THE ART OF FACILITATION:

A FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Table of Contents

I. FACILITATORS AND THE ART OF FACILITATION

What Facilitators Do

1) Facilitators are primarily organizers and communicators, with a special expertise in group dynamics.

2) Facilitators ensure there is a culture of two-way expressive involvement that emphasizes active listening as well as trusting communication among the participants.

3) Facilitators encourage team behavior in planning, organizing, disciplining, and monitoring . . . (a group's) activities.

4) Facilitators must have the ability to organize, handle details, and bring events to closure.

Qualities of Good Facilitators

1) Good facilitators are usually warm, friendly, open people with a service motivation, and they find satisfaction in the giving of their time and their talents to worthwhile ventures.

2) Effective facilitators are responsive people; they are capable of responding to others. Persons who are both responsive and reliable are more apt to do a good facilitation job.

3) Effective facilitators are intelligent people, but equally important, they are people who are willing and able to learn from others and who are interested in new ideas.

4) Good facilitators have learned how to work with others. In fact, their teamwork skills may be most important of all because every organization must work as a team of members if it is to accomplish its goal.

5) Effective facilitators are people who approach their jobs with conviction about the purposes that have been set, and their sense of purpose enables them to move forward with direction and security.

6) People who work with others must be equipped with bold vision and imagination. They must be able to see the designs of the future and must strive with diligence and application to enlarge the horizons of their group members.

7) Effective facilitators also seem to be the ones who are well organized in their work habits and manage to get all things done on time.

Actions of a Good Facilitator

1) **Gets agreement on desired outcomes, agenda, roles, decision-making, and ground rules.**
   - Review and check for agreement on important meeting start-up items
     "Before we get into our agenda today, I'd like to make sure we all agree on how we're going to work together..."

2) **Makes process suggestions.**
   - Suggests a way for the group to proceed.
     "I'd like to suggest looking at the criteria before trying to evaluate options."

3) **Gets agreement on how the group will proceed.**
   - Checks for agreement on a process that has been suggested.
     "Is everyone willing to identify criteria first?"

4) **Listens as an ally.**
   - Listens to understand before evaluating.
   - Listens positively, not as an adversary.
     "Let me be sure I understand your view of the problem. You're saying that...is that right? Now I'd like to express my view."

5) **Educates the group.**
   - Heightens the group's process awareness through education.
     "There's no one right way to solve a problem. Which way do you want to start?"

6) **Asks open-minded questions.**
   - Asks a question that doesn't have a single right answer.
     "What do you think we should do? Say more about your idea for tracking errors."

7) **Is positive – encourages participation.**
   - Exhibits a positive, win-win attitude.
     "I know this issue is quite emotionally charged, but if we take our time and work our way through the problem, I'm sure we can find a solution we can all live with."

How Facilitation Differs from Training and Presenting

Training, public presentations, and facilitating share some common behavior skills and often complement each other, but they are distinctly different developmental activities. Illustrated below are some traits of each.

Training	Presenting	Facilitation
Participants are present to learn.	Audience is present to receive prepared remarks.	Participants are group members with a common interest in a topic or issue.
Objectives are based upon learning.	Objectives are based on what is to be communicated (i.e., sell, inform, motivate, describe).	Objectives are based on outcomes desired by group members.
Lessons are plans prepared to enhance learning structure.	Presenter's outline is used to structure a logical presentation.	An agenda is used to structure the meeting for effectiveness.
Instructor asks questions to evaluate learning.	Presenter primarily answers rather than asks questions.	Questions are used to develop individual involvement.
Visual and training aids (tapes, films, cases, role plays) are used to illustrate learning points.	Visual aids are used to present data (i.e., charts, graphs, tables).	Flip chart is used to record… (Group) member inputs and ideas.
Involvement (experimental learning) used to learn from others' experience and retain interest.	Data, charts, graphs are used to support message or recommendations.	Facilitator encourages group members to work as a team.
Facilitator manages the meeting structure and content. Number of participants varies; usually under 50.	Communication is largely one way from presenter to audience. Group can be any size.	Facilitator manages the meeting structure, not content.

The Art of Asking Questions

Rules for Asking Non-Threatening Questions

The following are general rules for effectively asking questions to get participation.

Rule 1 Initially ask each question of the entire group.

Rule 2 Pause and allow the group members time to consider the question.

Rule 3 If a group member responds, acknowledge the remark and explore the response further if possible or necessary.

Rule 4 If no one responds in a reasonable amount of time, look for nonverbal signals from a group member who wants to be involved (i.e., eye contact, a forward lean, an uplifted eyebrow). Then, go to that person.

Rule 5 If no one responds to a question, consider rewording the question or asking if the question needs clarification.

Rule 6 Avoid biased questions.

Rule 7 Avoid too many "yes/no" questions, which limit discussion.

Rule 8 Avoid questions that may put people on the defensive.

