



How to Effectively Facilitate Groups

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Brainstorming

What are behaviors of successful facilitators that you have experienced?

To Get Started

- Fa·cil·i·ta·tion (noun) - ‘To make easy or easier’ (Oxford Coloured Dictionary, Thesaurus, 1996)
- ‘When a group is masterfully facilitated people say, “We did it ourselves!”’

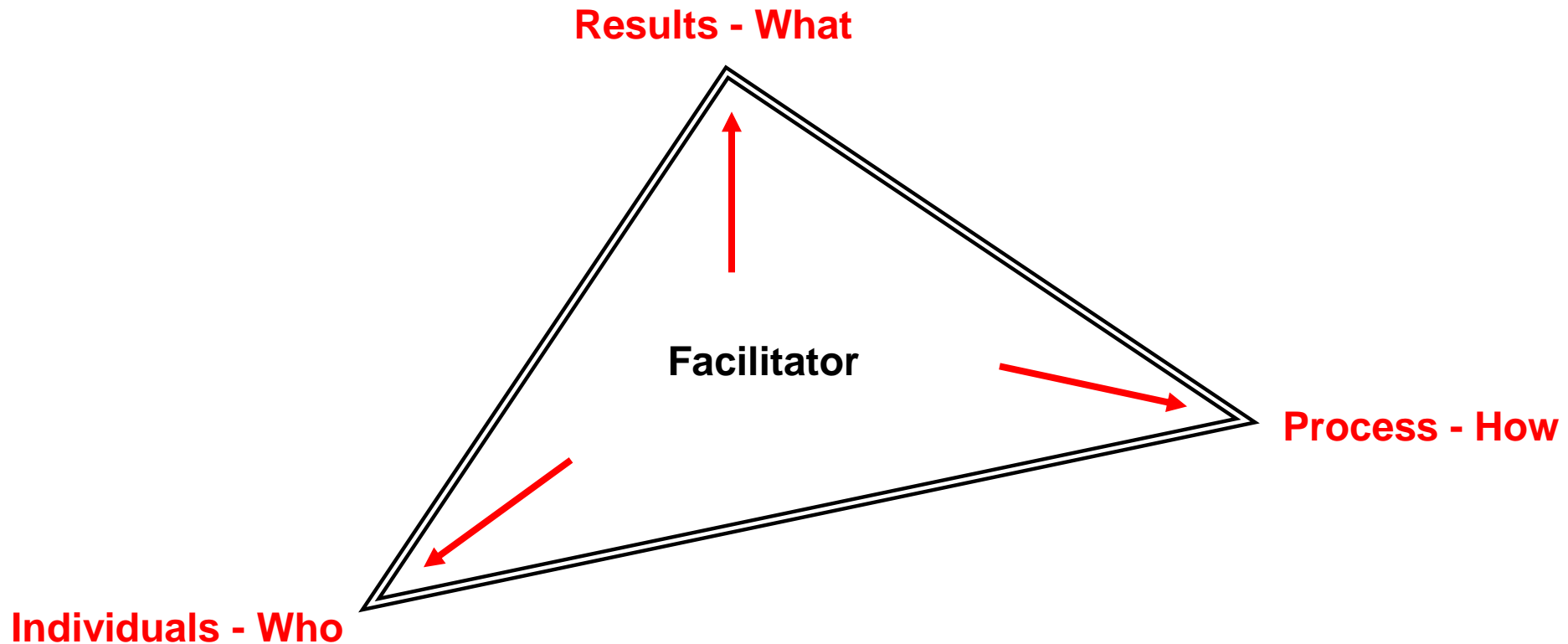
‘The art of facilitation is the art of assisting discovery’

Mark Van Doren

To Get Started

- When do add a facilitator: *'low certainty + low agreement = facilitated meeting!'*
- A good facilitator requires knowledge and skills in group process, conflict management, communication styles and learning theories

