

## **Basic Facilitation Guide**

**“Facilitation is the art of leading people through processes towards agreed-upon objectives in a manner that encourages participation, ownership and creativity by all those involved.” - Robert Cserti**

### **What is the role of a facilitator?**

The role of a facilitator is to:

- Help a group of people move through a process/conversation.
- Support everyone in the group to understand common objectives.
- Foster participation and help to engage participants in the process to share their ideas/thoughts/stories.
- Help structure conversation and asking clarifying questions to keep the discussion progressing.
- Hold time and space to allow people the opportunity to contribute.

### **How do I do it?**

#### 1) Prepare

- Take time to familiarize yourself with the topic(s) and the group you will be working with.
- If it feels helpful you can prepare an agenda (timing/prompt questions/topics)

#### 2) Establish Structure

- At the beginning of the meeting/event establish the timeframe you are working in.
- Outline any major topics or goals.
- Introduce yourself (who you are/where you are from/why you are where)
- Have the group introduce themselves (who you are/where are you from/why are you here/what do you hope to get out of this discussion)

#### 3) Be Curious

- Open the floor for discussion by asking prompt questions (open ended)
- Listen and learn.
- Create an environment where everyone can share – invite participants to share (What are your thoughts? Tell us more about that? Can you share a time when you experienced \_\_\_\_\_?)
- Continue to repeat the process by asking prompting questions when conversation reaches a lull or natural conclusion.

## 4) Rhythm and Timing

- Keep an eye on the time.
- Help keep the conversation moving.
- Warn the group ahead of time regarding deadlines.

## Additional Resources:

1. [Verbal-Facilitation-Tools.png \(882×623\) \(sessionlab.com\)](https://www.sessionlab.com/resources/verbal-facilitation-tools/)

**VERBAL TOOLS FOR GROUP FACILITATION**

When facilitating a group conversation in a meeting or workshop, you can use a number of simple verbal tools to engage participants and to make sure everyone is involved.



**Probing**  
Probing is used to determine the mood or general opinion of the group about a certain topic or point in the discussion. Just asking for a "thumbs up-thumbs down" survey can be enough to get an impression of the general opinion of the group.



**Paraphrasing**  
Paraphrasing means to express the same content that was just stated before but in your own words in order to check that both you and the others have the same understanding.



**Redirecting questions and comments**  
Redirecting a question to the group helps get participants more involved in the discussion. In addition, it also encourages group reflection.



**Bridging and referring back**  
This helps the group follow the discussion and to connect ideas by recalling earlier discussions or ideas.



**Shifting perspective**  
If the group gets stuck at some point in the discussion, try to shift the perspective and look at the problem from a different angle.



**Summarizing**  
Repetition promotes understanding, and summarizing what has been discussed so far will help the group build upon the conclusions they have already made.



**Giving positive reinforcements**  
It's important to encourage people, especially those who are less assertive, to state their opinions. Therefore, when someone brings up a good point, say so, thus showing his/her participation is appreciated, and later on he/she will feel confident enough again to bring up another idea.



**Including quieter members**  
Encourage less talkative members to contribute to the discussion. Ask directly for their opinions and ask if they have any questions. At the same time, keep in mind that people do have different learning and thinking styles and may not feel comfortable if they are 'encouraged' too much.

2. <https://effectivecollective.net/library/facilitation-handout.pdf>
3. [Liberating Structures - Introduction](#)