MOSAIC PATHWAYS
FACILITATION
Guide

Introduction

The origin of *facilitate* traces back to the Latin adjective *facilis*, meaning "easy". Similarly, facilitating something makes it easier for a group to work through content, together.

This guide is provided to support you with challenging conversations in a constructive way.

Facilitation is the process of guiding individuals and groups through discussions or activities to achieve common goals. Facilitation ensures equitable participation and fosters collaboration. This involves creating a supportive environment where diverse perspectives are valued and decision-making processes are inclusive.

Preparation

- The facilitator/s have experienced working with groups before
- There is ample time for preparation
- Some of the participants are known to the facilitator/s
- Support networks and resources are provided for participants after the session

RECOMMENDATIONS:

- Acknowledge who is in the room and their different experiences, levels of knowledge and understanding
- Keep an open mind, be curious and take opportunities to learn new things
- Recognise how sharing personal stories has the ability to enhance or disrupt conversations
- Agree on ways to support each other, including ways to check in with each others' comfort levels, and wvhether a pause is needed
- Explore ways to safeguard opposing views e.g., 'I don't see things like that, but I am glad to hear your views and the reasons behind them'

We encourage you to think about the workshop/session as being part of a process. Within that process is this session, which should also have a check in (beginning) and check out (end).

SOME HANDY SKILLS FOR A FACILITATOR TO HAVE:

- Ability to speak confidently in groups
- Adaptability
- Timekeeping
- Note taking (recording of feedback/insights)
- Openness to feedback
- Strengths-based communication techniques (see below)

APPROACHES TO DIFFERENT TYPES OF FACILITATION:

Co-facilitation - it is generally encouraged to have 2 facilitators share and interchange roles during the session (typical roles are leading the check in and check out, observing dynamics, energising the group and introducing tasks/activities).

1:1 facilitation - if a facilitator finds themselves in a 1:1 workshop, it is encouraged that this become more of a guided conversation (some suggested activities could be: colouring in art, fast post it brainstorming, Zine activity).

Consideration checklist

Support needs

Encourage participants to confirm before the session what will enable them to have a safe and constructive experience (e.g., what support do you need to have a great time).

Being a good host

Sometimes part of facilitation preparation is arranging kai, ensuring that there is a variety for diverse dietary requirements.

People

Consider the number, age and diversity of participants. You may need to arrange additional support, resources and activities for diverse learning needs.

Content

The content of the session needs to suit the audience. Considerations may include the length of the session, physical resources provided, accessible media needs (captions and audio tracks), comprehension levels, processes to follow for challenging or conflicting situations.

Environment

Ensure the environment provides a safe and comfortable space for conversation. Quiet, calm spaces which provide a friendly environment and are accessible to all (including via public transport) are ideal.

Age

Consider the age gaps between participants, level of knowledge on the topic (you can check with the organisers or those who know the participants if unknown), and ensure that all aspects of the workshop or engagement are safe and follow the Code of Ethics.

Numbers

For groups of 20 participants or more, we suggest having two facilitators. We recommend dividing participants into smaller groups and / or pairs throughout the session to encourage more participation by everyone involved.

Diverse cultural requirements

Arrange prayer or rest spaces and have clear break times during these times. Consider whether providing separate spaces for diverse gender identities is required.

Diverse learning

Consider providing fidget toys - these can also help to ease tension and lower conversation barriers. A sensory or breakout room may also be appropriate for diverse learning needs.

Diverse abilities

Rest breaks or integrated breaks within activities may be necessary. Have peers take ownership of task support. This support may include note taking, check in with the facilitator, recapping to peer if they need time away, audio descriptions for visually impaired participants, arranging an NZSL interpreter for hearing impaired, ensuring accessible bathrooms.

Diverse gender

Consider addressing pronouns in introductions and ensure these are respected, ensure to use gender neutral language. Check on the provision of gender neutral bathrooms.

Supporting tools for facilitating

DISCUSSION TOOLS:

Reflection

Mirroring key words you hear, to demonstrate that you've understood the perspective of the emotion/feeling someone is trying to share.

e.g. If someone says "I have so much work to do at the moment, I `you might reflect back by saying, "It sounds like you're feeling overwhelmed because of your workload and it is impacting on your sleep, is that right?."

