

QUESTIONING, LISTENING AND FACILITATION

Listening to others and making sense of what you see hear and feel is the key to successful facilitation.

Additionally, one of the main techniques a facilitator can use to stimulate discussion is the use of appropriate questioning. By using different types of questioning strategies facilitators can shift the learning and participation focus, elicit different responses, stimulate deeper thinking and reflection, and promote critical thinking and discussion. Below are some examples you can use or adapt



Question strategies

Evidence exploration

- How do you know that?
- What evidence is there to support that position

Clarification

- Can you put that another way?
- Can you give me an example?
- Can you explain that term?

Explanation

- Why might that be the case?
- How would we know that?
- Who might be responsible for ...?

Linking and extending

- Is there any connection between what you've just said and what 'X' said earlier?
- How does this idea support/challenge what we explored earlier in the session?

Hypothetical

- What might happen if...?
- What would be the potential benefits of...?

Cause and Effect

- What would happen if we increased/decreased 'X'?
- How is this response related to...?

Summary and Synthesis

- What else do we need to know or do to understand this better/be better prepared
- What remains unsolved / uncertain?

LISTENING

Along with questioning, listening is one of the most effective tools that facilitators have at their disposal. Listening is integral to our lives. It provides us with important information and insights. It keeps us focused, balanced and connected. Listening is essential to how we relate with group members, with ourselves.

People see themselves and others differently when they are listened to well.

Listening is the key to building trust, gaining understanding, and creating the conditions for taking action. Without it, little can be done to effect change or accomplish anything of lasting value.

Listening is an art and a technique, an attitude and an activity. It is a difficult skill to master for it requires much more than the use of one's ears and merely "hearing the words." Listening well requires the use of the whole being. Like any other skill, it needs to be learned and practiced over and over.



Answer the following questions. Maybe you would like to give this questionnaire to someone you trust to answer it honestly for you?

Read the statement and circle the answer below it which most closely matches your opinion.

When I am speaking I watch my listeners to be sure they are following me.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

I make eye contact with my audience.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

I am good at picking up non verbal signals from my audience.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

When I listen to someone speak I listen carefully and can recall most of what I hear.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

When I listen I look interested and engaged and I focus entirely on the speaker.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

I give people time to answer.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

I never speak over others.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

I am able to accurately paraphrase what someone has said.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

I ask probing questions to clarify the meaning of what has been said.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

I have a genuine interest in other people and encourage

them to open up.

Strongly agree agree disagree strongly disagree

Now reflect on the answers above and make some notes on your main strengths in listening and your key development areas.

My main strengths in listening are:

My development areas in listening are: