

# FACILITATIVE LEADERSHIP

## PURPOSES & BENEFITS

These tools and resources help collaborative group members to identify, develop and enhance leadership skills for working both within the collaborative group and with the larger community. The specific purposes and benefits are:

- To provide an overview of what facilitative leadership is, its value in community organizing work and addressing complex community issues such as sexual and domestic violence, as well as the underlying principles and the behaviors associated with facilitative leadership.
- To provide a mechanism for assessing facilitative leadership behaviors individually and collectively as a collaborative group.
- Understanding how change occurs and the relevant elements to impact in order to create positive change.
- The elements associated with setting a group process or activity up for success.

## HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

The facilitative leadership style fits well with community organizing work and addressing complex community issues like sexual and domestic violence that require a community response in order to find solutions. This document highlights the important aspects of facilitative leadership at a glance, and makes connections to other related components in the toolkit to help tie the ideas and tools together:

- **Universal Community Organizing Concepts**
  - Appreciative inquiry.
  - Making the case for community organizing.
- **Step 1A – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Coming Together**
  - Understanding elements of successful collaboration.
  - Identifying what each group member has to contribute to the collaborative.
  - Identifying the benefits of participating in the collaborative.
- **Step 1B – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Defining Your Purpose(s)**
  - Defining the collaborative group's agreed upon end goals.
- **Step 1C – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Determining How You'll Work Together**
  - Using a process for consensus decision-making.
  - Using diagnostic tools to maximize the group's performance both internally and in the community organizing work to be accomplished.
  - Managing conflict.
  - Developing internal communication strategies.
  - Defining roles and commitments.



## FACILITATIVE LEADERSHIP

Facilitative leadership is a term used to describe a style of leadership that focuses not only on the “what” leadership consists of, but also the “how” leadership occurs. This style of leadership emphasizes that leadership is associated with certain behaviors or acts and not necessarily with any particular person, position or authority, as many traditional leadership styles identify as synonymous with what it means to be a leader. Given these general concepts, facilitative leaders can be anyone in a collaborative group performing any group role, not just the person at the front of the room or facilitating the group meeting. This leadership style is especially useful when performing community organizing work and addressing complex community issues such as sexual and domestic violence, where community solutions are required. Some key principles of facilitative leadership:

- Facilitative leadership is a behavior or activity, not a position or authority; therefore, each of us has the opportunity to exercise leadership at any time, in any situation.
- Exercising leadership is an experiment. We can’t know if an intervention will work until we try it.
- Exercising leadership is risky:
  - We have control over any act of leadership we perform, but not the outcome(s) generated.
  - The risks of exercising leadership are both personal and professional.
  - It can involve risking casualties and managing losses.
- Being purposeful and intentional about performing acts of leadership is necessary in order to make progress; this means:
  - Doing what is best for the situation and not just what is wanted by or is comfortable for us and/or others.
  - Our comfortable default behaviors, some unconscious, can be significant barriers to making progress on the issues we care about; therefore, knowing ourselves is an important aspect of facilitative leadership.

Facilitative leadership behaviors, no matter the group member’s role, include the following:

- Understand the components of how groups work together (*see the “What Does It Mean for Us to Collaborate?” document in the collaboration tools section in Step 1A – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Coming Together – of the toolkit*); these are useful in helping to identify the stage the group is at and what is needed next in order to make forward progress.
- Know and capitalize on the talents and skills of group members in order to strengthen the collective (*see the “Stakeholder Map” and “What I Have to Contribute to & How I Benefit from this Collaborative” in Step 1A – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Coming Together – of the toolkit.*)
- Keep the group’s vision or desired end result, as well as the group’s mission or purpose(s) in mind – Where does the group need to go in this meeting and in future meetings? (*See the “Developing Vision and Mission Statements Worksheet” in Step 1B – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Defining Your Purpose(s) – of the toolkit.*)
- Have a solution-focus, as opposed to only a problem-focus.
- Ensure that everyone is included. Honor everyone’s contribution by:
  - Caring about, focusing on and finding value in others in the collaborative group. Facilitative leadership is relationship based. It can’t be done without caring about and focusing on others. Find the value each person has to contribute to the group.
  - Creating opportunities for group discussion as decisions are being made.
  - Encouraging the sharing of ideas.



