

FACILITATOR TRAINING:

TOOLS AND TECHNIQUES
TO HELP GROUPS
ACCOMPLISH THEIR GOALS

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Overview



The facilitator's job is to support everyone to do their best thinking and practice. To do this, the facilitator encourages full participation, promotes mutual understanding and cultivates shared responsibility. By supporting everyone to do their best thinking, a facilitator enables group members to search for inclusive solutions and to build sustainable agreements.

Bold Aspirations, the university strategic plan, and **Changing for Excellence**, the efficiency study led by Huron, are guiding KU's path to being recognized as a top-tier, public international research university. Each effort focuses on how KU can best achieve its long term vision.

The six goals of the strategic plan and the individual business cases developed by Huron involve changes that will engage collaborators from across campus during the implementation process.

However, to be successful, significant organizational change requires knowledge of the climate and players, and an understanding of the capacity for change of both. To support these efforts, the following resources are provided.

The **Organizational Change Workshop** will illuminate strategies for implementing change and reasons for resistance to change. The 90-minute workshop will be helpful to deans, directors, chairs, change leaders, facilitators, and members of groups tasked with implementing change at KU. Workshops on advanced topics are also available.

Facilitation Services will be provided to groups working on organizational change projects. Facilitators contribute structure and process to group interactions in order to:

- Ensure group members are fully engaged
- Ensure that the group is working effectively toward a defined outcome
- Ensure that the group reaches consensus or that differences are defined and understood
- Ensures that all are treated with respect

These services could include a facilitator working with a group for just a part of its process or the entirety.

The Change Facilitators Committee is a small group of faculty and staff committed to identifying one or more facilitators to support each change leader and group tasked with change. This committee will also provide Unstuck Services for those leaders and groups who need additional help during difficult stages of the change process.

Change Facilitators Committee

Our mission is to build the capacity for organizational change at the University of Kansas. To do so we will apply knowledge from a variety of academic fields within the climate of KU, providing educational materials and facilitation assistance to campus leaders and groups tasked with effecting the changes that determine the future course of our university.

BENEFITS *of facilitating change*

- Empower and motivate groups to experience success in implementing the changes with which they are tasked.
- Enable groups undergoing change to function more effectively and efficiently.
- Provide shared tools, strategies, and processes to allow groups to adapt to new models.
- Build overall capacity for positive change at KU.

SERVICES

for campus change leaders

- Access to informational programs and resources on organizational change process (workshops, change toolkits, a website of reference materials, and personalized coaching).
- Assistance with group identification and expectations to ensure appropriate representation, clearly-written charges, and well-defined parameters for the outcomes desired.
- Personalized coaching and assistance for group leaders in effective group process.
- Facilitation of initial group formation and process to ensure understanding of anticipated outcomes.
- Unstuck services: tailored facilitation assistance for groups that encounter particularly difficult topics or stages in the change process.

EXPECTATIONS *of facilitators*

- Dedicated to effective consensus-based processes without involvement in content.
- Focus on successful organizational process without a vested interest in a particular outcome.
- Focus on effective and objective communication.
- Treat all participants fairly, impartially, and with respect.

The Change Facilitators Committee is:

Marilu Goodyear, *Chair of Change Facilitators Committee and Director,*

School of Public Affairs and Administration

Stuart Day, *Chair and Associate Professor, Spanish and Portuguese*

Dennis Grauer, *Associate Professor, School of Pharmacy*

Curtis Marsh, *Program Director, KU Info and the Learning Studio*

Jenny Mehmedovic, *Assistant to the Provost*

Peggy Palmer, *Administrative Professional, Vice Provost of Student Affairs*

Brian Patton, *Custodial Supervisor, Facilities Operations*

Kathy Pryor, *Managing Director and Budget Director of University Theatre*

Noel Rasor, *Assistant Director, School of Public Affairs and Administration*

Margaret Severson, *Professor, School of Social Welfare*

Rebecca Smith, *Executive Director of Communications, Advancement and Administration, KU Libraries*

Tom Volek, *Associate Dean and Associate Professor, School of Journalism*

Facilitation: General Information and the Skills Involved

Definition, role, and skills

Facilitators are “keepers of the process” and do not take a particular position in discussions; i.e. they are content neutral. The role is one of helper and enabler like that of a midwife who assists in the process of birth but is not the producer of the end result.

Facilitators contribute structure and process to group interactions in order to:

- Ensure group members are fully engaged
- Ensure that the group is working effectively toward a defined outcome
- Ensure that the group reaches consensus or that differences are defined and understood
- Ensures that all are treated with respect

Communication skills are key in facilitation including:

- listening skills
- ability to paraphrase
- draw people out
- balance participation

Ethics

The facilitation process has three areas where ethics need to be considered: participant ethics, facilitator ethics, and the ethics of the situation. There are some “red flags” to be aware of and some “ethical expectations” to hope for in group meetings. For example, the facilitator should expect that information shared is honest and accurate and would find a red flag if it appeared someone was lying or manipulating data. The facilitation situation should be an authentic process and should not have a predetermined outcome. The facilitator should avoid conflict-of-interest situations and withdraw if that is the case, or if he or she is not qualified for the task at hand. Groups should brainstorm about the “red flags” and “ethical expectations” they bring to the situation.

In a public setting, facilitators must adhere to ethical principles and values. If they do not uphold ethical expectations, they undermine their role and potential success of their own future as a facilitator and they damage the effectiveness of others who serve as facilitators.

Marian Anderson, et al., “Volume 7: Utilizing Diversity, Power, and Ethics.” In *Facilitation Resources*, (St. Paul: University of Minnesota Extension, <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/citizenship/DH7437.html>, 2001)

Statement of Values and Code of Ethics for Facilitators

This is the Statement of Values and Code of Ethics of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF). The development of this Code has involved extensive dialogue and a wide diversity of views from IAF members from around the world. A consensus has been achieved across regional and cultural boundaries.

The Statement of Values and Code of Ethics (the Code) was adopted by the IAF Association Coordinating Team (ACT), June 2004. The Ethics and Values Think Tank (EVTT) will continue to provide a forum for discussion of pertinent issues and potential revisions of this Code.

Preamble

Facilitators are called upon to fill an impartial role in helping groups become more effective. We act as process guides to create a balance between participation and results.

We, the members of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), believe that our profession gives us a unique opportunity to make a positive contribution to individuals, organizations, and society. Our effectiveness is based on our personal integrity and the trust developed between ourselves and those with whom we work. Therefore, we recognise the importance of defining and making known the values and ethical principles that guide our actions.

This Statement of Values and Code of Ethics recognizes the complexity of our roles, including the full spectrum of personal, professional and cultural diversity in the IAF membership and in the field of facilitation. Members of the International Association of Facilitators are committed to using these values and ethics to guide their professional practice. These principles are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical practice; they provide a framework and are not intended to dictate conduct for particular situations. Questions or advice about the application of these values and ethics may be addressed to the International Association of Facilitators.

Statement of Values

As group facilitators, we believe in the inherent value of the individual and the collective wisdom of the group. We strive to help the group make the best use of the contributions of each of its members. We set aside our personal opinions and support the group's right to make its own choices. We believe that collaborative and cooperative interaction builds consensus and produces meaningful outcomes. We value professional collaboration to improve our profession.

Code of Ethics

1. Client Service: We are in service to our clients, using our group facilitation competencies to add value to their work.

Our clients include the groups we facilitate and those who contract with us on their behalf. We work closely with our clients to understand their expectations so that we provide the appropriate service, and that the group produces the desired outcomes. It is our responsibility to ensure that we are competent to handle the intervention. If the group decides it needs to go in a direction other than that originally intended by either the group or its representatives, our role is to help the group move forward, reconciling the original intent with the emergent direction.

International Association of Facilitators, June 2004

2. Conflict of Interest: We openly acknowledge any potential conflict of interest.

Prior to agreeing to work with our clients, we discuss openly and honestly any possible conflict of interest, personal bias, prior knowledge of the organisation or any other matter which may be perceived as preventing us from working effectively with the interests of all group members. We do this so that, together, we may make an informed decision about proceeding and to prevent misunderstanding that could detract from the success or credibility of the clients or ourselves. We refrain from using our position to secure unfair or inappropriate privilege, gain, or benefit.

3. Group Autonomy: We respect the culture, rights, and autonomy of the group.

We seek the group's conscious agreement to the process and their commitment to participate. We do not impose anything that risks the welfare and dignity of the participants, the freedom of choice of the group, or the credibility of its work.

4. Processes, Methods, and Tools: We use processes, methods and tools responsibly.

In dialogue with the group or its representatives we design processes that will achieve the group's goals, and select and adapt the most appropriate methods and tools. We avoid using processes, methods or tools with which we are insufficiently skilled, or which are poorly matched to the needs of the group.

5. Respect, Safety, Equity, and Trust: We strive to engender an environment of respect and safety where all participants trust that they can speak freely and where individual boundaries are honored. We use our skills, knowledge, tools, and wisdom to elicit and honor the perspectives of all.