Rule 9 Refrain from the temptation of initially asking people to respond to get their attention or to punish their inattention. Such actions by the facilitator cause resentment and further noninvolvement by the group.

Hint: Be careful of praising questions or responses of participants with words such as "That's a good question", or "What a great idea?" Other members not receiving such praise may interpret their question or response as being less valuable.

II. INTERVENTIONS

Using Interventions Effectively

Here are a few intervention techniques that help ensure group productivity.

Boomerang:

Return a question to the person who asked it or to the group so that the facilitator does not take responsibility for all questions.

- *Group member:* "I don't like the track we're taking here."
- *Facilitator:* "What do you think we should be doing?"

Maintain/Regain Focus:

Making sure everyone is working on the same content, using the same process, at the same time.

- *Facilitator:* "Let's stay focused on identifying problems. Are we all together?"

  OR

  "Just a moment, one person at a time. Joe, you were first, then Donna."

Say what's going On:

Naming something that isn't working (i.e. getting it out in the open so the group can deal with it).

- *Facilitator:* "It's very quiet here. What does the silence mean?"

Avoid Process Battles:

Preventing lengthy arguments about which is the "right" way to proceed. Pointing out that a number of approaches will work and getting agreement on one use to start.

- *Facilitator:* "Can we agree to cover both issues in the remaining time? O.K., which do you want to start with?"

Enforce Process Agreements:

Reminding the group of a previous agreement.

- *Facilitator:* "We agreed to brainstorm, and you're starting to evaluate the ideas. Would you hold onto that idea for now?"

Accept/Legitimize/ Deal With or Defer:

A positive method for dealing with difficult people or situations that might get a meeting off track. Accept the idea without agreeing or disagreeing. Decide as a group if the issue/idea is more appropriately dealt with here or deferred to another time. Record ideas or issues that are deferred and agree on when they will be addressed.

- *Facilitator:* "You're not convinced we're getting anywhere? That's OK, you may be right. Would you be willing to hang on for 10 more minutes and see what happens?"

  OR

  "Thanks for raising this issue that wasn't on the agenda. Do we need to address that now, or should we carry it over to our next meeting?"

Don't Be Defensive:

Arguing back when criticized will only provoke more arguments. Accept negative comments and boomerang the issue back on the individual or group.

- *Facilitator:* "I cut you off! I'm sorry. Please continue."

Use of Body Language:

Reinforce words with congruent body language; ask for ideas with palms open; regain focus by standing up and moving to the middle of the room.

Use Humor:

Make a joke to relieve the tension. Be sensitive not to joke at someone else's expense.

Protect Others Personal Attack:

Intervening to stop someone verbally attacking another.

- *Facilitator:* "Joe, you've interrupted Sue several times in the last few minutes. I'd like to hear what she has to say as well as hearing your view."

Escalating Levels of Interventions

The basic approach to dealing with interventions is to start with the most subtle and least threatening approach. If the behavior continues, gradually escalate the interventions, as shown in the diagram below. Remember, using low-level intervention techniques gives people an opportunity to let go of difficult behaviors gracefully.

☺ **HIGH-LEVEL INTERVENTIONS**
CONFRONT BEFORE THE WHOLE GROUP
CONFRONT – ON A BREAK
TOUCH AND TALK DIRECTLY
ASK – "What do you think?"
WALK BY THEM, MAKE EYE CONTACT
WALK HALFWAY
STAND UP
MAKE EYE CONTACT
LOW-LEVEL INTERVENTIONS

III. FACILITATION CHALLENGES & SOME SOLUTIONS

Facilitation Strategies for Dealing with Difficult Participants

Definition of a difficult participant: Anyone whose attitude or behavior prevents that person – or others – from learning/participating (i.e. acquiring/sharing knowledge and skills they can apply); can include shy or preoccupied people.

Goals of the Gifted Facilitator:

1) Get difficult participant "on board" (i.e., "to buy-in").

2) Minimize any negative impact the difficult participant may have on others.

General Ideas to Minimize Effects of Difficult Participants

1) Prepare in advance; understand what turns otherwise agreeable participants into difficult participants (consider: what makes you a difficult participant?).

2) Room set-up: design to promote learner participation.

3) Use group dynamics and people's desire to feel accepted/part of the group to reduce the tendency for people to be difficult.

4) Focus on results and appeal to the "what's in it for me" motivation (a.k.a. "wiifm"). How is the training/meeting applicable to them, their job/organization, and their work in the community?

5) Allow plenty of time for reflection/discussion. As participants listen to their peers discuss key points about what they are learning, share action plans, or brainstorm ideas about how they'll apply the tools – there will be less resistance.

6) Use least obvious techniques first. Your goal is not to embarrass or ridicule. Proceed in order by using preventative, positive reinforcers and gradually advance to indirect or direct corrective methods.

