



National Healthcare
Communication
Programme

FACILITATION STYLE

A GUIDE FOR FACILITATORS



Making conversations easier



Facilitation style

Clickable contents

1. Prepare
2. Start
3. Structure
4. Build rapport
5. Listen
6. Give information
7. Close



Brings you back to contents

“

When you see someone putting on his Big Boots, you can be sure that an Adventure is going to happen.

A.A. Milne, Winnie the Pooh, 1926



Facilitation style

1. Prepare

Rehearse



Rehearse! Practice your presentation, including the activities. The more you practice, the more you will be prepared, and presentation anxiety will diminish. Time your presentation. If your presentation doesn't fit in the time allowed, adjust so you can start and end on time.

Know your learners



Before working with a particular group, ask lots of questions to find out as much as possible about the participants.

Room set up

Arrange the space for optimal learning and comfort.



Facilitation style

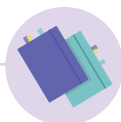
1. Prepare

Check audio-visual equipment



Check the equipment early to ensure that you know how to operate it and that all is working well.

Working with a co-facilitator



Share responsibilities and describe your roles. Check in with each other during coffee breaks, support each other and honour time commitments.

TIP

Consider your learners' needs. Is the room accessible? Can everyone see/hear what you are doing and saying? Consider age, gender and religious/cultural beliefs as well as physical and sensory impairments.



Facilitation style

2. Start

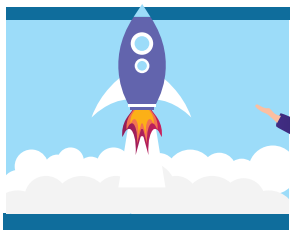
Use a strong opening to catch the learners attention



Be sure of your opening statement so that you are guaranteed to extend a warm welcome and make good eye contact with as many learners as possible.

Tell learners what they are going to learn

Review your agenda with the participants. Tell them what they are going to learn, how it will be done and why it is important to them. Everyone wants to know, *“What’s in this for me?”* So tell them!



2. Start

Use appropriate strategies for building learner safety



Establish and agree ways of working (or ground rules) at the beginning of each workshop. Emphasise choice and never require participation. Ways to involve learners include asking them to write down their thoughts first, before answering, or splitting the larger group into small groups to brainstorm answers. Be aware of who is talking and try to spread the discussion around so many different people can give their points of view.

TIP

The start is one of the most important parts of any workshop. Your opener will help to set the tone of the day and put your learners at ease.



3. Structure

Provide clear guidelines for group introductions and workshop agenda



Give learners time to feel safe and comfortable before asking them to introduce themselves. Provide clear guidelines for introductions and for how the workshop will run. Show and explain the slides for introductions, group activities and simulation sessions.

Clearly identify when learners are moving from one section of the workshop to the next



A good presentation has a specific sequence – a beginning, middle and end. It is presented in such a way that it holds the learner's attention and participants can understand and relate to what is being said. Use transitional statements to clearly indicate when you are moving from one section of the workshop to the next.



3. Structure

Summarise key learning points

Perhaps at the end of a section of the workshop or after a coffee break, it might be a good time to summarise the key learning points from the previous section.

TIP

Remember to honour time commitments, for example if you say that you are going to take a coffee break at eleven, do so.



4. Build rapport

Greetings and introductions



Be available to introduce yourself to people as they arrive, making a special effort to greet people you don't already know. Find out their names and how they like to be called. Use learner names throughout the workshop to build connections. Referring to people by name helps to build rapport and create a positive working environment.

Positive, enthusiastic interpersonal style



Recognise that learners have their own life and work expertise. As a facilitator you are supporting them to call on their own resources and creativity to improve their communication skills.



4. Build rapport

Use empathy to build rapport

Learners are more likely to engage if they feel that you understand their perspective. Demonstrate empathy by actively listening to their contributions, identifying, validating and exploring how they feel about the areas that you are discussing.

