

Notes for Facilitators and Recorders

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2009

1.0 INTRODUCTION

The materials in these *Notes* have been prepared to aid group Facilitators and Recorders in public meetings and workshops about community issues. They are drawn from a wide range of source materials, which are listed at the end of the *Notes*.

The materials are designed to provide guidance for conducting public meetings where everyone has an equal opportunity to participate. To avoid having articulate or powerful people dominating meetings, a "workshop" format is used, with participants working in groups at tables with Facilitators and Recorders. With careful facilitation, even the most shy and reticent can be encouraged to speak out. All opinions have equal value in a forum such as this; all views are recorded in a form, which everyone can see.

The contents of these *Notes* draw on published material on group dynamics, meeting format, communication, search conferences, interpersonal dynamics, creativity, conflict resolution and participation methods.

1.1 WHAT IS A GOOD MEETING/WORKSHOP

A number of common points contribute to good meetings, that is, meetings that people learn from:

- Commonly understood goals
- A clear process for reaching those goals
- An awareness that people come with their personal preoccupations and feelings as well as an interest in the subject at hand and
- A sense of involvement in making decisions and the actions following, which means that all members should participate.

Ensuring that all materials are ready so that you can concentrate on the meeting itself can help this process. The quality of recording is critical to the success of a meeting or workshop--for all concerned. The record is essential to ensure that an appropriate and actions flow from the deliberations.

Once in a group there will be you (the Recorder) who is someone to write down what is being said, when it is said, without interpreting what has been said. Also at the table will be the active participants (perhaps a timekeeper to ensure that the agenda flows smoothly by sticking to the time--though times may be extended if the group wishes), and a Facilitator.

1.2 Ten functions of a good meeting

- Bring people together who would not normally come together otherwise.
- Provide a comfortable setting in which to express ideas and attitudes.
- Helps to clear up misunderstandings.
- Establish many new informal channels of communication among participants.
- Provide more information and insights than are available through survey methods.
- Stimulates follow-up action growing out of real needs.
- Paves the way for co-operative action.
- Enables participants to understand more fully the objectives, boundaries and problems of other organisations.
- Be rewarding to the individual participant.
- Produce an unusually good setting for creative thinking.

2.0 THE AGENDA

The agenda is an important element in the meeting. It should be prominently displayed and show:

- Topics to be discussed
- The order in which they will be discussed
- The priority and
- A suggestion of the time to be devoted to each topic of discussion.

In the Meeting or Workshop you will attend, an agenda will have been prepared and will be thoroughly discussed with the Recorders, the Facilitators and all Resource People before the Meeting begins. It will also be discussed with meeting participants at the beginning of the first session.

3.0 FACILITATION

Facilitation is basically helping people's views to be openly shared in a balanced way. In doing this, the Facilitator should maintain equity, recognise each individual and try to balance personal and group needs, while not letting anyone dominate the discussion.

3.1 General points

Some pointers for effective facilitation:

- Have all the necessary equipment ready (for example, pens, paper and any background material).
- If anyone comes is looking lost, make them feel welcome; remember, they have something to offer the workshop.
- The aim of the workshop is to seek opinions. The Facilitator can suggest different ways to proceed.
- Have some questions ready for beginning discussion and restarting discussion if people are hesitant and discussion bogs down.

A Facilitator's job is to focus on how well people work together. The purpose of this focus is to ensure that members of a group can accomplish their goals for the Meeting or Workshop. The Facilitator trusts that each member of the group can share responsibility for what happens, whether it involves calling the members to remind them of the next workshop, making sure that each person has an opportunity to contribute to a discussion, or seeing that the agenda serves the group's purpose. The effects of this sharing can be to equalise the responsibility for the success or failure of the group and to allow more people to have control in determining what happens within the group and what decisions are made.

A Facilitator can fulfil different kinds of needs in working with a group. This is determined by the group's purpose for coming together and by what is expected of the individual who will act as Facilitator. The purpose of the gathering is entirely informational. As Facilitator resource person, you can affect the dynamics of the discussion by how you present your information, what kind of atmosphere you set within the group (open vs. closed, light vs. intense) and by the attitude you show toward the people you are working with.

As a Facilitator and resource person, you can affect the way in which the group interacts. Simple, non-verbal cues such as the way you sit and the attitude you show toward the people you are working with can affect the way a discussion will progress. Be aware of spatial and physical barriers that may exist between you and the group. If you can sit among the other participants, with them around you, this will physically equalise the relationships and ease interaction.