Some Additional Techniques:

1) Set ground rules
2) Go over the agenda
3) Use an opener that involves everyone
4) Work in small groups, rotate leadership/group membership
5) Physical proximity
6) Group-generated questioning
7) Practical applications
8) Acknowledge, don't confront
9) Change learning styles, introduce activity/game
10) Thank for input
11) Honor the person's positions/sympathize with their objections
12) Anticipate problems/ask for all topics of concern up front – proceed with the positive
13) Give problem participants a job

Facilitators face some predictable challenges when working with groups of people who may not be enthusiastic about attending. Below are some typical problems along with suggestions on how to avoid them when they occur. The suggestions for avoiding the problems are preventative techniques that should result in fewer problems.

Out of Control Participants

There is a fine line between participants being outright rude and just enjoying the session so much that they want to share something with a neighbor. If, however, they are blatantly "acting out," it is your responsibility to take control of the situation. If you don't, other interested participants can be distracted, and you lose your enthusiasm.

Solutions

1) Let the participants know from the beginning when breaks will happen, so they will know they'll have the opportunity to move around and talk.

2) Use a variety of media so that the participants do not become bored with too much of the same thing.

3) Have several surprise activities that can be pulled out at any point where there is a lull or loss of attention. This can be something as simple as doing some icebreakers or a game. The point is to get participants moving and involved.

4) Pick out ring leaders and involve them in the training by directing questions to them or by giving them handouts to distribute.

5) Talk to troublemakers during break and try to establish a rapport by getting down to the problem: *"I get the idea that you're not happy to be here."*

6) Be frank and ask the troublemakers during break what their objections are, giving them a chance to air their feelings. Most importantly, do not become defensive, but rather listen and reflect on their feelings. You may learn a lot about where they are coming from and be able to make adjustments in your presentation.

7) Sometimes you just want to get everyone's attention returned to you after a small group activity. You can do this by raising your voice, playing a cut of music, or flipping the light switch on and off.

8) Move near the troubling participants and establish eye contact if you can.

Ways to Increase Participant Involvement

Get Them Involved

One way to encourage participant involvement is by asking open-ended questions, that is, questions that require more than "yes" or "no" answers. Ask questions that are challenging and open to a number of responses. Be sure to allow enough time for group members to formulate answers. It is not necessary to fill conversation gaps immediately.

It is always better if people willingly answer a question, so always ask for volunteers. The more comfortable participants are, the more they will volunteer to participate. Look for subtle signs - a look of interest, a hesitant movement of a raising hand. These signals often indicate that someone wants to be called on. Do not ask someone to volunteer who is obviously reluctant. Never put people on the spot. You may get a response you really did not want to hear!

If you cannot get any volunteers, ask yourself why? Do they not understand the material? Are they bored? Are you boring? Try to put yourself in the participant's place and see if you can figure out what the problem is.

Responding to Silence

Most people are not good at waiting. Silence makes them uncomfortable and impatient. "Wait time" is important. If you ask a question, wait at least five seconds before you call on someone to answer. This gives everyone time to think. Your group will appreciate this because most people get nervous when there is a response required of them. Waiting lowers anxiety and encourages participation. Research shows that "wait time" increases unsolicited but appropriate responses, increases speculative thinking, and encourages more questions.

Don't let silence throw you. You may be tempted to fill the silence with "encouraging" words such as: *"When I did this activity last time, there was a really good answer to that question. It was…" Remember the old saying, "Silence is Golden."* Give people time to think.

The Power of Voice

The "voice" has incredible power. You can reduce your audience to tears, or boost them to ecstasy with the rise and fall of your voice. The way you enunciate your words matters. If you are not sure how to pronounce a word, look it up or ask someone. If you are not sure of your words, you will become nervous. When you become nervous, it affects the quality of your voice.

Rate, or pace, is another factor to consider. Be sure you do not talk so fast that your group is exhausted at the end of your presentation. On the other hand, be sure you do not talk so slow that the group falls asleep.

1) Be knowledgeable about adult learning and styles. Some learners will want to know who said it, according to what research, etc. They are the learners who want to see verification in writing.

2) Be sure you have looked at the activities and you understand exactly how to give the directions, etc. When you are well prepared, it comes across.

3) Remind participants that you are not an expert in all areas of the training. Tell them you will be glad to let them write down their concerns, and you will do your best to locate it. If you make a promise, follow through.

4) Admit that you do not know, or you cannot cite the specific research.

5) Look the questioners in the eye and stand with your body facing them in a confident position when you respond. Body language has a powerful effect on an audience.

Being a Pushover

A "pushover" is a trainer whose flexibility goes beyond what is in their own best interest and/or in the best interest of the participants. The pushover is easily swayed to change from a well-conceived plan to a less strategic and effective action. For example, participants might complain about an activity being too difficult, so the trainer drops it. This type of trainer is usually a "people pleaser."

1) Be aware ahead of time that there may be participants in the group who will ask you to make changes in the program. Be a proactive planner. Have a statement prepared, such as, *"Let me share the schedule with you today. We will adhere to it as much as possible. It is designed this way so that you will receive maximum benefit from the training."*

2) Practice self-talk. Be knowledgeable about the training so that you can explain why each part is important in relation to processing the information.

