Facilitation Skills for Evaluators
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The 3 P’s:
• Purpose
• Process
• People
• Understand the key steps in any facilitation
• Examine the core skills and practices you need to know
• Explore how evaluators use facilitation in their M and E work
• Share tools and tips for effective facilitation
Introduction: Process

• **Core:**
  – Understanding Facilitation
  – Planning a Facilitation
  – Core Skills and Practices
  – Facilitation Processes and Techniques

• But tailored to your work situations and the key questions you want answered

• Small and large group work
Introduction: Process

Workshop Binder
1. Introduction
2. What is Facilitation?
3. Core Skills and Practices
4. Facilitation Processes and Techniques
5. Special Topics
6. The Art of Facilitation
7. Conclusion
8. Appendices
Introduction: Process

Ground Rules

Parking Lot

Logistics
Introduction: People

1. Appoint a Facilitator and Time-Keeper
2. Introduce yourself
   • Name, Organization, Country
   • The one question you would like answered today about facilitation in your M&E work.
3. Write out your group’s questions – one per card – no duplicates - for wall posting later
4. Timing – 10 minutes
What is Facilitation?

To enable, to make easy, to help make happen
Continuum of Roles

Expert -- Trainer -- Facilitator

Content focus

Process focus
Principles for Facilitating Adults

- Assess Needs
- Atmosphere
- Methodology
- Real and Relevant
- Respect
- Accountability
When to Use a Facilitator

**Use a Facilitator when:**
- A neutral third party is needed
- All members want to participate actively
- The issue is complex and the solutions not clear
- There are diverse opinions and emotional issues with a high chance of conflict, and/or
- A fair, solid process that ensures commitment to agreements is needed.

**Don’t use a facilitator when:**
- There is clarity around the content, issue, options and potential directions
- Internal group leaders have strong facilitation skills and credibility
- There is maturity and experience with process and content within the group
- Time is limited, and/or
- Group process and building ownership and commitment are not critical.
Internal or External Facilitator

**Advantages**

- They’re assumed to be a credible, expert facilitator
- They’re above the fray and can walk away afterward
- They’re unencumbered by political or emotional baggage
- They can afford to take more risks
- They don’t have to live with the decisions
- They get paid for their efforts as a professional

**Disadvantages**

- They lack data about the group and the organization, such as its history
- They don’t know the personalities of the individuals involved
- They don’t get to see the initiatives of the group unfold (also an advantage)
- They need to create rapport and comfort to ensure trust
Core Skills & Core Practices (p. 9)
Set the right atmosphere

• Set an atmosphere that recognises everyone has unique and valuable knowledge and experience

• Encourage participants to contribute fully

• Be relaxed; it is OK to have fun and enjoy

• Ensure the physical environment is conducive to working together, e.g., light, heat, space, and food.
Share responsibility & control
Listen actively

Listening requires energy, concentration and interaction with speaker
Active Listening Techniques

- Attending
- Asking
- Encouraging
- Reflecting
- Paraphrasing
- Summarizing
Paraphrase & summarize

**Paraphrase** (translate)
- Reflect back on what someone said
- Know s/he has been heard
- Ensure everyone understood
- Clarity
- “So what you’re saying is ……?”
Paraphrase & summarize

Summarize
- Move group on
- Clarify where at
- Tool for consensus building
- Simple, concise and accurate
- Use participants’ words
Listen Actively Task

1. Think about a facilitation situation at work that stands out for you:
   - In pairs, one partner describes the facilitation situation and the other partner listens actively (1-2 minutes per person)
   - Reverse roles (same timing)
   - Assess each other using the Active Listening Checklist (1-2 minutes per person)
Tool: Active Listening Checklist

- Did I / they listen with my whole body and mind?
- Did I / they demonstrate genuine interest in what the other person was saying?
- Did I / they put the talker at ease?
- Did I / they keep my mind open?
- Did I / they resist distractions?
- Did I / they hold my tongue and not interrupt?
- Was I / were they patient?
- Did I / they ask clarifying questions to reduce misunderstanding?
- Did I / they listen more than I talked?

In order to improve my active listening skills, I will / they should:
- Start doing: _____________________________________________________________
- Stop Doing: ____________________________________________________________
Keep on track with time & process

- Set time guidelines
- Bring group back on track by repeating question or topic
- Park items
- Negotiate time
Questioning Skills

• WHAT?
• SO WHAT?
• NOW WHAT?

