



Facilitation Techniques

One of the biggest challenges of hosting an MDT is the process of hosting and facilitating meetings. Below are some resources to support you as you build your facilitation skills. In addition, I have added my own tips and tricks that I learned from coordinating in my past.

Document compiled by Leanne McCallum, LACAC. If you have questions or any additions you'd like to make, please email leanne@lacacs.org to have the document adjusted!

Facilitator 101:

- [9 Characteristics of a good Facilitator](#) Kickstart Alliance
- [Activity: Exploring the Four Leadership Styles](#)
- [How you spot the different personality types in meetings - HUONE International](#)
- [MDT Facilitator resources](#): Southern Regional
- *Leanne's tips and tricks:*
 - **Find your leadership and confidence before the meeting starts.** *It can be very scary to facilitate meetings. When I first started, I was often so nervous I could hardly hold my coffee mug without spilling during the meeting. However, it is critical that when you're the facilitator that you establish you're knowledgeable, reliable, and capable. Particularly for young professionals, sometimes team members will judge you as incompetent if you seem nervous or regularly defer to others for guidance or support. It's like the phrase "don't let them see you sweat"- try your best to have confidence in yourself and demonstrate how talented you are! For example, for me to build my confidence I would be extra organized and pre-plan the meetings as much as possible by practicing my introductions ahead of time.*
 - **Accommodate different learning styles for meetings.** *For example, some folks need an agenda or to know what will be discussed ahead of time- at least 2 days ahead of the meeting- in order to be active participants. Others will disregard the agenda and want to hear what will be discussed at the beginning of the meeting. Make sure to do both in order to accommodate both preferences- even if you personally prefer one over the other, there will be members of your team who are different!*
 - **Build relationships through listening.** *Get to know what makes your MDT members tick. Some folks love to talk about their dogs, children, favorite sports team, etc. Know those things about your team and remember to inquire with your members before the meetings. This will create connections and improve their*



willingness to engage in the group. Especially during COVID-19 when we're not physically meeting together, creating connection is critical to maintain group cohesion.

How to host an effective discussion:

- [Tips on Facilitating Effective Group Discussions | Sheridan Center](#) Brown University
- [Group Facilitation and Problem-Solving | Techniques for Leading Group Discussions](#)
- *Leanne's tips and tricks:*
 - **ALWAYS COME PREPARED- HAVE A PLAN!** Know what your goals are for the discussion, and have questions pre-written in advance of the meeting. This will help you ensure you make the best use of your time. If the discussion goes off topic, re-state the goals to your team to remind them of what you're trying to accomplish that day.
 - **Ask a concrete question if you want a response.** Using phrases like "I'd like to discuss _____" or "we'd like to talk about _____" can be too broad for some folks to respond. Instead, say "What are your thoughts on _____". Using yes/no questions and then asking why they answered that way is another mechanism to get folks to respond.
 - **After you ask a question, pause for a full 5 seconds minimum.** Do not be afraid of silence- some folks have to speak to think, others speak to think. Give space for folks to answer.
 - **Some folks are too shy to respond or may not engage without encouragement.** If I notice that one discipline hasn't spoken up, I might say "I haven't heard from (insert discipline, for example law enforcement) yet. Would someone from law enforcement be willing to give some feedback?" In other cases, I might notice that someone's body language is displaying that they have an idea. In that case I might say "(NAME) I noticed you look like you have something to say/ an idea. Would you be willing to share your thoughts with us?" **HOWEVER**, In both cases, make sure you know your audience as this tactic could offend some people. **Another option is to ask for written responses to the questions- this is particularly useful accommodation for folks who are Blue personality or very shy.**
 - **When nobody is responding or talking,** I sometimes use statements like "I've heard some people say that _____. Do you agree or disagree with that statement? Why is that?" Some folks have an easier time responding to something specific and building off of that.
 - **When you have a particularly difficult group that struggles to have robust discussions, pre-designate someone to speak up during silences.** I sometimes will ask a close colleague who will be attending the meeting to be my



“wingman/wingwoman” by filling long gaps with an idea or having them request folks speak up. Having an ally on the call can relieve some pressure on your shoulders as the facilitator!