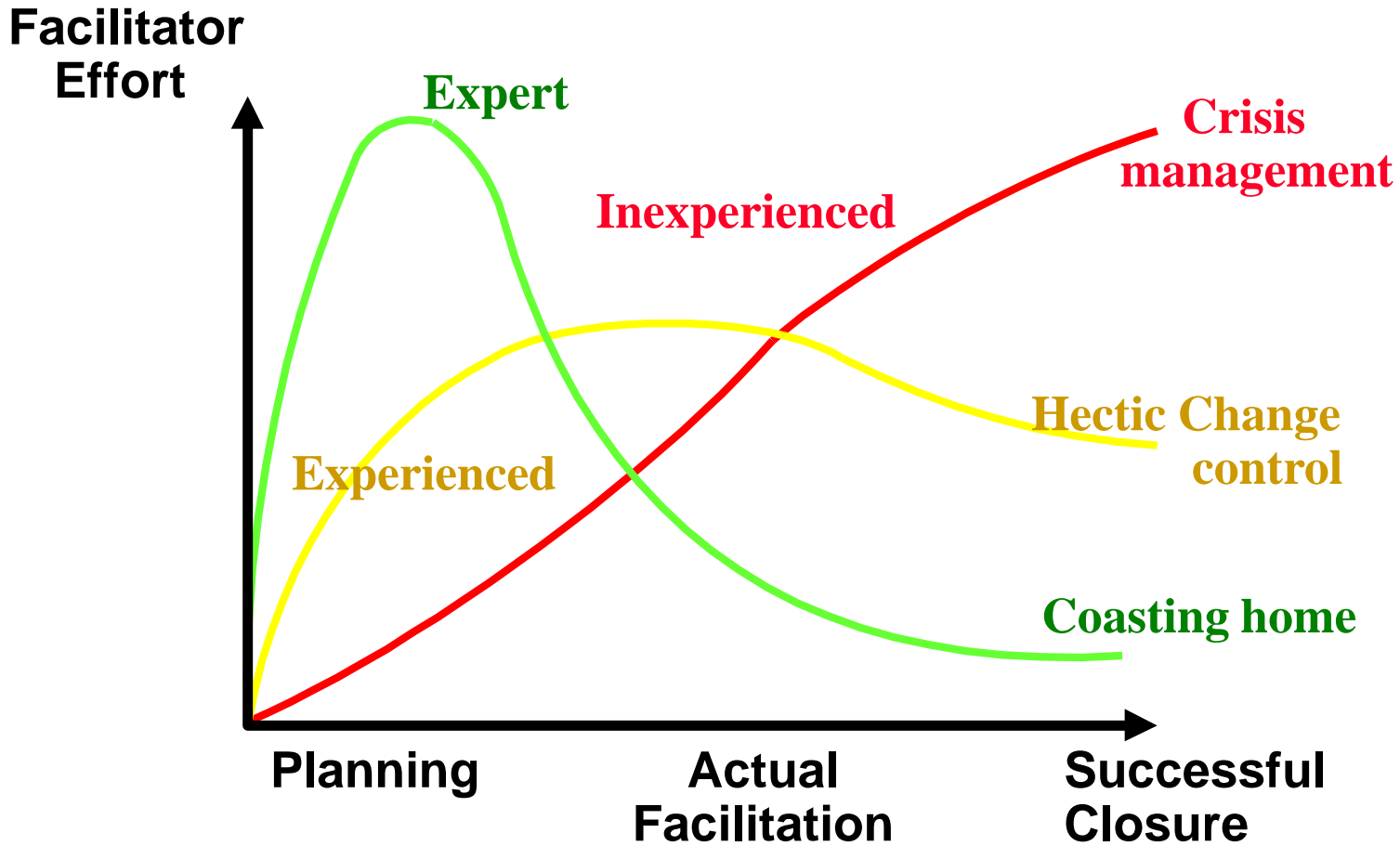
Facilitator Triangle



Key Facilitator Skills

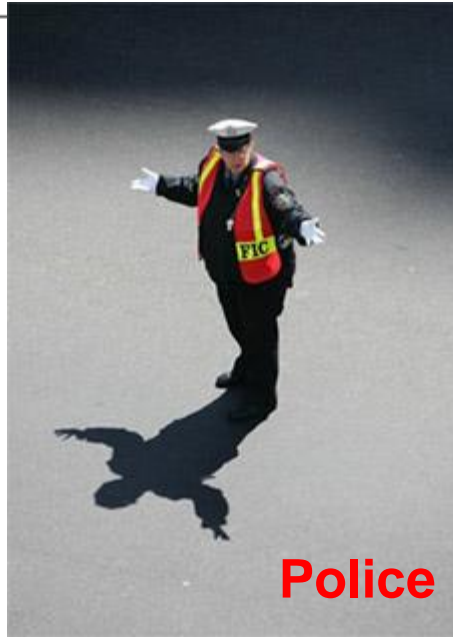
- **Planning Skills** - plan ahead and anticipate challenges
- **Diagnostic Skills** – ‘read’ verbal/non-verbal clues of the group, understand team dynamics and recognize barriers to team effectiveness
- **Intervention Skills** – understand when (or when not) to ask questions, offer feedback, provide problem solving methods, push for outcomes, ensure involvement or wrap up
- **Goal-getting Skills** – keep the outcome of the group in mind

Facilitator Planning Skills



Tips from the Trade - Before you get started?

- 'Get at least half of the work done in advance'
- Try to avoid designing to suit yourself based on your own assumptions and preferred working/learning style
- Within 10min, get all participants to talk
- Choose a decision-making method before you need it
- Know the group expectations
- Be aware of environmental factors, individuals and group dynamics (e.g., projection, transference, groupthink)
- Reach out to 'special' participants
- Be aware of your own biases
- Other ideas?