We seek to have all relevant stakeholders represented and involved. We promote equitable relationships among the participants and facilitator and ensure that all participants have an opportunity to examine and share their thoughts and feelings. We use a variety of methods to enable the group to access the natural gifts, talents and life experiences of each member. We work in ways that honour the wholeness and self-expression of others, designing sessions that respect different styles of interaction. We understand that any action we take is an intervention that may affect the process.

6. Stewardship of Process: We practice stewardship of process and impartiality toward content.

While participants bring knowledge and expertise concerning the substance of their situation, we bring knowledge and expertise concerning the group interaction process. We are vigilant to minimize our influence on group outcomes. When we have content knowledge not otherwise available to the group, and that the group must have to be effective, we offer it after explaining our change in role.

7. Confidentiality: We maintain confidentiality of information.

We observe confidentiality of all client information. Therefore, we do not share information about a client within or outside of the client's organisation, nor do we report on group content, or the individual opinions or behaviour of members of the group without consent.

8. Professional Development: We are responsible for continuous improvement of our facilitation skills and knowledge.

We continuously learn and grow. We seek opportunities to improve our knowledge and facilitation skills to better assist groups in their work. We remain current in the field of facilitation through our practical group experiences and ongoing personal development. We offer our skills within a spirit of collaboration to develop our professional work practices.

SIX CORE COMPETENCIES OF FACILITATION

1. Self-Mastery Skills:

How you facilitate yourself.

- Facilitate your own inner process.
- Practice empathic listening.
- Be open to new ideas and input.
- Become a life long learner.
- Seek feedback from others.

3. Relating Skills:

How you facilitate others.

- Be aware of your own “hot buttons”.
- Check assumptions.
- Listen empathically.
- Encourage participation from all members.
- Refrain from autobiographical responses.
- Listen for the “sub-text”.
- Voice observations.
- Use intervention tools and techniques when necessary

5. Intervention Skills:

How you shift a group.

- Model the behavior that you want reflected back to you.
- Summarize using paraphrasing to clarify and check group interpretation.
- Focus group attention by keeping on topic and on schedule.
- Use silence for reflection and refocusing.
- Boomerang questions back to the group.
- Name the destructive or deflective behavior.
- Encourage.
- Use your own body language.
- Accept. Legitimize, deal with, or defer...
- Don't talk too much.

2. Presence and Presenting Skills:

How you show up.

- Be prepared.
- Be flexible.
- Be confident.
- Be professional.
- Be authentic.
- Be inclusive.

4. Group Awareness, Management, and Exploration Skills:

How you facilitate a group or team.

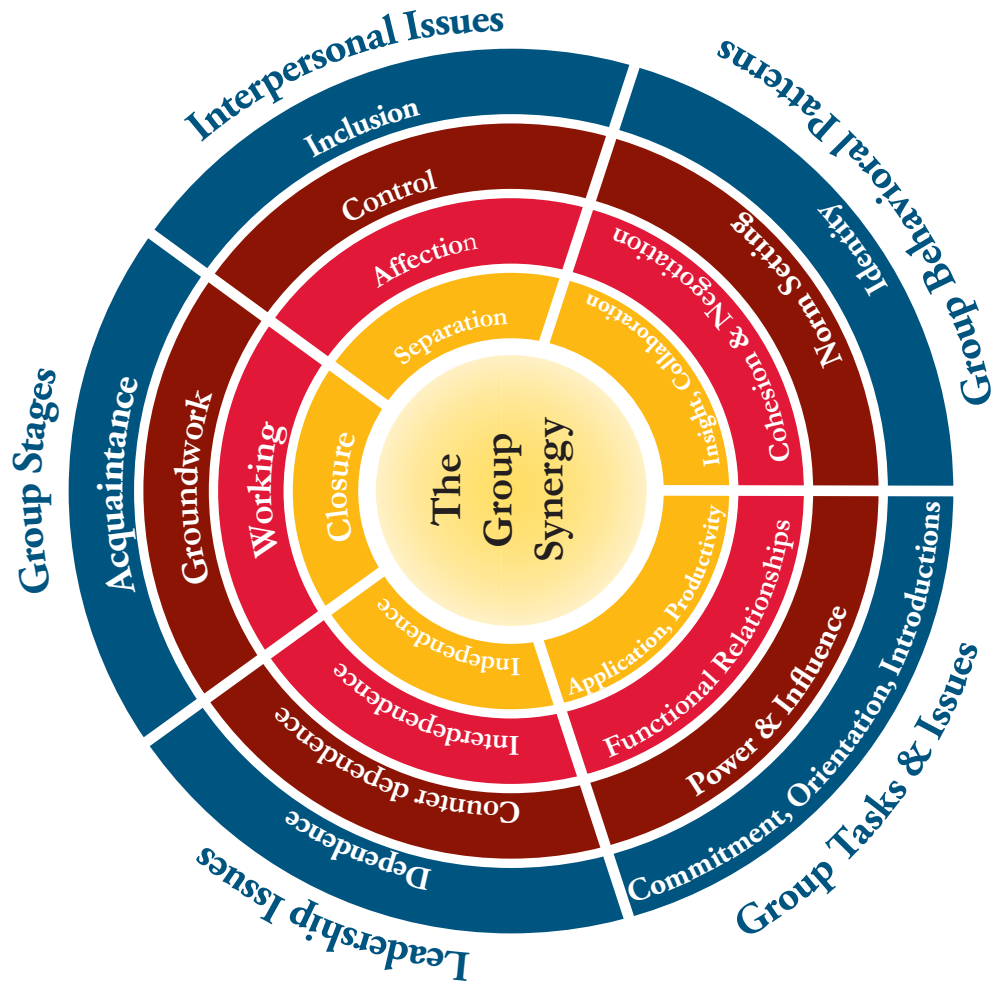
- Awareness of the stages of group development and where your group is in the process.
- Stay focused on the agenda.
- Recognize and affirm progress.
- Scanning and observing for non-verbals – body language, facial expression, gestures...
- Whole group involvement.
- Manage conflict with care-fronting techniques.

6. Logistic Skills:

How you facilitate the environment.

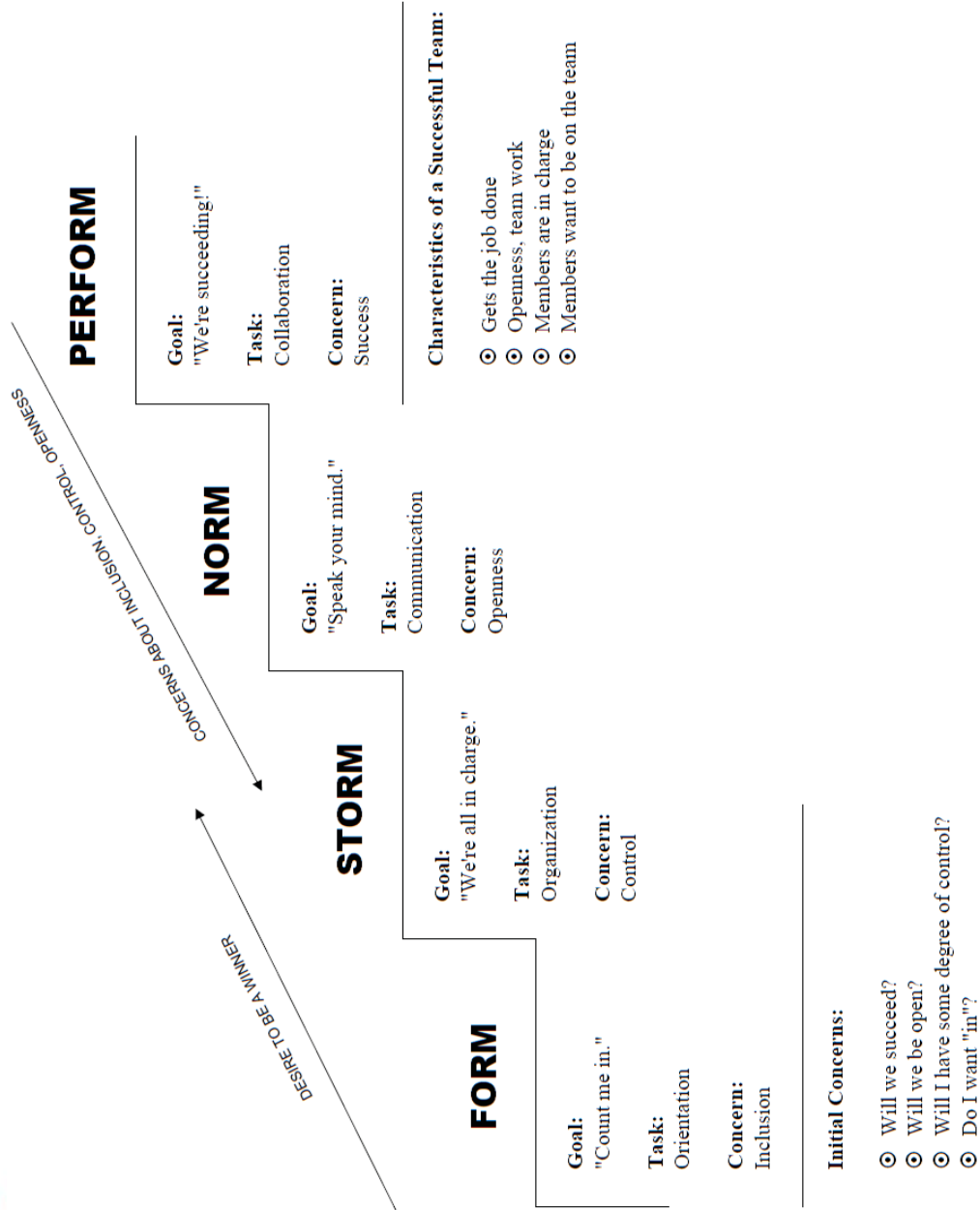
- Tangibles
 - The facility.
 - The group or team.
 - Props, materials, tools & supplies.
 - Process and procedure.
 - Group behavior.
- Intangibles
 - Trust.
 - Emotions/feelings.
 - Flexibility/adaptability.
 - Hidden agendas or undiscussables.
 - **Sense of community.**

