**Tips for Group Facilitators**

Effective facilitators unlock the power of the individual and show groups how to reach their desired goals. As facilitation skills improve within the group, people become more creative and productive, and are able to seize opportunities for dramatic gains in their struggle.

**Creating the Environment:**
1. Post Group-related quotes, banners, posters, photos etc on the wall.
2. Clip cartoons, newspaper articles on issues or themes and post them around the room.
3. Use color to enliven the room: flip charts, posters, tent cards, etc.
4. Learn to make simple line drawings and incorporate them into your visual aids (flip charts and slides).
5. Bring toys into the room related to the topic being discussed. For example, if training on problem solving, bring in different types of puzzles and brain teasers.

**Icebreaker Ideas:**
1. Have Group members write down 3 truths and 1 lie about themselves. Then have the rest of the Group guess which is the lie.
2. Have Group members identify one thing others don’t know about them. Then have the group guess who’s who.
3. Have each person identify several people on the Group who are most different from themselves. Then try to find 5 things in common with those "different" people.
4. Have each person share three rules they live by. Then develop rules for the Group to live by.
5. Write 3X5 cards with statements about Groups (ex: Good Groups never disagree). Distribute cards to Group members and have them swap until they hold a card they agree with. Swapping must be done silently, without knowing the card they will receive.

**Involvement Tips:**
1. Use a Koosh Ball to get participation. The person with the Koosh has the floor. When they are finished speaking, they toss the Koosh to someone else. This allows the Group to direct the discussion and prevents interruptions.
2. Have individuals write one question they want answered about the topic of the meeting on a 3x5 card. Then revisit the question at the end of the meeting and have their Group mates answer the questions.
3. Have individuals write down their feelings about the Group on 3x5 cards. Then collect all cards and redistribute them. Have Group members read and explain the cards based on what they think the writer meant. This allows issues and concerns to be brought forward without fear of punishment.
4. When brainstorming, have Group members write their ideas on post-it notes. Then
have them post the notes on a wall or flip chart and cluster related notes.
5. Use chips to control talkers. Each person receives 3-5 chips, each worth up to 1 minute of floor time. When you want to speak, you turn in a chip. When chips are gone, you cannot speak.
6. Have each person draw their vision of success for the Group (pictures only - no words). Then have others explain the vision.
7. Have each person complete this sentence: "One thing I need to understand on this Group is..." Then discuss the answers.

**Meeting Facilitation Tips:**
1. Use and post an agenda. When discussion strays, use the agenda to bring the group back.
2. Use a "Parking Lot or Bike Rack" flip chart - record side issues or those outside of the agenda on a flip chart. At the end of the meeting, determine when those issues will be addressed.
3. When you want to lead the discussion, stand front and center in the room. When you want the Group to lead the discussion, sit or stand to the side of the room. Changing position sends cues to the Group and helps you maintain control.
4. Capture minutes and decisions on flip charts during the meeting.
5. Set ground rules as a Group and review at every meeting.

**Conflict Management Tips:**
1. Have the Group identify the criteria they will use to make a decision. Then evaluate ideas against each criteria.
2. Post each position on a flip chart, with two charts per idea (one pro and one con). Have participants silently post their ideas on the appropriate flip chart. Each idea must be no more than 5 words in length. Each person can spend no more than 1 minute at a flip chart.
3. When two people disagree, ask each to reflect the opposite position using active listening. Continue reflecting until the other person agrees that they fully understand the position.
4. Summarize the issues on which there is agreement and confirm to show progress and possibilities.
5. When there appears to be agreement, confirm with each Group member.
6. Look for non-verbal signs of dissent and address them openly.
7. Divide Group into two groups. Assign each group either positive conflict behaviors or negative conflict behaviors and have them identify five items on their assigned list. Then have groups act out the behaviors on their list while the other group guesses. Debrief by developing a list of ground rules for conflict on the Group.
8. Never take sides. Instead, suggest a way for the Group to overcome its roadblock.

**Tips for Ending a Session:**
1. Ask for one thing each person learned in the session.
2. Revisit action items and assignments and confirm due dates.
3. Develop a game or quiz for the Group to see how many questions they can
answer correctly about the meeting content. For example, if the meeting was a "get acquainted" meeting for a new Group, one question might be: "Which person on your Group has been to Graceland three times?"

4. Ask each person to share one action they will take in the next week as a result of the Group session.

5. Have each person draw a picture of something they learned in the meeting. Then have others guess what it is.

Questions for Getting Feedback on How You're Doing:

1. What is one thing I could do differently next time in my role as facilitator?
2. What would you like me to be doing that I am not?
3. What could I have done to make this meeting more productive?
4. What should I be doing to make you (the Group) self-sufficient (not need me)?
5. What has to happen for you to rate our meetings a "10?"

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