Police



Teacher



Conductor



Catalyst

Roles



Facilitator	Manager	Content Expert
Facilitates	Directs	Presents information
Invested in process	Invested in outcome	Invested in providing content expertise
Asks questions	Provides solutions	Provides the right answers
Guides to solutions	Solves problems	Assists in problem solving
Challenges the team to meet groups goals	Sets the goals and requires the team to meet them	Aids the team to achieve the team goals
Helps the team “graduate” and become self-sufficient	Has long-term relationship with team	Works with team when expertise is needed

Key Roles

Facilitator:

- Process focused
- Objective & impartial
- No vested interest
- Remains neutral
- No input on content
- Not in decision making
- Monitors team interactions

Leader:

- Result focused
- Active team member
- A vested interest
- Voice opinions/ideas
- Provides input
- Part of decision making
- Represents the team
- Gets resources

Facilitator/Leader: Tips when they are one...

- Discuss with the group the differences: be authentic
- Tell people when you are in one role or another
- Be clear which role you are in when decisions or choices are being made
- Make conscious choices about which role you need to play and when to play it
- Other ideas?

Tips from the Trade - What facilitator should I be?

- Be positive, supportive and approachable; often compliment the group
- Always be respectful and don't take sides; be calm in time of emotion...
- Cope with uncertainty and allow disagreement; remove distractions and be aware of groupthink
- Actively listen – summarize/paraphrase; ‘do not make assumptions, challenge them’
- Use language familiar with the group
- Observe non verbal communications; think about pace
- Be clear about your role
- Don't talk to much; ‘facilitate NOT participate’
- Other ideas?

Tips from the Trade - What to do about silence?

- Don't assume consent or disagreement by silence; quickly poll group before major decisions
- In your head, count till 10 to allow for audience to respond
- For key questions, write them down for everyone to read
- If no response, simply say, "Turn to the person next to you and discuss!"
- Stray from agenda when necessary
- Other ideas?

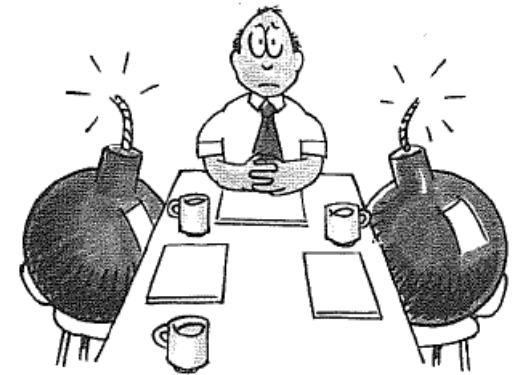
Types of Participants



Personality Types of Participants



Ramblers



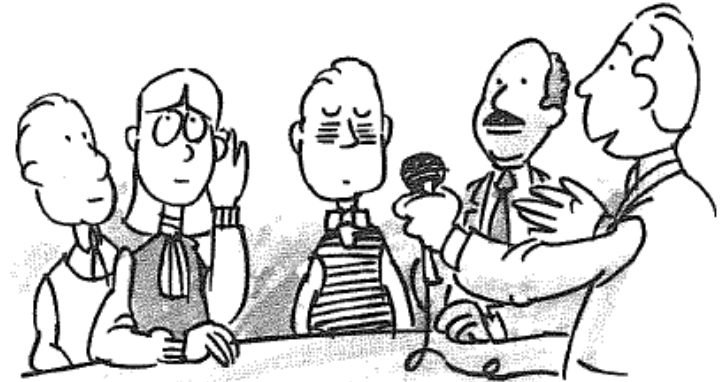
Complainers and Negativitists



Flounders

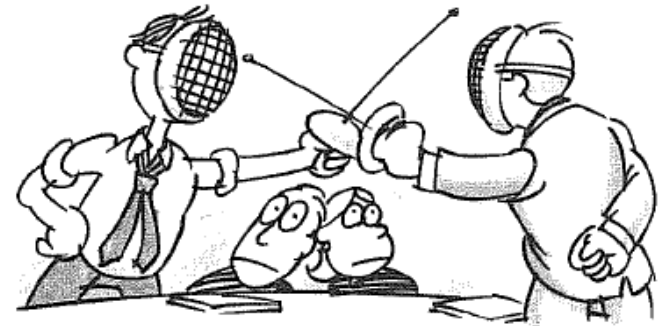
Personality Types of 'Willing' Participants