- Listening well without thinking of what to say next.
- Suspending judgment. Group members can judge harshly based on where people have arrived in their thinking or beliefs. Instead, each group member needs to seek to understand how they arrived at their beliefs – therein lies the commonalities. When one is busy judging a person, group, or process, responsibility for understanding and improving the group is limited.
- Capturing ideas presented.
- Creating opportunities for accountability among group members (*See the “Meeting Agenda and Notes” tool in Step 1C – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Determining How You’ll Work Together – of the toolkit.*)
- Encouraging revolving leadership and group roles.
- Celebrating accomplishments of individuals and the group as a whole (*See Step 5 – Demonstrate and Celebrate Your Success – of the toolkit.*)
- Help the group find consensus or points of agreement using the consensus-decision making process and brainstorming and consensus-building tools (*See the “Consensus Decision Process with Brainstorming & Tools” document in Step 1C – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Determining How You’ll Work Together – of the toolkit.*)
- When the group faces challenges, whether internal or external to the group, help the group to diagnose the situation (*See the “Group Diagnostic Tools” in Step 1C – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Determining How You’ll Work Together – of the toolkit.*)
- Ask questions to help gain collective understanding, gain greater insight, move the group forward, etc. Asking questions is how you connect with others. Find out how a person arrived at their position, not just what their position is. (*See the “Appreciative Inquiry” document in the Universal Community Organizing Concepts section of the toolkit.*)
- Think creatively. Reward new thinking with your attention, use appreciative inquiry to stimulate creative thought. Watch out for group think (*See “Recognizing and Managing Group Think” in “Diagnosing Internal Challenges for Collaborative Groups.”*)
- Pay attention. A very unique and simple act. Basic to all relationship building.
- Facilitate from the chair. All group members can improve the success of a group even if they are not in charge of the group. Challenge old stereo types of leaders with a gavel.
- Believe and trust in the group process. The facilitative leader creates the best process for a group to connect with each other, work through chaos, develop unity, and perform. (*See the “What Does It Mean for Us to Collaborate?” document in the collaboration tools section in Step 1A – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Coming Together – of the toolkit.*)

## ASSESSING MY FACILITATIVE LEADERSHIP BEHAVIORS

Since facilitative leadership is a behavior or activity, not a position or authority, identifying, understanding and intentionally practicing the facilitative leadership behaviors outlined on the previous pages is critical to the success of the collaborative group and creating real change to end community problems such as sexual and domestic violence.

Periodically, it might be helpful for you and/or all collaborative group members to check in and think individually about how you're performing as a facilitative leader. One simple way to do this is to review the bulleted list of facilitative leadership behaviors on the previous pages, rating yourself on each bullet point as follows: 1=Never, 2=Seldom, 3=Sometimes, 4=Often, 5=Almost Always.

After rating your facilitative leadership behaviors, write your responses to the following questions:

- What stands out or is important to you about the results?
- What facilitative leadership behavior(s) would you like to expand upon or grow further? How can you intentionally practice this/these behavior(s)?
- What facilitative leadership behavior(s) are you actively practicing that have contributed to the collaborative group's success? How have they contributed to the collaborative group's success?

Other ways to apply this assessment tool:

- Work as a collective group to assess the group's overall performance on the facilitative leadership behaviors.
- Group members identify each other's facilitative leadership behaviors to understand the collective group's performance.

Of course, these ideas are a bit riskier for individuals and the group, so think about the level of trust built in the group before applying the assessment tool in ways that allow group members to rate one another's performance. When applied in the right circumstances, however, these approaches can help to bring the group closer together and increase or enhance the group's performance.