Adult learning techniques:

- [9 Adult-Learning Tips and Techniques](#)
- [5 Adult Learning Techniques to Improve Your Training Programs](#)
- [Principles of Adult Learning and ISD](#)
- [Adult Learning Theories and Principles](#)
- *Leanne’s tips and tricks:*
 - **Know your teaching style and be authentic to who you are!** *I, for example, am a big nerd and I use that to my advantage. I focus on using the data and sharing my expertise in that way. I don’t try to be the bubbly orator because that is not my style. When you’re authentic people are more receptive to you.*
 - **People like to learn about things that apply directly to their work.** *Adjust your training materials or dialogue to ensure that your audience feels the information is relevant. For example, if you’re speaking to medical professionals use case examples of people identified in medical settings. If you’re speaking to DCFS workers, make sure to talk about indicators that they might see when investigating abuse allegations.*
 - **Acknowledge the expertise of your audience.** *They’re experts in their field, you’re the expert in trafficking. Let them know that you want to build their expertise to include trafficking. Give them the opportunity to share their knowledge and lived experience whenever possible.*
 - **Co-train whenever possible.** *Co-training with a member of the audience’s community will help them understand how your information is applicable to them. For example, when I was a coordinator I would always try to have a therapist co-train when I presented to mental health professionals, or would have an FBI agent join me when training law enforcement. This was critical to improve audience interest in the topic.*

Conflict resolution in group spaces:

- [Conflict Management Styles Assessment](#) Blake Institute
- [Fear of conflict and the Discovery Behaviours](#) (the 4 conflict types- red, yellow, green and blue)
- [MBTI® Basics](#) - get to know your personality and how you handle professional settings and conflict!
- *Leanne’s tips and tricks:*



- **Know the conflict style of yourself and your team members.** This is so critical to prevent a major disaster. (Leanne's note: I'm an INFJ, and I'm generally Blue with a hint of Green in the conflict style. Knowing who I am makes me more empathetic and self-aware about the way I interact with my professional work. Get to know yourself too!) When folks approach conflict differently than you, it's not that they're mean/passive-aggressive/aggressive/spineless or any other negative term. It's simply that they approach it differently. This will help you focus on the disagreement itself, rather than the emotional/personal side of the conflict. Prior to a conflict arising, there are TONS of free online tests for professional settings to identify personalities/conflict styles that you can have all your team members take, and then share with the group where everyone lies on the 'personality chart'.
- **Promote an environment of mutual respect.** When a conflict arises, it will be less painful if there's already established respect for all members. After a conflict, some respect may be diminished so it's important to do relationship-building exercises afterward to try to rebuild.
- When things get testy, I try to **remind the group of the "lowest common denominator" or what we all agree on and why we're all together.** It's important to remind folks who are in conflict that they share values with the team, because that will keep them engaged.
- **Try to stay neutral while facilitating a group through a conflict.** Even if you have a strong opinion, remember that you represent the whole group. If you are unable to be a neutral party, bring in an outside mediator or facilitator who is not affiliated with any parties at the table. You can always reach out directly to me (Leanne) if you need additional support finding a facilitator.
- **Assume good intentions during conflict.** Even when it doesn't feel like it. Intent versus impact is an important topic to acknowledge for both parties who are in conflict.
- **Avoid blaming individuals for systemic problems.** For example, blaming an HSI agent for President Trump's policies on immigration is not going to solve problems or build your MDT team. Blaming a DCFS agent for failures of the broader child welfare system is not going to build your MDT team. However, holding individual members accountable to the team values and their individual behavior IS encouraged. For example, "John, I noticed you haven't been attending meetings for the past 5 months. Our MOU says that you'll attend monthly meetings. Can we discuss this?"

Effective Virtual Meetings



- [How to host effective group discussions online](#)
- [What It Takes to Run a Great Virtual Meeting](#)
- [The seven secrets of successful virtual meetings](#)
- *Leanne's tips:*
 - ***Create space for interpersonal connection.*** *Ask an icebreaker question to include in the introductions! It seems cheesy but really does work to open people up. Have a conversation about life! Make sure they know that you still care and still are in relationship with them.*
 - ***Take breaks more often than you would for in person meetings.*** *People get distracted and fidgety when working from home because there are so many distractions. When you build time for the fidgets it helps folks stay focused during the meeting.*
 - ***Encourage folks to keep their videos on,*** *and tell them ahead of time that they should prepare to have their videos on. Data shows folks are more engaged when their video is on because they feel more pressured to focus and not multi-task. Trauma-informed care means folks do not have to do anything- but encouraging it is okay!*
 - ***Create an inclusive, welcoming space-*** *explicitly tell folks it's ok if their child interrupts, the dog barks, or the mailman rings the doorbell. Let them know we're all in this together! For example, I like to include a picture of my dogs barking when I share this with the group to try to break the formality and build connection.*
 - ***Utilize web-based engagement tools.*** *This can include [Mentimeter](#), [polleverywhere](#), or other web polling tools. It can also include small discussion and breakout groups. Most platforms like Zoom and GoToMeeting have built in tools for polls. For example, you can ask the audience to write down essential members of an MDT and make a word cloud, or do a poll to see whether your audience has been trained on a certain tool. Have set questions for small groups to discuss and then bring back to the whole group afterward. A word of caution: make sure that the engagement adds something useful or meaningful to your meeting. Using it just to use it will seem like busy work to your audience.*