

PEER FACILITATION

2021



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BHUTAN CENTRE
for MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY

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Peer Facilitation Guidebook

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PEER FACILITATION GUIDE

This Peer Facilitation Guide is a resource for youths interested in **GUIDING THE LEARNING** journey of their peers while also building their own leadership and **FACILITATION** skills. Departing from the traditional model of learning where learning happens in a single direction with the ‘teacher’ at the front and the ‘learner’ passively absorbing information, this guide employs a dynamic **PARTICIPATORY, INCLUSIVE** and **LEARNING-BY-DOING** approach.

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WHAT CAN YOU GAIN FROM THIS GUIDE?

This guide will make you aware of the three main aspects of facilitation so that you are able to balance them as you facilitate your sessions/programmes. You will become cognizant not only of the **TECHNICAL** aspect of facilitation but also learn applicable **INTERPERSONAL SKILLS** and strategies to achieve your **OUTCOME**.



Additionally, you will also be able to understand and communicate clearly, how groups are formed and how to lead the participants through the various stages as they go from being complete strangers to developing strong relationships through mutual learning and experience sharing.





Finally, you will be able to realise the different ways in which people learn so that you can facilitate an empowering space where everyone feels included; to make this happen, this guide will provide you with practical strategies and tips that you can use during facilitation to maximise the learning and fulfill your goals/objectives.

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BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER!
...STEP BY STEP.

WHY FACILITATE?

Think of a moment in your life when you were unable to come to an agreement or compromise with someone else or a group of people. This could be anything from a disagreement with your sibling about who should wash the dishes at home to other more complicated matters such as a school's policy on corporal punishment.

For example, a parent might consider corporal punishment to be a straightforward issue and be strongly opposed to it. On the other hand, for a teacher who holds deeply entrenched beliefs about discipline, corporal punishment can be seen as absolutely essential in creating well behaved students. In such situations, an observer will quickly find out how difficult it is to conduct a productive and sustained discussion.



Their different viewpoints make it hard to come to agreement or even simply communicate with each other successfully. This is where they must rely on a neutral third party, i.e. a **FACILITATOR**.

This facilitator will make the process of communication much more effective by building a shared framework of understanding and integrating various perspectives of the members to come to a solution that the members can agree on. The facilitator creates a space through innovative methods where everybody not only feels heard and respected but has fun while solving problems.

WHAT A FACILITATOR IS NOT

Oftentimes, when we are introduced to new ways of thinking and behaving, we have some challenge in understanding it. In these situations it helps us to compare it against concepts that we already know and take note of the differences. First, let us understand what a facilitator is not.

A facilitator is:



Okay! Now that we have a good understanding of who a facilitator is not, let's move on to see **WHO A FACILITATOR** is.

WHO IS A FACILITATOR?

A facilitator is someone who is **EMOTIONALLY MATURE** and helps fellow youth to do their **BEST THINKING** so that group members are empowered to search for **INCLUSIVE** solutions and ideas.

S/he does this by creating a **SAFE SPACE** where all members of the group feel encouraged to share and participate. This becomes possible because the facilitator asks questions and listens to the responses with an **OPEN MIND** and **HEART** while staying **NEUTRAL** to the content of discussion.