Planning the Facilitated Session: The Life Cycle of Groups



G. Corey and M.S. Corey, "Group Process and Practice in Perspective," In *Groups: Process and Practice*, 4th ed. (Monterey, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing Company, 1992),

Planning the Facilitated Session: Stages of Group Development



Office of Quality Improvement, University of Wisconsin-Madison, *Facilitator Tool Kit: A Guide for Helping Groups Get Results, 2.*

Planning the Facilitated Session: Stages of Group Development and Range of the Facilitator Behavior

	Stages of Group Development	Role of Facilitator
Developing a positive working environment	Inclusion/Forming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Becoming oriented • Developing commitment • Needing direction • Wanting to be accepted 	Directing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Climate setting • Clarifying roles, expectations • Defining goals & providing structure • Group-building
Dealing with issues of power & control	Storming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consolidating influence • Confronting dependency on the leader • Conflict among group members • Low level of work 	Coaching <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Surfacing issues, legitimizing concerns • Facilitating communication • Managing conflict • Inviting input and feedback • Expecting and accepting tension
Managing conflict; establishing ground rules	Norming <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Resolving control concerns • Establishing group agreement 	Supporting <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering own ideas, resources • Sharing the leadership role
Functioning as an effective group	Affection/Performing <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working productively towards shared goals • Problem-solving & decision-making • Open communication, trust • Dealing with conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being available for consultation • Smoothing the boundary between the group and the organization
Terminating the group's work	Adjourning <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creates apprehension • Regression in maturity level • Need help to say "good-bye" 	Delegating <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting, letting go • Helping group deal with termination

Planning the Facilitated Session

Facilitation Core Practices Observation Sheet

Facilitator: _____

Observer: _____

Behaviors that help		Behaviors that hinder	
	Listens actively		Oblivious to group needs
	Maintains eye contact		No follow-up on concerns
	Helps identify needs		Poor listening
	Gets buy-in		Strays into content
	Surfaces concerns		Loses track of key ideas
	Defines problems		Makes poor notes
	Involves everyone in the discussion		Ignores conflicts
	Uses good body language & intonation		Provides no alternatives for structuring the discussion
	Paraphrases continuously		Gets defensive
	Provides feedback		Puts down people
	Accepts and uses feedback		No paraphrasing
	Checks time and pace		Lets a few people dominate
	Provides useful feedback		Never asks "how are we doing?"
	Monitors and adjusts the process		Tries to be center of attention
	Asks relevant, probing questions		Lets the group get sidetracked
	Keeps an open attitude		Projects a poor image
	Stays neutral		Uses negative or sarcastic tone
	Offers suggestions		Talks too much
	Is optimistic and positive		Doesn't know when to stop
	Manages conflict well		
	Takes a problem-solving approach		
	Stays focused on process		
	Ping-pongs ideas around		
	Makes accurate notes that reflect the discussion		
	Looks calm and pleasant		
	Is flexible about changing the approach used		
	Skillfully summarizes what is said		
	Knows when to stop		

Ingrid Bens, "Chapter 1: What is Facilitation?"
 In *Facilitation at a Glance!* 2nd ed. (Salem, NH:
 GOAL/QPC, 2008)

Planning the Facilitated Session

Facilitator Feedback Form

The facilitator:

- Established group ground rules.
- Presence and presenting skills.
- Made good use of time.
- Group awareness and management.
- Listened actively.
- Summarized and synthesized key points.
- Asked open-ended questions.
- Reserved judgment and kept an open mind.
- Clarified steps involved in task.
- Encouraged group responsibility for action planning.
- Effective use of processes and tools.

Planning the Facilitated Session

Understanding the Charge of the Group, the Leader's Role, the Facilitator's Role, and Anticipating Known Group Dynamics

Charter or mission statement:

This should tell the team:

- What process or problem to study
- Why it is important to customers and to the organization
- What boundaries or limitations there are, including limits on time & money (or topic?)
- When they are scheduled to begin the project and, if appropriate, the target date for completion

Questions a facilitator should ask the leader prior to planning the facilitated session:

- What group is seeking the facilitation services?
- Is the leader a member of that group?
- Has the group committed to particular times for this facilitation work/activity? How much time?
- What objectives does the group want to accomplish?
- Have these objectives been clearly explained to the group? Ask for documentation of how this was explained.
- What problems is the group experiencing? Ask for specific examples.
- What is leader's perception of how the group interacts together?
- What does leader believe the groups' perception is of him/her?
- Is the leader aware of any known tensions/elephants/personnel issues that may arise during the facilitation? (assure the leader of your commitment to confidentiality and the fact that it's much better for you to know these in advance so you can plan how to address them if they come up)

Questions the Facilitator should ask him or herself:

- Is the problem/objective the group is trying to solve really the problem?
- Can the objective the groups wants to accomplish be achieved immediately, or is some prework needed? (i.e., it may be difficult for a group that has been reorganized to talk about their new mission/direction without first addressing what may be perceived as lost)
- Acknowledge that the leader has only given you his/her perception, and that it may not be accurate. Plan ahead for the group dynamics issues, but in a way that allows you to fully maintain your objectivity for the good of the group.

Planning the Facilitated Session

Setting Ground Rules, Planning Agendas and Activities for Meetings

Ground Rules or Guidelines for Group Behavior

Guide the group to have a conversation in which expectations for behavior are established. These ground rules can then become a tool for reaching agreement or staying on task or keeping the behavior civil.

- Everyone in the group has a right to his/her opinion. Members should listen objectively and hear all relevant contributions before taking action.
- Any member who feels that another member's behavior is counterproductive to the group's objectives and goals should attempt to bring the member back in or to find out if others in the group see the behavior as counterproductive.
- Feedback is essential if people are to know how their comments are received, especially if there is doubt as to whether the group understood. It is appropriate for any member to give another member feedback. For example, "Let me see if I understand the point you're making. You seem to be saying three things. First, ..."

Plan the agenda, present suggested activities to leader(s), and modify as needed. Agree on next steps for how the meeting/retreat will be run. Depending on the group, you may need to ask the usual leader to act like an equal participant in the process, and to let you as facilitator take the reins during the meeting.

Planning the Facilitated Session

Coaching Your Leader

The relationship between leader and facilitator is a critical link in group success. The facilitator needs to play a dual role of servant and challenger to the leader. The goal is to help the leader be effective by sharing the burden of organization and ensuring the leader's understanding of his/her role in group dynamics.

These roles focus on: helping the leader organize the work and understand the group needs.

The facilitator should assist the leader in the following ways:

- planning the work of the group in the beginning of the process
- assisting with agenda development
- assisting with meeting room set-up
- assisting with documenting group actions (minutes, action item lists, accountability lists, etc.)
- ensuring meeting evaluations and follow-up on suggestions for improvement

The leader and facilitator meeting in-between group meetings is a wise idea. Such meetings give the facilitator the opportunity to help the leader evaluate the process and make improvements. The facilitator's goal is to draw out the leader's evaluations of group process and ideas for improvements; facilitators should pose questions that would solicit this information:

- What went well with the meeting? What could be improved?
- Did you notice when (X person did Y, X person said Y)?
- What could you do (in the leadership role) to improve participation in the group?
- How did your X action affect the group process? How can I help you with that?
- What are your thoughts about X person's over participation, Y person's under participation?

