**Basic Facilitation Skills for Public Events**

**Course Description**

Facilitators support groups of people, helping to ensure they can accomplish their work together. Facilitating public processes is not the same as facilitating internal meetings. Everyone under the sun is invited, they come from tremendously diverse backgrounds, and they may not even support the organizations’ mission. In a democracy, they have the right to their opinions. Understanding their perspectives is essential to developing sound public policy and sustainable public decisions. But facilitating their engagement in a public meeting is not easy!

Public participation practitioners are often expected to facilitate public events, but many have not been provided and adequate opportunity to learn how to facilitate. We don’t want to practice with real participants, after all!

Building on best practices from the International Association of Facilitators, this three-day course introduces the essentials of facilitation in the public arena. Participants learn how to design and conduct successful facilitated public involvement events. It covers essential facilitation skills and basic methods for generating, organizing, and ranking ideas as well as for helping people to think together. Most importantly, it provides a safe environment to PRACTICE those facilitation skills. This three-day course is designed for small groups of participants, no more than a dozen, to consider information presented and practice essential facilitation skills in a safe learning environment with the opportunity for lots of feedback. Three practice sessions are recorded and participants go home with access to video files of their practice sessions to assist them in their ongoing journey to become effective at the art of facilitating.

The course was designed to assist participants seeking to learn how to:

* List the basic parts of a facilitated public event
* Use verbal and non-verbal skills to facilitate a meeting
* Demonstrate basic facilitation skills
* Plan group processes, select methods, and develop a session agenda
* Respond to challenging situations that arise at typical facilitated public events.

**Student Manual**

Students receive a 135-page manual. The chapters in the student manual include:

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1. What is Facilitation – which introduces facilitation and the role that facilitators play in conducting public participation events, as well as the “core competencies” as defined by the International Association of Facilitators
2. Session Planning – which lists the steps facilitators should take in planning to facilitate a public participation event.
3. Anatomy of a Meeting – which covers what facilitators should do to open, conduct, and end public participation event
4. Basic Facilitation Skills – which introduces the verbal and non-verbal skills employed by facilitators as well as skills for reading the dynamics in the room
5. Recording and Meeting Documentation – which covers how to use a flip chart or other method for recording participants contributions during a meeting and how to document the results of the meeting
6. Basic Facilitation Methods – which introduces methods for generating ideas, organizing ideas, ranking ideas, and helping people think together
7. Facilitating Challenging Situations – which reviews session design challenges, difficult people, and challenging group dynamics and provides suggestions for how facilitators can address these challenging situations to keep a public participation event on track.
8. Emotion and Conflict – which explores how emotions affect how people behave in a group setting and how to facilitate when conflict arises between participants
9. Facilitator Excellence – which shares guidance from professional organizations on what excellence mean for facilitators working in public participation settings.

**Agenda**

**Day One:**

Welcome, Introductions, Objectives, Agenda, Participant Expectations 8:00 am - 8:30 am

What Is Facilitation? 8:30 am - 9:15 am

Session Planning 9:15 am - 10:00 am

**Break 10:00 am - 10:15 am**

Anatomy of a Meeting 10:15 am - 11:00 am

Basic Facilitation Skills 11:00 am - 11:45 am

**Lunch/Prepare for First Recorded Session 11:45 pm - 1:15 pm**

Practicing Your Skills: The Anatomy of a Meeting 1:15 pm - 2:30 pm

**Break 2:30 pm - 2:45 pm**

Recorded Session #1, Continued 2:45 pm - 3:45 pm

Feedback 3:45 pm - 4:45 pm

Reflections on Day One, Preview of Day 2 4:45 pm - 5:00 pm

**Day Two**

Ground Rules 8:00 am - 8:30 am

Practicing Your Skills: Question Design 8:30 am- 9:00 am

Recording and Meeting Documentation 9:00 am - 9:30 am

**Break 9:30 am - 9:45 am**

Basic Facilitation Methods 9:45 am - 11:00 am

**Lunch/Prepare for Second Recorded Session 11:00 am - 12:30 pm**

Practicing Your Skills: Common Facilitation Methods 12:30 pm - 1:45 pm

**Break 1:45 pm - 2:00 pm**

Recorded Session #2 Continued 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Feedback 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm

Facilitating Challenging Situations 4:00 pm - 4:45 pm

Reflections on Day Two, Preview of Day 3 4:45 pm - 5:00 pm

**Day Three**

Ice Breakers 8:00 am - 8:30 am

Emotion and Conflict 8:30 am - 9:15 am

Practicing Your Skills: Facilitating Challenging Situations 9:15 am - 10:45 am

**Break 10:45 am - 11:00 am**

Practice Session #3 Continued 11:00 am - 12:15 pm

**Lunch 12:15 pm - 1:15 pm**

Feedback 1:15 pm - 2:15 pm

Facilitator Excellence 2:15 pm - 3:00 pm

**Break 3:00 pm - 3:15 pm**

Facilitator Excellence (continued) 3:15 pm - 4:15 pm

Other Resources for Facilitators 4:15 pm – 4:45 pm

Closing Reflections 4:45 pm - 5:00 pm