S/HE HELPS MEMBERS SEE THAT THINKING FROM EACH OTHERS POINTS OF VIEW IS VALUABLE



S/HE IS APPROACHABLE AND HELPFUL



S/HE IS NON-JUDGMENTAL



S/HE DOES NOT GIVE WRONG INFORMATION



S/HE RESPECTS DIVERSITY



S/HE MAINTAINS CONFIDENTIALITY OF SENSITIVE INFORMATION



S/HE IS FAIR



S/HE LEADS BY EXAMPLE

P R O C E S S



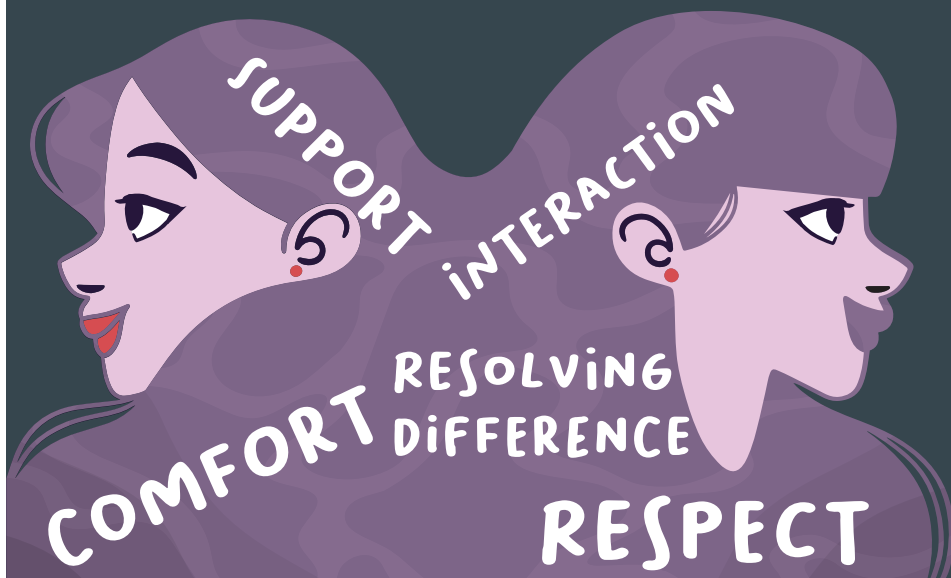
This relates to the technical/logistical aspect of facilitation that needs to be in place for any programme to run smoothly; Here are some questions that will help you stay prepared:

DO THE SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES/SESSIONS CONNECT AND BUILD ON EACH OTHER TO DEEPEN LEARNING?

**DOES EACH SESSION HAVE ADEQUATE TIME TO ACHIEVE ITS OBJECTIVE?
HOW WILL I MANAGE TIME SO THAT THE SESSIONS RUN SMOOTHLY AND NOT TAKE AWAY TIME FROM THE NEXT SESSIONS?**

HOW DO I MANAGE THE ENERGY LEVEL OF THE ROOM SO THAT PARTICIPANTS AREN'T DOZING OFF TO SLEEP OR BORED?

RELATIONSHIPS



This relates to the 'human' element of facilitation which is indispensable. The connection between a comfortable, respectful space created by good relations between participants and their learning should not be underestimated. Here are some considerations to bear in mind:

ARE THE PARTICIPANTS COMFORTABLE WITH EACH OTHER **AND THE FACILITATOR**? OR IS THERE STILL SOME AWKWARDNESS IN THE ROOM?

HOW COMFORTABLE ARE THE PARTICIPANTS INTERACTING WITH NOT JUST THEIR SMALL GROUP OF FRIENDS, BUT WITH ANY OTHER PARTICIPANT WITHIN THE ROOM?

DO PARTICIPANTS RESPECT EACH OTHERS' OPINIONS AND IDEAS? SHOWING SUPPORT WHEN THEY AGREE AND RESOLVING DIFFERENCES AMICABLY?

R E S U L T S



A good facilitator constantly monitors where s/he is in meeting the programme goals and objectives. Based on this knowledge, the facilitator makes necessary adjustments to respond to the particular context and ensures that the goals and objectives are met. The facilitator must always bear these questions at the back of their mind:

