

## Facilitation Training

### INTRODUCTIONS

-Introduce ourselves and what we do (explain what D&D is).

-Have them introduce themselves, and WHY they are here.

- See background students are coming from, why they are interested, etc
- What do you know about facilitation/experiences?
- What do you feel/think about the topic of dialogue and facilitation?

### SO WHAT IS FACILITATION?

- Differences between facilitation and mediation.
- Differences between debate and dialogue
- Maybe talk about the usefulness and relevance of facilitation skills in professional/non professional world?
- Some **objectives** for facilitators of D&D
  - Encourage participants to listen actively and empathetically even under conditions where emotions are raw and expressed with hostility.
  - Give ALL participants the opportunity to express their own ideas, feelings, and concerns regarding the dialogue topic with the expectation of respect and a fair hearing and give them a chance to hear directly from individuals who may profoundly disagree with them.
  - Foster an atmosphere where attitudes, beliefs, prejudices, or fears can shift away from individual attacks and toward a more issues-based or even worldview-based conversation.
  - Help participants begin to see commonalities between individuals/groups as well as individual/group rationale underlying fearful ideas or fiery rhetoric.
  - Provide an environment where participants can re-examine their own attitudes and feelings in order to better understand themselves and others.
  - Open a new social space that allows for personal reflection and change.
  - Silence allows participants to think through their feelings, ideas, etc. prior to sharing; always allow for silence
- **Ground Rules** -Suggest your own then encourage participants to come up with some
  - SAMPLES:
  - Focus on what matters (stay on topic)
  - Contribute your ideas and speak your mind and heart
  - Listen to understand, link and connect ideas
  - Do not interrupt when someone else is speaking
  - Have fun!

### HOW TO START THE DIALOGUE/DISCUSSION

1) Introduce yourself and your role, ask them to introduce themselves

2) Go over the objectives and ground rules for the dialogue

3) Ask them an opening question, like “what brought you here” or “what do you know about dialogue”

4) Sit back and listen!

## **FACILITATION SKILLS**

- Active and Empathetic Listening
  - How to listen when “triggered”
- Paraphrasing/Summarizing, Laundering Language/Reframing
  - Activity!
- Asking Questions
  - Types of questions
  - Points of clarification (“what do you mean when you say...”)
  - Open-ended vs Closed (“Tell me more about that....what influenced that view?”)
  - Avoiding bias in question asking
  - Question objectives
  - Having good questions prepared (we will give you prepared question sheets!)
  - Affirmation/Recognition when participants respond
  - Allow for periods of silence to allow for participant reflection prior to their responses
- Observations
  - About individuals
  - About group process
- Group Dynamics
  - Quiet Participants and Very Talkative Participants
  - What to do when there are power imbalances
- Intervention Techniques

## **FACILITATION EXERCISE: RE-FRAMING**

**Concept:** Two employees are having a work conflict. Rob was recently promoted from intern to a full-time, paid employee. Stella keeps asking Rob to get her coffee and do busy work and Rob is getting frustrated. Instead of confronting each other, both sides have gone around the office complaining, further disturbing work place peace and making everyone uncomfortable.

### **Roles:**

- Facilitator
- Rob was recently promoted from being an intern to being a full-time, paid employee; however, Rob feels as though he is not gaining the respect he deserves.
- Stella has been working in the office for years. She knows all of the ins and outs but is set off by Rob’s cavalier attitude in the office so she feels it is her job to show him the ropes and put him in line.

### **Script:**

**Facilitator:** Rob, what’s going on?

**Rob:** Well, Stella keeps treating me like the office pet. She has me getting her coffee, gives me petty, stupid tasks and she treats me like a child. It’s ridiculous.

**Facilitator:** So what I am hearing here is that you don’t feel like Stella is recognizing your new position in the office and you wish to be treated with greater respect.

**Rob:** Yes.

**Facilitator:** Stella, what is your perspective on what is going on?

**Stella:** Rob keeps walking around here like he owns the place. He hasn’t paid his due diligence and he has no respect for people who have been working here longer than him.

Facilitator: So Stella, what I am hearing from you is that you feel as though your time spent here in not being recognized or valued by Rob.

Stella: Correct.

## Personality Types, Dialogue, Conflict

**Dominating:** Utilizing a dominating style of participating, individuals attempt to monopolize the discussion so as to make sure their point is heard – and if possible accepted – by the other dialogue participants. Ideally, the facilitator will be able to set up the expectations for table participation at the beginning of the event and if needed provide gentle reminders of those expectations when necessary. If this proves difficult, continuous attention to the equity of the process needs to be stressed. In any case, before any discussion of what is or is not accepted occurs everyone needs to voice his or her own ideas.

**Reticent:** Many participants are introverts who tend to listen more than they speak in groups. These individuals may prefer to concentrate on the thoughts of others and do not always feel the need to share or to convince group members of the correctness of their own position. While this pattern may generally be the case, everyone has a point at which they are no longer willing (perhaps the rhetoric gets personal or offensive) to even be either at the table and leave or respond by being totally disengaged. Facilitators needs to be very aware of who is not participating, watching their body language, when noticing a possible sign of interest (sitting forward, writing a note on a card, etc.) asking them if they have anything they would like to say. If the response is no, let the participant know that you will check back with them. Also, while participants can certainly share their anger in the discussion, some comments may not be appropriate. The facilitator can ask the table participants how they feel about these comments in order to bring everyone into the discussion and the decision.

**Challenging:** These participants are by nature those who prefer to lead rather than be led. This may stem from uncertainty about the process or the facilitation or the certainty of their stance and their concept of what needs to happen. This could take the form of questioning the facilitator and his/her methods for leading the group with the goal of directing the dialogue in the method you they prefer. The facilitator manages the process but does not manage the outcome or make distinctions between threads of discussion.

**Off-Topic:** These participants, while interested in the topic under discussion, could be considerably more interested in another tangential topic or potential outcomes from the topic under discussion that are unknowable. From this point of view, the dialogue may be an opportunity to talk about the less central issue and these individuals see this as an opportunity to advocate and get others motivated. The facilitator, as guide to the dialogue process, will need to request that every one has a chance to discuss the current matter and then check with the other table participants about discussing the other issue. Depending on the purpose of the dialogue, advocacy for one participant's view may not be appropriate. If the dialogue is meant to be a brainstorming session that would be another matter entirely.

**Agreeable type:** Some participants come to a dialogue event because the dialogue process itself fascinates them as well as vaguely interested in the topic under discussion. While not holding a strong opinion or perhaps even much knowledge about the topic, these participants use the time to practice active listening, paraphrasing, or other facilitation related skills. As a participant, these skills are assets. However, if the main focus of the event is to listen, learn, and gain understanding as well as alternative conceptualizations of the topic, the facilitator needs to guide the process so that the listening, learning, and understanding can at least be possible.

**Questions, Comments Notes:**