



Let's start with a little housekeeping, shall we?

This preview pack includes 12 Facilitator Cards (a preview of the 60 that will be included in the deck). We'll talk about how we use them, and give you some pointers for printing them out.

It also includes the basics of using the cards, as well as detailed write-ups for 4 of the cards (the full Facilitator Cards Facilitator Guide will have detailed write-ups all of them).

And bathrooms are down the hall on the left (did we get it right?).

One last thing before we start: please tell us what you think. We welcome constructive criticism regarding the cards, the guide, the preview pack, and our website. More than welcome, we'd *love* to hear it!

This project is *for facilitators by facilitators*. We know the importance of feedback for improving our process — and we know you know it, too — so if you have a thought, please get it out of your head and into ours. We invite you to share whatever surfaces. No need to raise your hand.

Email hello@facilitator.cards or fill out this form to share what's on your mind: bit.ly/replytofc

Using the Cards

We bet you could put these tools to work without any guidance from us. You're a facilitator — a magician of the human psyche! A prophet of energy dips, corraller of down-the-rabbit-whole trips, and knower of when people have to pee. This is your wheelhouse, and we thank you for inviting us in.

Consider us your humble guides, here to show you around a few different aspects of the cards we're excited about, and to share some of the thinking that went into creating them, giving you a glimpse through our eyes.

That said, if you use Facilitator Cards for your planning, for responding to your group's needs, or for improvising when the unexpected comes up — however you're using them — you're using them right. You really can't do it wrong¹.

What Every Card Has in Common

Every card features a processing tool (the general way we're referring to the activities, steps, frameworks, etc.).

They all have a front with the processing tool's name, and icons for what it's great for, group configuration, and props. There is also a blank space where you can write notes to yourself, the name of the activity you're going to use this process for in your facilitation, etc. More on this later.

On the back, there is a short description of the process. Our hope here is that the description is robust enough to jog your memory in the moment or give you the necessary steps to recreate the process if you've experienced it. But it's not long enough that we expect you to read it and have zero questions if you've never experienced that process yourself².

Overall, we've kept the cards simple. The icons and colors help you recognize what it is, what it's for, and how you can use it — all at a glance. This will make them as useful during a break in a facilitation when you're deciding what to do next, as they are when you're collaborating with a cofacilitator before a training to plan your agenda.

Four Colors. Four Fors.

The colors on the backgrounds of the cards indicate what each card is “for”, specifically the outcomes of the facilitation process that we think that process is uniquely great at achieving. We can think of these as different “modes” of facilitation:



◎ **Teal is for Emotion.** These tools are great for surfacing thoughts, feelings, reactions, and predispositions from your participants. Think of “emoting” as the main verb here.



◎ **Green is for Ideation.** These tools are great for forming, generating, and brainstorming ideas and concepts. Think of “ideating” as the main verb here.



◎ **Yellow is for Clarification.** These tools are great for distilling, pinpointing, getting to the bottom, and finding common ground. Think of “clarifying” as the main verb here.



◎ **Red is for Execution.** These tools are great for decision-making, planning, strategizing, and directing. Think of “executing”³ as the main verb here.





¹ Something we believe so adamantly that we'd love to hear from you, especially if you're using them in ways we don't recommend. Our bet is you're not doing anything wrong, but instead that you've figured out something brilliant we overlooked. Would you care to share with the rest of the group?

² That's where the Facilitator Guide will come in handy.


³ A plan, not a person!

Group Size Matters

There are four different group configurations we group the cards into:




-  **Individual** means each participant is working through the process on their own.
-  **Pairs** means everyone is working through the process with a buddy.
-  **Small Groups** means the full group is divided into pods of 3 - 4 to work through the process.
-  **Full Group** means the entire group is working through the process together.







If you're thinking, "But I've done that process and it wasn't in that group configuration..." Yes!

 Great! Most of these processes can work in a variety of group configurations (many even work in all four!). Actually, most of them are flexible enough to work in different modes as well (i.e., for emotion, ideation, clarification, and execution). We'll get to that in a second.