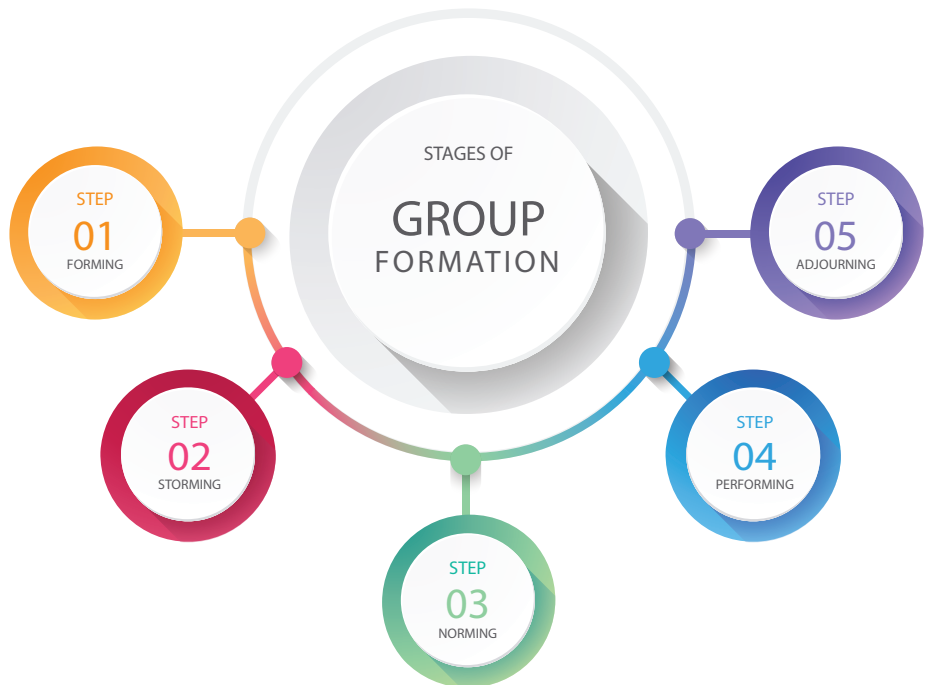
AM I CLEAR ON THE OUTPUT OF THE SESSION/PROGRAMME?

DO I HAVE WAYS TO MONITOR IF WE ARE ON TRACK IN ACHIEVING THE GOALS & OBJECTIVES?

HOW WILL I CORRECT MY APPROACH IF IN CASE THE LEARNING OUTCOMES ≥KNOWLEDGE, SKILLS AND VALUES≤ ARE UNLIKELY TO BE MET?

STAGES OF GROUP FORMATION

Think back to a time when you have been part of a group where you didn't know most of the other people. You were probably nervous, uncomfortable and had to give too much thought to simple considerations like where you would sit. However over time, not only did you become familiar with the people around you but also challenged your comfort zone.



In the context of facilitation, the transition from the initial moments when participants don't know each other to the moments when they have to depart can be broken down into distinct stages. This helps us as facilitators identify which stage the group is at, so that relevant approaches and tools can be utilised to ensure that the group is doing the best they can. However, this doesn't mean that all groups will follow a linear stage. It is important to recognise that groups can regress and conflicts can arise at any stage, and that the energy level can drop. An expert facilitator can “feel the pulse” of the group and respond accordingly.

1. FORMING

This stage can be characterised by:

- High levels of nervousness
- Overly polite and pleasant
- Some excited and some anxious due to lack of clarity as to what they will be doing

As such your role as a facilitator should be to:

- Help establish clear goals and expectations
- Help discover division of roles within the members
- Help participants get to know each other's stories, life experiences and interests



2. STORMING

This is the most difficult stage and can be characterised by:

- Conflict and competition among the members
- Unclear communication between team members
- Clashes in working styles and interpersonal relations
- Disagreements on goals, approaches and objectives
- Formation of sub-groups and cliques

As such you should be:

- Specific and remind the members on the goals
- Remain positive and inspire resilience
- Ensure that you don't overwhelm or overload
- Model behaviors that support the team members and help them support each other





3. NORMING

This stage is characterised through the following:

- Members begin to resolve their differences
- They appreciate each other's strengths
- Sense of unity and cohesion
- Work functionally towards the same end goal

As such your role as a facilitator should be:

- Encourage and provide positive feedback
- Step back and allow the team to take responsibility and become self-directed
- Utilize team building exercises to strengthen unity and trust between the team members.



