

# SYFS Lesson One

## Facilitation Basics: Let's Get Started!

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# SYFS Series Overview

- Series objectives
- Series framework
- Lesson framework

# SYFS Series Objectives

- Learn core facilitation competencies;
- Observe facilitation challenges, such as constant change, competing priorities, changing team members, limited time and carefully guarded resources;
- Practice skills in an experiential setting and receive feedback in a safe environment; and
- Commit to build community capacity by volunteering facilitation skills to a community group or organization.

# Facilitator Core Competencies (IAF)

- A. Create Collaborative Client Relationships
- B. Plan Appropriate Group Processes
- C. Create and Sustain a Participatory Environment
- D. Guide Group to Appropriate and Useful Outcomes
- E. Build and Maintain Professional Knowledge
- F. Model Positive Professional Attitude



# Lesson Framework

- Review objectives for lesson and way we will meet them.
- Do group activity that allows everyone to “check-in” and experience ways to build group capacity.
- Reflect on content and process.
- Individual and group activities to practice what you’re learning.
- Group evaluates the lesson content.

# Lesson One Objectives

Participants will:

- Develop an understanding of the core competencies of facilitation.
- Understand contracting.
- Learn how preferred thinking and learning styles impact group process.
- Understand decision-making options available for group situations.

# *What is Facilitation?*

Facilitation is the design and management of structures and processes that help a group:

- Work together successfully.
- Identify and minimize problems.
- Increase effectiveness.



# *The Facilitator*

- Helps the group increase its effectiveness by improving its process and structure.
- Acts as a neutral guide who takes an active role in managing the group's process.
- Intervenes in a manner that teaches the group facilitation skills, thereby decreasing the group's dependency on the facilitator.

# Road Map for Facilitation Success

Opening

Clarifying Objectives

Clarifying the Role of the Facilitator

Overview of the Agenda and/or Process

Develop Working Agreements

The Body

Recap Outcomes

Confirmation of Consensus and Next Steps



# Core Values of Facilitation

Valid information

Free and informed choice

Internal commitment

Compassion

# *What is Contracting?*

- A process.
- An agreement between the facilitator and the group members about how to work together and what will be accomplished.
- A way of agreeing about who is responsible for what.
- A way to know the group or situation you are facilitating.
- A conversation to determine what result the group wants.

# How to Gather Contracting Information

One-on-one interviews

Group interviews or focus groups

Surveys

Observing the group in action

# The Facilitation Contract

- Specifies the work to be accomplished: what services the facilitator will provide and what the measurable outcomes will be.
- Outlines how work will be conducted: who will be involved, when, for how long and why?
- Defines the expectations of both the group and the facilitator. Lists responsibilities.

# Facilitation Contract continued

- Outlines a process (including check-in points) to determine if the contract is being fulfilled.
- States what resources will be needed: who will provide what, who pays expenses, etc.
- Creates a reasonable time line for the work.



# Facilitation Contract continued

- Includes an evaluation component: how will both parties know when the facilitator's work is done?
- Includes options for flexibility: is the contract renegotiable and, if so, how might it be changed?

# Learning Styles

Behaviors

Characteristics

Mannerisms

used for gathering data from the environment

(Gregorc, 1985)

# Natural Learning Style

- How we naturally gather information from the environment.
- Most comfortable in this style.



# Role-based Learning Style

- Patterns, behaviors and mental qualities that are socially expected as a result of schooling.
- Taught or demanded of us by others.
- Exists externally.
- Not natural or ‘comfortable’.



# Advantages of Matching Learning and Teaching Styles

The group members can:

- Concentrate on the content without having to learn how to process information leading to increased achievement.
- Feel validated, because as they process information, they strengthen their self-concept.
- Gain an improved attitude toward learning, working and group process.

- Enjoy a flow of energy among other members and the facilitator; conflict is reduced.
- Concentrate on goals and content.

(Gregorc, 1985)

# Disadvantages of Matching Learning and Teaching Styles

Members might:

- Become ineffective or lazy, as they choose the path of least resistance.
- Become arrogant, leading to an imbalance in what the group produces.
- Gain an inflated view of self and may demand that all information or group processes be delivered in his/her preferred way.

- Devalue and ignore other learning styles.
- Not get the opportunity to experience other learning styles.

(Gregorc, 1985)

# Decision-making Options

## Spontaneous Agreement:

- A solution favored by everyone; 100% agreement happens automatically.

## One Person Decides:

- The group defers the decision to one person.

# Decision-making Options

## Compromise:

- A negotiated approach. Everyone gains a little and loses a little.

## Multi-voting:

- A priority-setting tool. Group members use dots or marks to determine the decision(s) favored by the majority.

# Decision-making Options

## Majority Voting:

- Group members choose the option they favor (usually by a show of hands or secret ballot).

## Consensus Building:

- Group members jointly develop solutions that represent their best thinking.

(Bens, 1999, and Justice and Jamieson, 1998)