

Facilitation Tips

Principles of Great Facilitation

- **Prepare beforehand.**
 - Review the [Action Plan Worksheet](#) and be sure you understand the flow, the time you have, and the goals of the discussion.
 - Familiarize yourself with the campaigns your group will be working on.
- **Establish ground rules.**
 - If your host didn't set norms at the start of the meeting, quickly ask the group to shout out a few and affirm them.
 - Here are some suggestions:
 - Stick to the agenda.
 - Respect all points of view (relatedly, it's ok to disagree).
 - Step Up and Step Back—If you are a person who talks a lot, be conscious of letting others speak. If you are someone who is naturally quiet, speak up. Having multiple points of view is essential to a good discussion.
 - Don't interrupt when someone else is speaking.
 - Have fun!
 - Now you, as a facilitator, have a mandate! You should work to be sure the group adheres to the ground rules. For instance, if someone starts to bring the group off topic, you can interject something like this: "As facilitator, I want to remind everyone that we agreed as a group to stick to the agenda. We can certainly continue this discussion after the formal agenda has concluded." And then move the conversation back to the agenda.
- **Balance participation with efficiency.**
 - Your role as facilitator is to involve as many people as possible in bringing the group to its goals. The group will enjoy the meeting more if everyone can talk and share their ideas, but no one enjoys a meeting that does not end on time. As the facilitator, your role is to accomplish both. Be conscious that the power dynamics in the room can influence people's comfort level in speaking up. Be intentional in creating space for those whose voices are often silenced due to their gender, race, class, sexual orientation, immigration status, or other identity.

Tips

- Set the tone for participation early by getting everyone to introduce themselves to the group.
- If someone isn't speaking much, ask them what they think.
- Encourage vocal folks to give others time to speak.
- You can encourage participation by doing a "go-around." This is just asking everyone to answer the question in some sort of order (possibly the order in which people are sitting).
- If your group is large—more than 20 or so—break people into smaller numbers for the discussion questions so that everyone has a chance to contribute ideas.
- Add it to the parking lot! That is, keep a running list of interesting topics that people bring up during the meeting but that don't fit into the agenda. People can stay after the meeting to discuss, or you can save these topics to be discussed at the next meeting. We call this a "parking lot."
- Start and end on time. Demonstrate respect for your and your attendees' time by starting and ending when you say you will. Use the tips on this sheet to help you do this!