Indecisives/Silent-unresponsives



Super-agreeable

Hostile-aggressives



Dealing With Difficult Behaviors



Behaviors Discussion

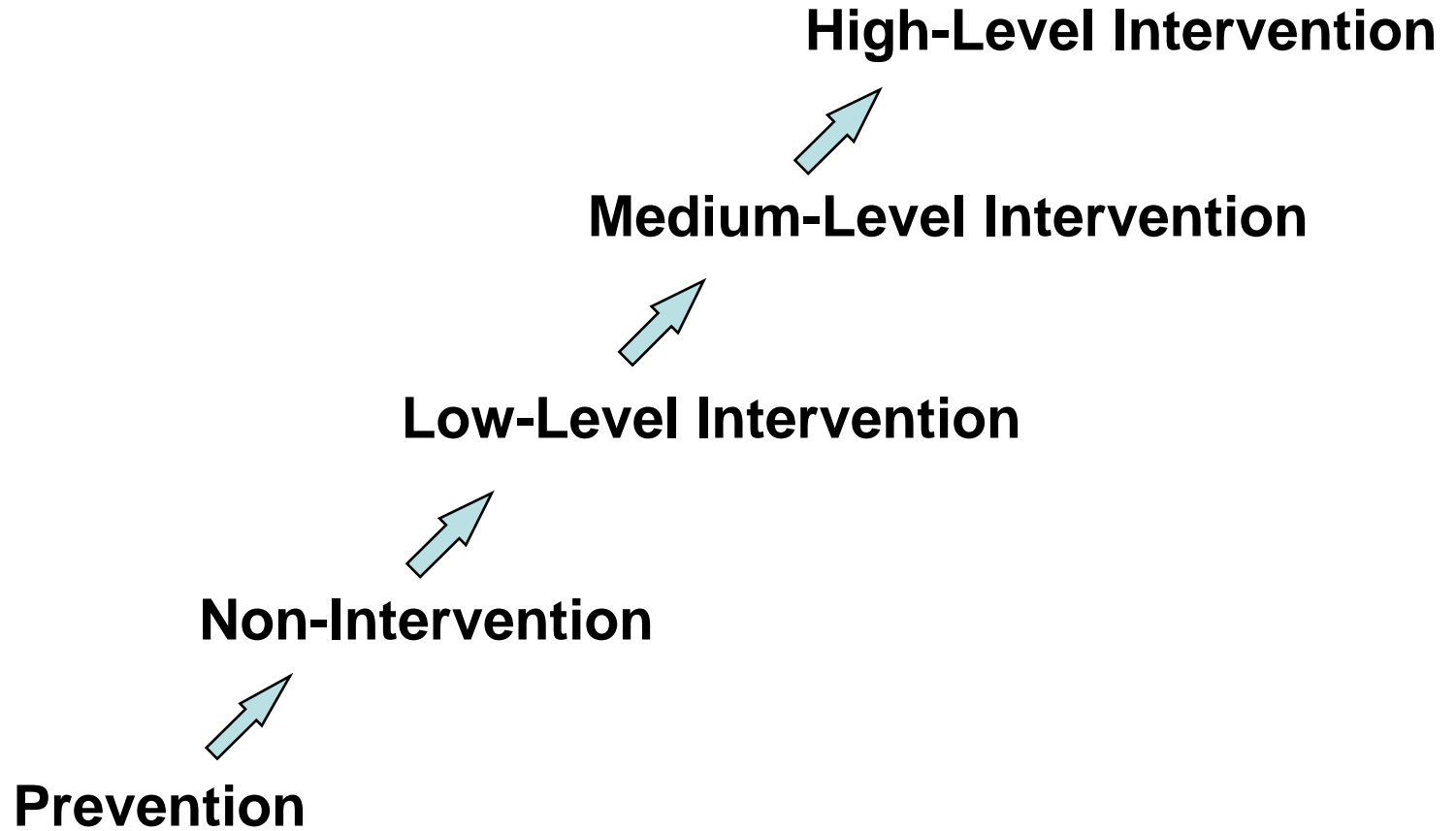
When have you experienced difficult behaviors in groups you facilitated? What happened?

What did you do? How did it work out? (or what could you do next time?)

Guidelines for Working Through Conflict

- Maintain your neutral position
- Help the group be mindful of its ground rules
- Intervene immediately if members launch into personal attacks
- Let group members know they have been heard by paraphrasing and summarizing the points of view being expressed
- Check in often with group members to make sure they feel they have been heard correctly and feel understood
- Work with the group to expand participants' understanding of one another's viewpoints
- Help the group decide whether and how to deal with the issue

Intervention Strategies



‘What If’ Scenarios...

- The group is progressing but I noticed that one participant is a ‘broken record’ and no one disagrees...
- Key group members are consistently absent or late...
- Group members want to change course once the meeting starts...
- Group is engaged in a meaningful discussion but time runs out...
- A medical director dominates the discussion and tries to control the decisions...
- You ask for feedback but no one really wants to answer...

Make a Wish...

Think about one strategy that you want to try out moving forward to improve your facilitation style or approach

Share one improvement idea

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