When coaching leaders the concept of strength in excess can be helpful. Leaders often have very apparent strengths (the reason why they became leaders), but often, if these strengths are used too much, or applied in the wrong circumstances, they can become weaknesses. It is sometime necessary for a facilitator to help a leader see that these strengths are misapplied. Examples:

A leader dominating the process: Your ability to articulate the issues is truly excellent, and it's important to ensure that the entire group understands these issues. We also need to ensure that members of the group participate enough for us to evaluate their level of understanding; what are your ideas for ensuring that each person participates? Potential follow-up: Your communication skills are a real strength and will be important in several places in the process; however, right now the strength we need is listening skills.

A leader rushing the group to solutions before the problem is defined: You have strong skills in visualizing the solutions and communicating those to the group. The literature on organizational change indicates that solutions are more likely to be accepted if they come from the group—maybe we could hold back for a while to see what the group comes up with and then you can use your skills to fill in the holes.

Difficult Dialogues

Difficult Discussions is a spin-off of a national model, *Difficult Dialogues*, that addresses the increasing polarization of our society and the need to deal more effectively with breakdowns in civil discourse, specifically in higher education. The overall goal is to create safer places for the free exchange of ideas, and to become more inclusive of voices and ways of knowing that have been absent, unpopular, excluded, or oppressed.

Stop the video before the intervention and ask the following:

1. What could Charlotte have done differently?
 - a. From the start with the seating arrangement
 - b. Agenda not clear
 - c. No ground rules
2. What do you think is going on with Mary and Anne?
3. What is Howard's agenda?
4. What management strategies are Clint trying that don't work?
5. Other thoughts?

Play the rest of the video with the intervention techniques:

1. Seating arrangement
2. Agenda – clarify the purpose of the meeting
3. Ground Rules – hearing all perspectives
 - a. Other ground rules needed?

Difficult Dialogues: <http://www.diversity.ku.edu/events/dialogues.shtml>

Guidelines for Skillful Discussion

Prepare for skillful discussion:

1. Create a learning space or safe haven for conversation
2. Value openness and trust by all
3. Encourage and reward the sharing of new perspectives
4. Plan the agenda, time, and context

Participate in skillful discussion:

1. Pay attention to your intentions
2. Balance advocacy with inquiry
3. Build shared meaning
4. Use self-awareness as a resource
5. Explore impasses

Four building blocks of dialogue:

1. Suspension of judgment
2. Assumption identification
3. Listening: the key to perception
4. Inquiry and reflection

Behaviors that support dialogue:

- Listening and speaking with judgment suspended
- Respect for differences
- Role and status suspension
- Balancing advocacy and inquiry
- Focus on learning

Guidelines for dialogue:

- Trust that people of good intention can work through difficult issues together
- Respect each other's right to have different points of view
- Speak clearly, authentically, and in ways that encourage feedback
- Seek shared meaning through engaged listening
- Taking time saves time
- Learn your trigger style and how to know when you are using that style
 - Trigger styles result from assumptions we make about others and ourselves – find common ground.

Bierema, L. L., "How to Reframe Conversation Through Dialogue." In M. Silberman (Ed.), *The 2001 Team and Organization Development Sourcebook*, (New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001) 305-318.

Group Process: Reading a Group

1. Understand the Stages of Group Development.

All groups have a life cycle and it is essential that you understand the signs and symptoms of each stage prior to using any tool or intervention. The stages are predictable and inevitable. A group can move quickly through the stages of the life cycle or seemingly take forever. Each stage has certain outcomes and if skipped will likely result in the group returning to an earlier stage before finishing its work or getting “stuck” and unable to finish as a group.

2. Balancing Group Roles.

There are two kinds of behavior required for groups to complete their tasks and survive as a group. Both product and process behaviors must be balanced for a group to successfully accomplish its charge.

Product behaviors help the group define and accomplish its work and complete outcomes.

They include:

Initiating and proposing	Questioning	Giving information/opinions
Building or elaborating	Disagreeing or challenging	Testing for consensus
Coordinating or integrating	Testing for understanding	Clarifying
Seeking information & opinions	Orienting the group to its task	Recording & capturing content

Process behaviors deal more with keeping the group together, maintaining functional relationships, and strengthening the ability of the a group to perform. They include:

<i>Energizing & motivating</i>	<i>Relieving tensions</i>	<i>Acknowledging differences</i>
<i>Inclusion & participation</i>	<i>Adhering to work standards</i>	<i>Appropriate intervention</i>
<i>Collaboration</i>	<i>Pacing</i>	<i>Seeking common ground</i>
<i>Encouraging</i>	<i>Observing process</i>	<i>Praising progress</i>

3. Psychosocial Issues.

The psychosocial arena requires the most experience and skill as there are often deep underlying patterns causing people to behave as they do and interact with others the way they do. As a facilitator, your interest is in keeping the group focused and progressing toward its goal. You need to recognize and understand the interpersonal dynamics that can get in the way of a groups success. Observe people’s verbal and non-verbal behavior; what they say and do, and what they do not say and do. Even participation by reducing the participation of some members while maintaining the involvement of others.

Kathleen Ames-Oliver

Group Process: Reading a Group

(3. Psychosocial Issues cont'd)

For example, low participation in the group may indicate issues of trust and inclusion; a lot of verbal input from a member might indicate status or control issues; a lot of criticism of ideas might indicate competitiveness or turf issue; a lot of procedural or methodological discussion might indicate a low tolerance for ambiguity or need for more structure.

Stating your observations to the group, and asking the group to help interpret what is going on is better than assuming you know and taking action on your assumptions (which may be off-base).

If the group is not able to address what is going on or the situation worsens, you may need to speak individually to some members to address the behavior.

4. Task Progress

Issues on the task side of group life can be just as dysfunctional as issues on the psychosocial side. Groups can often get “stuck” in task ruts. The job of the facilitator is to develop processes to deal with the various tasks aspects of group work. It is important for the facilitator to be comfortable with a variety of tools to help groups get unstuck and move forward. Groups need to be clear about, make decisions about, and follow through on the following basic issues:

- What the result will be and the outcomes should look like, what they will do and not do, and for what they are accountable.
- How they will accomplish their outcomes, take the steps they need to take, problem-solve, reach consensus, make critical decisions, use specific processes and procedures, and so on.
- Who will do what, will take on what functional roles, will be involved, and so on
- When they will be done or complete various components, and
- When they will meet, report, conduct various steps, and so on

5. Leadership

Group leadership is really about who creates and controls the agenda for what the group does and how the group gets things done, who gets listened to, and who influences opinions and direction.

Groups need leadership whether it come from one person or be shared by several. Leadership can be formal and designated, or informal and emerging. Facilitators need to guard against taking the leadership role. The facilitator’s job is to be a neutral party, balancing the needs of the leader with those of the group. They need to strengthen and support the effectiveness of formal leaders; support the efforts of effective, informal, emerging leadership, and facilitate the resolution of conflicts among leaders vying for leadership.

Kathleen Ames-Oliver

Group Process: Reading a Group

6. Understanding Communication Patterns.

Groups develop their own unique communication patterns. These patterns include who talks and who talks to whom, the intensity, tone, and inflection of verbal communication; and who talks after and to whom. The patterns also include who does not talk; expressions of attentiveness, agreement, disagreement, boredom, eye contact, and pairings during non-session times (breaks and before and after the formal meeting times).

Paying attention to communication patterns as they unfold can help you understand the dynamics. Who talks to whom and who follows whom with some verbal and non-verbal expressions often indicate alliances, bonds of influence, or a clear demonstration of differing opinions. The facilitator can play a very active role in making group members more aware of their communication patterns and focusing attention on productive communication patterns.

7. Participation.

Observing participation patterns is similar to observing communication patterns. You want people to feel free to participate as much as is needed for the group charge. However, equal participation rarely occurs and it will be necessary to facilitate the involvement of everyone at the appropriate level of participation.

There is little question that the highest performing groups operate with equitable participation. However, most groups do not operate in a natural state of equity. The danger in not having appropriate levels of participation is that important information and perspectives may be left out, the picture might be incomplete, and biases may go unchecked. Facilitators often have to intervene to create more even participation by reducing the participation of some members while maintaining the involvement of others.

8. Conflict Management.

Conflict within groups is natural and inevitable. It is the facilitator's role to create a safe environment for the airing of differing points of view; enabling differing parties to state their positions, hear one another, engage in balanced, rational dialogue, and involve all group members in resolving issues. Sometimes the conflict needs to be aired and resolved within the group sessions, while at other times, it may be more effective to help differing parties "off-line" or away from the meeting setting, with an appropriate reporting back to the group.

