



Environmental Finance Center

# Smart Management for Small Communities: Practical Resources for Governance

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# Meeting Facilitation and Conflict Management

A Workshop by  
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Presented by Melissa Young, Program Manager  
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# Unsuccessful Meetings/Groups

- Think of your experiences with meetings and groups which were ineffective and/or inefficient in working together and accomplishing tasks.
- What were some of the specific factors that contributed to their ineffectiveness and/or inefficiency?





# Reflective Listening

- Involves respectfully listening to a person and then checking in to make sure you understand what they are saying.





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# Your turn!

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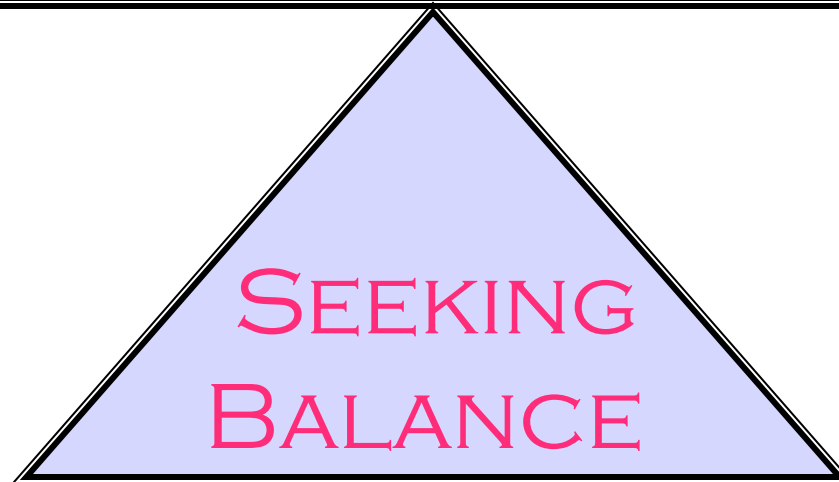


# PROCESS

“HOW”

# TASK

“WHAT”



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# What causes conflict in groups?

- No facilitation
- Poor group skills
- Individual differences
- Lack of/ different information
- Unclear goals
- Personal or professional agendas (no common purpose)
- Lack of behavioral standards
- Power
- Lack of problem-solving process
- No ability to reflect, assess, improve
- No closure





# Definitions of Facilitation

- **Facilitation is the increased ease of performance of any action.** (*Webster Dictionary*)
- **Facilitation is the design and management of structures and processes that help a group do its work and minimize the common problems people have working together.** (*Justice and Jamieson, The Facilitator's Fieldbook, AMACOM, 1999*)







# Types of Facilitation

- Basic vs. Developmental (Schwarz)
  - Basic: one meeting...membership varying... focus on meeting flow, event design and efficiency
  - Developmental: ongoing group for foreseeable future...focus on effective group development and increased capability to problem solve and achieve high performance





# Facilitator Tasks

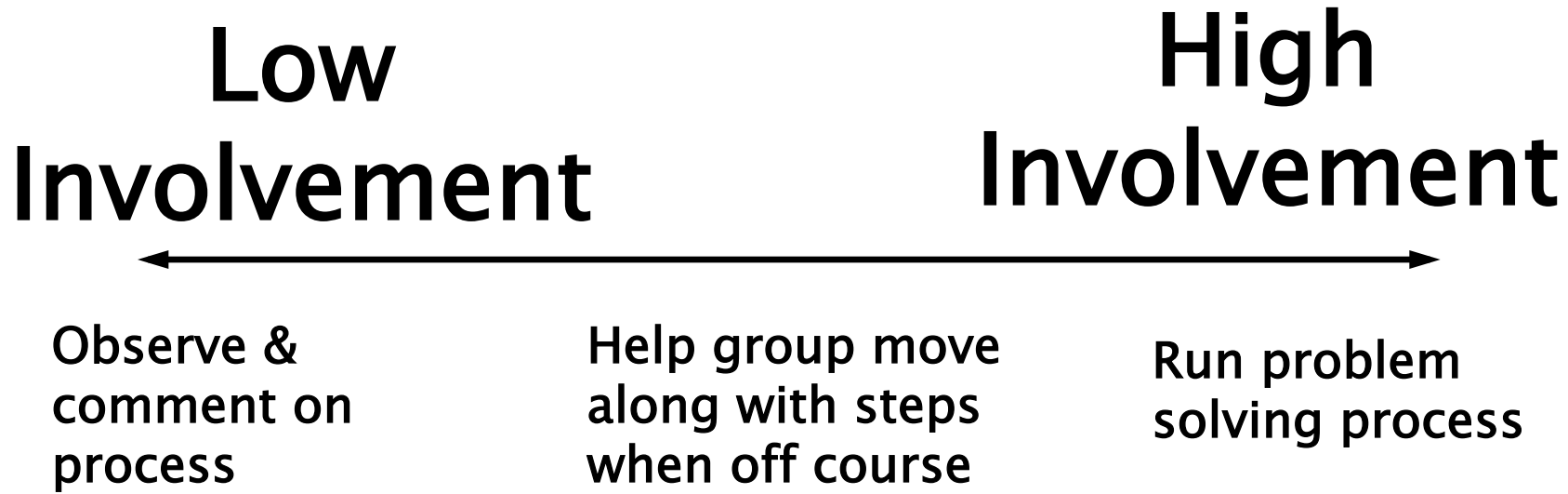
- Meeting Flow
- Group Development
- Group Performance

