

Toolkit: Collaborative Facilitation (Co-facilitation)

What is it?

- Co-facilitation is the collaboration between a pair of nonspeakers and allies to lead a group meeting.

Why?

- The motor differences of nonspeakers should not preclude any member from any role in organizational participation; nonspeaking people have too much to share! Co-facilitation ensures ‘nothing about us, without us.’ Being an active participant in meetings allows greater agency for nonspeakers and amplifies their voices by letting them lead.

Benefits

- Co-facilitating pairs form stronger bonds and working relationships.
- Nonspeakers are empowered.
- Members gain a different point of view and are encouraged to work towards group goals in an efficient, enjoyable, and sustainable way.
- Responsibility for planning and leading meetings shifts from group coordinator to group members.

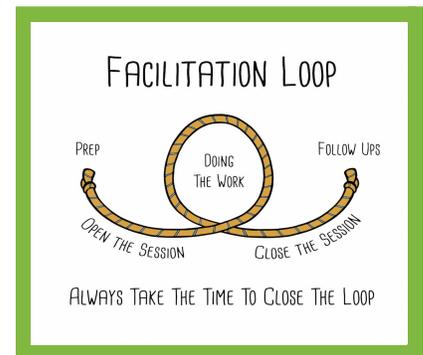
How?

- Facilitation trainings
 - Review common facilitation guides such as the one provided here: _____
 - Your group coordinator can provide general facilitation tips and their own training resources
 - Seek input from your nonspeaking group members - What will be helpful and important to consider?
 - Develop a facilitation guide for your group to train members as they join the leadership team.
- Partners - What it looks like
 - Pair nonspeakers and allies.
 - Each pair can work together outside of the larger group meetings to delineate their co-facilitator roles and process.
 - With the ally's support, the nonspeaker can take the lead in as many or as few aspects of prep and actual facilitation as they are comfortable with.
 - Allies should be flexible and respectful in supporting the nonspeaker to contribute as they prefer.
 - Questions for pairs to consider together:
 - How and when will the planning take place?
 - What will agenda items be?
 - Who will secure other members' participation?

- Will it be a large group gathering or have small group breakouts?
- Who will send out the necessary meeting notifications?
- What part will each co-facilitator play in leading and guiding the actual live meeting?
- How will the thoughts and ideas of the nonspeaker be conveyed?

Facilitation Loop

- The group coordinator can provide scaffolded support as pairs learn how to be co-facilitators.
- Before meetings: Provide organizational and planning guidance
- During meetings: Jump in and take on tasks for smooth execution
- After meetings: Reflect on the facilitation process for necessary modifications



Practical Tips

- Don't just hear, listen!
- Communicate with your co-facilitator
 - Teams should support each other through private chat during the meetings. They can make decisions about when to end a discussion, what consensus seems to be, when to end the meeting, etc.
- Come up with creative ways to engage everyone, even the quieter members!
- Make sure to match the energy of your crowd
- Make sure to build consensus among all
- Nominate specific volunteers for tasks to avoid confusion and ambiguity
- Make sure to summarize what was achieved at the end and answer any questions about action items so everyone is clear moving forward!
- Be mindful of how long meetings can go before members who struggle to regulate for long periods of time are excluded. It can be tempting to keep getting things done.