



# Facilitation Skills for CQI Practitioners

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# Agenda / Learning Objectives



- Facilitation Overview
- Facilitation Skills
- Building a Facilitation Toolkit



# Facilitation Overview

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# Facilitation Overview



- Define Facilitation
- Goals of Facilitations
- Facilitation Process
- Roles Needed for an Effective Facilitation



# What is a facilitation?

# Facilitation Defined



The act of providing unobtrusive, objective guidance to a group in order to collaboratively progress towards a goal.

# Facilitation Defined – Broken Down

- Act of providing
- Unobtrusive
- Objective
- Guidance
- To a group
- Collaboratively
- Progress towards a goal







**What are the goals of facilitation?**

# Goal of Facilitations

- Full and equal participation
- Mutual understanding
- Inclusive and collaborative decision making
- Shared responsibility





# Goal of Facilitation – When should you use facilitation?

- You want feedback from a group of people
- There is more than one answer to a question or side to a story
- A person in power wants to be a participant in the discussion



**What are the steps in a facilitation?**

# Facilitation Process

- Pre- Facilitation
- During Facilitation
- Post Facilitation



# Pre-Facilitation Checklist



## CONTENT ELEMENTS: WHAT

- Figure out the goal of the facilitation
- Create an agenda to meet those goals
- Questions should be drafted by the group seeking the facilitated groups input.
- Facilitator should review questions; ensure they are in an order that makes sense and may achieve the information they seek.

## PROCESS ELEMENTS: HOW

- Meeting flow
- Communication
- Power/influence
- Problem-solving process
- Participation
- Roles
- Decision-making process
- Group atmosphere

# During the Facilitation



Tasks taking place during a facilitation

- Collect data
- Present/clarify information as it is collected
- Synthesize and summarize the information
- Encourage participation throughout
- Address conflict

All these tasks can be supported by facilitator with strong facilitation skills.

# Post Facilitation



- Ensure accuracy of discussion records
- Follow-up with participants
  - Ask for feedback (live and post facilitation)
  - Acknowledge their contributions
- Prepare any report / write-up of the facilitation
  - Ensure parties in the room know what is coming out of the facilitation from the beginning of the process
- Debrief for individual and process improvements





**What roles are needed to provide an effective facilitation?**

# Roles Needed for an Effective Facilitation

- Coordinator
- Documenter or Scribe
- Methodologist or Meeting Designer
- Facilitator



# Coordinator

- Reserves the meeting space
- Ensures equipment and supplies are available
- Orders (and possibly sets up) refreshments, and
- Supports participants requests (such as directions)



# Documenter or Scribe



## Responsibilities

- Sets up the documentation software, and tools,
- Documents outputs and inflection points, not verbatim discussions
- Distributes the meeting and workshop notes, and
- Manages edits, document versions, and archiving.

## Keys to this role

- Neutrality
- Deliverable / Documentation

# Methodologist



## Responsibilities

- Helps the facilitator, business partner, and technical partner codify the deliverable and define the appropriate agenda steps to follow
- Provides succinct questions to ask and the optimal order or sequence for the questions to be answered, and
- Occasionally participates in works hops to ensure that the output produced satisfies the expected standards of quality and consistency.

## Key to this role

- Not always one person
- Facilitator is commonly the meeting designer, but should get input on the deliverable sought / goals of the meeting if facilitating for another group

# Facilitator – Defined



- One who helps participants learn from an activity
- “One who makes things easy”
- One who helps manage the process for a group centered meeting

# Facilitator NOT Trainer



\*Facilitators are content-neutral process experts\*

Trainer/Presenter may say:

“This is how we will solve the problem we are meeting about...”

“This is what I think about the problem and what we should do....”

“I think we should do this to meet this goal...”

Facilitator may say:

“How do you think the problem should be solved?”

“Does anyone have any ideas to share with the group?”

“What do you think should be done to meet this goal?”

# Facilitator – Principles



- Always be listening
- Create an inviting space
- Welcome improvisation
- Be authentic to you and your knowledge
- Avoid giving advice
- Embrace constructive conflict

Key to this role:

- Only expertise needed is facilitation skills
- Knowledge drawn from the group and shared
- Facilitation is a skill / art – not a science



# Facilitator – Responsibilities



- Standard-setters for the discussion
- Make the environment a priority
- Mindful of timing issues
- Responsible for articulating the purpose of the discussion
- Use various techniques/tools to keep the discussion moving
- Responsible for paying attention to group behaviors
- Relaxed and have a sense of humor, when needed

