



Enhancing Your Facilitation Skills

Your Role as the Facilitator

As the facilitator, it is your job to guide the group through the assessment process together. Your role is to draw out opinions and ideas of the group members. You are not there to give opinions or take sides, despite your expertise. As the facilitator, you should care about how people participate in the process, and not just on what gets accomplished. It is your job to make sure your session is structured in a way that everyone can participate. This includes things like:

- Making sure everyone feels comfortable sharing their input, regardless of whether they agree or disagree
- Making group members feel valued
- Making participants feel good about their contributions to the assessment
- Making sure that decisions are made by the group
- Making sure to provide positive reinforcement

Tips to Enhance Your Facilitation

The *Facilitator's Guide* includes tips and strategies throughout the document to help you in your role as the facilitator. This includes steps you can take to prepare for your role prior to the assessment meeting. We encourage you to review this guide prior to your session. Additionally, here are a few more suggestions:

- **Don't memorize a script.** Although it's okay to have notes and be prepared, if people sense that you have memorized your lines, you may not appear as flexible and natural. This may stifle the conversation and make some participants reluctant to respond freely. Be prepared, but also be flexible and engaging.
- **Watch the group's body language.** Do people look bored, tired or confused? Are people fidgeting in their seats? If participants seem restless or nonresponsive, you may need to take a break, or speed up or slow down the pace of the discussion. And if you see confused looks on a lot of faces, you may need to pause and check with the group, to make sure that everyone knows where you are.
- **Be aware of your own behavior and actions.** Make sure you are not repeating yourself, saying "ah" between each word, or going too fast for the group. Are you standing still or walking around the room to engage all participants? Don't stand in the front of the room for the entire meeting.