

A guide to

# Personal and Public Involvement (PPI)



## Undertaking facilitation

This guide will provide an overview of what facilitation is and give you an overview of how to facilitate a session. This may involve facilitating a group at a conference or workshop where there is limited time available and there will be a requirement to feedback on key points. Or the facilitated session may be part of a wider project and the involvement of participants through a facilitated session will contribute to a wider programme of work. The guide will provide the key steps to take when facilitating any of the above.

### Background – facilitation styles

There are four distinct facilitation styles. Any one or a mixture of these styles can be used to facilitate group discussion and achieve the aims of the session.

- **Directive:** giving people information, instructing them how to do something, such as: ‘This is how to develop a work plan.’
- **Exploratory:** asking questions, encouraging people to voice their experience and ideas, such as: ‘What did you find useful in the last community group you were part of?’
- **Delegating:** assigning tasks, roles and functions to individuals.
- **Participative:** taking part in discussion, sharing personal experiences and encouraging others to do likewise, such as: ‘The first time I ever did a skill-sharing workshop like this was ...’

### Facilitating a session

#### Before the group discussion:

- If you are chairing/hosting or leading on the session, please ensure that the other facilitators are briefed in advance.
- Identify if your participants need additional support to be involved, i.e. sign language interpreter, support worker and interpreter.
- Make participants and facilitators aware that the session is being recorded.
- Agree a Group agreement to set the safe parameters for the group.
- Read and reflect on the topic planned for the session.
- Identify what resources are required to facilitate effectively, e.g. room layout, flip chart, pens or post it notes.
- Make sure the room is well ventilated and there is a fresh circulation of air.
- Develop a well structured (yet flexible) plan for the session building on your preferred facilitation style. This will include developing questions to support the group and encourage discussion on the particular topic.
- If possible, identify in advance a note taker to record the session.

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### Conducting the discussion session:

- Introduce yourself to the group as the facilitator.
- Check in with the group to ensure that everyone is at the right session.
- Clarify with the group the objectives/goals for the session and the amount of time available.
- If using breakout rooms, try to have fair and balance representation.
- Create an inclusive environment for group participants. Consider the room layout and ask participants to introduce themselves to the other participants.
- Determine the existing knowledge levels of the group.
- Initiate the discussion with an engaging question or challenge.
- Use mainly open-ended questions or comments.
- Listen actively and non-judgementally and encourage group members to do likewise.
- Allow participants to contribute in a style and manner that is most comfortable for them.
- Keep the discussion from being dominated by one or two group members.
- Invite quiet participants to contribute.
- Paraphrase (restate) ideas and suggestions.
- Steer any conflict away from personalities and toward task-related issue/s.
- Before the end of the discussion, summarise the main points and check with the group that they are content that this reflects the discussion.

### Feeding back discussion:

- Agree how notes will be recorded, i.e. via a note taker agreed in advance, appoint a note taker at the workshop or use a flipchart to record the main areas of discussion. It may be helpful to do this under agreed headings.
- If the facilitated session is part of a conference or workshop proceedings, you may be asked to provide verbal feedback following the discussion:
  - Ask if any member of the group wish to undertake this role (it will often be left to the facilitator, but on occasion group members may wish to provide feedback).
  - Present the agreed summary in a concise fashion. If some of the points have been covered previously by other groups, acknowledge that this is the case and add any additional points discussed by your group.
  - After providing feedback, ask the group if there is anything they would like to add.
- Share the notes with the event organiser.
- If the facilitated discussion is part of a wider project, ensure:
  - Participants know how their input will be used.
  - Ensure feedback is provided to this group at a later stage ie a project report.
  - Planning Doing Reviewing.

For more information on Involvement, Co-Production and Partnership Working  
please visit the Engage website  
<http://engage.hscni.net>

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