



## Facilitation Tips

- **Be prepared.** Think ahead about how the discussion might go. This will allow you to give your full attention to the group. Study the topic being discussed.
- **Stay neutral.** Use the power you have with the group wisely. Your role should never be to promote a particular point of view, but rather to further the discussion. By the end of the discussion, group members should not know your views on the issues being discussed.
- **Let participants respond to one another.** Encourage interaction among the group. If questions or comments are directed at you, try to deflect them to someone else. You should speak less than any person in the group.
- **Don't let any one person dominate the discussion.** If you allow people to interrupt or let one or two talkers take over, the more polite people will get angry and frustrated. At the first sign of trouble, refer to the ground rules the group has set.
- **Draw out quiet participants.** Don't put anyone on the spot, but watch for opportunities to bring quiet people into the discussion. Learn participants' names and use them.
- **Keep the discussions on track.** Since important issues are usually related to each other, it is easy for groups to move into other areas. Find the balance between participants needing the freedom to explore connections and ideas while you simultaneously keep the discussion related to the session's topic.
- **Allow for pauses and silences.** People need time to think and reflect. Sometimes silence will help people build up the courage to make a valuable point. You may find it helpful to silently count to ten after asking a question.
- **Don't worry about achieving consensus.** Not everyone is going to agree on everything. There is no need for consensus--just try to help the group find some areas of agreement.
- **When in doubt, ask the group.** If you're having trouble enforcing the ground rules, or deciding which topic to spend time on, ask the group what they would like to do.
- **Create a "Treasure Chest"** on an easel page for those ideas that are 'off topic' for this meeting but want to be preserved for future meetings.