TIP

Many of the communication skills for working with patients translate into good facilitation practice. Embody a facilitation style that is friendly, empathy, positive and reflects that you care for your learners.



4. Build rapport

Facial expression



Our faces are very expressive. Keeping an open, warm facial expression helps to build rapport with your learners. Ensure that your facial expression matches the content of your speech.

In general a smile is one of the most important skills in building rapport and can help to put your learners at ease.

Eye contact



When communication begins, eye contact can help to establish rapport. Making eye contact signals that you are listening and interested in what your learners are saying. Share a comfortable eye contact with all of your learners while respecting cultural differences.



4. Build rapport

Posture

Maintain a relaxed, open posture, facing towards your learners. Keep your shoulders relaxed and your hands by your sides. Assume a position that allows you to move easily in any direction.

Gestures

There are many types of gesture. Illustrators are the most common and are used to clarify the verbal message they accompany. For example, you might use a hand gesture and say something like *tell me more* to encourage a learner to continue talking. Try to avoid repetitive gestures (for example, twiddling thumbs, placing your hands in your pockets or in the prayer position).



Facilitation style

4. Building rapport

Head movement

A head nod can be used to show that you are listening and it encourages the learner to continue with their story. Your head tilted to one side shows interest in the conversation.

TIP

Stay on your feet as much as possible and move with purpose to capture the attention of your learners.



4. Build rapport

Pace, Pitch, Power, Tone and Pausing



Speak slowly and clearly, vary your vocal volume and use appropriate tone, pitch and speed. Pause to give learners time to absorb what they are hearing and to prepare for the next point. Pauses are also useful to emphasise important points and to create transitions.

Articulation

Articulation relates to how you pronounce your words. Do you slur your words (ok for a casual encounter) or pronounce each syllable precisely (required in workshop settings)?

TIP

It is often through our nonverbal vocal expression that we reveal what we are thinking and feeling. Are your nonverbal behaviours reflecting and supporting the words that you are using?



4. Build rapport

Appearance



Appearance refers to you, your facial and body type, your hair and skin colour. We do not have as much control over these nonverbal cues as we do with other nonverbal aspects of communication.

Adornment



Adornment refers to the physical objects you use to express yourself: the clothes you wear and accessories such as jewellery or glasses. Appearance can affect judgements like a person's character, personality and status.

TIP

Although what you wear or how you fix your hair does not define you as a facilitator, it does send messages about you to your learners. Be aware of your personal appearance, a professional approach is important to build trust and confidence.



4. Build rapport

Watch your time



One key task as the facilitator is managing the time. It is important to know in advance how long each section takes so you can stay on track.

Know when it is time to move on



There are times when you need to make the decision to move on. If a certain topic sparks a lot of discussion, try to reach a good stopping point and respectfully tell your learners that you are going to move to the next section.

TIP

Time is important when facilitating a workshop. It is important to keep yourself and your learners on schedule.



Facilitation style

5. Listen

Use positive, visible cues to demonstrate active listening

Demonstrate active listening by maintaining a warm facial expression, appropriate eye contact, leaning and nodding while your learners are speaking.

Show interest in understanding learner perspectives

Use open questions (who, why, what, when, how) to encourage your learners to think about what they are saying and to help you to engage with their perspectives. If you receive a short reply, perhaps follow up with...

Can you tell me more about that?



5. Listen

Demonstrate this understanding using reflective listening

Reflecting is a fundamental listening skill. It has a calming effect as it assures learners that they are being listened to and understood. Preface your reflection with a comment like...

It sounds to me, you are saying... or let me see if I understand...

Use summaries and clarifying questions to give learners the support they need to refine their ideas

A **summary** is a brief statement about the main points of what the learner has said to you. **Clarifying** is used to better understand what was said and perhaps to support the learner to refine their thoughts...

What do you mean by...?



5. Listen

Draw out learners own experience, insights and opinions



Brainstorming is a way to get your learners to think about the question and come up with their own solutions. When you collect answers from the group as part of their brainstorm, take each answer as it comes, even if it is one that you think does not belong on the list.