The purpose of your role as Facilitator is to share information, not to set yourself above the group as an expert. By being open to questions and soliciting feedback, you can accomplish this, as well as learn something from the others yourself.

One need not be labelled "Facilitator" in order to employ facilitation techniques in a group. Any group member can call the group back to the subject of the discussion, interrupt patterns of conflict or misunderstanding between other parties, offer clarifying comments, summarise activities or give evaluative feedback. In some groups, many or all of the members share these responsibilities. Other groups, whose members are less skilful at group process, will expect the Facilitator to perform this function alone.

3.2 Communication

Your effectiveness as a Facilitator depends on your ability to communicate well with the group and to help the group members communicate well with each other. The ability to communicate effectively is a skill, and like any skill, it is best acquired through practice and self-observation. Following a list of rules and strategies that are conducive to effective communication.

Adapt to your listeners: Something that seems perfectly clear to you may have an entirely different meaning, or may be completely incomprehensible to the person you are talking to. Other people have had different experiences from yours. As a result, they may attach different meanings to words, gestures and appearances than you intend. To minimise this possibility, adapt:

- **Your language:** Make sure that the terms you use are common usage for the group. Do not use any technical terms, or professional jargon, without making sure that the entire group agrees on the meaning. Slang that is common to your peer group may make others of different ages, professions, or even geographical origins, feel uncomfortable, either because it is offensive to them, or because it is unfamiliar.
- **Your style:** The way you dress, carry yourself, and interact with others will affect how well you fit in with a group. In general, if you are informal and comfortable with the group, it helps to make them relax as well. But interpret the word "informal" to be consistent with the norms of the group. Do not dress or act in ways that give a false impression, but do try to avoid turning people off by appearing strange or threatened in any way.

Listening is important: Listening is much more difficult than most people realise. Much of the time when someone is talking to us, we are not really listening; we are thinking about what we are going to say in answer. When you are listening to someone, try not to immediately evaluate what is being said in terms of what it means to you; instead, try to understand what it means from the other person's perspective. Ask questions that will help you understand better what the other person is thinking and feeling. Not only will you understand better, but also you will be able to give an answer that has meaning to the other, from her or his point of view.

Be aware of what is happening in the group: Various verbal and nonverbal cues tip you off as to how the people you are talking to are reacting. You can adjust your style (by speaking faster, slower, on a more or less complicated level; by encouraging more or less group participation). Or you can check out your interpretation of these cues with the group and get them to suggest revisions in your method. Some cues to watch for are:

- **Restlessness:** Are people shifting around a lot? Are they clearing their throats or having side conversations? If so, you are probably losing them. You may be boring them or talking over their heads or it may be simple fatigue.
- **When silences occur:** Do they seem comfortable or uncomfortable? In some groups, silences can be agonising. If this is the case, several things could be happening; people may be bored because you are going too slow or because your material is too simple; people may be uncomfortable with the topic, or people may be shy with each other and too self-conscious to talk in front of the group.
- *Do people look at you when you talk?* If so, they probably feel comfortable with you and are intrigued by what you are saying. If they avoid eye contact, something may be wrong.
- *Do people look at each other when they talk?* Again, if they do not avoid one another's gaze, it is a sign that the group is relaxed and at ease. If two or more people will not look at each other, or if two or more people will not talk to each other, there may be something wrong.
- *Posture of group members:* People often lean forward and shift positions when they want to say something. Posture can also reflect tension or how relaxed a person is. Naturally, posture also reflects how tired or alert people are.

These cues are given to serve as general indicators for you to watch for. Remember that none of these cues can tell you absolutely what is going on.

Test assumptions: Communication and interpersonal relationships are based on assumptions that people make about each other and about the relationship. Sometimes these assumptions are correct, but often they are only partly correct, or altogether incorrect. People generally believe that their assumptions are correct until something happens to make them change the assumption. Sooner or later, most mistaken assumptions lead to a misunderstanding of one kind or another. The longer a mistaken assumption has been held the greater the problems that such a misunderstanding can bring.

