

Part 1: Facilitation Theory and Feedback Models

What are the traits and practices of an effective facilitator, and how can effective facilitation benefit a project and team?

Topics: Facilitation, public speaking, content neutrality, active listening, asking the right questions, staying on track, feedback/coaching

Summary: Service is not performed in a vacuum. It involves people working toward a common goal. However, people have different perspectives, priorities, and backgrounds, which can lead to clashes that stifle the group process. Effective facilitation is a means to involve all parties and points of view in an empowering process. It also demonstrates leadership in action.

Outcomes: Participants will define concepts around mindful facilitation and describe how it relates to effective work in their organizations/communities

Participants will identify problem-solving behaviors (individual and group) and learn effective prevention and intervention strategies

Participants will identify and practice three key ingredients for effective and mindful facilitation

Participants will learn and use a feedback cycle that aids teamwork and provides coaching practice

Participants will learn and practice a facilitation model that they can apply in real world situations

Duration: One full training day (Morning: Facilitation Theory and Feedback Cycle; Afternoon: Facilitation Practice)

Materials: Facilitation Handouts 1–13
Chart paper and pens
Cut-out strips for “Staying on Track” activity

Background: Your participants will come from a wide range of backgrounds and proficiency levels in terms of their facilitation abilities. These activities will introduce a rigid framework that should engage both beginning and advanced facilitators alike.

One way to keep the session positive is to model good facilitation practices.

Procedure: *Warm Up.* Introduce the concept of effective facilitation as it applies to project-planning meetings.

1. If you are unfamiliar with this topic, look over the participant sheets to get a grasp of what effective facilitation involves within this context. You can also share your own unique perspective on this topic.

2. Ask the group the following questions, and capture their responses on chart paper: What is facilitation? When are we facilitating? What does an effective facilitator do? There are stock answers to these questions included in the participant pages; familiarize yourself with these and if the group leaves out significant points, give the participants prompts to make sure they create a well-rounded set of responses to the three questions.

Activity: “Practices of an effective facilitator”

The activity opens with groups of three engaging in a facilitation exercise as laid out in Facilitation Handout 2. (There need to be at least three people per group. If your group doesn't divide by three, make the groups larger rather than smaller.)

1. Divide group into threes.
2. Explain activity and roles. When groups select a topic for debate, encourage them to select something abstract rather than a real issue facing them in their service. The more abstract the issue, the easier it will be for the groups to focus less on the issue and more on the facilitation.
3. Allow 15 minutes to complete activity, including 10 minutes for the role-play discussion.

The next part consists of four concepts. There is an introduction to active listening, which provides participants a few moments to digest the information. This is followed by activities along with an opportunity to practice facilitation and provide and receive feedback.

Remaining content neutral. It is important to note that content neutrality is an ideal that focuses on process. In realistic settings, the facilitator is also part of the team, and if the facilitator should remain purely content neutral, her or his voice would be lost. For the sake of the facilitation exercises practiced in this model, facilitators should do their best to remain neutral. Later, as an advanced skill, they can learn ways to step out of the content neutral facilitator role occasionally and provide their own opinions and feedback.

1. Spend roughly 15 minutes highlighting key elements of the concept. You can draw from the information provided in Facilitation Handout 4, as well as your own personal experience.
2. There is not a direct activity related to content neutrality. While presenting the topic, ask group members for their opinions on why content neutrality is a practice of an effective facilitator. This will help keep the participants engaged.
3. Transition into the next concept: active listening.

Listen actively. Participants are often already aware that listening is an important element of facilitating or any team process. However, they may not focus on it as an individual skill, and one that can improve with practice.

1. Spend a moment stressing the importance of active listening as a skill in facilitation.
2. Facilitate a group brainstorm of the concepts surrounding active listening. On one sheet of chart paper, record what is best “to do” as an active listener. On a second sheet, record

responses on what it is best “to avoid.” Facilitation Handout 5 already includes such lists, but let the participants go through the process themselves. If the group leaves out important responses, use prompts to make sure the lists are well-rounded and complete.

3. Set up a 15-minute “active listening” activity, as outlined in Facilitation Handout 6. In pairs, one participant will make a statement. The other participant will then repeat verbatim what she or he heard. The pair will then discuss how the message altered through the communication process.
4. Bring the large group back together and spend a few minutes discussing what they learned from the activity.
5. Transition to the next segment: Ask clarifying questions.

