

**EFFECTIVE
FACILITATOR**

AN EFFECTIVE FACILITATOR

THEME This workshop teaches group members how they can be effective group facilitators by demonstrating what makes a good facilitator.

FACILITATOR PREPARATION

Prior to conducting this workshop, the facilitator should:

- ✓ Read:
 - Facilitator's Manual
 - Reading Materials provided for this workshop

- ✓ Gather:
 - Flipchart
 - Magic markers
 - Chairs
 - Tape

- ✓ Do:
 - Set chairs in a circle

WORKSHOP TIMELINE

ACTIVITY A:	Introductions	10 minutes
ACTIVITY B:	Icebreaker Exercise: ASPIRA's Believe It or Not	15 minutes
ACTIVITY C:	Case Study--A Tale of Two Facilitators	60 minutes
ACTIVITY D:	Wrap-up	<u>20 minutes</u>
Total Time		105 minutes (1 hour, 45 minutes)

ACTIVITY A INTRODUCTIONS

TIME LIMIT  10 Minutes

- OBJECTIVES**
- To welcome the group back and introduce new people to the group
 - To answer any questions not answered during the last workshop
 - To provide an overview of the workshop and how it will be conducted
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FACILITATOR DIRECTIONS


1. Welcome everyone back who attended the last workshop. Welcome new members to the group and have them say something about themselves if they feel comfortable doing so. Then, have group members briefly introduce themselves to the new parents.
2. Announce that new group members should get in touch with a person who attended the previous workshops in order to get the reading materials provided.
3. Answer any questions which were not answered at the last workshop.
4. Provide an overview of the workshop and how it will be conducted. Your overview may contain the following:

"This workshop will introduce the role of a facilitator in groups. Facilitator contains the Spanish word "fácil" and that is the facilitator's role -- to make participation easy. During this workshop we will see what makes a good facilitator and how a good facilitator makes participating in a meeting easy."

ACTIVITY B ICEBREAKER EXERCISE: ASPIRA'S BELIEVE IT OR NOT

TIME LIMIT  15 Minutes

OBJECTIVE To draw out the group's perceptions about what it takes to be a facilitator.

PREPARATION  Write out some "true and false" questions about facilitators on your flipchart for ASPIRA'S "BELIEVE IT OR NOT" (see paragraph #3 below for some suggestions).

FACILITATOR DIRECTIONS



1. Advise the group that this is an **icebreaker exercise**. Have a group member explain what an icebreaker exercise is meant to do. Once the person is finished, you may want to fill in anything that was left out.
2. Advise the group that for the icebreaker exercise, we will play a game--ASPIRA's "**Believe It Or Not.**" Display the list of statements about facilitators on your flipchart. You should take care to choose true or false statements that are enlightening, insightful, and when wrong, funny. Some examples are:

ASPIRA's "BELIEVE IT OR NOT"

- *Only a few people are really cut out to be leaders.*
 - *If an argument breaks out in a group, a facilitator should never "step in" to stop it, but should let it work itself out.*
 - *Men make better facilitators than women.*
 - *Women make better facilitators than men.*
3. Ask the group to decide whether each statement is true or false and encourage them to explain why. The group should have fun with these statements!

ACTIVITY C CASE STUDY – A TALE OF TWO FACILITATORS
TIME LIMIT  60 Minutes

- OBJECTIVES**
- To identify the role of a facilitator
 - To understand what makes a good facilitator

- PREPARATION**
-  Make sufficient copies of the Reading Material for this workshop entitled "**Some Advice for Facilitators**" to hand out to the group at the end of the workshop.
 -  On the flipchart, write out some characteristics of a good facilitator (see paragraph #3 for some suggestions).

**FACILITATOR
DIRECTIONS**

1. Advise the group that this will be a **guided discussion exercise** that begins with a **case study**. Have a group member explain what case studies and guided discussion exercises are meant to do. Once the person is finished, you may want to fill in anything that was left out.
2. Tell the group a short story (no more than 5 minutes). The story should not be read, but told, and contain these elements:

Carlos and Julita González have two children--9 year old María and 13 year old Eduardo. Both parents are worried about how well their children are doing in school, and both have been invited to join new groups of parents, one in each school their children go to.

When Carlos goes to his meeting, a number of things happen. No one introduces him to anyone else attending, the meeting starts late, the facilitator gives a twenty minute lecture, which is long and hard to understand, little discussion takes place, and when someone disagrees with the facilitator, it almost leads to a fight. Carlos decides not to go to any more meetings.

Julita had a good time. When she goes to her meeting, she is greeted at the door by Señora Rosado, who says she is the facilitator for the group. She is introduced by Sra. Rosado to several parents. The meeting starts on time. Sra. Rosado asks for people's ideas and encourages everyone to participate. When asked to come again, Julita is sure she will, and she thinks she might persuade Carlos that he should go with her, maybe in with other parents he knows from Eddie's school.