Kathleen Ames-Oliver

Common Participant/Group Behaviors and Interventions

Types of Personalities You May Encounter

How he/she acts	Why	What to do
Professional Heckler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Aggressive, argumentative personality. Gets satisfaction from needling others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hold your own temper. Don't let others get excited. Try to find merit in one of his/her points...express your agreement and move on to something else. When he/she makes an obvious misstatement of facts, toss it to the group and let them correct him/her.
Overtly Talkative	<p>You'll find this person is usually one of four types:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An "eager beaver" A show-off exceptionally well-informed/anxious to show it, Or, just plain talkative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wait until he/she takes a breath; thank him/her; refocus attention on the subject; and then move on. Slow him/her down with some difficult questions. Or jump in with: "that's an interesting point...now let's see what the group thinks."
Griper	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> May have a pet peeve; for the sake of complaining; or in some cases has a legitimate complaint. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If on the subject: Point out that the purpose of a workshop is to find better ways to do things by constructive cooperation. In some cases, it works to have a member of the group answer instead of you. If off the subject: Indicate you'll talk to him/her later.
Asked you for your Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Trying to put you on the spot. Trying to have you support one view. May be simply looking for your advice. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally, you should avoid solving their problems for them. Point out your view is relatively unimportant compared to the view of the people at the workshop. Don't let this become a phobia. There are times when you must...and should...give a direct answer. Before you do so, try to determine their reason to asking your view. Say, "first, let's get some opinions. Joe, how do you look upon this point?" (select a group member to reply.)
Won't Talk	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bored Indifferent Feels Superior Timid Insecure 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> If bored, arouse his/her interest by asking for his/her opinion. If indifferent, irritate him/her for a moment by tossing a provocative query. If the superior-type, ask for his/her view after indicating the respect held for experience (don't overdo this less the group resent it.) If timid or insecure, compliment him/her the first time he/she does talk. BE SINCERE.
Quick, Helpful	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Really trying to help. Actually, makes it difficult; keeps others out. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cut across him/her tactfully by questioning others. Thank him/her, suggest "we put others to work." Use him/her for summarizing.
Rambler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Talks about everything except subject. Uses far-fetched analogies; gets lost. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When he/she stops for breath, thank him/her by restating the relevant points, and move on. Grim, tell him his point is interesting and in a friendly manner, indicate we are a bit off the subject. Last resort, glance at watch.

Kathleen Ames-Oliver

Common Participant/Group Behaviors and Interventions

Types of Personalities You May Encounter (cont'd)

How he/she acts	Why	What to do
Personality Clash	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sometimes differences of opinion get too sharp. • In other cases, two people just don't get along. • Can divide your group into factions. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Emphasize points of agreement, minimize points of disagreement (if possible). • Draw attention to objective(s). • Cut across with direct question on topic. • Bring sound member into discussion. • Frankly, ask that personalities be omitted.
Obstinate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Won't budge. • Prejudiced • Hasn't seen your point 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Throw his/her view to the group; have group members straighten him/her out. • Tell him time is short, you'll be glad to discuss it later; ask him/her to accept group view point for the moment.
Wrong Subject	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not rambling, just off base. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Take blame: "something I said must have led you off the subject. This is what we should be discussing" (restate point or use the flip chart, etc.)
Side Conversation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be related to subject. • May be personal. • Distracts members and you. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't embarrass them. • Call one by name, ask him/her an easy question. • Call one by name, then restate last opinion expressed or last remark made by group member, and ask his/her opinion of it.
Inarticulate Wrong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lacks ability to put thoughts in proper words. • He/she is getting idea but can't convey it. • He/she needs help. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't say "what you're trying to say is this..." • Say, "you're saying then that..." • Twist his/her ideas as little as possible, have them make sense. • Check back for agreement.
Definitely Wrong	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Member comes up with comment that is obviously incorrect. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say, "I can see how you feel" or "that's one way of looking at it." • Say, "I can see your point, but can we reconcile that with (true situation)?"
Definitely Wrong Opinion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must be handled delicately 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Say, "sorry, I wasn't clear. What I meant was..." • Ask group, "how do the rest of you feel about this?"
Objector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Against everything 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ask him/her to resolve the objection he/she raises.
Highly Argumentative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Combative personality... professional heckler, or, • May be normally good-natured but upset by personal problems. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Keep your own temper firmly in check...don't let group get excited either. • Honestly try to find merit in one of his points, express your agreement (or get the group to do so), then move on to something else. • When he makes an obvious misstatement, toss it to group...let them turn it down.
Side Conversationalist	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be commenting on subject matter, but usually personal conversation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Don't embarrass him...but call him by name and ask an easy question. • Call him by name, then restate the last opinion expressed or last remark, and ask his opinion of it. • Get the side conversationalist <u>into the act</u>.

Kathleen Ames-Oliver

The Toolbox: Group Decision-Making Methods

Effective Decision-Making Behaviors

Behaviors that Help	Behaviors that Hinder
Listening to other's ideas entirely & politely, even when you disagree	Interrupting people in mid-sentence (even to build on their idea)
Paraphrasing main points made by another, especially if you're about to contradict their ideas	Not acknowledging the ideas that others have put on the table
Praising other's ideas	Criticizing others' ideas, as opposed to giving them useful constructive feedback
Building on other's ideas	Pushing your own ideas while ignoring other's input
Asking others to critique your ideas, and accepting the feedback	Getting defensive when your ideas are analyzed
Being open to accepting alternative courses of action	Sticking only to your ideas and blocking suggestions for alternatives
Dealing with facts	Basing arguments on feelings
Staying calm and friendly towards colleagues	Getting overly emotional; showing hostility in the face of any disagreement
Exploring ideas of others more fully (intense curiosity)	Defending own ideas so much that you can't hear what others may be saying to build on them

Guidelines for Effective Decisions

Understand the context of the decision	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To make a good decision, teams need good information <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ How will the outcome affect people, their work, and the organization as a whole? • Clarify the decision <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Does everyone have same understanding of what is being decided? • Understand deadlines <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Know the risks of missing the time window or not making the decision • Learn how this decision affects the critical path for the team's work • Gather relevant info about past, pending, and implicit decisions that are related
Determine who should be involved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • While it may be important to involve a wide variety of people, don't confuse that involvement with responsibility for making the actual decision • Who has the authority to make the decision? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ This person chooses whether & how to involve others • Who is ultimately responsible for the results of this decision? • Who is critically affected, now & in the future? • Who has vital information?
Decide how to decide	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions can be made using several methods. Each method is appropriate for different circumstances—•◦◻ •

Information Services Organizational Effectiveness Council, based on modification of information in: Bens, "Chapter 5: Effective Decision Making," In *Facilitation at a Glance!* 2nd ed., 78-79. Michael Wilkinson, "Chapter 10" in *The Secrets of Facilitation: The S.M.A.R.T. Guide to Getting Results With Groups*, (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004). Barbara J. Streibel, Brian L. Joiner, and Peter R. Scholtes, "Chapter 3," In *The Team Handbook* 3rd ed., (Madison: Oriell Inc., 2003)

The Toolbox: *Various Methods for Decision-Making*

Method	Pros	Cons	Uses
Spontaneous Agreement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast, easy • Unites 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too fast • Lack of discussion • May indicate group-think 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When full discussion isn't critical • Trivial issues
One Person Decides	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can be fast • Clear accountability 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of input • Low buy-in • No synergy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When one person is the expert • Individual willing to take sole responsibility
Compromise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussion creates a solution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Adversarial win/lose • Divides the group 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When positions are polarized and consensus is improbable
Multi-voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Systematic • Objective • Participative • Feels like a win 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limits dialogue • Influenced choices • Real priorities may not surface 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To sort or prioritize a long list of options
Majority Voting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fast • High quality (if it includes dialogue informing the decision) • Clear outcome 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May be too fast • Winners and losers • Often discourages dialogue • Can lead to less than optimal solutions, because not enough time spent investigating potentially better alternatives • Influenced choices (succumb to peer pressure rather than an informed opinion) • Dissenters are able to say they weren't in agreement, thus absolving themselves of responsibility for outcomes decided by group • Can result in less effective implementation because there is not full agreement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trivial matter • When there are clear options • If division of group is okay
<p>Consensus Building</p> <p>NOT intended to make everyone happy or leave all 100% in agreement...</p> <p>Goal is to determine the best possible course of action given the circumstances...</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborative • Systematic • Participative • Points of disagreement are sought out and encouraged • Discussion-oriented • Encourages commitment • Increases effectiveness of implementation (saves time later) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes time • Requires data • Requires creative thinking and open-mindedness • Requires member skills in communication, listening, conflict resolution, and facilitation • Potentially great solutions can often become watered down until they are something with which everyone can live • As a result, can create less than optimal solutions • If members think consensus means "don't rock the boat," group-think can result 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Important issues • When total buy-in matters • Wise to use when 1 or more individuals routinely dissent (working toward consensus forces dissenters to collaborate)
<p>Five-Finger Consensus</p> <p>To check for agreement on an issue/decision, on the count of three, each person holds up between 1 & 5 fingers indicating the level of support for the recommendation on the table:</p> <p>5 – strongly agree</p> <p>4 – agree</p> <p>3 – can see + & -, but willing to go along with group</p> <p>2 – disagree</p> <p>1 – strongly disagree & can't support</p> <p>Any 1's or 2's are given opportunity to explain to group why they gave the rating they did and what alterations they suggest for the recommendation on the table.</p> <p>Test for 5-finger consensus again until anyone with a 1 or 2 has had opportunity to suggest alterations.</p> <p>In the final review, majority rules.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Results in strong, but not unanimous, support for decisions • Encourages group to listen carefully when there is disagreement, including listening twice if necessary • Ensures everyone is heard, and has the opportunity to suggest alterations to the recommendations on the table. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the final review, majority rules (see "cons" for that method in the segment on majority voting above) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • After a period of discussion, to test for agreement on an issue or decision • When buy-in matters, but not everyone in group has stated their opinion yet of the recommendation on the table

Information Services Organizational Effectiveness Council, based on modification of information in:
 Bens, "Chapter 6: Facilitating Conflict," In *Facilitation at a Glance!* 2nd ed., 75-77.
 Wilkinson, "Chapter 10" in *The Secrets of Facilitation*.
 Streibel, Joiner, and Scholtes, "Chapter 3,"
 In *The Team Handbook* 3rd ed.