Ask clarifying questions. This segment classifies the types of questions that facilitators can ask group participants to make sure everything is understood. There is not an activity associated with this concept, but it should be modeled during the practice facilitation sessions.

1. Spend a few minutes describing the information from Facilitation Handout 7. You may wish to use flip charts or overheads to illustrate this information. Involve the group in your illustrations, so that they are engaged in the learning process. When asking questions of the group, you can model the concepts from this segment.
2. Repeat the process from the above step with Facilitation Handout 8. This sheet has significantly more categories and depth than the previous handout.
3. Transition to the next segment: staying on track.

Staying on track. Participant Theory Handout 8 includes a long list of the components to leading a group planning process, including ideas for opening and closing meetings. The list contains dense content, and here is a brief activity that can help participants become familiar with it.

1. If you choose to do this activity, you will need to cut out the 10 items A–J in strips beforehand. If you are working with 20 people, cut out two sets; if you have 30, make three sets. (Items K–O will not work as well with this activity, but are valuable elements to the handout.)
2. Hand each participant a strip and ask him or her to find the other(s) in the room with the same strip.
3. Give these instructions: Working individually (if the group is small) or in groups (if the group is large), spend a few minutes brainstorming two or three ideas that facilitators can use on the individual topic included on your strips. Also, work on a plan for presenting the concept and ideas for implementing it. (Note: Not only does the content of the exercise revolve around “staying on track,” but the participants are expected to stay on track while engaging in this activity.)
4. Each group (or individual) will get two minutes to make a presentation to the larger group.
5. Complete the process by asking participants what new ideas they learned from presenting and hearing others’ presentations.

Facilitation practice and feedback model. The participants are just about ready to break into small groups and practice the elements of effective facilitation that they have been learning about and discussing. An ideal size of a small group is 6–10 people with a group leader with advanced facilitation skills. The facilitation practice follows the model illustrated above. Facilitation Handout 12 has general information on providing feedback, and Handout 13 introduces the feedback cycle for use in this module.

Likewise, the feedback cycle also follows a model, as outlined in Facilitation Handout 12.

1. Introduce the feedback cycle, and the importance of providing constructive feedback.
2. Walk the group through the process of delivering feedback as outlined in Facilitation Handout 13. The process revolves around two questions (1. What did you like? 2. What would you do differently next time?). Give the group leader, practice facilitator, and group participants a chance to weigh in.

Public Speaking. Before beginning the facilitation practice, you may want the group to engage in a public speaking activity, which is also designed to let participants practice using the feedback model. This activity lasts 60–80 minutes.

This activity should be done in small groups of 6–10 participants with a Group Leader with advanced facilitation training and skills. The desired outcome of this session is to have each participant practice public speaking by sharing his or her answer to the question, “Why do you do what you do?” with the group. By the end of this session, each participant should feel more comfortable speaking in front of a group.

The Activity:

1. At the beginning of this session, share the desired outcomes and learning objectives with the participants. Tell them that they will each give a 3–5 minutes presentation answering the question, “Why do you do what you do?” You will ask them to keep going if they stop before 3 minutes and let them know when 5 minutes are almost up. Review the feedback cycle and make sure that everyone understands that he or she will receive feedback on his or her presentation. Provide 10 minutes to prepare an outline of the speeches.
2. To start the presentations, ask for a volunteer. If no one volunteers, then request a person who has spoken in front of a group before to start. Ask each volunteer to stand up in front of the group to present.
3. At the end of each presentation, use the feedback cycle on Facilitation Handout 13 to evaluate the presentation before moving on to the next volunteer.
4. Allow enough time for everyone to practice before the group.

Wrap Up:

Before breaking, explain to the group that the next part of the session will consist of practicing a facilitation model.

Part 2: Facilitation Practice

Now that you've learned about facilitation theory, how do you put it into practice?

Topic: Facilitation, content neutrality, active listening, asking the right questions, staying on track, feedback

Summary: After lunch, bring back the group for a facilitation practice session. An ideal group size is 6–10 participants. If you have more participants, divide them into small groups of 6–10. For each small group, appoint a Group Leader with advanced facilitation skills.

This session is designed so that participants can build on their facilitation skills and get specific feedback from their peers in a safe, learning environment. By the end of this session, participants should have a clearer idea of their areas of effectiveness and improvement in facilitation.