Paraphrasing

Summarising the situation/thoughts/feelings someone has expressed to check that you've understood them properly. To offer the sharer the chance to hear the situation in someone else's words/voice. Paraphrasing gives someone the opportunity to correct you if necessary.

Minimal Encouragers

Communication techniques that gently invites others to elaborate by expressing interest in hearing more.

e.g. Occasional "Mmm"s and "Uh huh"s, gentle nods and making eye contact, to let them know you are engaged in their communication.

Open/Closed Questions

Open ended questions
Allowing someone to respond in any way they want.

e.g. Was there more you wished to say on that? Can you expand on that? How did it make you feel?

Closed ended questions
Allowing someone to respond if they are finding it hard to talk or do not know all the answers.

e.g. "On a scale of 1-10, 5 being neutral, how do you feel right now?"

Try to avoid leading questions, ones that you believe should be answered a certain way:

e.g. "Eating 3 ice-creams in one sitting wasn't a good idea was it?"

Affirmation

Acknowledging positive steps or constructive ideas someone has taken to help their situation (e.g. removing themselves from a dangerous situation/ taking time out/ seeking support)

e.g. "Asking for help can be really hard, I think it's great that you're talking to me about what's going on for you."
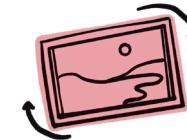
Validation of Feelings

Validating appropriate behaviour/responses/feelings in relation to the current situation.

e.g. "Considering the situation, it seems fair enough that you were concerned by what happened."

Reframing:

Questioning in a gentle way to so that the communicator may recognise that they may be saying something other than what they mean, or doing something other than what they say.

e.g. "I heard you say earlier that you know you should be sleeping more, but you just told me that you have less than 4 hours sleep, can you share why that is happening?"

Asserting Boundaries:

Being aware of your personal boundaries, in terms of what you are comfortable dealing with, and effectively assert these boundaries with others. This can be done subtly with deflection or explicitly:

e.g. "I hear that you're pretty angry about that situation and I'd like to talk about this more, but I don't feel knowledgeable enough to help – I am happy to support you if you would like to see a professional?"

Activities

ICEBREAKERS

These short and simple activities encourage connection and relationship building quickly within the group.

Some examples can be found at:
https://www.sessionlab.com/library?q=icebreaker

ENERGISERS

These short and active exercises support engagement and attention through physical activity. Some examples can be found at:
https://www.sessionlab.com/library/energiser

Ensure that diverse accessibility needs are catered to for active energisers.

BREAKOUT GROUP SESSIONS

Moving participants from larger groups into smaller groups can help with efficient trouble-shooting, more engaged participation or clearer communication.

Some examples of activities to be used in these breakout groups can be found at:
https://www.sessionlab.com/library/team

Ideas for sorting breakout groups:
https://venturelab.org/14-ways-to-group-up-students/

EXAMPLE SESSION FORMAT

Typical session:

5 MINUTES	**Open the space**
5-10 MINUTES	**Icebreaker**
15-20 MINUTES	**Whakawhanaungatanga** (could be introduction round, encourage sharing pronouns here)
5 MINUTES	**Overview of the session**
10 MINUTES	**Tikanga/ground rules**
20 MINUTES	**First activity**
10 MINUTES	**Break** (have activity options scattered around the room, e.g. colouring in, zine making, other crafts or encourage breaks outside)
15-20 MINUTES	**Second activity** (perhaps in pairs)
10-15 MINUTES	**Segue into third activity** (perhaps move into groups of four or five)
10 MINUTES	**Break**
5 MINUTES	**Energiser**
15-20 MINUTES	**Final activity**
5-10 MINUTES	**Close the space**

SUGGESTIONS FOR EXTRA RESOURCES:

The NAS Collective tīma are always available support you with these pathways, please contact us kiaora@nasaotearoa.com

Additional facilitation and workshop support can be found here:

https://thefacilitatorsnetwork.co.nz/tools-and-resources/

https://community.net.nz/resources/community-resource-kit/