That Was a Great Meeting!

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Functions of a Facilitator

1. **Design processes** that lead to productive group work
2. **Support full participation** to harness the power of the group's diversity
3. **Develop mutual understanding** among disparate perspectives within group
4. **Foster the development of lasting solutions** among group members
5. **Establish shared responsibility** for those decisions

Supporting Individuals and Groups to do Their Best Thinking

Venue/Room Selection and Set Up - Sample Checklist

- Overall:
  - All participants and facilitator(s) are able to see and hear each other and any visuals
  - Room should be large enough to hold group with space for any meeting needs (such as breakout rooms, movement, etc.)
  - Natural light makes all meetings 1000% better.
- Room Set Up - tables and chairs
  - Style: conference, u-shape, rounds, hollow square, classroom, or no tables at all?
  - Extra tables for handouts, meals, or for checking-in?
- Equipment
  - Whiteboard, flip charts, flip chart stands, markers?
- AV/Tech
  - Is there wi-fi?
  - Do you need a projector or screen? Will someone be bringing the laptop?
  - Do you need a polycom for participants to join by phone?
  - Will lots of folks need to plug in their laptops (availability of outlets and power strips)?
- Helpful to have on hand:
  - Wi-fi password
  - How to get into the venue (if requires a code or a sign-in process)
  - Contact on site for maintenance/catering/space issues
- Welcoming/hospitality - nametags, food, drinks
- Breaks- timing and nourishment

Addressing Bias, Designing for Inclusion

Take Action

Steps you can take as a facilitator to mitigate the effects of bias and make your meetings more inclusive:

1. Work to understand and mitigate your biases
2. Get feedback
3. Make agendas and materials available before meetings
4. Design meetings that promote participation and recognize power dynamics
5. Use yourself:
    a. Pay attention and hold space
    b. Monitor what you talk about
    c. Track participation and group dynamics
    d. Intervene
6. Make the dynamics explicit
    a. Use working agreements
    b. Call out patterns
    c. Talk about it

Meeting Goals and Topics

Goals

By the end of the meeting:

1.

2.

3.

Draft Agenda

What (topic)	How (process)	Who (lead)	Time (mins)

Design Processes to Achieve Your Goals

Practices

- **Start with your goals and topics** – what are you trying to accomplish and why?
- **Prioritize** – identify what is most important to accomplish.
- **Think about the "unit of work"**. Each unit of work has a beginning, middle and end. Units of work can be nested within each other. As a facilitator, track the units of work and be deliberate about starting them, doing them and ending them.
- **Boost energy in the group** by mixing up how the work is happening. Incorporate individual work (thinking/writing), working in twos ("buzz"/talk with your neighbor), threes or fours.
  - Think about how much time each person needs to talk about the topic and estimate your time based on that. E.G. – a pair could share their reactions to something for a few minutes. They could have a 15 -minute dialogue where one person speaks while the other is listening. And the listener then gives feedback, a reflection or a question. Then they switch. It depends on the purpose and need
- **Use the accordion concept**: do some work (conversation, activities) as a whole group, then do activities individually, in pairs or small groups, and then come back to the whole group. This can increase energy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- **Match the method to the group dynamics**. Consider the group size, purpose, frequency of meetings, and nature of relationships when designing. EG, a small team of 4-7 probably doesn't need to meet in small groups, and a large group of 20+ probably shouldn't have whole group discussion for the whole meeting.

Calculating Time

- Estimate time for each activity. Then review the whole agenda with a reality check. Where are you trying to fit too much in? Cut and simplify so that you have enough time to do what is needed.
- For large group discussion and small group activities, estimate how much time each person will need to speak and then add it up. For small group/breakout activities, add some time for movement and organization. EG in a small group, if all four people need to talk for 3 minutes each, allot 15 minutes. For large group discussions estimated to take more than 10 – 25 minutes, identify a way to build in engagement. EG – have participants talk to their neighbor and then ask for unique responses in a popcorn fashion. (IE if multiple groups had the same response, don't need to repeat it.)
- For breakout groups, don't underestimate the time needed for report outs. If five groups are talking about different topics for 20 minutes and they need to share their ideas and proposals with the full group, allotting 4-5 minutes for a report out results in a 20-25 minute report out, or a 45 minute session. If they're talking about the same topic, you can do a round-robin and take one idea or suggestion from each group, going around as many times are needed to get the most important, unique ideas out.

