

# Facilitation Skills

## Goals:

1. To provide productive consultations/meetings/workshops.
2. To inspire confidence.
3. Project a positive and professional image of our group.
4. Encourage participation and help build the group.

## Principles:

1. Set an open yet professional tone.
2. Accommodate different learning styles by giving information in different styles: let people learn through hearing, seeing, talking, and doing.
3. Have and stick to an agenda.
4. Guide don't tell.

## How Tos:

1. Over prepare.
2. Dress up.
3. Stand up and use an easel.
4. Go over agenda, explain your role, ground rules, and parking lot.
5. Use open ended questions to guide and encourage discussion.
6. Be aware of the time.
7. Get consensus and then move on.

## Tips:

1. Use peoples names.
2. Address the elephant in the room.

## Pitfalls:

1. Allowing conversation to stray.
2. Being too dogmatic/fascist.
3. Offering too many of your own ideas.
4. Allowing yourself to be flapped.

## **Gordonisms: Helpful Phrases and Ideas for Your Facilitation Toolbox**

For presenting or sticking to the agenda:

- “How many of you have had meetings that have gone on too long? I’m here to help us put together a good plan and be finished in two hours.”
- “I’m committed to getting us done by 9:30 and doing that by keeping to the agenda. Is that OK?”

Naming situations out loud/recognizing a difficult situation:

- “I see you need to get going, can we finish up this last point in the five minutes or less?”

For refocusing the group:

- “Can I tell you something interesting...”
- Use “And” instead of “But.”
- Say the person’s name: “Kim...”
- “I have an opinion about that. Do you want to hear it?”
- “Let me interrupt you...”

For answering a challenging question or trying to help decide on thorny issue:

- “In our experience here’s what works and here’s why...”
- “You’ve heard from Sally and you’ve heard from me, what do the rest of you think?”

For dealing with a negative perspective or challenging personality:

- “That’s one perspective, what do the rest of you think?”
- “Clearly you’ve given a lot of thought to this AND I want to hear what others think.”
- “I’m here to help work with you at the point that you think it can be worked on. What do you think can be done?”
- “It’s great you’re playing the devil’s advocate AND what do the rest of you think?”
- “With all due respect, I see it differently and so do others here it seems.”
- “Matt, hear me out...”

For encouraging discussion/brainstorming:

- “You’re all experts of your community, so let’s hear from each of you...”
- “Alyssa, what do you think?”