3) Just say, "No!"

4) Tell the participants that the program is designed for a specific schedule, but if they would rather take a lot of mini breaks versus longer breaks, a shorter lunch period, etc., you will be willing to let them out earlier. This allows you the time you need and puts the responsibility of making some unpleasant decision (e.g., shorter lunch) onto the participants.

The Person Who Argues

A disagreement among participants can be constructive or damaging, depending on the issue and how the disagreement is handled.

1) Avoid letting someone push your button and cause you to lose your temper.

2) As a facilitator, you can set an example of how to argue. You can reduce tension if you disagree with the statement rather than with the person making the statement. A constructive response would be: *"Keisha, you present an interesting argument. There is one part that is still difficult for me to understand. Could you elaborate on…?"*

Brick Wall

Out there in the sea of faces, there will undoubtedly be some who do not respond. Trying to change or impact a brick wall is definitely a trap to be avoided. It will lead to frustration.

1) The best strategy is to avoid brick walls. Part of that avoidance is the simple realization that 10% of any population is negative.

2) Avoid making eye contact with brick walls. Eye contact with brick walls makes a facilitator feel less affirmed and more frustrated.

3) Be nonjudgmental and respect their views.

4) Never preach or argue. You can say, "You may be right, " or "I see your point."

Quiet People

Some people are naturally quiet, and others become quiet in a seminar setting. While you should not expect these people to change dramatically, you may be able to help them participate more than they would otherwise.

1) Watching for nonverbal clues is sometimes helpful in determining if the person wants to talk.

2) Build into the training exercises ways that the quiet person can participate (i.e., small group discussion or dyad (pair) discussion).

Personalizing Skepticism

Facilitators and trainers sometimes make the mistake of assuming that a participant who asks questions or expresses curiosity is criticizing. The trainer may feel personally attacked and become defensive, thereby losing credibility.

1) Know your role. As a trainer you are not expected to answer every question. If you are comfortable as a trainer, you will not be defensive.

2) Look the questioners in the eye and stand with your body facing them in a confident position when you respond. Body language has a powerful effect on an audience.

Use the Reward/Praise System

It is a risk for members of the group to volunteer to answer a question or make a comment. If that risk is punished, chances are the participants will quit trying. Your role as a trainer is to find ways to reward participants so that they will volunteer again.

Use praise after participants have completed an activity that was emotionally draining or complicated. Say something like, "You've all worked hard on this process; you did an excellent job."

Another time to use praise is on a break. If someone asked a good question, gave a good response, or shared a story that was personal yet powerful, you may want to quietly praise them at this time.

One kind of reward is to simply thank and compliment someone when they have volunteered an answer. Use positive reinforcement as a learning tool. Genuinely praise individuals for becoming involved – clapping is acceptable.

If you are having trouble finding the "reward," repeat, in your own words, what you think the person has said. This will clarify the message for you and also give you a chance to think about how you want to respond.

The rule of thumb is: "Never lose an opportunity to say something good."

If You Don't Know, You Don't Know

Admit you do not know. Just remember, you do not have all the answers. You are a person who is good at what you do, but not necessarily an expert. Anyway, participants do not like trainers who act as though they know it all. You can be honest with your group and tell them you do not know, but you will find out from someone who does.

Before you engage in a question-and-answer session, you should consider some suggestions that will help you appear relaxed and calm in the midst of all types of questions.

1) Be proactive by anticipating difficult questions. Look at the content of the training and think of questions one could ask.

2) Be sure you understand the basic concepts of the training program.

3) Listen very carefully to the questions. Do not try to think of the answer while the person is talking. You may miss the real meaning of the question.

4) Pause for at least five seconds before responding to the question. That gives you time to reflect and respond appropriately.

5) Be sure the group hears the question. It is very frustrating to not be able to hear.

6) Be friendly. Smile. Use the questioner's name in responding.

7) Ask for clarification if you do not understand the question. It does not embarrass the questioner. Just say, "I'm not sure I understand what you're asking. Could you clarify?"

Redirecting Unclear Information

Many times the audience does not understand some of the information you have given them. Do not, under any circumstances, ignore and continue. We may want to go on because we are not sure of the materials. Panic sets in, and we hope we can slide past this point to safer ground. Instead, say, "I can tell I have confused some of you. Let me clarify…" If this happens, review your notes, and be sure that the next time you present this part, you do so in a clearer way.

Respect the Audience

Some areas to watch:

1) Avoid big words. People in the group may be intimidated if they cannot figure out what you are talking about. It makes them feel stupid and that is very threatening to the adult learner.

2) Avoid acronyms and technical terms that might be unfamiliar to your group.

3) Do not brag. This insults your group. If you are good at what you do then model it. Your group will know it and respect you more.

4) Know your audience. When you know something about the people you are working with, you can be personal. For example, it is helpful to know the reading skills of your group, so you can make adjustments if necessary.