Outcomes: Participants learn a new approach for managing informal and formal conversations

Participants build on and practice facilitation skills. Participants enhance coaching and communication skills using the Feedback Model

Participants understand how to apply facilitation skills back at their sites and in other parts of their lives

Duration: One full training day (Morning: Facilitation Theory and Feedback Cycle; Afternoon: Facilitation Practice)

Materials: Discussion Topics
Feedback Cycle poster
Discussion strategies

Procedure: Here is an agenda for the first segment of the session, designed to last 2 hours and 30 minutes.

TOPIC	TIME (min.)
Review of Large Group – Debrief	10
Overview of Practice/Presentation of Feedback Model	30
Practice Facilitator 1 (with feedback)	20
Practice Facilitator 2 (with feedback)	20
Practice Facilitator 3 (with feedback)	20
Practice Facilitator 4 (with feedback)	20
Personal Planning: Personal Keeps and Improves for the Year	20

Warm Up:

1. Check in with the group to assess reaction to material presented in the large group. Provide some time to clarify questions and urge participants to reflect on when and where they have used some of the skills presented in their lives.
2. Explain that the purpose of the session is to practice facilitation skills that are used in formal and informal conversations (discussions and meetings). Have them keep in mind some of the strategies presented in the large group.
3. Present the topics for today's practice. You may want to develop some of your own topics. Keep in mind that the topic should be appropriate and it must be agreed upon, decided, and/or discussed so that everyone in the group is involved in the outcome. You may wish to identify several topics to keep the conversation lively and give a total of four facilitators a chance to practice. Topics can include:
 - 5–7 ways to keep romance alive
 - Places to go on vacation
 - Reasons it is important to stay content neutral as a facilitator
 - Criteria for an MLK Day service project
 - How to spend \$1,000
 - Others (as appropriate)
5. After reviewing the practice agenda and explaining the process for practice facilitation, explain the feedback cycle. Make sure to set the context for how to give feedback. It is especially important to keep feedback positive and constructive. This helps create a safe and thriving learning environment.

The Activity:

The first step to implementing this activity is to walk through the roles and step-by-step process as outlined in Handouts 14 and 15. This is a complex process with many concepts that may be new to the group, and the practice facilitators will need to keep much of it in their heads while they are on their feet. One way to present this overview is by having a dry run with the group leaders serving as facilitators. Each time the group leader arrives at a new technique or step in the process, she or he will step outside the facilitator role for a moment and provide explanation. You may wish to have the group members read along with their handouts during the dry run.

The second step to implementing this activity is to prepare the practice facilitators.

1. Coach the practice facilitators on some of the strategies they will use to facilitate the conversation. Ask them if they would like to work on a specific strategy and would like feedback specific to that skill.
2. Ask facilitators to present the topic as if they were a team leader and the topic has come up. To apply the neutrality strategy, they will want to let the group know that they are not invested in the outcome and that their role is to facilitate the discussion so that the group can have a healthy discussion and come to a shared agreement.
3. Ask the group to reflect on their facilitation skills. What skills do they use/have that they are most proud of? What areas would they like to work on? Have them reflect on these questions

in their journals. For those that like structure, recommend that they map out their own personal Keep and Improve as demonstrated in the closing from the night before.

The next segment begins with a clarification of any questions about the facilitation model. The segment will include an explanation of the roles of a facilitator and recorder. The feedback cycle will also be used. The roles for the practice session include Facilitator and Recorder, as outlined in Facilitation Handout 14. Among the remaining participants, the group will include a Time Keeper.

Here is an agenda for this segment, designed to last 2 hours and 10 minutes:

TOPIC	TIME (min.)
Review Meeting Roles, Tools & the Feedback Model	10
Practice Agenda #1	55
Break	15
Practice Agenda #2	55

The materials you will need for this segment include Facilitation Handouts 13 (Feedback Cycle), 14 (Facilitator and Recorder Roles), and 15 (Practice Agenda). You may want to write the information from these handouts on chart paper so the group can reference the information during the session. Post the role chart pack sheets in places in the room where the role players can see them. In other words, hang the “Facilitator” role chart pack sheet in the back of the room where the Facilitator can see it.

The better you prepare the practice facilitators, the greater their chance for success and productive learning.