As evaluators, when do and when should we use our facilitation questioning skills?
Facilitation Don’ts

• Lose track of outcomes or time
• Be insensitive to the group’s differences and needs
• Leave participants confused about questions, processes, and/or instructions
• Let discussions get sidetracked
• Forget to check group concerns
• Change the meaning of what participants say
Facilitation Don’ts

• Be defensive

• Get into personal battles

• Insult or belittle someone

• Let a few people dominate

• Try to be the centre of attention; most important person in the room

• Impose your views on the group.
Facilitation Do’s

• Be clear on what you are trying to accomplish
• Create a supportive environment
• Help people understand why they are here
• Speak in simple and direct language
• Treat all participants equally
• Stay neutral
• View yourself as a servant of the group
• Be flexible and change direction if necessary
Facilitation Do’s

• Model effective facilitation skills
• Listen actively to all that is being said
• Encourage participants to contribute fully
• Build trust and respect among group
• Encourage dialogue and learning
• Ensure participants feel ownership
• End on a positive note.
Facilitation Outcomes and Techniques

**Facilitation Steps**

1. **Plan**

2. **Start**

3. **Facilitate Session**

   - 3a. Building Understanding
   - 3b. Making a Decision
   - 3c. Planning for Action

4. **Finish**
Facilitation Processes and Techniques

Stage 1: Planning the Facilitation p. 22
Stage 2: Starting a Facilitation p. 28
Stage 3: Facilitating the Session p. 32
Stage 4: Finishing the Session p. 56
Facilitation in our M&E Work

1. Appoint a Facilitator and Note-taker

2. Have a discussion on:
   - How you use facilitation in your M&E work
   - Anything that makes facilitation “unique” or “different” because it has to do with M&E?

3. Timing

4. Sharing in Plenary – Large Group Discussion
Special Topics
1. What is the dysfunctional behaviour?

2. How can a facilitator deal effectively with this behaviour?

3. Other dysfunctional behaviours?
Dealing with Dysfunctional Behaviour

WHO AM I?
The Dysfunction Arc

As the degree of dysfunction increases, the severity of the disruption caused by dysfunction increases as well.
Conflict

A conflict occurs when two or more related parties hold different interests. In order to promote, or achieve their interests, these parties will respond to conflict in a variety of ways, including healthy debate, discussion, and can escalate to not hearing each other, disrespectful behaviours, and unwillingness to work together.
Techniques for Facilitating Conflict

• Venting emotions
• Clarifying conflicts
• Naming the Elephant in the room
• Understanding positions and interests
• Finding common ground
Facilitating Conflict

- Establish a safe and supportive climate where people can air differences freely without fear of recrimination
- Stay calm and focused
- Listen actively; hear what is said and what is not said. Emphasize listening to each other
- Focus participants on ideas and issues, and solutions not problems
- Confront poor behaviour and revisit the norms established
Facilitating Conflict

- Do not allow people to get personal and blame others
- Be assertive in protecting all members of the group
- Clarify the points of difference in a neutral, factual manner
- Make sure everyone stays involved
- Call a break if the discussion gets too emotional
- Summarize agreed upon areas. Bring closure to the discussion by clarifying the next steps and how unresolved issues will be dealt with in future.
Outstanding Questions?
The Art of Facilitation: Being Conscious

- Process
  - Participants’ level of interaction and body language
- Content
  - When & how to intervene?
- Time
- Desired Outcome
- Physical Environment
- Where to from here?
- Power imbalance
Facilitator Affirmations

• I am focused on the outcomes desired by the group and remain flexible in how to achieve them
• I trust in and respect the intelligence of all members of the group
• I ensure all are clear and agree on who makes the final decision
• I ensure full participation by all, regardless of position or status
• I use a variety of skills, processes, and different roles including being an expert on content as well as guiding process
Facilitator Affirmations

• I am a model for listening and building consensus, often bridging, paraphrasing and summarising what was said

• I seek to create mutual understanding, recognizing the value of differing views

• I use facilitation process to build the capacity of and confidence in the use of evaluation to improve programs and services
Facilitator Affirmations

• I recognize that there is no ‘one right way and answer’ in a facilitated process, and guard against seeking perfection, and

• I value feedback and reflection, my own and others, and use it to enhance my facilitation practice.
Closing Thoughts

- Practice, practice, practice
- Self-reflection and awareness key
- Feedback from others is invaluable
- Observe and learn from other facilitators
- Lots of great (and free) resources on the web (check them out in the Appendices)
- Have Ben’s Facilitation at a Glance Pocket Book for everyone – free – just fill out the workshop evaluation form
- Good luck and have fun – thank you!