Body Language

When we think of communication, we almost always associate it with verbal forms of expression. However, research has indicated that a large part of all human communication is nonverbal. In reality, the nonverbal messages we send and receive are subconsciously more meaningful than words.

Facilitator Traps

Being a Fortune Teller

1) Although you are well aware that you do not have all the answers, your position as a facilitator may suggest to your audience that you do.

2) Ask other participants if they have answers or suggestions.
    a. Throw the question back on the person in terms of what they think, know, or have tried.

Losing Track

Occasionally, facilitators lose either their train of thought, or their place in their notes. It can be very disconcerting.

1) To avoid losing your place in your notes, keep a pencil handy and put a check next to where you stop.

2) In discussions, you can jot down your last point, so you will remember where you left off.

3) A paper clip can be slipped onto the paper at the spot where you left off speaking for a discussion or story.

4) A good outline, readily visible, will help you stay on track.

5) Rehearsing helps presenters to avoid losing track.

6) You can be honest and say, "I've lost it. Can someone help me out?"

7) Ask a participant, "What was the last thing I just said?"

8) If you have lost your place in the notes and need more than a few seconds, you can say, "Everyone, I need a two-minute break – let's take a stretch."

Premature Closure

Discussions relevant to the topic are very worthwhile. Facilitators may, however, become nervous about how much time they have to complete a session and cut off meaningful discussion. It is important that participants' interest is acknowledged as valid and worthwhile.

1) Do not ask leading questions toward the end of the session.

2) Be sure to schedule discussion early in a session so that you can adjust your speed accordingly.

3) Plan the schedule carefully and estimate time for discussion. As you become more knowledgeable, you will know which sections elicit the most discussion.

4) You can leave time for discussion at the end of the session, and tell participants that, if here is time, discussion will resume later.

5) Flexible time can be built into sessions so that when relevant discussion arises, the time can be devoted to it at the right spot.

6) If you think the discussion is going to continue and it will affect the time, say, "We have two minutes before we need to move on."

7) If you think the discussion is valid, do a quick review of the schedule and see what you can condense or eliminate.

Hooked on "Yes, But"

When given examples of solutions to potential problems, some participants will tell you that the solution will not work. They may throw out a hook like this: "Yes, that's one way, but it doesn't work for this problem."

1) You can turn the solutions over to the audience and see what they have tried.

2) Ask the participant what he/she has tried. When they tell you a technique they have used say, "That's one solution.", and move onto o something else.

IV. GROUPS AND GROUP MEETINGS

Running an Effective Group Meeting

As a facilitator, ensure that the five major causes of poor meetings are eliminated from your group meetings, and you will find greater productivity and satisfaction in your gatherings.

CAUSES	WHAT TO DO
☞ Late-starting meetings	As Facilitator, arrive early and get organized. Be assertive and start on time! If meetings begin late, the tardy participants are penalized. Obviously, late-starting meetings are also unproductive.
☞ Wandering from agenda and tendencies to gripe	Tactfully refocus the group back to the agenda purpose and agenda item.
☞ Failure to set and end meetings on time	Always indicate ending time on meeting notification and always end meetings at designated time.
☞ Lack of summary	Summarize the action or decision after each agenda time and summarize again at end of meeting. Also indicate time frames and responsibilities for each action item to provide reminders and reinforcement.
☞ Lack of minutes	Use your flip chart sheets as minutes. Take five minutes to record selectively major actions, decisions, and assignments. Distribute to group members in a timely manner.

Stages of Development of Groups

Getting Started Phase: Leaders and members are chosen and goals are set. This may take some time, especially if persons are not well acquainted and are rather new to one another. Decisions have to be made about when, where, and how often to meet. A time schedule has to be considered. Rules of procedure are needed and should be decided.

We-Are-Now-Under-Way Stage: The group has begun to come to grips with its task and people become connected up to or related to one another and to the work at hand. This stage may arrive rather soon, or it may take longer. Much depends on the leadership, loyalty, abilities, and preparation of the members.

Information-Seeking and Fact-Gathering and Analysis Period: The group pulls together the material needed to understand the task or problem that it is working on. During this period many assignments can be made to individual group members, and they can get a chance to make a contribution to the work of the group as a whole.

Alternative Stage: The group has crystallized its thinking around a number of alternatives or options as to what it might recommend or decide upon as most feasible in terms of the task that has been undertaken and the resources available.

Decision-Making Time: The group has considered all the alternatives and has agreed on the plan, program, or approach that seems most likely to offer a solution to the matter it has been working on. This, of course, is a critical time and may be a highpoint in the cycle of the group's life.

Report Preparation Stage: Individuals prepare sections of the final report and present them for the group's consideration. Remember, groups cannot write or communicate. Individuals do the writing and talking. The group report is always a product of the work of individuals whose ideas meet the majority approval of the group.