Give feedback: A good way to test assumptions is to provide, and ask for, feedback. Ask people what they mean by a certain word, or tell them how you feel about what they just said. This will allow them to explain where they are coming from, and will let them know how you feel. Feedback is best if it is given immediately, since looking back to something that happened two weeks ago is hard for people. Feedback statements are more helpful if they are:

- *Specific rather than general:* "You bumped my arm" rather than "You never watch where you are going".
- *Tentative rather than absolute:* "You seem unconcerned about this problem" rather than "You do not care what happens".
- *Informing rather than commanding:* "I have not finished yet" rather than "Stop interrupting me".

- *Suggesting rather than directing*: "Have you ever considered talking to Tim about the situation?" rather than "Go talk to Tim".
- *Tied to behaviour rather than abstract*: "You complain frequently," rather than "You are immature".

3.3 Clarifying roles

Demystifying the Facilitator: Many participants will be unfamiliar with facilitation as a leadership style. You should make sure everyone in the group understands what your role will be. Even with this understanding, though, there is likely to be a tendency to treat the Facilitator as an authority. It is up to you to help the group perceive you as "human". Following are some ways of achieving this.

- **Your own attitude** towards your skills and resources should be a humble one. What you say about facilitation can help people see that you have a combination of skills, which everyone possesses in some degree - that you are in the role of Facilitator only because you have had an opportunity to develop these skills.
- **Explain the reasoning behind the things you do.** If you tell why you introduced a particular exercise or intervened at a particular point, you are bringing your tools and skills down to earth, enabling the participants to evaluate them for themselves. This leaves you open to criticism or alternative suggestions. By exposing the logic behind your moves, you become more accessible to the group. They understand what you hope to accomplish, how your decision making works, and that you are not holding anything out on them. Thus, they can perceive you as just a person who is present to fulfil a need in the group.
- **Solicit feedback and pay attention to it.** Demonstrate to the participants that their opinions count. Treat their ideas with the same value that you do your own.

The Recorder:

Recording or writing down the content of group discussions is a useful function in many situations. Participants should understand the purpose of this role and how it will be useful to the group. This role is discussed in further detail later in these *Notes*.

The participants:

Egalitarian group participation - the sharing of leadership responsibilities - may be a new concept to some or all of the participants. You may need to take time to tell the group what you expect of them, what their rights and responsibilities are. You cannot facilitate in a vacuum - it requires the cooperation of all participants. And since responsibility for what happens in the group is shared, the Facilitator cannot simply prescribe certain behaviour for group members and expect it to be performed. A group can only function cooperatively when the members themselves want it to.

Altering the roles:

Facilitation varies from situation to situation and your role with one group will not be the same role you will perform with another group. If you or the participants are uncomfortable with some aspect of the Facilitator's role (the responsibilities assigned to it, or your style of performing those responsibilities), then the group should discuss modifying the role (and the role of participants in relation to it). This may happen at the beginning of a workshop, or at some point during its progress.

4.0 GROUND RULES: BEING EXPLICIT

The ground rules for the discussion sessions are:

1. Everyone's contribution is valuable, must be listened to and recorded.
2. Everyone must talk - they have come to make a contribution, and must be given the chance to do so - even if it is a small contribution or they are shy.
3. However crazy a suggestion may seem, give it the chance to influence the picture. This is particularly important in the brainstorming sessions.
4. Work towards the goal of the workshop. Make sure that people do not start making judgments (especially negative ones) about what specific outcomes may occur from the workshop.
5. No one should be allowed to consume group time with his or her own hobbyhorses.
6. Conflict is healthy and differences are important. Do not let differences or conflict drift into confrontation. No one is to be bullied into changing his or her opinion.
7. By merely attending the workshop, people have made the point that they want to be involved in the consultations, and are committed (at least to some degree) to resolving the issues involved.

5.0 TECHNIQUES AND GROUP PROCESSES

There are many ways to help people in a group come to agreement or simply be creative together. Some of these approaches are discussed below.

5.1 Brainstorming

The point of brainstorming sessions is to generate ideas. It is literally a process which encourages "a storm in the brain" -- ideas bursting out without any particular order. The aim of brainstorming is not to come to a decision.

One way is to follow these five steps:

1. **Conduct a warm-up session:** It is especially important to remind the group not to evaluate any idea prematurely.
2. **Brainstorming:** This step is the actual brainstorming session, which should not last more than thirty minutes.
3. **Elimination of duplicated ideas:** Once the brainstorming session is completed, the leader takes the group through the notes made and eliminates all duplications. This can be one using a "lump and split" approach.
4. **How to do it:** In this model, the first item on a list is given the number 1. Then all other similar or related topics are also given 1. The Facilitator then moves back to the top of the list, with the direction of the group and gives the second item a number 2. Then all related items throughout the list are similarly identified by 2's. And so forth. This approach generally yields about seven or eight key categories, in our experience, which can be further collapsed into three or four categories if necessary. The Facilitator or rapporteur can then report back to a plenary session on the main categories.
5. **Clarifying, ordering and evaluating:** In this final step the group categorises the large volume of ideas into some sensible outline.