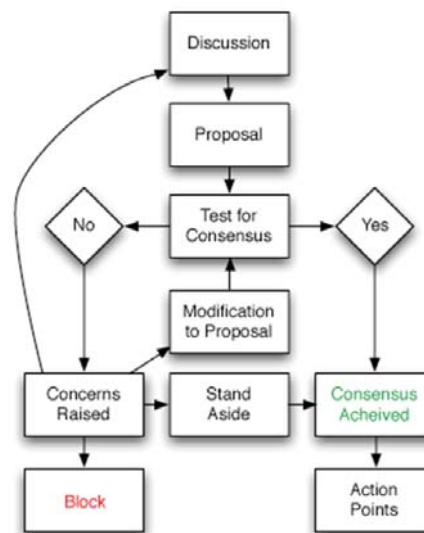
The Toolbox

Consensus

What is it?

- The objective of consensus is to gain commitment to support a group action or decision.
- A group reaches consensus when all members agree to support a group action.
- It is NOT a majority vote.
- It's an effective way of helping group members achieve the group's goal rather than having it their way – it improves productivity and interdependence

Consensus Flowchart



When do you use it:

- When a commitment of all group members is required
- When the group is creating a win-win or compromise solution

Steps:

- Clearly define the action or decision through the discussion
- Agree that consensus is required
- Ask the group the following questions:
 - Can you live with this action?
 - Will you support this action within the group?
 - Will you support this action outside of the group?

If anyone is unable to answer yes to any of the above, ask:

- What has to change in order for you to support this action?
- Put a time limit on the discussion—if consensus is not reached, use the Conflict Resolution Process.

The Toolbox

Consensus — Other Thoughts

What is Consensus?

- **A group reaches consensus when it finally agrees on a choice and each group member can say:**
 - I believe that others understand my point of view
 - I believe I understand others' point of view
 - Whether or not I prefer this decision, I support it (will not undermine it) because it was arrived at opening and fairly and is the best solution for us at this time
- **Facilitator must check for “consensus” and not assume that everyone agrees just because opposition is not voiced overtly.**
 - Restate the agreement, “The consensus is that we will do ...”
 - “Are we all in agreement to go ahead?”
 - “Is there anyone who just can't live with this idea?”
 - “What assurances would you need to make this proposal minimally acceptable to you?”
- **A simple way to check:**
 - Thumbs Up – I strongly support this idea.
 - Thumbs to the Side – I can live with this idea. While it may not meet all of my needs, I don't have strong reservations.
 - Thumbs Down – I cannot live with this idea and have basic concerns that must be heard by the group before we move forward.

Office of Quality Improvement, University of Wisconsin-Madison, “Chapter 3: Ideation and Consensus,”
In *Facilitator Tool Kit*, 7-16.

The Toolbox

The Importance of Consensus

Pros and Cons:

- Pros – collaborative, systematic, participative, discussion-oriented, encourages commitment
- Cons – takes time, requires data and member skills
- Uses – important issues and when total buy-in matters

Importance of building consensus cannot be overstated – facilitators are constantly building consensus with everything they do – Can anyone give me any examples?

- Summarizing a complex set of ideas to the satisfaction of group members
- Gaining buy-in from all members as to the purpose or goal of a session
- Getting everyone’s input into a clear goal and objectives
- Linking thoughts together so people can formulate a common idea
- Making notes on a flipchart in such a way that each member feels they’ve been heard and is satisfied with what’s been recorded.

All facilitation activities strive to be collaborative, participative, synergistic and unifying – therefore all facilitation activities are essentially consensus-building in nature.

Hallmarks of the Consensus Process:

- Lots of ideas being shared
- Everyone’s ideas are heard
- There’s active listening and paraphrasing to clarify ideas
- People build on each other’s ideas
- No one’s trying to push a pre-determined solution – open and objective quest for new options
- The final solution is based on sound information
- When the final solution is reached, people feel that they were part of the decision
- Everyone feels so consulted and involved that even though the final solution isn’t the one they would have identified working on their own, they can readily live with it

Consensus isn’t designed to make people happy or leave them in 100 percent agreement. Its goal is to engage all members in creating an outcome that represents the best feasible course of action with which they can all live.

- Never end a consensus exercise by asking if everyone is happy or if everyone agrees with the outcome.
- For resisters, ask:
 - What stops you for supporting this idea?
 - What changes, amendments, or additions would make this an idea you could live with?

Bens, “Chapter 5: Effective Decision Making,”
In *Facilitation at a Glance!* 2nd ed., 75-77.

The Toolbox

More on Consensus

Examples of consensus-building activities:

- Facilitation itself, because facilitators are constantly building consensus with everything they do
- Summarizing a complex set of ideas to the satisfaction of group members
- Getting everyone's input into a clear goal and objectives for group's activities
- Gaining buy-in from all members to the purpose of the session
- Linking people's ideas together so they feel they're saying the same thing
- Making notes on a flip chart in such a way that at the end of the discussion, each member sees where and how they've contributed and is satisfied with what has been recorded
- Discussing and agreeing on which decision mode to use in a formal decision-making process

Signs that a group is working in a consensus-building manner:

- There are lots of ideas being shared.
- Discussion is based more on facts than feelings.
- Everyone is heard.
- There's active listening and paraphrasing to clarify ideas and ideas are built on by other members.
- No one is trying to push a predetermined solution; instead there's an open and objective quest for solutions.
- When the final solution is reached people feel satisfied that they were part of the decision.
- Everyone feels so consulted and involved that even though the final solution isn't the one they would have chosen working on their own, they can readily "live with it."

Tips for successful consensus:

1. **Listen carefully** by asking for reasons & checking assumptions.
2. Encourage all members to **participate fully** (silence may not mean agreement).
3. **Seek out differences of opinion.**
4. **Search for alternatives that meet the goals of all members** (a solution needn't be win-lose).
5. **Avoid changing your mind ONLY to avoid conflict.**
6. **Don't just argue for your point of view** (modify or combine your idea with others' in response to constructive criticism).
7. **Balance power.**
8. **Make sure there is enough time** (allow for full discussion where a solution can emerge).
9. Check understanding of the decision, and why it was made.

Bens, "Chapter 5: Effective Decision Making" In *Facilitation at a Glance!* 2nd ed., 75-77.

Streibel, Joiner, and Scholtes, *The Team Handbook* 3rd ed.

Wilkinson, *The Secrets of Facilitation.*

The Toolbox

Common Causes of Disagreement

Type of Disagreement	Ease of Resolution	Causes	Solutions
People Involved Lack Shared Information	Easiest to resolve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • People disagreeing have not clearly heard or understood each other's alternative and the reasons for supporting it. • Often a result of assumed understanding of what other person says or means • People may actually agree, they just don't know it so they continue to argue • Common to hear, "is THAT what you meant? Why didn't you SAY that?" • Not hearing each other • Hearing but not understanding each other • Not sharing relevant information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slow down the conversation to encourage careful listening. • DELINEATE: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Start with agreement. ○ Pinpoint source of disagreement ○ Identify all possible alternatives under discussion. ○ Ask each party delineating questions about each alternative. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ How much will it cost? ▪ How long will it take? ▪ Who is involved? ▪ What is involved? ○ Summarize info. ○ Test for consensus. • STRENGTHS/WEAKNESSES • MERGE • WEIGHTED SCORING
People Involved Have Different Values or Experiences	Significantly more difficult to address	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on a set of values, beliefs, or experiences that are not shared by all parties • These different values or beliefs result in parties preferring 1 alternative over another. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Isolate the key underlying values • Create alternatives that combine the values • The real issue isn't the alternatives, but the reasons each party supports one over another. • By focusing on those reasons rather than on the apparently opposing alternatives, solutions can be created that satisfy everyone's needs/reasons.
Outside Factors are Affecting the Disagreement	Most difficult to resolve	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Based on personality, past history, or other factors that have nothing to do with the alternatives on the table • Tend to be irrational • Arguer may not offer any rationale for their position. • Parties often show no interest in resolving the disagreement, considering alternatives, or convincing the other side. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often calls for a deeper intervention and cannot be resolved in a typical facilitated session. • Determine the source of disagreement as quickly as possible to avoid wasting time. • Because the disagreement is not based on the issue at hand, cannot be solved by analyzing the issue. • Issue must be taken to a higher source for resolution.

