Guide to Becoming an Effective Facilitator/Trainer

CUSTOMER-CENTERED
SERVICE DELIVERY

icsps
Illinois Center for Specialized Professional Support, Illinois State University, College of Education

SUPPORTING SUCCESS
Southern Illinois Professional Development Center

Facilitator vs. Trainer
What's the Difference?

Facilitator - Focuses on guiding a group through a process or discussion.

Creates an environment that fosters collaboration, problem-solving, and informed decision-making.

A facilitator does not necessarily provide content expertise; instead, they ensure participation and flow.

Trainer - Focuses on teaching specific skills or knowledge.

Provides structured content and instruction to help learners achieve defined learning objectives. Often acts as a subject matter expert.

Key Distinction:

Facilitators enable learning through interaction; trainers deliver learning through instruction. For this training, you will be both!

Attributes of a Great Facilitator/Trainer

- **Communication Skills** – Clear, concise, and engaging delivery.
  - Example: Explaining complex concepts in simple terms.
  - Best Practice: Use plain language and check for understanding.
- **Active Listening** – Understand participants' needs and respond appropriately. Listen Fully Before Responding. This shows respect and confidence. Paraphrase for Clarity, which confirms understanding and builds credibility.
  - Example: Summarizing participant input before moving on.
  - Best Practice: Use phrases like "What I hear you saying is…"
- **Adaptability** – Adjust approach based on audience dynamics and feedback.
  - Example: Switching from lecture to group activity when energy drops.
  - Best Practice: Have backup activities ready.
- **Empathy** – Create a safe, inclusive environment for learning.
  - Example: Acknowledging a participant's concern about time constraints.
  - Best Practice: Validate feelings and offer solutions.
- **Time Management** – Keep sessions on track without rushing the discussion.
  - Example: Keeping a 90-minute session on track without rushing the discussion.
  - Best Practice: Use a visible agenda and time checks.
- **Confidence & Presence** – Command attention without dominating.
  - Example: Maintaining calm when technology fails.
  - Best Practice: Practice beforehand and have contingency plans.
- **Knowledge** – Deep understanding of the subject matter.
- **Neutrality** – Avoid imposing personal opinions on group decisions. Your job is to manage the process, not influence the outcome.
  - Example: Do not discuss political or religious issues.
  - Best practice:
    - **Avoid expressing personal opinions** (e.g., "I think youth programs are more important" would break neutrality).
    - **Use inclusive language** ("both perspectives" instead of "the better idea").
    - **Focus on process, not content** (guide discussion rather than advocate for a solution).
    - **Ensure equal speaking time** for all participants.

Tips for Success

- **Prepare Thoroughly**
  - Know your audience, objectives, and materials.
  - Anticipate questions and challenges.
    - Example: Research audience background and tailor examples.
    - Best Practice: Create a session plan with timing and objectives.
- **Engage Participants**
  - Use open-ended questions, polls, and activities.
  - Encourage diverse perspectives.
    - Example: Use breakout groups for problem-solving.
    - Best Practice: Ask open-ended questions like “What are your thoughts on…?”
- **Create a Positive Environment**
  - Set ground rules for respect and participation.
  - Use inclusive language and examples.
    - Example: Start with an icebreaker to build rapport.
    - Best Practice: Set ground rules for respect and participation.
- **Use Varied Methods**
  - Combine visuals, discussions, and hands-on activities.
  - Incorporate technology where appropriate.
    - Example: Combine slides, videos, and hands-on exercises.
    - Best Practice: Cater to different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic).
- **Handle Challenges Gracefully**
  - Stay Calm with difficult participants: Pause before responding to difficult questions.
  - Admit When You Don’t Know: Say, “That’s a great question—I’ll follow up.”
  - Redirect Negativity: Bring focus back to the session objectives.
  - Redirect conversations without shutting people down.
    - Example: Redirect a dominant participant by inviting others to share.
    - Best Practice: Use phrases like “Let’s hear from someone who hasn’t spoken yet.”
- **Evaluate and Improve**
  - Gather feedback after sessions.
  - Reflect on what worked and what didn’t.
    - Example: Use post-session surveys for feedback.
    - Best Practice: Reflect on what worked and adjust for next time.