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# Facilitator Range of Involvement



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# Group Development Stages

**Form**



**Storm**



**Norm**



**Perform**

[Tuckman]





# Ground Rules for Effective Groups

Ground rules are based on four core values:

1. Valid Information
2. Free and Informed Choice
3. Internal Commitment
4. Compassion





# Ground Rules for Effective Groups

1. Test assumptions and inferences.
2. Share all relevant information.
3. Use specific examples and agree on what important words mean.
4. Explain your reasoning and intent.
5. Focus on interests, not positions.



# Ground Rules for Effective Groups

6. Combine advocacy and inquiry.
7. Jointly design next steps and ways to test disagreements.
8. Discuss undiscussable issues.
9. Use a decision-making rule that generates the level of commitment needed.



# Creating a Meeting Purpose

- Exchange information
- Analyze specific information or problem
- Identify specific needs, interests, concerns
- Generate alternative solutions
- Make a decision
- Address social needs of members







# Other Concerns

- Room Set-Up
- Materials and Equipment
- Breaks





# Theory behind facilitation?





# Interest-Based Conflict Management

- Participants develop processes which benefit whole of the organization
- Interest-based processes often lead to more creative and durable solutions
- Relationships are frequently improved
- \$ and time can be saved
- Participants encourage others to use the alternative processes



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**“... A problem well stated is a  
problem half-solved.”**





# Stressed System \*

**Power**

**Rights**

**Interests**

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\* © Ury, Brett, and Goldberg, 1988

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# Stressed System

## Interpersonal Communication :

- ◆ Tactical use of other side's statements
- ◆ Strong assertions
- ◆ Selective responses
- ◆ Limited disclosure of feelings & underlying interests

-- From Strategic Negotiations, Walton, Cutcher-Gershenfeld, and McKersie, 1994.





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**Effective  
System \***

**Power**

**Rights**

**Interests**

**\* Ury, Brett, and Goldberg, 1988**

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# Problem Solving Methods: Integrative

## Interpersonal Communication:

- ◆ Paraphrasing
- ◆ Active Listening
- ◆ Minimizing Defensiveness
- ◆ Brainstorming
- ◆ Disclosure of feelings & underlying interests

-- From Strategic Negotiations, Walton, Cutcher-Gershenfeld, and McKersie, 1994.







# Resolution and Results

Issue

\$

\$\$\$\$



**Prevent Negotiate Facilitate Factfind Advise Impose**

Educate - Talk it Out - Mediate – Investigate - Test case - Arbitrate

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# Key Methods for Managing Conflict

- Communication: active listening, feedback, ground rules for behavior
- Engagement of parties of interest – stakeholders...pro-active sharing of information and opportunity with those who have a stake and who can help
- Problem solving processes



# Steps in Interest-Based Problem Solving (IBPS)

- Clarify Issue
- Identify Interests/Reframe issue
- Brainstorm Options
- Evaluate Options with Criteria
- Review and Discuss
- Consensus Solution



# Step One: Clarify the Issue

- The *WHAT* to be addressed, including its component parts
- State the problem as a question and in a positive fashion
- Define the problem so each member clearly understands it



# “Talk Story”

- Those who have a story about the problem to be solved share those stories briefly
- Rest of the group listens actively to understand the dimensions of the problem and the concerns of those who have experienced the problem
- Aim for no more than a total of 15 minutes for the stories to be told



# Step Two: Identify the Interests

- Interests are reasons *WHY* the issue is a problem, so “peel the onion” with “why?”
- Identify all interests (e.g., needs, fears, concerns, desires, hopes)
- Recognize the legitimacy of all interests
- Remember to look back at the issue and reframe to capture all of the interests





# Step Three: Brainstorm Options

*How the problem can be addressed*

- Use brainstorming to be creative and prolific without pre-judgment
- Capture all ideas and keep in front of problem solving group (chart)
- Be open to possibilities - think “outside the box”





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# Using the Flipchart as an Effective Facilitation Tool



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# Flip charts as useful tools

1. The Purpose of Meeting
2. The Agenda
3. Key presentation points
4. Proposals/New ideas
5. Alternate Issues
6. Action Items/Next steps





# Tips for charting

- Use words sparingly
  - Try to capture complex ideas in as few words as possible
  - Use different colored markers
  - Don't use light colors
- 
- Flip charts a a tool, meant to help you focus the group



# Questions for Consideration

- *If IBPS is a cheaper and more satisfying set of dispute resolution methods, why hasn't it spread everywhere?*



## Resources

- EFC Staff
- PARCC: [cgerard@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:cgerard@maxwell.syr.edu)

Program for the Advancement of  
Research on Conflict and Collaboration

- Christina S. Merchant, Professor of  
Practice: [csmercha@maxwell.syr.edu](mailto:csmercha@maxwell.syr.edu)