Once the first round of volunteer facilitators has been recruited, you are ready to begin.

1. Give an overview of the facilitator role:
 - Make sure that the facilitator has a clear understanding of the agenda.
 - Remind the facilitator that he/she will need to review the agenda (again) to the whole group.
 - Encourage the facilitator to be very thorough with the review; ask them to review a few key role functions of a facilitator as part of their introduction.
 - Remind the facilitator to take a moment before beginning the meeting and check in with the recorder.

2. Provide an overview of the recorder role:
 - Ask recorders if they understand their role.
 - Remind them that they will be receiving feedback at the end of their practice and make sure it is okay.

- Have them introduce themselves to the group and review a few key role functions.
 - Remind the recorders to take a moment and check in with the facilitators before they begin.
3. Explain feedback:
- Thank the volunteers and ask them to sit down.
 - Quickly review the feedback cycle.
 - Remind people to address their feedback to the person.
 - Don't let the person or group members focus on the things they would do differently—the negatives; remember that the volunteer can only state **one thing** that they would change.
4. Give an overview of the second round facilitator and recorder:
- The second round facilitator and recorder will pick up where the first volunteers left off. However, the process for the second round crew is more challenging.
 - Make sure to have the second round facilitator review the overall agenda again before covering new ground.

Wrap Up:

When the activities are complete, bring the small groups back together and spend a few minutes reflecting on what happened throughout the day, what the participants will take away from the experience, and what can be improved in the future.

FACILITATION HANDOUT 1: Skills

What is facilitation?

Facilitation is a way of providing leadership without taking control. The facilitator bridges ideas and perspectives in order to help a group work together effectively and assume responsibility for their own actions and decisions.

When are we facilitating?

As a facilitator you may be asked to design and lead a variety of interactions. Any interaction, formal or informal, can be seen as a “meeting” in need of a facilitator. Some examples of meetings are:

- A priority setting meeting
- A strategic planning meeting
- A team building session
- A focus group
- A meeting to share feedback and improve performance
- A problem solving or conflict resolution meeting

What does an effective facilitator do?

- Moves a group forward toward its objectives
- Helps members assess their needs and create plans to meet them
- Provides a process to help make high-quality decisions and use time effectively
- Uses consensus to make all members feel included and that their opinions are important
- Helps the group communicate effectively by encouraging active listening and understanding
- Teaches and empowers others to share responsibility
- Fosters an environment where members enjoy working together and where they are working to attain common goals

Facilitation Handout 2: First Practice

To begin to understand what a facilitator must do, practice by having a difficult discussion between two people with a third person as the facilitator.

Person A – For the Issue

Person B – Against the Issue

Person C – The Facilitator

Sample issues: Pay raises for teachers, mandatory community service in high schools, 12-month school year, lowering the drinking age, making cigarettes illegal, etc.

Topic: _____

What did the facilitator do to make the discussion easier?

-
-
-

What else would you have done if you were the facilitator?

-
-
-

What are some general practices of an effective facilitator?

-
-
-

Facilitation Handout 4: Remain Content Neutral

Your job as a facilitator is to focus on the process you are leading and avoid the temptation of offering opinions about the topic being discussed. You should use questions and suggestions to move the process along, but you should never impose your opinion on the group.

Differentiating Between Process and Content

The content of any meeting is what is being discussed. The content is where the energy of the participants should be directed. It is the verbal portion of the meeting and consumes the attention of the participants.

The process is the method, procedure, format, and tools used to achieve the goals of the meeting. The process includes the environment, the dynamics, and the style of interaction. The process is silent and often unnoticed by the participants. The process is the primary responsibility of the facilitator.

Content – The <i>What</i>	Process – The <i>How</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The subject being discussed • The task at hand • The problem being solved • The items on the agenda • The goal of the meeting • The decision needing to be made 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The agreements and expectations • The climate and the environment • The tools being used • The way the group works together • The flow of the agenda • The way the meeting is kept on track

One of the toughest challenges as a facilitator is to remain content neutral when you think the group is making a poor decision. You know it is your job to focus on the process and leave the content and the decisionmaking to the group, but you don't want the group to reach a dead end or fail. There are things that you can do to give direction to the conversation without compromising your neutral role.

What are some tips to help you remain neutral?