Communicate with Confidence

Body Language

- Stand Tall: Maintain good posture to project agency and openness.
- Show your Hands: show your hands, do not cross your arms or have your hands hidden. Do not have them in your pockets or behind your back. Your hands are a great communication tool. Don't hide them.
- Eye Contact: Engage participants by looking at them, not your slides. Make eye contact as you enter the room with your participants.
- Gestures: Use natural hand movements to emphasize points.
- Don't shrink, maximize the distance between your earlobes and shoulders and plant your feet when you speak

Voice

- Speak Clearly and Slowly: Avoid rushing; pauses show confidence.
- Vary Tone and Volume: Emphasize key points with vocal variety. Use low tones for content and higher tones when asking a question.
- Avoid Fillers: Replace “um” and “uh” with short pauses.
- Always start with the GNAP – Greeting, Name, Affiliation, and Purpose

Manage Nerves

- Breathing Techniques: Take deep breaths before speaking.
- Positive Self-Talk: Replace “I’m nervous” with “I’m prepared.”
- Practice: Rehearse out loud to build familiarity.

Engage Participants

- Ask Open-Ended Questions: to encourage dialogue and show confidence in handling responses.
- Acknowledge Contributions: Thank people who participate and engage for their contributions. Validate participant input to build trust.
- Use Names: Personalization creates connection and authority.

Project Confidence Through Appearance

- Dress Professionally: Align with audience expectations.
- Avoid Distracting Accessories: Keep focus on your message.
- Choose accessories that are simple, neutral, and complement your professional attire—so the focus stays on their words and presence.

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Training at a Glance

6 session training series

Session	Topics	Timing	Material(s) Neeeded
In-person Kick-Off Introduction to Customer -Centered Service Delivery	• Benefits of moving from process flow to a relationship flow • Understanding the customer's journey through the program • Customer journey mapping: the best route to high-quality customer experi-ences • Steps to creating a customer journey map	6.5 hours (9:30-4:00)	Persona worksheet (for slides #33-34) Hard copies to distribute and/or digital copies available to access Whiteboard, blank wall, or trifold display board for each group Several packages of large Post-it notes in 3 different colors, and several packages of small circle stickers in green, yellow, and red
Webinar 1 Motivational Interviewing - Part 1	• Motivational Interviewing • Spirit of Motivational Interviewing • Motivational Interviewing coaching vs. paternalistic/authoritative coaching • Life goals vs. program goals • Change talk vs. sustain talk	1.5 hours	Cheat Sheet for Motivational Interviewing (use for preparation for the webinars and could be distributed to participants at the beginning and the end of the webinars – trainer's choice) Webinar 1 review questions

Webinar 2
Motivational Interviewing - Part 2
	• Open-ended questions
	  • Rationale
	  • Turning closed questions into open-ended questions
	• Giving affirmations
	  • Definition and rationale
	  • Praise v. affirmation
		1.5 hours	Open-ended questions and
			Open-ended questions with space for response
			
			Webinar 2 review questions

Webinar 3 Motivational Interviewing - Part 3	• Asking permission • Using reflective listening • Summarizing	1.5 hours	Webinar 3 review questions
Webinar 4 Motivational Interviewing - Part 4	• Stages of change • Examples for each stage of change • Strategies for each stage of change	1.5 hours	Cheat Sheet for Moativational Interviewing (repeat handout if trainer distributed this during Webinar 1) Webinar 4 review questions
In-Person Final Day Conclusion to Customer-Centered Service Delivery	• Motivational interviewing in action • Real Play • Desk guides • Re-engagement • Motivational interviewing skills in post-placement follow-up	6.5 hours (9:30-4:00)	Cheat Sheet for Motivational Interviewing MI Sort and Match Challenge (copied and cut into cards, 1 set per table) MI Sort and Match Answer Key Blank index cards (5 cards per pair) and markers list the following: Open-ended questions and Open-ended questions with space for response Building Core Capabilities Video and Handout-Connecting Important Research to Motivational Interviewing

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