4. PERFORMING

This stage is characterised by:

- Clear and stable structures in relationships
- Team is matured, organised and has a sense of consensus and cooperation
- Although problems arise, they are dealt with effectively and efficiently
- The team is performing at its highest level

As such you should be:

- Delegating most of the work to the group
- Focus on developing the individual team members
- Taking a minimal role as compared to all the other stages



5. ADJOURNING

This stage is characterised by:

- The end of the project or programme
- Emotional for some due to the interpersonal relationships that have taken root
- Anxiety for the future outside the team

As such you should:

- Allow room and space for celebrations
- Facilitate reflections as to what went well and what could be improved
- Provide closure to the members and help chart their future path



Source: Five stages of team development by Bruce Wayne Tuckman & Mary Ann Jensen, 1977



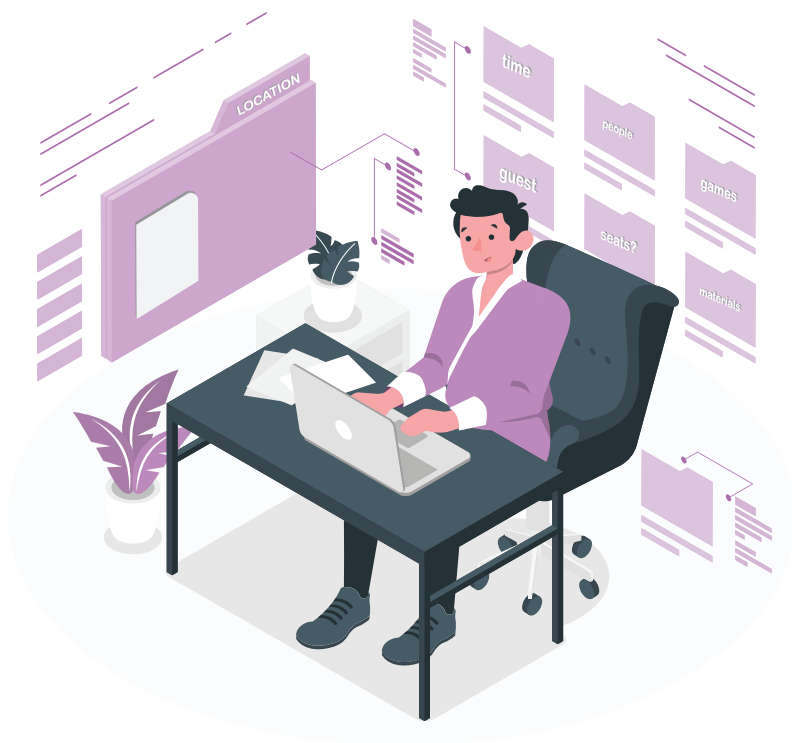
BRINGING IT ALL TOGETHER!

S T E P B Y S T E P



1. PREPARE YOURSELF

Fortune favors the prepared! It is worth dedicating enough time for session preparation so that you don't miss out anything important. Ask yourself the following questions:





CHECK LIST

☐

What will the space look like (shape of the room, movability of the chairs, spaces to display presentation, space for group activities, etc.)?

☐

What materials do you need (flipchart, markers, camera for recording, etc.)?

☐

How many participants will be present?

☐

What do I know about the participants (background information on education level, rural/urban towns etc.)?

☐

Does the group need to do pre-work before meeting (registration, readings, email reminders, etc.)?

☐

How long do you have to run the session for?

☐

What is the programme objective/desired outcome?

☐

What will success look like?

NOTES:

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2. CREATE A SAFE & EMPOWERING SPACE

the power in space

If you are able to create an atmosphere where everyone feels heard and people's views are acknowledged you have already built a strong foundation on which learning can happen!

First and foremost is the *power in space*.