Ask Questions. If you have a good idea that you think might help the group, you don't need to withhold it. Instead, offer the idea in the form of a question. For example, you can ask "What are the benefits of renting vans as a interim strategy to deal with the transportation problem?" The group can then consider your proposal and accept it or reject it as they choose. You have maintained your neutrality because you have merely offered a suggestion in the form of a question. You did not tell the group what to do. They have the final say.

Offer Suggestions. Sometimes you may have a good idea and posing it as a question will not make a strong impact. In this case you may want ask the group to consider a suggestion from you. For example, you might say, "You could always think about renting vans temporarily until your new budget has been approved." This suggestion is still facilitative if you make it sound like an

offer, not an order. As long as the members have the decisionmaking power, you have merely offered another suggestion.

Take Off the Facilitator's Hat. If the group has not taken any of your gentle hints and you truly believe they are about to make a serious mistake, you may need to ask permission to step out of your facilitative role to offer advice. You might say: "I need to step out of the role of facilitator for a minute and point out that renting vans is three times more cost-effective than buying them and then not needing them later if your plans change." This role shift is only legitimate if you believe the group is in grave danger of making a major mistake and you absolutely have to help them out. Be careful—a facilitator who shifts out of his or her role often causes confusion and mistrust.

FACILITATION HANDOUT 5: Listen Actively

Listening carefully to the verbal and nonverbal communication of your group allows you to better understand the situation. It also helps create an environment of trust and mutual understanding. Good listening skills are central to good communication and relatively easy to master. However, good listening skills do not always come naturally.

To do:

- Be calm and patient
- Do not assume you know what the speaker thinks and feels—listen
- Show warmth through facial expressions and voice
- Demonstrate you are listening by restating the strongest feelings and most important issues
- Ask open-ended questions (one at a time)
- Pay close attention to the person and what he or she is saying
- Acknowledge you are listening by nodding, smiling, and bridging the ideas of other group members
- Hold and move your body in ways that acknowledge that you are listening to the person

To avoid:

- Don't be designing and preparing your next comment
- Don't judge until after you have heard and evaluated the entire content of the message
- Don't try to identify with other people; it will tempt you to launch into your story before they finish theirs
- Don't try to be a great problem solver by advising; just listen—you may miss something if you are searching for the right advice
- Don't placate the speaker by always saying: "Right"... "I know"... "Absolutely"
- Don't dream about other things while someone is speaking; it is easy to pretend you are listening while you are drifting in and out of your fantasies, but it is apparent to the group members

FACILITATION HANDOUT 6

Active Listening Exercise

1. In pairs, listen to one another complete the sentence: “What I need for men/women to be my ally is for ...”
2. Repeat verbatim what your partner said.

What happened?

Why?

What does this teach you about active listening?

FACILITATION HANDOUT 7

Asking Clarifying Questions

The importance of knowing how and when to ask the great probing questions cannot be stressed enough. Effective questioning is the key to effective facilitation. Questions invite participation and get people thinking about the issues from a different perspective. Questions are essential to stimulating a good conversation and for getting feedback from participants.

There are two basic types of questions:

1. Open Ended
2. Closed Ended

Type of Question	Description	Example
Closed Ended	Requires a one-word answer. Closes off discussion. Usually begins with “is,” “can,” “how many,” or “does.”	“Does everyone understand all of the expectations we have just listed?”
Open Ended	Requires more than a “yes” or “no” answer. Stimulates thinking. Usually begins with “what,” “how,” “when,” or “why.”	“What are some of the things that you expect to get out of this meeting?”

FACILITATION HANDOUT 9

Asking Clarifying Questions, Part 2

When selecting questions to ask, there is a broad range you can choose from. It is important to understand how each of these types of questions achieves a different type of outcome for a different purpose.

