

## 10 Tips for Effective Facilitation

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*Facilitating well can make all the difference in a learner feeling safe in a learning event or not. This is a skill and an art. Here are 10 tips to help:*

1. **Wait at least 5 seconds for an answer after asking a question.** Silence is a difficult thing when we are facilitating. However, people need time to think of what they want to say, whether they want to share and what questions they have.
2. **Affirm all answers.** Learners need to know that every answer, regardless of how strange or different, is appreciated. When learners know that all answers are good answers (although not always correct), they will be encouraged to share.
3. **Cross-talk.** Traditionally the teacher is the focus of a classroom and all discussion. Since this is not engaging for the learner, you need to encourage learners to answer and respond to each other's ideas and questions. Of course the trainer ensures that the group is on-task and on-time, but dialogue between learners (rather than between teacher and learners) can help learning.
4. **Ask open questions.** Open questions encourage dialogue and invite ideas, opinions and discussion. Since open questions have no 'yes' or 'no' answers, learners are invited to engage with the content and each other, explore and make sense of the topic for themselves.
5. **Weaving.** Weaving past and future information and stories into what you are doing will help learners see connections and hook personal learning into the new learning.
6. **Talk less, listen more.** The more learners can discuss, debate, and assess new content, the more they learn. This means: less of you, more of them.
7. **Use invitational language.** Invitational language is respectful and inviting. Try phrases like: "I want to invite you back to the circle..." or "Who would like to share their story with us?" or "Who has a question?"
8. **Sample to keep energy up.** When debriefing table or group work, it may not be necessary to hear from everyone. It is important to honor the work that was completed *and* invite questions, but this can be done by sampling: "Let's hear from 2 groups" or "Let's hear 1 of your stories" or "Who else haven't we heard from so far?" Avoid sampling, however, when it is important that the group together make a decision that affects everyone.
9. **Use your co-trainer.** If you are lucky enough to have someone you are co-training with, use that person. Discuss how you can best support each other and work as a team.
10. **Be flexible.** The most critical thing to remember about facilitating is to be flexible. Because we never know exactly how a workshop will go, who will be there, and what unexpected events will arise, you need to be able to shorten an activity, add some important language to a definition and change the format of your session.