



FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Questions? Call or Text: Suzanne @ 214.957.0903

ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR

- Greet participants as they arrive.
- Provide overview, including stating purpose of the design team challenge, reviewing questions, and establishing ground rules.
- Appoint a note taker, if you do not have one, and provide brief instructions on their duties (see below).
- Serve as a **neutral guide** and direct the discussion based on the agenda and focused on main discussion questions.
- Keep discussion moving along, ensure all participants are given the opportunity for equal contribution and ensure no one dominates the discussion.
- Close the discussion 5 minutes before end and discuss next steps.
- Give the group's notes to Suzanne Smith. You may also email the notes to suzanne@socialimpactarchitects.com.
- Provide feedback to team after the event.

ROLE OF THE NOTE TAKER

- *(Can be facilitator if needed)*
- Record key points from the discussion so the group can have a record of each group's conversation. Key points should focus on the following:
 - Key challenges/issues/ideas the group identified
 - Ideas to address the challenges/issues the group identified
 - Group's final recommendations
- Give the notes to the group facilitator at the end of the session.

BASIC GROUND RULES

- Listen respectfully. Treat everyone and their opinions with dignity and respect. Explore differences respectfully – support listening, not convincing.
- Hear from everyone. Everyone needs to share their thoughts and experiences. There is no right or wrong answers.
- One person talks at a time. Do not interrupt. Give everyone the opportunity to complete their thoughts.
- Stay on task. Trust the process. It is OK to ask for clarification.
- Turn off electronic devices.
- Confidentiality.
- This is a discussion, not a debate. It is NOT important to win a point. It IS important to hear other points of view.

GUIDELINES FOR EFFECTIVE FACILITATION

In the small group discussions, the major role of the facilitator is to help the group stay on task and ensure everyone's voice is heard. During the discussion, some participants may be off the topic or get sidetracked from the main topic of the conversation. You might encounter a participant who tends to have so much to say about the subject matter that the topic is diverted into all sorts of interesting issues. The facilitator should be alert to these circumstances happening in the discussion. A good way to refocus to the subject at hand is to politely intervene and acknowledge the person's ideas and stories and then transition quickly to the main topic or to continue where they left off before the discussion got sidetracked. Remember, stay on track - follow the agenda.

Following are some facilitation tips to keep in mind:

DO

- Keep discussions constructive and positive.
- Establish a safe, comfortable setting. Allow participants to introduce themselves – set up the ice breaker so the group can interact and get to know each other.
- Establish ground rules, including rules of confidentiality.
- Make sure expectations are clear and everyone understands their role.
- Create an inclusive environment and use inclusive language.
- Encourage participation. Ask for clarification if unclear about a comment, intent or question.
- Treat participants with respect and consideration.
- Keep the group on task without rushing anyone. Provide sufficient time and space for participants to gather their thoughts and contribute to discussions.

DON'T

- Use certain conventions, lingo, or language that will exclude certain groups from understanding the context of the discussion, or make them feel uncomfortable.
- Assume participants all have the same expectations when the group first convenes.
- Over-generalize behavior or have stereotypical expectations of participants.
- Use (or allow others to use) disrespectful language or tone, or disrespectful non-verbal communication.
- Convey a sense of self-importance or superiority.
- Allow only the dominant or more verbal participants to take over the conversation.
- Discourage alternate views or counter-arguments.

LESSONS LEARNED

The participant who talks too much:

Redirect the discussion to another person or another topic. Alternatively, you may wish to reframe their comments, making them viable additions to the discussion.

The participant who will not talk:

Ask opinion questions occasionally (e.g., “How do you feel about this?”). This may encourage participation by reducing fear of answering incorrectly. Another strategy is to have guests write out their answers to a question. Having the words written out may make it easier for a shy or fearful person to speak up.

The discussion that turns into an argument:

Take a strong position as facilitator, preventing guests from interrupting each other or speaking simultaneously. Facilitator can lay ground rules for discussion, such as asking guests to focus conflict on ideas rather than people and to resist being judgmental.

Unclear or hesitant comments:

Encourage participants making unclear contributions to give examples and factual evidence of their points. The facilitator can also restate points for verification or rejection by the participant, or give enthusiastic nonverbal cues and patience.

The discussion that goes off track:

Stop and ask a guest to summarize where the discussion is at the point it appears to go off track.