## THE CHANGE FORMULA

In order to create positive community change on the issues of sexual and domestic violence through community organizing work, it is important to understand the formula for how change occurs, which is as follows:

$$\underline{\text{Dissatisfaction}} \times \underline{\text{Vision}} \times \underline{\text{First Steps}} > \underline{\text{Resistance to Change}}$$

or

$$D \times V \times F > R$$

According to this formula developed by Burghart, in order for change to occur, the variables on the left side of the equation (i.e., dissatisfaction, vision and first steps) must be present (or not equal zero) and greater than the right side of the equation (i.e., resistance to change). Knowing the variables that need to be in place is helpful when working with the community in order to create the change necessary to end sexual and domestic violence in the local community.

Let's break each variable down a bit further:

- **Dissatisfaction:** Where there is dissatisfaction, there is motivation to change. Some people change because they see the light, while others change because they feel the heat. Not everyone in the local community may readily see the light of the connection between ending sexual and domestic violence and a healthier community. In that case, dissatisfaction is the heat that provokes interest in making change for the better. Think about how to increase dissatisfaction in the local community beyond just the statistics.
- **Vision:** These are the people who "see the light" as described above. Making sure they are committed to helping and being involved in making change happen is an important variable of the change formula.
- **First Steps:** An effective collaborative group gains closure and commitment by working toward first or next steps, including clarifying who is going to do what by when. This is where the importance of a strategic plan, including the work plan which details the first and next steps, comes into play. This allows the group to move forward in implementing the community organizing strategic plan toward a desired state and sets group members and other stakeholders up to be accountable to each other as the plan is implemented.

Adapted from Beckhard, R. & Harris, R. (1987). *Organizational transitions: Managing complex change*. Addison Wesley Publishing Company: Reading, MA.

## SETTING THE GROUP UP FOR SUCCESS

When introducing a process or activity, assuring that the group understands the important elements of the task at hand will help to set the group up for success and create transparency in the group that will help to build trust and increase or enhance the group's performance.

The following important elements, provided in the order listed below, can help set the group up for success:

<b>Key Element</b>	<b>Helps to Answer</b>	<b>Answers the Group's Secret Process Question(s)</b>
<b>Purpose</b>	Why are we doing this work? What will success look like?	Why should I care or pay attention?
<b>Linkage</b>	Why are we doing this activity now? How does it link to the work we just completed and the work we will be doing next?	Are we just jumping through hoops or are we going somewhere?
<b>Macro Process</b>	What major steps will we be taking to complete this part of the agenda?	What is the whole picture?
<b>Micro Process</b>	What are the specific questions we will be answering and/or tasks we will be doing for this activity? What mindset will make us most effective?	What steps are we supposed to take? Where can I find them? How can I remember them?
<b>Group Process</b>	How will we be working together on this activity? Do people in our group have different roles, such as facilitator, recorder, and spokesperson?	Who in our group does what and when?
<b>Timing</b>	How much time do we have to work on this activity?	How fast do we need to work?
<b>Logistics</b>	Where will we be working? Do we take a break before or after this activity? When do we return to the full group or move on to the next activity?	Where are we supposed to be?

## ADDITIONAL FACILITATIVE LEADERSHIP TOOLS IN THE TOOLKIT

While facilitative leadership is a universal community organizing concept and it applies across the board in the toolkit, you can find additional information, resources and tools on facilitative leadership in the following sections of the toolkit:

- **Universal Community Organizing Concepts**
  - Appreciative inquiry.
  - Making the case for community organizing.
- **Step 1A – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Coming Together**
  - Understanding elements of successful collaboration.
  - Identifying what each group member has to contribute to the collaborative.
  - Identifying the benefits of participating in the collaborative.
- **Step 1B – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Defining Your Purpose(s)**
  - Defining the collaborative group's agreed upon end goals.
- **Step 1C – Set Your Collaborative Group Up for Success: Tools for Determining How You'll Work Together**
  - Using a process for consensus decision-making.
  - Using diagnostic tools to maximize the group's performance both internally and in the community organizing work to be accomplished.
  - Managing conflict.
  - Developing internal communication strategies.
  - Defining roles and commitments.