



Tips for Facilitation – How it’s Done

Facilitation is about helping people express themselves and helping a group hear each other. It is also about moving a group through a process --like an agenda or training-- so they can make decisions and get things done. For example, you could facilitate your Individual Education Plan [IEP] meeting at school. Here are some ideas to get you started.

Ask Questions

You are a facilitator if you are helping a group of people make decisions. A facilitator should not to make decisions *for* a group. Instead, the group should make decisions together.

These are some questions you can ask the group when you are facilitating. This can help the whole group talk about an issue or idea.

- What do people think about this topic?
- What did people think about what “Bob” just said?
- Has anyone had an experience with this topic?
- Why is this important?
- How does this topic relate to_____?

*The next set of questions may be asked to **help the group make a decision:***

- How do people feel/think about this idea?
- What I hear the group saying [and then summarize things you’ve heard]. Is that right?
- Do people feel like they can make a decision, or do we need to talk about it more?
- Do people have any other questions or thoughts?

Other Tips for Facilitation

- Have a plan, which is sometimes called an agenda, that lists the things the group needs to get done.
- Ask someone to keep track of the time or keep track yourself. Let the group know if they are running late and review the agenda to see how much time is left to cover each task.
- Make sure breaks are included in an agenda if the meeting or training will go longer than 2 hours.
- Be a good listener [see “A Facilitator Is” tip sheet]
- Make sure that one person in the group is not answering all the questions. If this happens you can say to the whole group, “Let’s hear from someone else” and ask another question.

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- Try to say things from **your** perspective. For example, you would say, "I think we should all try to listen and focus on what Bob is saying." You would NOT say, "Susan, you are not listening to Bob".
- Don't pressure anyone to speak.
- Words are not the only way to communicate. Pay attention to your tone of voice and your body language.
- Check in with the group every once in a while to make sure everyone is clear on what needs to be done and understands what is being talked about. For example, "Is everyone clear on what we are talking about?"
- If you are acting as facilitator and are also part of the group and feel like you want or need to add comments and ideas, it's ok. Try to add them during discussion time while still making sure others have time to speak. Make sure not to put down other people's ideas/thoughts if they disagree with you.
- Don't worry if there is a point in the discussion where you are not sure what to do. Let the group know, or ask the group how they think something should be done. For example, you can say, "I'm not sure how to move on from here. Does anyone have some ideas?"

RESOURCES

****We could not find resources on facilitation written for youth by youth or youth friendly facilitation resources. Those below are not necessarily considered (by us) to be youth friendly, but they do have helpful information to share.*

Facilitate.com offers their 10 hot tips

<http://www.facilitate.com/Facilitation10Tips.html>

The Thiagi Group

<http://www.thiagi.com/tips.html>

This is a consulting Firm, but they offer some 'freebies' that are interesting.

Minnesota Facilitators Network

http://www.managementhelp.org/grp_skill/resource.htm#anchor1195627

This is a list of free, on-line resources for facilitation.

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