Okay, think about someone who is powerful and inspires fear in others. Is s/he standing or sitting? Is s/he in front of you, beside you or behind you?

Most people imagine the person standing in front of them. This is because someone who is in front of others or standing, indicates that the power lies with them. Since facilitators strive to create an open, comfortable and encouraging space, they usually sit with participants instead of separating from them as much as possible.



Second part is **RESPECTFULNESS**, it is important that the facilitator as well as each participant are respectful toward each other. What does it mean to be respectful? What kind of behaviour demonstrates that? This is where co-created rules come into the picture. Here, co-created means not necessarily starting from scratch but gaining consensus/support from participants.

EXAMPLE OF CO-CREATED RULES:

It is only one person who speaks at any given time (no interruptions, no side conversations).

We don't offend anyone or laugh at their opinions/appearance, etc.

Switching mobile phones to silent mode and avoid using them during the session.



HAVE YOU WONDERED ABOUT THE VALUE OF CO-CREATING RULES?

Giving participants the space to suggest rules sends out the message that their views matter and it is safe for them to express themselves. Once they contribute a rule, they also share the responsibility of following the rule. Co-created rules make better sense to all.

Communicating with participants about the length of the session (even though this might be agreed on in advance) and deciding on the breaks can help in regulating participants' full attention towards the session. Always try to be adaptable to the needs of the group.

IMPORTANT

“When laying out chairs and tables for the facilitation, consider what would help participants feel more equal and comfortable. Below are some tried and tested seating arrangements that work!”

3. KNOW YOUR GROUP & LET THEM KNOW YOU

Create a friendly atmosphere. Everybody comes from a different background with different thoughts and expectations. At this first stage i.e. forming stage, short common exercises such as name games, icebreakers or energisers will help you to get everyone on the same page. A warm, friendly environment will take time at the beginning, but it will accelerate the group's progress towards the performing stage. This way, it saves a lot of time later on and participants genuinely enjoy the sessions.

Never underestimate the power of names! In a group, this quickly lets your participants know that you not only 'know' them individually but the foundation for trust is laid. Always take the time to know the names of the participants in your group; everyone if possible.



THE HEAD, HEART & HANDS





4. TRIGGERING THE HEAD, HEART & HANDS

Many researchers believe that quality education and successful education reforms can be achieved by integrating all three domains of learning: cognitive (head), affective (heart) and psychomotor (hands). When participants are encouraged to use their head, heart and hand during the session, their experience will be more memorable and the energy level of the group will stay optimal. That is why it is important to have activities in a balanced way. It is also a way of letting people know that you're paying attention to their thoughts, emotions and actions.



HEART :



Learning is not only a mental process, but it is also influenced by our feelings. Emotions stimulate our learning and determine whether we are confident. Sometimes people will feel things before they really know or understand them, so being alert to people's feelings is valuable for a facilitator. Are they excited? Frustrated? Hesitant? Ask them how they are feeling. Use activities which involve emotions and team building (Look at “Take a stand” or “River of life” exercise)

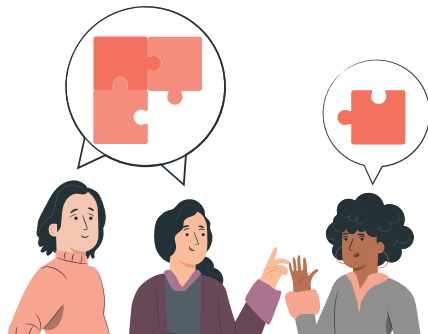
“Heart” also represents the values that are inherent in any kind of learning or social interaction. When discussions on a topic or issue is facilitated in a way that tugs at the hearts’ strings, more profound and enduring learning ensues.

FOR HEAD:



The head stores all processes that allow us to understand the world and form judgments about certain things. It is determined by knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation.

One of the important tasks as a facilitator is to encourage participants to open up their mind to the novel and different ideas that sometimes may challenge their own perspectives and notions about things in life.



