

## Facilitation Role Play Handout

Different behaviors you might encounter in facilitation and how to handle them.

**They know everything:** This participant has a high level of context or involvement with the issue or topic at hand. They might prematurely shoot down other's ideas or insist they know best.

- Ensure their input is appreciated and utilized in the group: "Thank you for raising those concerns about the dietary needs of llamas. Let's add that to the notes."
- Show the group that everyone's input is valued, not just experts.
- Encourage participants to look at issues from multiple lenses, and to step outside of their area of expertise.

**They came to argue:** This participant tends to be confrontational or quick to disagree with others. You might hear phrases like "you are wrong" or "I can't believe you think that."

- Show this participant that conflict and disagreement can be healthy. Thank them for raising difficult questions or issues.
- Remind group of shared goals: "I know you are all here to discuss designing this year's calendar. My job is to keep us on task to come up with a workable plan. Let's focus on next steps."
- Set clear boundaries if this person attacks or belittles another participant. It is ok to disagree without shutting others down.

**They are quiet and shy:** This participant may appear disengaged and unwilling to add to the discussion; however, this is a symptom of not feeling confident sharing. This person may have lots to contribute when properly engaged:

- Try asking open-ended questions and teasing out this participant's opinions about particular issues.

- Show active listening when this participant speaks and ensure they are aware that their input is valued.
- Give this participant time to warm up and feel safe sharing. Don't rush or push them to speak if they don't feel ready.

**They love to talk:** This participant dominates the conversation and may interrupt or talk over others, throwing lots of new ideas onto the table. It is possible they aren't aware of how much space they are taking up at the table.

- Remind the whole group of ground rules, like talking one at a time or waiting until it is their turn.
- Encourage them to trust you to guide the process: "I hear you have a lot of thoughts regarding the implementation stage; however, I want to dig a little deeper into the design phase first."
- Find openings to turn conversation back to other participants. For example, "Wow, that reminds me of what Darius said earlier about doing community outreach. Darius, did you want to add anything?"

**They are new to the topic:** This person may have little context for the topic being discussed or may insist they know nothing about the issue. They may speak lots without adding much to the discussion or may intentionally hold back and stay quiet.

- Encourage this participant to ask questions: "I hear you saying you aren't very familiar with this tool. What information would help you feel more engaged?"
- Help this participant understand their role in the facilitation and the knowledge they bring to the table. Maybe they live in the impacted neighborhood or have other important value as a stakeholder.
- Focus on teasing out their values and goals.