

Facilitation

Safe Zone Training

Here are some important keys when working with individuals and groups that will be important when it comes to facilitation around Safe Zone and other diversity-related issues.

1. Know your audience.
 - a. How you train for faculty may be different from students.
 - b. Not all groups may be the same either – a group of student leaders may have a different skill level than a group of residence hall freshmen.
 - c. The size of the audience will affect how you interact. A group of 7 will be more intimate and discussion-oriented than a group of 20. Groups of 20 can be sub-divided into smaller sub-groups of 4 or 5 to facilitate discussions
2. Set the tone early.
 - a. Establish your credibility as a trainer by being friendly and confident (but not overly so!)
 - b. The first 30 minutes set the tone for the program. Begin on time; don't assume everyone needs exactly the same content. Neutralize the teacher-pupil relationship as quickly as possible. Let them know you wish to interact *with* them where communication flows through. You are a guide and facilitator and less a teacher.
 - c. Emphasize confidentiality, but you cannot guarantee it. This means that you can request it and have it as an expectation, but cannot force anyone to do so.
 - d. Minimize tangents or defer to after training. If the topic gets into a different area than you intended, you have some choices: run with the topic since it is a good 'learning opportunity', defer to after training or other resources (website, online, handouts), or address very briefly and then try to move on.
3. Respond to questions from the group and use proactive feedback:
 - a. Ask questions to clarify other people's comments or questions.
 - b. Ask for examples and/or paraphrase.
 - c. Respond with "I" statements. Answer as you, yourself instead of "people in general".
 - d. Say "Thank you" for the question and validate the experience.
4. Communication and Non-verbals
 - a. Remember your non-verbal messages to your group. In a cultural context, engage the audience with attentiveness. Always make sure your verbal messages correlate with your non-verbals.
 - i. Establish eye contact with participants
 - ii. Be aware of the pace and volume of your voice as you speak.
 - iii. Be aware of 'um' and 'ah' in your speech.
 - iv. Movement and gestures can be effective in drawing an audience in.
 - b. Not all cultures respond and have the same non-verbals. Don't mistake a non-verbal or interpret others in the same way. Do some non-verbal cultural research if you'd like more information.
 - c. Your perceptions are important to track with participants.
 - i. We tend to assume that others are like us. More often than not, we are wrong.
 - ii. We see what we expect to see and our past experience affects us.
 - iii. First impressions are hard to shake.
 - iv. We notice characteristics we don't like more readily than those we do.
 - d. Self-disclosure can be a powerful tool as a facilitator. Choose when to use your own personal experiences around an issue, but don't make the training about you. This self-disclosure can build closeness with an audience and relatability to the issues at hand.

5. Facilitation Keys
 - a. Ask open-ended questions. These questions don't expect a yes /no answer. These are the best for encouraging dialogue. "How do you feel about...?"
 - b. Be patient with the group when asking these questions. Give people a 5-8 second window to answer. If no replies, try restating the question or asking people if they understand where you are going with things.
 - c. Look at the "difficult behaviors (or people) handout for additional information.
 - d. Engage different people in the group, not just those that raise their hands to speak.
 - e. Don't let comfort or excitement get too high on the issue or topic. Either situation can limit learning.
 - f. Actively listen to what people have to say – refer to this handout.
 - g. Remember that not everyone learns the same way! Some people learn by listening, some by watching and some are "hands on."
 - h. Reiterate and understand why this information is important. Relay that to the group as needed, but don't overuse it.
 - i. Be mindful about people with accessibility issues and have alternate activities to modify the modules to accommodate participants.
6. 10-point facilitation menu as you lead group discussions:
 - a. Paraphrase what someone has said
 - b. Check your understanding of what was said to make sure you know what s/he is saying.
 - c. Compliment an interesting or insightful comment.
 - d. Elaborate on a participant's contribution to discussion with an example.
 - e. Energize a discussion by quickening the pace, using humor or getting more group feedback.
 - f. Disagree (gently) with a participant's comments to stimulate further discussion.
 - g. Mediate differences in opinion and relieve any tensions that may be brewing.
 - h. Pull together ideas and show their relationship to each other.
 - i. Change the group process by breaking into smaller groups
 - j. Summarize what was talked about before moving on.
7. Use the facilitation questions for activities, but go off of the list if you feel the urge to do so!
 - a. A good idea is asking what people saw, heard or felt during an activity.
 - b. Ask what concerns people may have about a topic, how the activity applies to work/real life situations, or what was helpful or not helpful.