Report Presentation Time: The final report of the group is submitted to the organization or body that created it. Here it is important that clear, brief copies of recommendations be made available and that the chairman or a group members so designated make a strong case for what has been decided after weeks, months, or years of work.

Time of Disbandment: The group's work is done, and proper appreciation should be shown its members by the appointing body. Certificates of recognition are not expensive to prepare and they are nice to receive.

Types of Groups

Productive Groups

1) The group members are clear as to what their job is and stick to the assignment rather than wander all over the place.

2) The group members are carefully chosen because they are not only interested, but have a contribution to make in regard to the matter at hand.

3) The group members are committed to the work they have undertaken and can be counted on to fulfill their responsibilities.

4) The group has reached early agreement on procedures, rules of order, and methods of work.

5) The group has a plan in relation to a time frame and works steadily and diligently toward completion of its task.

6) The group has a good inventory of the talents of the various members and makes appropriate use of those talents in a variety of individual assignments.
   - ✓ Ask questions
   - ✓ Raising current media relative topics

7) The group keeps good records or minutes of its decisions and does not backtrack or chew over decisions already made.

8) The group has well-prepared material for review and discussion, and members do their homework by studying the material in advance of the meeting.

Successful Groups

1) Have clear goals and purposes specifically defined and realistic in relation to resources and time.

2) Achieve success primarily because of active member participation by interested, committed people who are willing to work.

3) Choose their leaders carefully, focusing on people who are dedicated to the tasks at hand.

4) Enjoy a continuous infusion of new blood in leadership and membership roles.

5) Are understood in the community and always devote time to a good program of public interpretation about what the group is doing.

Nonproductive Groups

1) The group is composed of the wrong people – wrong in the sense that they lack the skills, talents, and capabilities to work with others in groups and have not had any real experience along these lines.

2) The group is unrealistic as to its goals in terms of the resources it has and the length of time it will take to achieve the goals it has set for itself.

3) The group has divided unwittingly into a small subgroup of people who do almost everything, and a larger group of non-participants who willingly let the few carry the load.

4) The group has goals that duplicate the goals of other groups, and instead of working together, the groups work at cross-purposes.

5) Some groups fail because leadership becomes old and tired, but hangs on and refuses to make way for new leadership and new ideas and strengths.

6) The group never became unified and consequently consists of cliques and subgroups.

7) The planning process so essential in all phases of group life is ignored, and the group lurches along from crisis to crisis without long-term goals.

8) The group fails to spread the work evenly among the members, and some drop out simply because they are never invited to do anything – never find their own place.

9) The group should have never formed in the first place because the time was not right and the resources of committed people were simply not available, or because the group's goals were unattainable or unrealistic.

10) The group fails to realize that it has accomplished its purpose and should disband.

Membership and Participation

Responsible Membership

1) The individual accepts the fact that it takes time to get any job done in a group, and sets aside and guards the time required.

2) The individual makes every effort to attend meetings regularly.

3) The individual thoughtfully shares ideas, experiences, opinions, and beliefs about the matters before the group and does so openly and with the realization that others may have different views.

4) The individual cooperates with the group leader by staying on the topic and helping the leader, who is striving to give focus and direction to the work of the group.

5) The individual knows the purpose of the group and the goal of a particular discussion. When these are not clear, s/he asks for clarification.

6) The individual does her personal assignments on behalf of the group on time and in relation to the assignments of others.

7) The individual is fair, considerate, and reasonable in the amount of time that s/he consumes in the group meeting so that others can take part.

8) The individual is willing to blend her/his ideas with those of others and gets satisfaction out of group ideas and group productivity.

9) The individual is willing and able to evaluate the part s/he is playing in the group, and if it not adequate or satisfying, is willing to step aside.

10) The individual learns how to use factual material, and if such material is not clearly stated, is able to ask for interpretation and clarification.

11) The individual has some insight into what is happening in the community in a contemporary way and assesses realistically the forces that can help or hinder the group.

12) The individual is careful never to commit the group to early premature and nongroup-made decisions which not only confuses the group but confuses its image in the community.

13) The individual becomes adept in accepting the problem-solving process in a positive way and sees the continuity between one meeting and the others to follow.

Reasons for Lack of Responsible Participation

1) The members may not have had much experience in working together with others and may need education and help to learn how to do this.

2) The members may not be sure about the jobs they are expected to do and may be spending their time in aimless energy expenditure.

3) Perhaps not enough time and thought has been given to the formation and composition of the group.

4) Some members who are very bright (even brilliant) as individual performers may have less capability in terms of being able to blend their talents with those of others.

5) Perhaps members are failing to participate because they are overloaded and overworked.

6) Some members may lack knowledge and experience in the problem area being considered.

7) Low participation may be a result of the group having reached a plateau in its deliberations, with no one being able to get it off "dead center."

8) Perhaps the group has become "leader dependent." Members may be unable to participate because for too long they have relied on the one or two at the top to do all the work, while they merely stood by or acted as rubber stamps.