3. Ask the group to say what they think are the traits of a good group leader/facilitator. List these traits on the flipchart:

Add to the list any of the following characteristics of a good facilitator the group hasn't suggested. A good facilitator:

- *helps recruit members into the group*
- *helps develop the group*
- *gives information to group members*
- *coordinates and organizes the work of the group*
- *takes on responsibilities and tasks, and carries them out*
- *delegates responsibilities and tasks to group members*
- *serves as communications link between group members and school staff*
- *guides the group towards these goals*
- *leads the group until leaders are selected*
- *coordinates and organizes the work of others so that it gets done faster and more effectively*
- *guides and directs a group towards completing its tasks*
- *informs, orients, and instructs others*

4. After reviewing these, ask the group to describe characteristics of bad facilitators they observed from the case study or their experiences. List their ideas on a separate piece of paper from the flipchart.
5. You should stress that the role of the facilitator is less dramatic than that of a leader, but it is a highly active role. Group members should never be permitted to make the facilitator a leader, for everyone in the group should have a role in leading.

ACTIVITY D WRAP-UP

TIME LIMIT  20 Minutes

- OBJECTIVES**
- To summarize lessons learned
 - To obtain feedback
 - To thank group members for attending the workshop series
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FACILITATOR DIRECTIONS

1. Have a group member explain what a "wrap-up" is meant to accomplish. Once the group member is finished, you may want to fill in anything that was left out.
2. Summarize accomplishments of the workshop. Ask the group what they learned. Be sure to include:
 - *The characteristics of a good facilitator*
 - *That a good facilitator makes group members feel comfortable and want to attend meetings*
3. Thank group members for participating in the workshop series.
4. Provide members with copies of the Reading Materials for this workshop entitled "Some Advice for Facilitators."

READING MATERIALS FOR WORKSHOP TEN**Some Advice for Facilitators****A. ROLE OF THE FACILITATOR**

In your first meetings, there are eight tasks that only you, the facilitator, can do.

1. You need to be aware of your role, where you fit in the context of this task, and how this context influences you;
2. Offer a number of reasons why parents should come together and stay together;
3. Help members set goals for the group;
4. Encourage and organize parents to describe their present relationship with their schools, and their role in their children's education;
5. Helping the group to focus on what they consider real problems;
6. Summarizing the relationship parents and children have with their schools, and explaining it graphically and dramatically, to move them to study and understand their situation better;
7. Guiding their start in research and analysis -- their data collection, readings, meetings with other parents and teachers -- that will provide them with a history of education, an understanding of the dropout situation, and how each relates to the Latino community; and
8. Encouraging their excitement and sense of accomplishment.

B. PARENTS ARE THE CENTER

You are going to be the facilitator at a number of meetings of a group of school parents. Facilitator contains the Spanish word "fácil," meaning easy, and that's your role. You are there to make the whole process easy for the parents. Parents are the center of this entire program.

It's not your role to be a leader in the usual sense. Everyone should have a role in leading. As a facilitator, you will have to be careful not to let group members make you their leader, so they can passively follow what you do and say. Unfortunately, this is a problem encountered often.

When members of the community go to their first meetings, they often feel as uncomfortable as they do when they go to the school for a formal meeting with the teacher.

They may feel exposed, talking about some things they don't feel they know all that well.

It's a lot easier for them to let the facilitator do the talking and the work. It's easier for the facilitator to lead, to define the problems parents face, state the needs, and set the agenda for the group. There is no way you should allow yourself to be put in this position.

You cannot and should not take the role of a strong expert leader.

Parents may not bring the skills of trained educators to these sessions, but they bring applicable skills. They have experience. They are self-directed. They have learned to deal with and solve problems all their lives. Because of this, a group of parents has got to learn to identify its own needs, and set its own agenda for its community. No matter how difficult or uncomfortable that might be for them at first.

C. FACILITATORS ARE ACTIVE ADVISORS

These descriptions of a facilitator do not mean that you, as a facilitator, should now turn around and be inactive. Yours is a less dramatic but highly active role within the group. Facilitators are very important to the program and to the parents who would not learn or do as much without the facilitators efforts.

A facilitator can be any one of several things --

- A person who coordinates and organizes the work of others so that it gets done faster and more effectively.
- A person who guides and directs a group towards the completion of its tasks.
- A person who informs, orients, and instructs others.
- Any other roles you want to add?

As a facilitator, you will have several tasks. At first, you will lead the group, until the group members select their own leader. If they offer you the job, refuse it.

The heart of your task is to encourage discussion at group meetings. Even encourage taking of sides on information that will be gathered once you start the discussion meetings.

You will always relay information to the group, which comes from meeting with the facilitators of other groups like yours to solve problems, learn skills, and share experiences.

You will always be recruiting new members, organizing and developing new groups, coordinating and implementing required group activities, and helping to generate and coordinate new activities for the group.

You can be a technical advisor about consensus, listening skills, and constructive criticism, all of which are skills everyone will need to learn.

You can also help people make clear their own views on community and school issues and how to approach them. In fact, most of your time will be devoted to explanation.

In summary, a facilitator...

- _____ helps to recruit members into the group
- _____ helps develop the group
- _____ gives information to group members
- _____ coordinates and organizes the work of the group
- _____ takes on responsibilities and tasks, and carries them out
- _____ delegates responsibilities and tasks to group members
- _____ serves as communication "link" between group members (on club matters) and school staff
- _____ guides the group towards its goals
- _____ leads the group until leaders are selected from within the group

(This checklist can be useful to you as you go about doing your job as facilitator. Keep it handy.)

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