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2.3 USE FACILITATION STRATEGIES

While the role of the facilitator may seem simple on paper – get the work done while supporting and building the partnership – in reality it is often dynamic and challenging.

At the “action” level, a facilitator’s job might include sharing information, managing time, clarifying concepts and goals, summarizing what has been accomplished, assisting with group process and decisionmaking, assigning tasks, outlining next steps, and building momentum. At the “interpersonal” level, it requires pulling together individuals who may have unequal organizational power and different agendas, motivations, experiences, and histories into a cohesive group that is willing to honor and respect disagreement while working together toward their common vision.

What makes a good facilitator?

A good facilitator balances getting the work done with supporting individuals and strengthening the partnership, is perceived as unbiased, and is trusted by the partners.

Characteristics of an Effective Facilitator:

- ❖ "Asks" rather than "tells"
- ❖ Keeps things on task, but also spends time building trust and rapport.

The following tip sheets provide suggestions and activities for use by partnership's facilitator. The tips are broken down into three key areas: active listening, equalizing participation, and asking good questions to support open communication.

Tip Sheet #1: Active Listening

- ❖ Listen and look for what is not being said

Tip Sheet #3: Asking Good Questions to Support Open Communication

- ❖ Don't ask questions that are really statements.
- ❖ Don't assume you know the answer.
- ❖ Try not to prejudge what a person will say.
- ❖ Limit yes/no questions.
- ❖ Use open-ended questions.
- ❖ Don't put individuals on the spot.
- ❖ Pose questions that allow everyone to draw on his/her own experience.
- ❖ Don't fish for the "right answers." If you want partners to understand a particular point, highlight its importance.
- ❖

The meeting:

To ensure that your partnership gets off on the right track, at the first meeting make sure to:

- ❖ Start the meeting on time and acknowledge at the start that you will try to keep the meeting on schedule.
- ❖

Sample Annotated r2p Partnership First Meeting Agenda

R2p Partnership First Meeting
Thursday, Oct. 11th 12:00pm – 3:00pm EST

1. Welcome & Introductions.....12:00–12:15.....
Discuss purpose of meeting to discuss how the partnership will work and establish ground rules
2. Partnership Overview.....12:15–12:30....
3. Process, Structure, Governance.....12:30–2:45.C.....