Propping Yourself Up for Success

The props icons help you know what you need to have in your bag of tricks in order to use that process. We've tried to limit the props to essentials that most facilitators we know often have on-hand, and all are things you can easily locate in an office supply store.

-  **Flipchart:** a large writing surface with removable sheets (often interchangeable with whiteboard)
-  **Marker:** bold enough to read from a distance (no fine point felt pens), having both flipchart markers and some regular wide-tipped Crayola would be the dream
-  **Writing Utensils:** pens or pencils (anything people can write with quickly to read later themselves), at least one per participant

-  **Paper:** a stack of (scrap) blank paper (generally enough pieces of paper for your group size, but more is usually better here)
-  **Sticky Notes:** for writing on and sticking to a wall, flipchart, or other surface (typically 3"x3" will work, but for some processes you might find smaller or bigger stickies work better)
-  **Tape:** a roll of masking, blue (painter's), or cellophane tape for adhering things to a surface
-  **Index Cards:** a stack of 3" x 5" cards (generally more than one per participant, and you can usually substitute small sheets of scrap paper)
-  **Custom:** some special prop needs to be created or procured, explained in the description
-  **None:** no props needed

But Can't You Do That Like This?

Maybe you recognize a processing tool you've used many times, or participated in, and we have assigned it a different group configuration, mode, or prop than what you were expecting. Have you been doing it wrong? Are we doing it wrong?

Here's the skinny: every processing tool included in the Facilitator Cards deck is useful in a *wide* range of situations. That's one of our criteria for inclusion. In categorizing the cards, we are trying to do two things.

First and foremost, we are trying to highlight the things each processing tool does exceptionally well. You can use hammers to bend pipe. Screwdrivers to open beer bottles. But that's not where hammers and screwdrivers excel. There's a better tool in both of those cases to accomplish that goal. We categorized the processing tools in the deck to answer "If this were a physical tool, what exact purpose was it crafted for?"

Secondly, we default to variety for vari-

ety's sake. If a process is just as good for small groups as it is for pairs, but we only have one other process for pairs in that group, we're going to make that a pairs card. We want the deck to be as useful in as many situations for as many different types of facilitation as possible, and variety is one of the ways we're accomplishing that. Bonus: your participants will appreciate mixing things up.

So, if a tool is assigned a designation you disagree with, what do you do? Whatever you want.

Feel free to scribble out our small group icon and draw a full group one. Use an ideation card for emotion, or an emotion card for execution. Add props into a process that says none are required. You know your process, your preferences, and your participants better than we ever will. It's your deck of cards. Write your own house rules⁴.

(No) Two Facilitation Processes of a Kind

Like poker hands, we don't anticipate you going very far with only one card. Facilitator Cards are well-suited to be paired with other Facilitator Cards, creating intentional sequences to engage your participants, delight your clients, and accomplish your goals.

As you're using the cards, think about how one process will complement another. Generally speaking:

- ☉ Emotion processes lead well into other Emotion processes or Ideation.
- ☉ Ideation leads well into other Ideation, Emotion, or Clarification.
- ☉ Clarification leads well into other Clarification, Ideation, or Execution.
- ☉ Execution leads well into other execution or clarification.

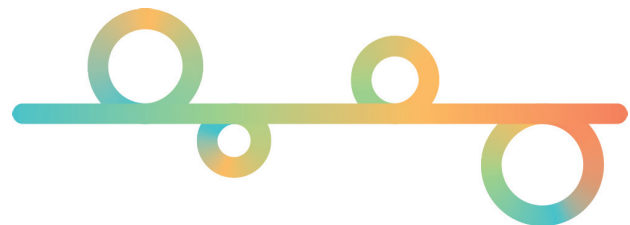
What you might notice here is a linear flow, starting with Emotion and ending with Execu-

tion. That's the underlying theory behind this deck, that flowing in that order is beneficial for most facilitation goals, most of the time.