Decision-Making: Example Decision Rules

- Unanimous agreement

- Majority vote

- Person-in-charge decides without discussion

- Coin Flip

- Delegation

- Person-in-charge decides after discussion

Facilitation Skills

- ▶ Paraphrasing and Mirroring
- ▶ Validating and Empathizing
- ▶ Drawing people out
- ▶ Stacking
- ▶ Encouraging and making space
- ▶ Balancing
- ▶ Silence
- ▶ Listening for common ground
- ▶ Summarizing

Action Planning Worksheet

The most important things I learned/re-learned today were:

In the future, I want to try….

_____

Write down three steps you will take in the next three months to strengthen your effectiveness as a facilitator:

Step 1:

Step 2:

Step 3:

Resources

Liberating Structures
Exercises like "2-4-All" can be found at www.liberatingstructures.com

The website includes a menu of thirty-three simple rules to guide and liberate participant contributions. The menu includes examples of what is made possible with each structure along with instructions for how to facilitate them, including materials and amount of time needed and the room set up. Check it out and try them out – you will likely see some activities you have experienced before.

Native Land Acknowledgements
For more information on native land acknowledgements consult the following resources:

Honor Native Land: A Guide and Call to Acknowledgement: https://usdac.us/nativeland/

Native Land - includes maps with links and more information on Territory Acknowledgements: https://native-land.ca/

Project Implicit
projectimplicit.net

Project Implicit is a non-profit organization and international collaboration between researchers who are interested in implicit social cognition – thoughts and feelings outside of conscious awareness and control. Their goal is to educate the public about hidden biases and to provide a "virtual laboratory" for collecting data on the Internet.

Visit the website to take a test on the following Implicit Association Tests:

Weapons, Race, Disability, Arab-Muslim, Sexuality, Age, Presidents, Weight, Religion, Skin-tone, Asian, Native, Gender-science, Gender-Career

Unconscious Bias Workbook
cookross.com/publications

Check out the Cook Ross website for tools and publications, including the Unconscious Bias Workbook.

Books and Resources
- ***The Working Together Toolkit***, Institute for Conservation Leadership, 2006
- ***Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making***, Sam Kaner (with Lenny Lind, Catherine Toldi, Sarah Fisk, and Duane Berger), Jossey-Bass, 2014.
- ***Connecting to Change the World: Harnessing the Power of Networks for Social Impact***, Peter Plastrik, Madeleine Taylor & John Cleveland, Island Press, 2014
- ***Network Weaver Handbook (A Guide to Transformational Networks),*** June Holley, 2012
- ***Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds***, adrienne maree brown, AK Press, 2017
- ***Collaborating with the Enemy***, Adam Kahane, Berrett-Koehler Publishers, 2017
- ***Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook: A Guide for Citizens and Civic Leaders***, David D. Chrislip, 2002
- ***Thinking in Systems: A Primer, Donella Meadows***, Chelsea Green Publishing, VT, 2008

Online Resources
- Institute for Conservation Leadership,
  - Blog Posts: https://www.icl.org/news/
  - Collaboration: https://www.icl.org/collaboration/
  - Resources: https://www.icl.org/product-category/resources/
- REAMP.org
- Co-Creative Consulting, http://www.cocreativeconsulting.com/tools
- Interaction Institute for Social Change, http://interactioninstitute.org/blog/
- Community At Work, http://communityatwork.com/resources.html
- June Holley, https://networkweaver.com/june-holley/
- Leadership Learning Community, http://www.leadershiplearning.org/
- Race Forward, https://www.raceforward.org/