When you **ask your learners questions**, you may get answers that are incorrect. If this happens, acknowledge the answer and continue to question the learners. Ask if there are other opinions or if someone else has a different idea and try to work your way to the right answer.

It is always more constructive if your learners figure out the answers on their own.



Facilitation style

5. Listen

TIP

There may be times when you ask a question and no one responds. This is normal. Try to resist the temptation to quickly give the answer yourself. **Use silence** to give your learners time to think about the question and appropriate **eye contact** to encourage your learners to respond when they are ready.



Facilitation style

6. Give information

Provide clear, concise verbal and visual instructions for learner activities

Give clear, concise, verbal and visual instructions, (for example have the instructions written on a piece of flipchart paper or on a PowerPoint slide). Briefly demonstrate the activity yourself. Ask if everyone understands the directions or has any questions. When you feel learners know what they are supposed to do, proceed with the activity. Walk around the room to ensure that learners are undertaking the activity correctly. If you see a group not participating ask them if they need clarification on what they are supposed to do and encourage them to complete the task.



6. Give information

Use a variety of learning approaches to match different learning styles (auditory/visual/kinaesthetic)



People learn best when they use sensory based learning styles.

Ensure that your materials incorporate all modalities – *visual, auditory and kinaesthetic* – to keep the attention of your learners at different stages throughout the workshop.

Accept and respectfully respond to learners who disagree or are ambivalent



Be confident in the information that you are delivering and in your facts. It is also important to accept when learners express disagreement and a preference for other approaches.



6. Give information

Keep the learning session moving with a steady, up-beat pace



Support the information with your own facts and experiences... tell **real stories**, use real examples and work with real case scenarios. **Invite questions** from the audience. Bringing **humour** into the learning environment makes for a dynamic and engaging workshop.

Debrief activities, videos and simulations using the Calgary-Cambridge Framework



The Calgary-Cambridge Framework identifies 73 communication skills used throughout the clinical consultation. It is important to be familiar with these skills and to be able to clearly explain the skills based approach to teaching communication skills when you are delivering the workshops.



6. Give information

Use the ALOBA framework to deliver feedback to learners during simulation sessions

We have adapted the Agenda Led Outcome Based Analysis (ALOPA) framework developed by Jonathan Silverman and colleagues for giving feedback in these modules. This focuses on self-assessment by the learner and the observer(s), helps with problem-solving and consideration of alternative approaches.

The six steps are:

Step 1: Set the scene

Step 2: Identify the learner's agenda

Step 3: Watch the practice session

Step 4: Feedback and re-rehearsal

Step 5: Teaching points

Step 6: Close the session



Facilitation style

6. Give information

Adjust content to emerging learner needs as required

Be flexible! Facilitators need to accommodate to a variety of learning styles and thus you may need to tailor the teaching to the particular audience and their needs.

TIP

Keep your own contributions brief during group discussions. Give your learners the opportunity to respond to the questions and one another. If your learners fully answer a question, thank them and move on.



Facilitation style

7. Close

Use a strong closing



Summarise the main points of learning.

Ask participants to reflect on how they will use their new knowledge

Remind participants of what they learned and ask them to reflect on how they will use their new knowledge.

Provide participants with the opportunity to evaluate the workshop

Hand out evaluations before the end to allow time for reflection.

Thank the learners for their participation and hard work



Thank learners for their participation and hard work. Let everyone know that with ongoing commitment to continued practice, their communication skills will continue to improve.



Facilitation style

7. Close

Working with a co-facilitator

It is important after every workshop to debrief with your co-facilitator, what went well, what could be improved upon... so that you are constantly learning and improving your skills.



TIP

Having a good close to the session will ensure people remember what they have learned and thus, they will be more likely to put it into practice after the workshop.

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This Skills Card is the work of the National Healthcare Communication Programme.