Bens, "Chapter 5: Effective Decision Making," In *Facilitation at a Glance!* 2nd ed., 75-77.

Streibel, Joiner, and Scholtes, *The Team Handbook* 3rd ed.

Wilkinson, *The Secrets of Facilitation*.

The Toolbox

Brainstorming

Objective: Create as many ideas as possible:

- A good session produces a long list of ideas. Groups use brainstorming more than any other tool.
- Use when:
 - a group wants to consider all possibilities
 - come up with new ideas
 - expand beyond current thinking

Guidelines:

- Everyone is encouraged to produce as many ideas as possible
- Quantity is the goal – so do NOT judge others' ideas
- Record ideas so that everyone can see them

Steps:

- Decide how to use the information – have a purpose for brainstorming
- Read the guidelines to the group
- Give everyone approx. 5 minutes to silently work along to generate ideas
- Invite everyone to share ideas and record them exactly as they are spoken
- Stop the session when no one has any more ideas – be willing to wait through several silent periods so that people can think and do NOT cut them off too soon

Options:

- Record on index cards or other removable notes so they can be moved around and grouped later
- Consider “nominal group technique” if more vocal members are dominating session – i.e. take turns sharing ideas one at a time
- Recording on flip charts, may want to have more than one person to move things along

Group development helps:

- people in a group to better listen to one another
- groups to value and support input from every member
- with judging ideas too quickly – following the guidelines helps people practice listening and suspending judgment – i.e. can learn a new behavior
- people build on the ideas of others

The ToolBox, Part I: The Essential Elements of Facilitation, The Process of Effective Facilitation

Bens, “Chapter 8: Process Tools for Facilitators,” In *Facilitation at a Glance!* 138-141.

The Toolbox

Brainstorming Techniques

Brainstorming:

- Helps a group create several ideas in a short period of time
- Helps a group expand its thinking creatively to include thinking about all dimensions of a problem or solution
- The ideas generated can be paired down or prioritized using one the techniques in the decision-making section of this guide (e.g. matrix, dot voting, 0 to 10 rating, etc.)

• **Accepted ground rules for brainstorming:**

- Never criticize ideas
- Write every idea down on a flip chart so that it is clearly visible
- Everyone should agree on the question or issue being brainstormed
- Record on the flip chart the words of the speaker – ask clarifying questions
- Do it quickly — 5–15 minutes

Other rules:

- Let ideas flow freely
- No evaluating until later
- There are no bad ideas
- Everyone participates
- Build on the ideas of others
- Be creative
- Think in new ways
- Break out of old patterns
- Keep discussion moving

Office of Quality Improvement, University of Wisconsin-Madison, *Facilitator Tool Kit: A Guide for Helping Groups Get Results*, 13.

Ingrid Bens, “Chapter 8: Process Tools for Facilitators,” In *Facilitation at a Glance!* 38-141.

The Toolbox

Three Approaches

1. **Structured Brainstorming (aka Nominal Group Process): each team member gives ideas in turn**

- Give 5-10 minutes to silent write down ideas
- Ask each group member to give one idea and records it on a flip chart
- Participants give ideas in turn or pass
- When all ideas are recorded, participants may ask for clarification, but may not argue the validity of the idea
- Discussion is followed by two rounds of voting

2. **Unstructured Brainstorming: each team members give ideas as they come to mind**

- Ask group members to give ideas as they come to mind
- More relaxing environment and allows participants to build on each other's ideas
- Risk that the most vocal members will dominate the discussion

Variations:

- Visual brainstorming: members produce a picture of how they see a situation or problem
- Analogies/free-word association: unusual connections are made by comparing the problem to unrelated objects, creatures or words, i.e. if the problem was an animal, what kind would it be?

3. **BrainWriting 6-3-5: building on each other's ideas**

- Why and When to Use:
 - Silent brainstorming process that anyone can use to identify new ideas or solutions
 - Goal to generate as many creative ideas as possible
 - Silent work ensures that high verbal people do not overwhelm quieter ones
 - Enables individuals to see what others have written
 - Can be used with groups as small as 6 and as large as 60
- How it works: for more information, refer to the Facilitator Tool Kit from Univ. of Wisconsin
 - Process is conducted in 6 rounds of 5 minutes or less and uses a 3-column worksheet
 - Question or problem is stated at the top of the worksheet
 - Each person writes 3 ideas, using the 3 boxes in the top row
 - The worksheet is passed to the next participant to add three more ideas
 - By the time the worksheet is passed to the 6th person, it will have 18 ideas and the group of 6 will have over 100 ideas
- Variation is to provide a sheet with blank self-stick notes attached and ideas are written on the notes rather than the worksheet — this allows for ideas to be easily grouped into themes (Affinity Process)
 - After the rotations, each participant is asked to contribute ideas from the worksheet
 - Ideas are recorded on a flip chart,
 - When all ideas are recorded, they are narrowed down to a few priorities
 - Combining ideas, grouping into categories, ranking or voting with stickers may be used to select ideas for action
 - The pros and cons of each idea may be discussed.
 - Depending on the situation, more sophisticated prioritizing tools may be used.

Michael Brassard and Daine Ritter, "Brainstorming,"
In *The Memory Jogger 2: Tools for Continuous
Improvement and Effective Planning*,
(Salem, NH: GOAL/
QPC, 2008) 23-33.

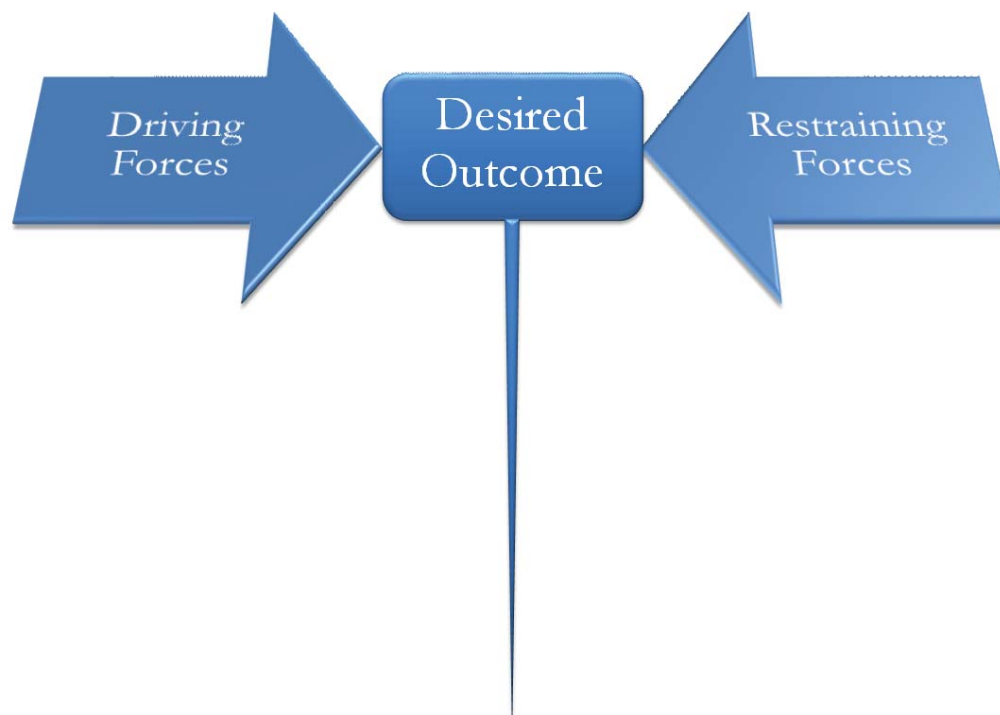
The Toolbox

Force Field Analysis

A tool to illustrate the forces for change and forces for stability that are influencing a situation.

A good force field analysis helps a group make plans to create something new from a current situation. Moving from the current state to a new state requires an understanding of forces for change and forces for stability. These forces provide information about “leverage points” for changing a situation. A force field analysis is a good place to start when considering less concrete or tangible situations.

1. Describe the current state or situation.
2. Describe the desired future state or situation.
3. Identify the forces that will compel us to change (called forces for change or driving forces).
4. Identify the forces that will compel us to remain the same (called forces for stability or restraining forces).
5. Set action steps to enhance driving forces and reduce restraining forces.



Kurt Lewin, *Field Theory in Social Science*, (New York, New York: Harper & Row, 1951).

The Toolbox

The Parking Lot

The parking lot: A place to record items that would take the group away from its current task, but that need to be further explored later.