# Facilitator – Characteristics of Effective Facilitators



- Neutrality with commitment to high-value deliberations
- Manage diversity and conflict wisely
- Active listening, empathy, and synthesis
- Structure and consistency tempered with flexibility
- Content and context knowledge
- Self-awareness and self-knowledge
- Servant leadership



# Facilitation Skills

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# Good facilitators



- Understand the goals
- Keep the group and the agenda moving forward
- Involve everyone
- Ensure decisions are made democratically
- Plan a good, supportive process

# Hard Skills



- Use collaborative methods
- Guide, support, and encourage engagement from the group
- Reduce and acknowledge assumptions
- Create and implement efficient processes

# Soft Skills



- Objective approach to guiding the process, removed from your internal agendas or personal bias
- Organizational skills to communicate with the group, keep the group moving forward through the discussion, and assist in concluding the facilitation
- Empathy and understanding
- Authenticity to build trust with the group
- Assertiveness and confidence in your skills, to keep the group on task, focused, and moving forward to respect their commitment to the facilitation
- Be flexible, adaptable, and willing to improvise if the situation requires it
- Ability to keep the energy level in the room high

# Key Skills



- Focuses the group and keeps the group on track
- Uses facilitation skills to enhance communications
- Ensures all participants have an opportunity to participate
- Explains and enforces all the roles
- Listens actively to the discussion and challenging assumptions
- Manages the documenter and/or the documentation
- Observes the group interactions and adjusts when necessary
- Questions further to active clarity
- Recognizes disruptive behavior and creates positive corrections
- Works to manage conflict that develops

# Facilitating the Process:



- Start on time
- Welcome, thank everyone
- Make introductions
- Review agenda, objectives, and ground rules
- Encourage participation
- Stick to the agenda
- Seek commitments
- Bring closure to each item
- Summarize results and follow-ups



# Consider Ground Rules



- One person at a time
  - Raise your hand
  - Listen to others
  - No mocking or attacking
  - Be on time
  - Respect each other
- TIP: Have the group create the ground rules for more buy-in.

# Facilitation Skills – Do's



- Model the behavior and attitudes you want group members to employ.
- Use encouraging body language and tone of voice, as well as words.
- Give positive feedback for joining the discussion.
- Be aware of people's reactions and feelings, and try to respond appropriately.

# Facilitation Skills – Do's



- Ask open-ended questions.
- Control your own biases.
- Encourage disagreement, and help the group use it creatively.
- Be a recorder if necessary.
- Keep your mouth shut as much as possible.

# Facilitation Skills – Don'ts



- Don't be the fountain of all wisdom.
- Don't attempt to be the expert or the center of attention.
- Don't let one or a small group dominate the discussion.
- Don't let one point of view override others.
- Don't assume that anyone holds opinions or positions because of his culture, background, race, personal style, etc.
- Don't assume that someone from a particular culture, race, or background speaks for everyone else from that situation.



# Build a Facilitation Toolkit

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# Tools to Consider

- Materials
- Activities
- Techniques
- Conflict Management Techniques
- Suggestions for dealing with typical challenges



# Materials



WHAT:

Tangible materials

WHY:

Help create artifacts and capture group memory

Examples

- Sticky notes
- Sharpies
- Whiteboard or large easel
- Voting dots
- Index cards
- Parking lots

# Activities

## WHAT:

Activities for participants to complete during the facilitation

## WHY:

Assists in engaging participants in several ways to ensure full participation

## Examples:

- Energizers
- Round-robin
- Post ups
- Affinity diagrams
- Landscape maps
- Forced ranking
- Storyboarding
- Role playing
- Playbacks





# Techniques

## WHAT:

Skills (mostly verbal) used to encourage, intervene, or maneuver conversations with or between participants

## WHY:

Each technique has its' own goal

## Examples:

- Encouraging
- Intentional silence
- Balancing
- Linking back



# Conflict Management – Types of Disrupters:

- Individual domination
- Intimidation
- Tension
- Someone expressing doubts
- Side conversations



# Conflict Management – Preventing Disruptions:

- Get agreement early
- Listen and show respect
- Learn expectations
- Stay cool



# Conflict Management – Dealing with Conflict:



- Practice compassionate intervention
- Inquire about what you notice – do not assume
- Do not ignore the conflict
- Use a break if needed to check-in with the person
- Do not allow the conflict to drag on

# Typical Challenges



- Certain participants don't say anything, seem shy
- An aggressive or talkative person dominates the discussion
- Lack of focus, not moving forward, participants wander off the topic
- Someone puts forth information which you know to be false, or participants get hung up in a dispute about facts and no one present knows the answer
- Lack of interest, no excitement, no one wants to talk, only a few people participating
- Tension or open conflict in the group

# Good luck in your future facilitations!



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