Power Dynamics

Sources of Power

1. **positional power** that comes from organizational authority or position (we have it now in this room as trainers) – often forgotten by people with the power, rarely forgotten by those without it.

2. **referred power** that comes from connections to others (e.g. a staff member without formal positional power but has known the ED for years.)

3. **expert power** that comes from wisdom, knowledge, experience, skills (e.g. someone is widely respected because of their skills as an organizer.)

4. **ideological power** that comes from an idea, vision, or analysis. As Victor Hugo said, "Nothing can withstand the power of an idea whose time has come." It can be an original idea of an individual, an ideal such as "democracy" or "liberation," or as a developed ideology.

5. **obstructive power** stemming from the ability to coerce or block (whether implicit, threatened or demonstrated; those without other sources of power may depend on it; many activists are experts in its use)

6. **personal power** energy, vision, ability to communicate, capacity to influence, emotional intelligence, psychological savvy, etc.

7. **co-powering** an idea that comes from the Latino community speaking to the responsibility for individual leaders to mindfully work towards supporting the personal power of others through modeling, validating and feedback.

8. **collaborative power** that comes from our ability to join our energies in partnership with others, in pairs, teams, organizations, communities, coalition and movements.

9. **institutional power** economic, legal, and political power directly wielded by institutions (whether a corporation or police department; or one of your organizations; exists apart from the individuals who work there at any one time; name recognition, membership, skill, etc.)

10. **cultural power** from the perspective of the dominant culture, this is the cultural norms, conditioning, and privilege regarding race/class/gender/age (as with positional power, to the dominant group this is often invisible; to those with less

11. **structural power** covertly or implicitly exercised through the dominant institutions of society. (examples: the resistance to alternative medicine from the AMA and insurance providers; racism expressed and maintained through structures such as red-lining by lending institutions.)

12. **transcendant power** that comes from our connection to a higher power such as spiritual, natural, and/or historical imperative.

Source: Rockwood Leadership Program
1405 McGee Avenue, Berkeley, CA 94703

Minimizing Power Differences

Dealing with power difference in an open and honest way is a key ingredient to success in community building. This is not always easy but essential to building relationships.

1) ***Orient.*** Effective orientation of new members helps to equalize power relationships.

2) ***Use ground rules.*** Ground rules work best if they are developed by the entire group, acknowledged, hung in a prominent place during meetings, and periodically reviewed by the group to see if they are being honored or if there are additions or deletions.

3) ***Increase numbers of those with less power.*** (Adding more representation to equalize "who is at the table.") The best way to begin dealing with this is to have open discussions in your collaborative. If you are sincere about wanting to change the power dynamics of your group, you are the best experts on how to do this. For example, if you are looking to increase the number of parents of young children, you may have to change meetings to evening events with potlucks and childcare.

4) ***Offer special support (to increase access).*** Transportation, childcare, and stipends are commonly needed supports for parents. Remember, professionals who attend your collaborative meetings may or may not have an institution that is covering their time and expenses. Participants experience these differences in support as part of the power relationship.

5) ***Make special preparations (to increase involvement and effectiveness).*** For example, schools and community-based programs that successfully involve parents in decision-making make special efforts to inform and orient them. Approaches include special training, meeting in advance in small groups of all or mostly parents, or one-on-one conversations with parent representatives before and after meetings.

6) ***Listen to and respect all members.*** As leader or member, your role modeling can help equalize power relationships in the collaboration.

7) ***Be a relationship builder.*** Help facilitate and establish personal relationships between leadership in the collaborative and those with less positional power. People need to know their ideas will be heard and respected.

Ground Rules and Agreements

How many times have you sat in a meeting thinking how much more effective and efficient things would be if a few people just changed their behavior? Whatever the offense, the goods news is there is a tool that you can use to enlist people's best conduct in meetings – agreements.

What are agreements, and what do they do?

Agreements are specific guidelines, agreed to by all meeting participants. "Start and end on time" is a common example. Agreements are intended to promote positive meeting behavior. They commonly merge from the implicit expectations of one or more participants, such as "I wish people would speak more supportively." By making these wishes public, expectations become explicit. Then they can be examined and adopted as agreements or rejected by the group.

Some example agreements for meetings include:

1) Support the objective of the meeting by keeping discussions focused on relevant topics.
2) Respect the view of all participants.
3) Keep time schedules; be on time, start on time, end on time.
4) If you agree to something, fulfill it.
5) Communicate immediately if you think you may not be able to fulfill an agreement.
6) Make a decision at each meeting.
7) Cherish diversity of ideas.
8) Allow one conversation at a time, no side conversations.
9) Silence means consent.

How do you create agreements?

Agreement terms must be clear and observable. You can observe people being on time, but you cannot observe them "having a good attitude" because that is too subjective. Agreements must also be entered into freely and remain open to renegotiation. That is far better than simply having participants break the agreements!

1) Think of one or more guidelines that might truly serve the group, or use a model such as "SPERO" (Sensitivity, Participation, Experimentation, Respect, Openness). *Spero* is Latin for "I hope."