Type of Question	Description	Example
Fact-Finding Questions	<p>Targeted at verifiable data such as who, what, where, when, how, and how much.</p> <p>Use them to gather information about the current situation.</p>	<p>“What is the new organizational structure of your organization?”</p> <p>“How many days of training has your team received this year?”</p>
Feeling-Finding Questions	<p>Ask subjective information that gets at opinions, feelings, values, and beliefs.</p> <p>They help you understand views, beliefs, and culture.</p>	<p>“How do you feel about the effectiveness of the new organizational structure?”</p> <p>“Do you think your team is prepared?”</p>
Tell-Me-More Questions	<p>Help you get more information.</p> <p>Encourage the participants to provide more details.</p>	<p>“Tell me more?”</p> <p>“Can you elaborate on that?”</p> <p>“Can you be more specific?”</p>
Best/Least Questions	<p>Help you understand potential opportunities in the present situation.</p> <p>Let you test the limits of the participants’ needs and wants.</p>	<p>“What is the best thing about the new organizational structure?”</p> <p>“What was the worst part of the training you received?”</p>
Third-Party Questions	<p>Help uncover thoughts in an indirect manner.</p> <p>Are designed to help people express opinions on sensitive issues.</p>	<p>“There is a concern that new organizational structures often create fear and distrust in an organization. Can you relate to that?”</p> <p>“People are more likely to fail when they have not been trained properly. How does that sound to you?”</p>
“Magic Word” Questions	<p>Let you explore people’s true desires.</p> <p>Are useful in removing temporary obstacles from a person’s mind.</p>	<p>“If time and money were no obstacle, what type of training would you design for your team?”</p>

FACILITATION HANDOUT 10

Staying on Track

Staying on track is thinking strategically about your group and how you want to navigate them through the process. Where is the group now? Where does it need to go? What tools will you use to keep the group on topic and to help them reach their goals?

I. Opening Meetings

a. Set the Context

What is the context, or environment, in which this meeting is taking place? What issue brought the meeting to life? Who are the people at the meeting and why have they come? What happened at the last meeting? This is a time for the facilitator to bring everyone at the meeting to the “same page.”

b. Introduce Your Role

Who are you? Why are you here? What role will you be playing? Who will be recording? What are you going to be doing and what do you expect from the group members during the meeting?

c. Introduction of the Group Members

Have each group member introduce him or herself if the group is a manageable size. Have the group members “check-in.” Consider doing this by asking the participants to share one word about why they are here or how they feel about being here. This will help you gauge the group and give you a general idea of who is in the group.

d. Review the Objectives, Agenda, and Timeframe for the Meeting

What is the purpose of this meeting? What will be covered during this meeting? Who will be responsible for each part of the agenda? How long will this meeting be? How long will be spent on each item? Will everyone be here for the entire meeting?

e. Explain the Process

What process and tools will you be using to lead the group? How will decisions be made? How will ideas be generated?

f. Generate Expectations and Agreements

What does the group expect to accomplish by the end of the meeting? What agreements would the group members like to make in order to reach the expectations?

g. Explain Logistics

Where are the bathrooms, water fountain, food, phones, etc.?

h. Seek Understanding and Agreement

Does everyone understand and agree to what has been proposed? Are there any questions or comments before beginning?

II. Leading the Meeting

The desired end result of the meeting, the sensitivity of the topic at hand, and the culture of the group should determine the way that you decide to lead the core of the meeting. The following are ideas to lead a group according to what is best for the group.

i. Brainstorming

Have your group come up with as many ideas as possible before they begin critiquing the ideas. Make sure to let the group know that any idea is a good idea. Set up the group to be able to safely generate ideas.

j. Small Group Dialogue and Reporting-Out

Ask your group to break into smaller groups to discuss a topic. Each group will report the highlights of their discussion to the larger group. The small groups can range from two to eight people. Small-group discussion is often more effective and inclusive, especially for those who do not like to speak out in a large group.

k. Silent Reflection

Have each group member silently write and think about the idea proposed before the group begins brainstorming. Allowing a few minutes for silent reflection gives the more introverted thinkers time to get their thoughts together.

l. Hat Drawing

Have each group member place an idea or concern into a hat. The facilitator can read the ideas or they can be redistributed among the group members to be read. This also works with Post-it notes on a wall or poster.

m. Role Playing

Ask the group members to practice a new skill or exhibit differing points of view through play-acting different roles.

III. Closing the Meeting

Thinking strategically about how you can close a meeting to complete it on an evaluative and reflective note. It can leave the group members feeling they have accomplished something and it can bond the group.

n. Reflection Tools

Key Learnings. What are the “ah-has” from this discussion or meeting? Have your group share their learnings verbally. It sometimes helps to have them share first in pairs.

Journal Writing. Have members silently reflect on the day.

Group Reflection. Ask the group to reflect as a whole. Ask participants to say a word or create a picture to describe what the experience was like for each of them.

o. Tools for Evaluation

Individual Written Evaluations. Conduct a formal written evaluation with questions that include space to comment on each part of the meeting.