But here's the thing: you might have a dozen "mini-goals" for any given "facilitation." These are both broad ideas. You can bounce from an emotion process, to ideation, clarification, then execution in a matter of minutes. We often do! Have you ever gone to dinner with a group of friends? "I'm feeling like." (Emotion) "Oh, what if we went to..." (Ideation) "Wait, are they open? Do they have...?" (Clarification) "Alright, does that work for everyone? Let's go!" (Execution)

Within the context of one training, retreat, school period, meeting, or wherever your facilitation is taking place, you'll likely loop through several smaller iterations of the Emotion-to-Ideation-to-Clarification-to-Execution flow.



Facilitator Cards will help you be mindful of this flow — going along with it, or interrupting it, based on your situational needs and what the group is telling you. Swapping a card based on something you notice, or adding another card to stay in the same mode for a little longer, are easy enough, but also require a mix of art and magic and experience and luck.

Here are some general bumpers of guidance for things to avoid — or think carefully about — when you're creating sequences of processes:

- ☉ Ideation or Clarification that happens before Emotion will likely just be Emotion.
- ☉ The cards in the neighboring parts of the flow (e.g., Emotion & Ideation, Ideation & Clarification, Clarification & Execution)

⁴ We'll even help! A big portion of the Facilitator Guide is dedicated to walking through ways the tools work well as not-assigned, giving you plenty of ideas for how you might tailor the process to your setting and needs.

are often interchangeable, and can be used well for each other's outcome.

- ◎ If a process doesn't work for your outcome (e.g., an Ideation card doesn't generate any ideas), try another process that has a different group configuration or props from that same mode (e.g., an Individual Ideation process if the one you tried was Full Group).
- ◎ If your group is stuck, even after trying multiple processes within that mode, consider moving back a step in the flow (e.g., return to Ideation if the group is stuck in Clarification).
- ◎ Execution and Emotion are best kept separate, because one negates the other, and those two outcomes are generally mutually exclusive.
- ◎ Any Execution that doesn't happen in the Full Group presents the risk of the group pushing for Clarification, Ideation, or Emotion, which might undermine your Execution.

If any of that was confusing, trust that it'll become more clear once you start using the cards, and getting to know the processing tools each of the modes include.

For now, that should be enough to get you started. Depending on your style of facilitation, and the groups you're facilitating, you'll likely uncover new bumpers, new truths. That's the fun part!

We'll end this section by addressing something that is probably obvious, but feels conspicuous if it isn't directly said: there is only one of each card in the deck.

This is by design. And the rationale is simple: we want to make it easy for you to mix up your methodologies, and a little more difficult to go through the motions. If you have to reach for a card you haven't used yet when planning, or when something comes up in the space, it's like a free boost of creativity. And you can always fall back on an old classic in a pinch or scramble: you probably don't need a card to remind you how to do your "go-to" process.

Facilitator Cards aren't going to help you de-

fault to the same process over and over, dragging your group through a repetitive *déjà vu* experience. Can we go around the circle and hear from everyone why this might be a good idea?

Write. Erase. Repeat.

The white space on the front of is perhaps the most powerful aspect of Facilitator Cards⁵. This is a "Choose Your Own Adventure" book, map, and diary all wrapped into one.

Here are some of the ways you can put that wonderful little square of white to work:

- ◎ Write a keyword, agenda item, or activity name on each card to designate when you're using that process in your facilitation.
- ◎ Note timing, like how long you want the process to take, when you want it to start and end, or how many minutes you're giving a particular step.
- ◎ Jot down ways you're tailoring that process, or mixing it up (e.g., changing the group configuration, swapping a prop).
- ◎ Assign a "Parking Lot"-ed share to a card for later in your facilitation.
- ◎ Scoring how well it worked for your goals (e.g., with a number, or super secret symbol scoring system), so that later, when you're debriefing, you can recall exactly how you felt.

In our manufactured deck, the cards are waterproof and wet-eraseable for exactly this reason. On DIY printed cards, you can use a pencil (for erasing), laminate your cards (and use a dry/wet erase marker), or print out new decks for every facilitation (please consider the Earth).

⁵ But we'd feel silly providing a bunch of blank white squares, so we added colors and shapes and letters to them. This way feels like we're helping more, even if it's an elaborate charade.