2) Propose them to the group: "I'd like us to agree to…."

3) Encourage others to discuss for understanding. Do not permit evaluation or counter-proposition at this time.

4) Ask for a vote of those willing to agree on your proposal. A simple thumbs up or thumbs-down will do.

5) If the vote is not unanimous, ask those who voted against it what it would take to make the proposal work for them. Listen to their answers and modify your proposed agreement.

6) Negotiate until you reach unanimous agreement or withdraw your proposal.

7) Post the agreement on a shared display.

Reinforcing agreements

1) Most agreements are broken because of neglect, not intent.

2) To reinforce meeting or team agreements, post them on a shared display and review them periodically to make sure they still represent the commitment of the group.

3) When you notice participants actively upholding agreements, recognize them and express your appreciation.

4) When someone fails to keep an agreement, let the participant know you expect him or her to behave as agreed. Codes of conduct only work to the degree that members uphold the agreements.

5) Create close tolerance on only those agreements required to maintain an effective meeting or team. We all have distinct styles and personalities. In the long term, supporting such diversity is one of the most valuable benefits of having agreements in the first place.

Helpful Hints

1) If you have a common or recurring problem in your meetings, propose a new agreement that would correct it.

2) When voting on agreements, use a simple thumbs-up/thumbs-down method – it is quick and effective.

3) Post your agreements in the meeting room where everybody can see them.

How to Use the Flip Chart

Here are a few suggestions that will help to increase the effectiveness of the flip chart and make it easier to use.

Posture

1) Stand facing the group and to the side of the flip chart when facilitating.
2) Write on the flip chart with your body at an angle to participants.
3) Do not turn your back to the group while recording.
4) Ensure that all participants can see the flip chart.

Recording

1) Use a heading on each sheet.
2) Print in block letters 1 ½ - 2 inches high.
3) Print as legibly as possible but do not be overly concerned about neatness or spelling.
4) Limit recording from 5-9 lines per page.
5) Strive to use participants' exact words when recording.
6) Leave 2 to 3 inches between lines.
7) Use "bullets" to denote each input if only a few points will be made; otherwise, number the points.
8) Consider leaving the bottom one-fifth of sheet blank.
9) Use black, dark blue, green or purple felt markers for recording; use red, orange and yellow for highlighting.
10) Highlight by use of underlining, circles, bullets, and use of contrasting color.
11) Use abbreviations liberally, e.g. increase, decrease, > (greater than), < (less than).
12) Use diagrams when appropriate.

Common questions asked by a Recorder

1) Does this capture what you said?
2) Can I paraphrase that by saying…?
3) Would you summarize that in a phrase or two for the record?
4) What do you mean by that?

Warning!! Always check to see if the facility will allow flip chart sheets to be taped to walls. Using Post-It flip chart sheets can avoid this concern; however, they are expensive and may not be an option. Also, some surfaces, e.g. uneven walls, fabric walls, are not good surfaces for Post-It chart paper. With fabric type walls, straight pins or thumb tacks work well. Never write on flip chart pages attached to the wall; unless you are 100% sure the ink will not bleed through and damage the surface.

Meeting Checklist

Meeting Room
o Room reservation made
o Room available for early set up
o Permission granted for taping pages to wall
o Wall space for taping flip chart pages
o Room is climate controlled
o Room is clean
o Adequate lighting available
o Adequate and appropriate tables and chairs
o Plans made for proper furniture setup
o Break-out rooms/space for subgroups
o Other: ____________________________

Pre-Notification and Agenda
o Pre-notification distributed in timely and accurate manner
o Arrangements made for guests
o Meeting objectives clearly stated
o Agenda distributed prior to meeting
o Advance materials distributed
o Coordinating instructions included
o Copies of minutes from last meeting available
o Other: _______________________________________

Supplies and Equipment
o Adequate easels and flip chart pads
o Masking tape, pins, or thumb tacks
o Participants note pads and pens
o Set of pens (four colors)
o Other: ________________________

Miscellaneous
o Refreshments available
o Name tags or tents for initial meeting
o Washroom locations known, and indicated to participants
o Break times indicated to participants
o Other: -___________________________________

Meeting Evaluation Form

Yes	Partially	No	N/A	
○	○	○	○	Desired Outcomes were achieved.
○	○	○	○	People were prepared.
○	○	○	○	People understood and carried out their roles.
○	○	○	○	Efficient and effective meeting process.
○	○	○	○	Safe, stimulating environment.
○	○	○	○	Participants were able to contribute fully.
○	○	○	○	Full potential of the group was utilized.
○	○	○	○	Time was used well.
○	○	○	○	Minimal amount of wheel-spinning.
○	○	○	○	Clear agreements were reached.
○	○	○	○	Consensus was fully supported.
○	○	○	○	An energized team left the room to implement the decisions made.
○	○	○	○	Clear understand of who will do what, by when, to follow through on meeting agreements.