Group Verbal Evaluation. Conduct a large group feedback session by asking the group members to identify verbally with parts of the meeting that worked and parts that need improvement (also known as Plus/Deltas and Plus/Wishes).

Thumbs-Up/Thumbs-Down Evaluation. Ask the group to evaluate the meeting by casually rating it with their thumbs. This can also be done numerically with fingers.

Anonymous Suggestion Box. Place a box in the room and invite feedback.

PARTICIPANT THEORY HANDOUT 12

Giving and Receiving Feedback

When Giving Feedback:

Take responsibility for your role in the feedback process

- Think about what you say and how you say it.
- Think about the appropriate place and time to be giving feedback.
- Listen for clues and pay close attention so your feedback is appropriate.

Protect the person's self-esteem—this is a chance for them to grow

- Use specific examples when giving feedback. Don't generalize.
- Focus on the future. Tell them what you would like to see differently next time, not what they did wrong.
- Demonstrate that you care. Show empathy and sincerity.
- Model receptive behavior by responding well to the feedback you receive.

When Receiving Feedback:

Know your needs

- Do you have the ability to hear the feedback? Are you in a safe place?
- Do you need time to process the feedback before you respond to it?
- Do you need to see things in writing?
- Are the people giving you feedback aware of your boundaries? Is there a process with parameters?

PARTICIPANT THEORY HANDOUT 13

The Feedback Cycle Process

The feedback cycle is a process that a person goes through in order to gain valuable advice and comments on his or her performance. The feedback cycle is a safe way to improve skills and receive feedback.

Two questions are the foundation of the feedback cycle:

1. What did you like?
2. What would you do differently next time?

What worked? What did you like?	What would you do differently next time? What improvements can be made?
1. The group leader asks the person who has practiced a skill to state one or two things that s/he did well.	4. Return to the person who has practiced a skill and ask the person to state ONE thing s/he would do differently next time.
2. The group leader asks the group to share a few things they noticed the person doing well.	5. Ask the group for some feedback on some things the person might do differently next time.
3. The group leader gives her/his own feedback about what went well.	6. The facilitator gives ONE thoughtful comment on an improvement that can be made.
7. Always end on a positive note by offering a positive comment and thanking the person who practiced in front of the group.	

FACILITATION HANDOUT 14

Roles

The Facilitator

Responsibilities:

- To remain content neutral by not contributing, judging, or evaluating the ideas generated by the group
- To listen actively to all group members
- To seek agreement and understanding among group members by speaking effectively
- To navigate the way by guiding the process toward desired outcomes
- To seek involvement and participation from everyone
- To help ensure group agreements and time specifications

Introduction:

“I am here to help you reach the goals you set out to reach at this meeting and to help you get through your agenda. I will remain content neutral and not contribute any ideas without your permission to step out of my role. I will make process suggestions and be as helpful as I can. Please feel free to give me feedback if you would like. I am here for you.”

If you are the facilitator:

- Make sure you have a clear understanding of the agenda
- Remember that you will need to review the agenda (again) to the whole group as part of their agenda review
- Practice thoroughness with the review; as part of the introduction, ask them to review a few key role functions of a facilitator
- Remember to take a moment before beginning the meeting and check in with the recorder

The Recorder

Responsibilities:

- To remain content neutral and not participate in the meeting
- To create a visible, written record of the meeting

- To write down the group's ideas by using direct quotes and not paraphrasing without permission
- To ask the group to slow down if he or she needs more time

Introduction:

“I am here to record what will be taking place at this meeting. I will not contribute my own ideas without first asking permission to step out of my role. Please let me know if I miss something you said or incorrectly write something. This is your meeting. I am here to help you.”

If you are the recorder:

- Make sure you understand your role.
- Remember that you will be receiving feedback at the end of the practice and make sure it is okay
- Remember to introduce yourself to the group and review a few key role functions
- Remember to take a moment and check in with the facilitator before you begin

The Group Member

Responsibilities:

- To contribute ideas
- To be open and honest with concerns
- To actively listen to others
- To commit to following the process and working by the agreements

From: How to Make Meetings Work by Michael Doyle and David Straus, Jove Books, New York, New York, 1982.

