

## **Facilitator Guidelines**

The facilitator is a "guide" or "discussion leader" for the group. Facilitating is a way of providing leadership without dominating the discussion. A good facilitator focuses on both content and process.

**Content:** What is the issue, question or task that the group will address?

**Process:** What is the group dynamic? What are the methods or procedures that will be most useful to keep the discussion moving forward?

### **What does a facilitator do?**

- Pays attention to the time and the space
- Evokes participation and creativity
- Pays attention to the group dynamic, taking turns, who talks and who doesn't
- Maintains ground rules of respect and tolerance for varying opinions
- Maintains personal integrity

### **Facilitator Characteristics**

- Initiates conversation
- Asks for other's opinions rather than always having to offer their own
- Listens without interrupting
- Looks people in the eye when talking to them
- Keeps the big picture in mind
- Is naturally curious about people, things, and life in general
- Has a good understanding of the topic being discussed
- Is more like a coach than a boss

### **Participant Pitfalls**

- Confusion about the topic
- Dislike for the topic or the nature of the discussion
- Feelings of insecurity based on ability or others in the room
- Feelings of superiority to others in the room or towards the facilitator
- Fear of speaking or sharing of ideas in front of others
- Dominating the conversation

### **Facilitator Best Practices**

- Listen actively
- Ask questions
- Check for common understanding of terms and definitions
- Track discussions
- Summarize
- Use appropriate language
- Take notes (or ask someone else to)

### **Communication between facilitators (sometimes you get to work in a team)**

- Ask for help if you need it
- Know the job division between you and your partner
- Check in with each other often