The parking lot is a list of items that will be dealt with at a later time. During a meeting, topics come up that are important but not related to the current task of a meeting. Or, more information may be needed before the discussion can proceed. Recording items in the parking lot helps the group stay focused on the task at hand while still assuring group members that the ideas will not be lost or forgotten.

It is important to specify a time to return to the parking lot. Also the parking lot should not be used to shut down opposing points of view.

1. Label a flip chart page as the “Parking Lot.”
2. Explain how the parking lot will be used.
3. Record appropriate items on the parking lot.
4. At the end of the meeting specify a time that items in the parking lot will be discussed.

Robert M. Schwarz, *The Skilled Facilitator: A Comprehensive Resource for Consultants, Facilitators, Managers, Trainers, and Coaches*, 2nd ed. (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

The Toolbox

Multi-voting

Multi-voting is a simple and quick tool that helps a group sort a list or reduce the number of items on a list. It can be used to work with the information generated during a brainstorming session.

Groups can use this method in setting priorities when there are many options. It can be used to identify where to start in addressing an issue, which project to start first, what is our top core value, etc. For example, suppose a group has generated a list of all the things they believe they should address this school year. They know they can't do it all. This method would help give a sense (albeit unscientific) of which items are most important and should be addressed first.

1. Begin by brainstorming all the options and list on a flipchart in any order. Leave enough space between the items to place sticky dots.
2. Give each person in the group 10 dots (for this exercise, color is irrelevant). Instruct them that to indicate their priorities, they are to “use all 10 dots but no more than 4 on any ONE item.” Therefore, 4 dots would indicate their top priority. Some items will have no dots.
3. Participants walk up to the flipcharts and place their dots under the items. If you have a larger group, split the items on 2 flipcharts on opposite sides of the room so as not to take too much time or cause congestion. Start half the group on each chart.
4. When everyone has placed his/her dots, count the number of dots for each item and make a priority listing on a new flipchart page. There usually are a few clear winners. You may then discuss with the group if they agree those should be top priorities on which to start working. It does not mean the others are eliminated.

This exercise creates a “fun” activity, good visual, and limits discussion if it has gone on too long, as well as getting input from the entire group.

The Toolbox

Debrief

A tool used to evaluate the effectiveness of a meeting or a task.

- **Debriefing helps groups learn about how its members are working together and what they can do to improve.**
- **Every member should have the opportunity to participate in the debriefing discussion. Groups should agree to hold debriefing discussions at the completion of significant tasks or projects.**
- **Facilitator leads a discussion about the following questions:**
 1. What was your experience when you were working on this task (or in this meeting)?

2. What went well?

3. What did not go well?

4. How can we do things differently next time?

The Toolbox

Measuring Impact/Progress

Describe your goal:

If your goal doesn't have an action word in it, search for and add the appropriate action word to the goal so that what you intend to accomplish is clear.

1. Who are the stakeholders who will be affected by this goal?

- | | | |
|-----------------------------------|---|---------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faculty | <input type="checkbox"/> Department Chair | <input type="checkbox"/> Others |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Staff | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Academic Departments | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Students | <input type="checkbox"/> Other Administrative Offices | |

2. What does this goal primarily aim to achieve?

- | | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improving quality | <input type="checkbox"/> Improving effectiveness | <input type="checkbox"/> Other |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Improving efficiency | <input type="checkbox"/> Monitoring progress | |

3. How will you know when you have successfully achieved your goal?

4. Re-state/refine your answer(s) to question 3 so your measure of success:

- is clearly defined (so another person in your department/office would understand it)
- can be measured at the end of the year (assuming annual goals are congruent with the budget year. A planning cycle other than one year may work better in some settings.)
- can be compared over time
- tells you (or will tell you) whether the effort made any difference, had any impact

Office of Quality Improvement, University of Wisconsin-Madison, "Appendix R: Worksheet for Identifying Impact Measures," *Facilitator Tool Kit*, 31-33.

The Toolbox

Measuring Impact/Progress

5. Are the data to answer question 4 (your measures of success) available now? If yes, how are we doing right now? If not, how can we get this data? Who will be in charge of collecting it?

Data to be collected or to continue being collected	Baseline (How are we doing right now?)	Who is collecting it (or will be) and how?

6. At checkpoints throughout the year:

- Are we collecting the data we will need to evaluate at the end of the year?
- What do the data tell us right now? Are things going as planned? Do we need to adjust our plan?
- Questions this information raises?

7. At the end of the year:

- How do the results compare with what we expected would happen?
- What have we learned?
- Do we need to change our hypotheses about cause-and-effect? What do we know about the about the needs of our stakeholders now? What should we do differently in the future?
- Will the goal and/or measure of success stay the same or change based on this past year's experience?

Office of Quality Improvement, University of Wisconsin-Madison, "Appendix R: Worksheet for Identifying Impact Measures," *Facilitator Tool Kit*, 31-33.

Additional Resources

Facilitation

Anderson, Marian et al. *Facilitation Resources*, St. Paul: University of Minnesota Extension, <http://www.extension.umn.edu/distribution/citizenship/DH7437.html>, 2001.

Bens, Ingrid. *Facilitation at a Glance! A Pocket Guide of Tools and Techniques for Effective Meeting Facilitation*. 2nd ed. Salem, NH: GOAL/QPC, 2008. Handy pocket guide summarizing principles, tools and techniques of facilitation.

Michael Brassard and Daine Ritter, *The Memory Jogger 2: Tools for Continuous Improvement and Effective Planning*, Salem, NH: GOAL/QPC, 2008.

Justice, Tom, and David W. Jamieson. *The Facilitator's Fieldbook*. 2nd ed. New York: American Management Association, 2006. (HRD Press) This publication also grants permission to use the materials for your own purposes.

Kaner, Sam, with Lenny Lind, Catherine Toldi, Sarah Fisk, and Duane Berger. *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-making*. Second ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass/Wiley, 2007. This is one of those sensible “toolkit” publications for facilitators that gives permission for using materials in our organizations.

Office of Quality Improvement, University of Wisconsin-Madison, *Facilitator Tool Kit: A Guide for Helping Groups Get Results*, Madison: University of Wisconsin, <http://oqi.wisc.edu/resourceibrary/uploads/resources/Facilitator%20Tool%20Kit.pdf>, 2007.

Schwarz, Roger M. *The Skilled Facilitator: A Comprehensive Resource for Consultants, Facilitators, Managers, Trainers, and Coaches*. 2nd ed. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002. The classic almost-scholarly work on facilitation, updated in a second edition.

Schwarz, Roger, Anne Davidson, Peg Carlson, Sue McKinney, and others. *The Skilled Facilitator Fieldbook: Tips, Tools, and Tested Methods for Consultants, Facilitators, Managers, Trainers, and Coaches*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005. An excellent companion volume to the classic above.

Weaver, Richard G., and John D. Farrell. *Managers as Facilitators: A Practical Guide to Getting Work Done in a Changing Workplace*. San Francisco: Berrett-Koehler, 1997. Includes good coverage of facilitation and what to do when interventions are needed. Especially useful for thumb-nail summaries of most facilitation tools.

Wilkinson, Michael. *The Secrets of Facilitation: The S.M.A.R.T. Guide to Getting Results with Groups*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

Additional Resources

Conflict Management

Bierema, L. L. “How to Reframe Conversation Through Dialogue.” In M. Silberman (Ed.), *The 2001 Team and Organization Development Sourcebook*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 2001.

Hammond, Sue Annis, and Andrea B. Mayfield. *The Thin Book of Naming Elephants: How to Surface Undiscussables for Greater Organizational Success*. Bent, OR: Thin Book Publishing, 2004.

Noonan, William R. *Discussing the Undiscussable: a Guide to Overcoming Defensive Routines in the Workplace*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2007. A long-awaited expansion on earlier work.

Chris Argyris on the topic – work that Roger Schwarz incorporated into his basic groundrules for groups in his works on facilitation. Relates to Hammond and Mayfield on “naming elephants.”

Scott, Susan. *Fierce Conversations: Achieving Success at Work & in Life, One Conversation at a Time*. New York: Viking, 2002. A guide to planning and having those difficult conversations.

Stone, Douglas, Bruce Patton, and Sheila Heen. *Difficult Conversations: How to Discuss What Matters Most*. New York: Penguin Books, 1999. One of the better works on the topic.

Teams

Lencioni, Patrick. *The Five Dysfunctions of a Team*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002.

Scholtes, Peter R., Brian L. Joiner, and Barbara J. Streibel. *The Team Handbook*. 3rd ed. Madison, WI: Oriel, 2003. Perhaps the second-most cited work on teams (after Katzenbach & Smith). Excellent and well-organized.

The Team Memory Jogger: A Pocket Guide for Team Members. Madison, WI: GOAL/QPC and Oriel Incorporated, 1995. A handy, small, short-hand guide to solving team issues.

Meetings

Lencioni, Patrick. *Death by Meeting*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004.

Doyle, Michael, and David Straus. *How to Make Meetings Work*. New York: Penguin, 1982.

THANK YOU!