FACILITATION HANDOUT 15

Step-by-Step Model

Brainstorm

Guidelines:

- All ideas are good ideas
- Defer judgment and evaluation
- Use others' ideas to generate more ideas

Purpose:

- To get the group into a creative space
- To create as many ideas as possible
- To generate many ideas in a short time frame

How to Set Up:

“First, we are going to generate as many ideas as possible. All ideas are equal at this stage. There are no bad ideas.”

“Let’s try to generate at least 30 ideas in the next 20 minutes.”

Clarify

Guidelines:

Read through each idea to make sure the participants have a shared understanding of the idea

Purpose:

To make sure all of the participants understand each of the ideas before they are asked to make decisions or evaluate the idea

How to Set Up:

“Please read through the list. This is the time to ask questions or get clarification on any of the ideas you are unsure about.”

“Do we need to clarify any of these?”

Combine Similar Ideas

Purpose:

To make sure there is no duplication

To group similar ideas together to make the evaluation and decision- making process easier

How to Set Up:

“Are any of these ideas similar enough that they should be combined or grouped together?”

“Are there any duplicate ideas up here? Can we agree to have only one of those ideas on the list?”

Prioritize (N/3)

Guidelines:

Count the number of ideas

Divide the total number of ideas by 3

The remainder is the number of votes per participant

Purpose:

To get an idea of what ideas the group senses are important to consider without making a final decision

How to Set Up:

“Let’s try and see which ideas the group finds important to explore. There are 12 ideas up here. Twelve divided by 3 is 4. So, each of you will have 4 votes.”

“OK, how many of you are in support of alternative A?”

Negative Poll

Purpose:

To be able to focus on the alternatives that the group finds to have the highest priority by eliminating those which have the lowest priority

To reach a quick agreement between a few alternatives

How to Set Up:

“It looks like there is a natural breaking point at the ideas with three votes each. Is anyone opposed to focusing on the ideas with three or more votes?”

“Is anyone opposed to taking ideas D and H off of the list?”

Finding a Solution

Purpose:

To facilitate negotiation regarding the ideas

To facilitate the sharing of different views

To avoid a situation that is either/or or win/lose

How to Set Up:

“Can anyone see a way to combine ideas A and B to come to an agreement that everyone would be comfortable with?”

“What is a creative way that would make it work for everyone?”

“Do we need to choose between these two ideas? Or can we try both?”

From: *How to Make Meeting Work* by Michael Doyle and David Straus, Jove Books, New York, New York, 1982.

FACILITATION HANDOUT 16

Recording Skills

Having a skilled recorder document the meeting is very important to the success of the meeting and the success of the work of the group. The following are some tips to assist recorders in making posters and charts that are easily read and understood.

Recording Tips:

Title your posters

Alternate earth tones (green, blue, purple, brown, black)

Highlight with light colors (red, pink, yellow, orange)

Use bullets instead of numbering (*, ●)

Use abbreviations (like ppl, grps, ldrs, hp)

Use symbols for words like money (\$), up (↑), down (↓)

Use spacing (white space) between items

FACILITATION HANDOUT 17

Practice Agenda

WHAT	HOW	WHO	WHEN
Set Up <input type="checkbox"/> Roles <input type="checkbox"/> Context <input type="checkbox"/> Desired Outcomes <input type="checkbox"/> Agenda	<input type="checkbox"/> Present <input type="checkbox"/> Clarify <input type="checkbox"/> Check for Agreement	Practice Facilitator #1	5 min.
List of the top 5–7 Ways to Keep Romance Alive*	<input type="checkbox"/> Brainstorm <input type="checkbox"/> Clarify <input type="checkbox"/> Eliminate Duplicates	Practice Facilitator #1	15 min.
FEEDBACK TO PRACTICE FACILITATOR #1 AND RECORDER #1	Feedback Model	Group Leader	5 min.
Continue... List of the top 5–7 Ways to Keep Romance Alive*	<input type="checkbox"/> Prioritize (N/3) <input type="checkbox"/> Low/High <input type="checkbox"/> Check for Consensus	Practice Facilitator #2	20 min.
Meeting Evaluation	<input type="checkbox"/> Keep/Improve	Practice Facilitator #2	5 min.
FEEDBACK TO PRACTICE FACILITATOR #2 AND RECORDER #2		Group Leader	5 min.

*Other topics can include five to seven “Things that make a good movie,” etc.