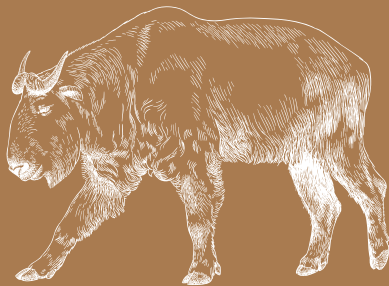
FOR HANDS:



Did you know that the part of the brain that processes movement is the very same part that processes learning? You as a facilitator can design activities that allow physical movement. “Hands” also indicate action and application. Activities such as group discussion, presentation, quiz, quick research and projects that allow application of the concepts and skills make learning more fun and effective.

There once lived five blind men in a village. One day the villagers told them, 'Hey, there is a takin in the village today!' Not having any clue as to what a takin was, they decided, 'Even though we would not be able to see it, let us go and feel it anyway.' All of them went to where the takin was.

Every one of them touched the takin. 'Are you sure it's not a wild-beast' asked the first man, touching the takin's horns. 'Surely, it's a bear!' Said the next, tugging at it's tail. 'I think this is a cow' Said the third man, sizing the takin to himself. 'This feels like a moose to me' mumbled the fourth man, fondling the face. 'My friend, this is a bison!' Exclaimed the last man, as he ran his hands down the takin's legs.



5. CATERING TO ALL TYPES OF LEARNERS

Do you know of a friend who was a mathematics genius but socially awkward; or the one who had impressive memory but failed miserably in science; or the one who cared least about anything else except poetry and drama. What does this tell you?

Every individual is unique and processes information at their own pace and in their own way. Different styles of learning appeal to different individuals.

How do you learn things the best? Is it by discussion or your own contemplation? By listening to a video or watching a documentary? Or perhaps writing it down?

An effective facilitator is cognizant of using multiple tools and approaches to cater to different learning styles. These different learner types can be categorised into the following seven types, although most of the time everyone is a combination of the types.



7 DIFFERENT TYPES OF LEARNERS



VISUAL LEARNER

Diagrams, charts, processes, shapes, colors, pictures, images



AUDITORY LEARNER

Gravitate towards music, think out loud



LOGICAL/MATHEMATICAL LEARNER

Statistics, precision, formulas



PHYSICAL LEARNER

Movement, hands-on, action-oriented, role plays



VERBAL LEARNER

Speaking and listening, words, texts



SOCIAL/INTERPERSONAL LEARNER

Interaction, conversations, community, collaboration, teamwork



SOLITARY/INTRAPERSONAL LEARNER

Quiet space, reflection, introspection

Source: 'Frames of Mind: The Theory of Multiple Intelligences' by Howard Garnder, 1983



6. FACILITATE

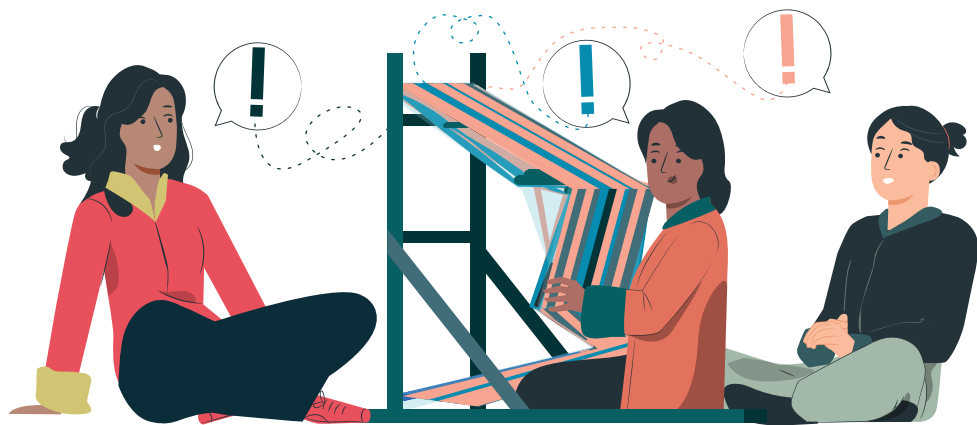
Remember your role is to provide space where everybody is heard and encouraged to explain his/her point of view. In order to do that you need to be present, mindful and listen with your head and your heart open. To listen actively means that the other person not only feels heard but that you understand their point of view.

