



## Facilitation Skills

### Course Description

It is impossible to be part of an organization today and not attend meetings. Staff meetings, project meetings, and planning and coordinating meetings all take time.

There has been a growing realization that we have to pay attention to the process elements of meetings if we want them to be effective. With its focus on asking rather than telling, and listening to build consensus, facilitation is the new leadership ideal, the core competency everybody needs. Managers and supervisors are often asked to facilitate rather than instruct or manage their meetings and training sessions.

How can you facilitate, rather than control, group decision-making and team interaction? With no formal training, people may find it difficult to make the transition from instructors or managers to facilitators.

This two-day workshop has been created to make core facilitation skills better understood and readily available for your organization. It represents materials and ideas that have been tested and refined over twenty years of active facilitation in all types of settings.

### Course Objectives

Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:

- ◆ Distinguish facilitation from instruction and training
- ◆ Identify the competencies linked to effective small group facilitation
- ◆ Understand the difference between content and process
- ◆ Identify the stages of team development and ways to help teams through each stage
- ◆ Use common process tools to make meetings easier and more productive

### Course Content

#### Course Overview

You will spend the first part of the day getting to know participants and discussing what will take place during the workshop. Students will also have an opportunity to identify their personal learning objectives.

#### Defining Your Role

To begin, participants will explore the differences between facilitation, training, and chairing.

#### How Facilitators Work

Next, participants will explore key facilitation skills, levels of facilitation, facilitation language, and things to do to ensure facilitation success.

#### Establishing Ground Rules

In this session, participants will discuss ground rules, also known as norms. They will also work together to generate a list of ground rules for the remainder of the workshop.

#### Content and Process

While facilitators are responsible for the process, it is participants who are responsible for and manage the content. This session will explore the differences between these two aspects of a meeting.

#### Types of Thinking

Next, participants will learn about divergent thinking and convergent thinking, as well as the grey area (also known as the Groan Zone) between the two.

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#### Handling Controversial Issues

In this session, participants will learn how to handle controversial issues in a neutral and professional way.

#### Communication Skills

This session will explore the building blocks of good communication: active listening, questioning skills, probing techniques, and managing your body language.

#### Listening For Common Ground

For most people, it seems to be instinctive to try to find something in common with their fellow humans. In this session, we will explore the importance of listening for common ground in facilitation.

#### Common Facilitation Techniques

This session will begin with a lecture on 16 important facilitation techniques. Then, participants will divide into groups to prepare and present a short demonstration on a chosen technique.

#### Providing Effective Feedback

Part of your role as a facilitator includes providing and accepting feedback. This session will give participants some tips on giving and receiving feedback. It will conclude with an exercise that will help them practice this skill.

#### Managing Divergent Perspectives

Next, participants will learn some ways to manage divergent perspectives. Then, they will apply their knowledge to a case study.

#### The Language of Facilitation

In this session, participants will learn about some communication elements that are unique to facilitation. Then, they will apply their knowledge to an interactive case study.

#### Building Agendas

Part of facilitating meetings is developing an agenda. This session will outline a brief, easy process to help facilitators build a good agenda.

#### Dealing with Difficult Dynamics

In this session, participants will complete a mix and match exercise to identify possible difficult behaviors and ways to manage them. Then, participants will learn about and practice twelve easy, effective ways to intervene in a group discussion.

#### Building Sustainable Agreements

Getting a group to come to an agreement is not much good if that agreement is not supported by true consensus. This session will give participants ways to build sustainable agreements.

#### Stages of Team Development

Next, participants will learn about Tuckman and Jensen's Forming, Storming, Norming, Performing, and Adjourning model, which outlines the stages of team development. Participants will also identify some ways to help groups through each stage.

#### Analysis Tools

The final session will introduce participants to two decision-making tools: SWOT analysis and force field analysis.

#### Workshop Wrap-Up

At the end of the course, students will have an opportunity to ask questions and fill out an action plan.