“Love is the only emotion that enhances our intelligence”

Humberto Maturana

To facilitate means eliciting stories and ideas from participants; distributing the opportunities to speak; introducing and connecting ideas; probing for deeper insights and differing perspectives; mediating group dynamics and making everyone feel safe and included while not forgetting the broad objective of the session.

One danger that novice facilitators often fall prey to is leading a session that is all fun and excitement with no substance. One of the tips to avoid such situations is reminding yourself of the overall objectives as you design the activities. Ask yourself : How does this activity meet the intended objective?



TOOLS WHICH HELP YOU WITH ACTIVE LISTENING

1. MIRRORING

How?

Facilitator repeats the speaker's words verbatim.

"SO, YOU ARE SAYING. ..."

Why?

It helps you confirm what the participant just said. Also, it shows neutrality to a group and helps to establish trust.

2. PARAPHRASING

How?

In your own words, say what you think the participant said.

**"IT SOUNDS LIKE YOU ARE SAYING..."
"LET ME SEE IF I UNDERSTOOD YOU..."**

Why?

Shows the participant that his or her thoughts were heard and understood.

3. TRACKING

How?

Pause the discussion and summarise the discussion so far, checking for accuracy. Then continue the discussion.

**"LET ME SUMMARISE THE DISCUSSION SO FAR. IT SEEMS
THAT THERE ARE THREE TOPICS BEING DISCUSSED..."
"HAVE I GOT IT RIGHT?"**

Why?

Keep track of all the various parts of a discussion in order to help people focus and organise their thoughts.



TOOLS WHICH HELP YOU UNDERSTAND

1. OPEN EXPLORATIVE QUESTIONS

How?

Ask exploratory questions

"HOW SO?" "I HEAR YOU SAYING THIS... NOW, CAN YOU TELL ME MORE?"
"WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY...?"
"CAN YOU GIVE ME AN EXAMPLE?"

Why?

It helps people clarify their ideas and encourages them to express all their thoughts.

2. INTENTIONAL SILENCE

How?

Stay silent, and model behaviour that shows you are comfortable with silence.

Why?

Some people need brief silence to order their thoughts. It can also underline important revelations. However, it could also make the room awkward, so use your judgement here.

.....

TOOLS WHICH HELP YOU FACILITATE

1. SUMMARISING

How?

Use a flipchart to summarise.

Restate the overall topic of the discussion.

"SO WE HAVE BEEN DISCUSSING YOUTH'S PARTICIPATION"
OR

Mention the number of themes that emerged:

"I THINK PEOPLE HERE RAISED THREE THEMES"

INTRODUCE THE NEXT STEP:

"BASED ON THIS DISCUSSION, WE WILL NOW..."

Why?

Help people categorise their thoughts and gain overview. It helps to move on to another topic.



2. STACKING

How?

Ask those who want to speak to raise their hands. Assign a number to each speaker.

"WOULD ALL WHO WANT TO SPEAK RAISE YOUR HANDS?"

"X. YOU ARE FIRST. Y. YOU ARE SECOND. Z. YOU ARE THIRD... WHEN THE LAST PERSON HAS SPOKEN"

"WHO WOULD LIKE TO SPEAK NOW?"

Why?

When a lot of people want to speak at the same time, it helps people take turns in speaking. Increases overall group participation and lessens interruptions and competition for airtime.

3. MAKING SPACE

How?

Keep an eye on the quiet person. Sense if they want to speak, and then invite them to speak. If they decline, do not push them.

"DID YOU WANT TO ADD ANYTHING?"

"WHAT ARE YOUR IDEAS?"

"WHAT DO YOU THINK ABOUT THIS?"

"YOU LOOKED LIKE YOU WANTED TO SAY SOMETHING?"

LET'S LISTEN TO SOMEONE WHO HASN'T SPOKEN YET OR HASN'T GOT THE CHANCE TO SPEAK?

Why?

Every group has people who speak less or need more time to think. Make sure to include everyone in discussion and create an inclusive environment.

4. BALANCING

How?

Offer space for other perspectives to emerge.

"ARE THERE OTHER WAYS OF LOOKING AT THIS ISSUE?"

"DOES EVERYONE ELSE AGREE WITH THIS PERSPECTIVE?"

"OK. WE HAVE HEARD X'S POSITION ON THIS MATTER. DOES ANYONE HAVE A DIFFERENT POSITION?"

Why?

It helps broaden the discussion by including other perspectives.



5. MANAGING GROUP DYNAMICS

One of the recurring challenges during facilitation is dealing with difficult situations and contrasting personalities. How you diffuse tensions and build teams hinges a lot on the tone you set and the space you create as the facilitator.

How?

A warm and welcoming tone goes a long way in creating a safe space for people to engage. Inviting different perspectives and acknowledging differences diffuses tensions between individuals who hold differing positions.

You can try to brainstorm the issue, propose a break/energiser or work in pairs or small groups.

**"LET ME SUMMARIZE WHAT I AM HEARING FROM EACH OF YOU. THERE ARE SOME
DIFFERENCES BUT ALSO SOME SIMILARITIES..."
"HAVE I GOT IT RIGHT?"**

Why?

Also summary of group's differences and common ground can help.

In case of disruptive individual(s), you may need to talk to the person and give feedback on his/her behaviour in private. When giving feedback, it is always good to refrain from judging the person. Instead, describe your observation and explain your feelings. "I feel unpleasant when you act/say..." "I observed that the group is unhappy when you..."

6. DEBRIEF

Make sure that you will keep some time for reflection at the end of each session.

One way to make debrief fun is through a game: (3-2-1)

**3 NEW THINGS I LEARNED TODAY
2 THINGS I ENJOYED
1 QUESTION THAT IS STILL ON MY MIND**

Explain what will be the follow-up (if there is any): What are we going to do next? Who? When?

.....



GOOD TIPS

COMMUNICATION

Follow these guidelines when you give information:

Be **SPECIFIC**

Be **CONCISE**

Use **SIMPLE WORDS**

Be always mindful of your **BEHAVIOUR** like body language, tone of voice, etc. Group has to trust you, respect you and know you can cope with any situation that may arise.

If no one wants to start with communication at the beginning you can go first. In that case you must remember to leave a lot of open space for others to contribute.

TIME MANAGEMENT:

Try to follow a beforehand **AGREED AGENDA** (In case you are behind schedule, co-decide with the group on how to use the remaining time).

Be **FLEXIBLE** (change the time of breaks based on group energy level).

Keep track of the **TIME** and inform participants about the remaining time.

GROUP DYNAMICS:

Pay a lot of attention to **GROUP NON-VERBAL COMMUNICATION** of participants:

Who is **QUIET**?

Who is **SPEAKING** too much?

How are they **REACTING** towards each other?

How are people **FEELING** in the process - are they nervous, bored, enthusiastic, tired?

INTERACTION between participants is very important, since it influences the entire process.

In case of a large group, you may need to consider **BREAKING-DOWN TO SMALLER GROUPS** for some time in order to generate more ideas.

GET CONSENT FROM ALL

If you or someone else is **RECORDING/TAKING PICTURES/COLLECTING INFORMATION** about your participants that will be made public or used where others will be able to see it, it is very important to ensure that you **GET THE PARTICIPANT'S CONSENT.**



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