Common problems with brainstorming approaches

Three common problems often arise during this session, so be prepared for them.

1. **Problems:** People find it difficult to be creative because they can see the problems in their ideas, and will say, "if ... then we could". Your job is to get them to stop worrying about the "if" at this stage.
2. **"Yes, but" and disagreement:** Other people will listen to an idea and say "yes but". Your job is to control this and encourage people to listen to what each other has to say without judgment.
3. **Conflict:** There will be contradictory and conflicting views about what is desirable. Your job is to get them all recorded, and see that no one person's view is considered right.
 - It is important to highlight areas of disagreement, and make each person feel that they have been heard.
 - It is also useful to highlight areas where there has been strong agreement, so that they form a picture of shared goals, and areas that need much more discussion.
 - Do not try to avoid the conflicts. Make them important and record them, but do not let people get into discussion or argument about them. Keep reminding them that this workshop is to generate information, not solutions.

Ten rules for brainstorming

1. The aim is to generate ideas, not to make decisions.
2. Everyone should speak and their opinions should be listened to and respected.
3. Do not debate. Conflicting views are a healthy sign and should be recorded. Do not strive for agreement in the first session.
4. Keep the discussion moving - just toss in ideas.
5. Creative and "oddball" ideas are also valuable and should be recorded.
6. Stay away from "it is too hard" and "it will never work - we have tried that before" - keep the creativity flowing.
7. Do not let anyone dominate the discussion. Give everyone their turn and encourage the more hesitant members to speak out too.
8. Record all ideas, including disagreements.
9. Suspend judgment and criticism just for this session.
10. Every comment has equal value. Not all the people attending the session will have the same degree of experience, but they will still have valuable contributions which should be listened to.

5.2 Rounds

This is a technique for getting people to speak in a group. In "rounds", each person has an equal opportunity to speak and be heard. Each person speaks in turn, encouraged by the Facilitator. This encourages full participation. The Facilitator should explain at the beginning of the rounds that statements should be brief and specific. A time limit may be set.

Rounds can be either structured - each person speaks in turn - or unstructured - anyone can speak. Just keep moving from one person to the next around the table, asking each to make a contribution.

5.3 Feedback

The group Facilitator can help the group by providing feedback. Feedback should focus on:

- the behaviour of the group, not the individual;
- actual observations, not inferences;
- the description of what has been said, not judgment;
- the sharing of ideas, not the giving of advice;
- the exploration of alternatives, not the production of solutions;
- listen to what has been said, not why it has been said.

5.4 Consensus decision making

The first step is to agree to reach an agreement. Then encourage individual participation and ensure that those who are going to be affected make the decisions. Some of the qualities of consensus decision making are set out below:

1. Agreement to reach agreement.
2. People have the right to their own beliefs.
3. Know your own limits.
4. Only if you speak can you be heard.
5. Non-hierarchical process.
6. Valuing differences.
7. Encourage creative synergy.
8. Valuing clarity, conciseness and focused discussion.
9. Autonomy with cooperation.
10. Contracting.
11. Active participation is the responsibility of each person.
12. If the issue does not directly affect you, leave it to those who are.
13. Knowing when to listen and when to speak.

5.5 Evaluation

In any group process, it is always important to evaluate the effectiveness of the group process. It is important to distinguish one thing: we are evaluating ideas, not individuals. You may want to stop and evaluate your group's progress part way through the session or do so at the end of the workshop. Evaluation can also focus on the effectiveness of the Facilitator. You can ask for feedback on how well the group was facilitated.

6.0 ADVICE TO FACILITATORS ON GETTING STARTED: THE VERY FIRST STEPS IN A GOOD WORKSHOP

6.1 Before you begin

- Take time for yourself to be alone before the session begins. These allows you time to clear your mind, leave your other activities and concerns of the day behind, and focus on the session ahead.
- Make sure your agenda is clear in your mind. This will keep you from getting confused once the workshop begins.

6.2 As you enter the room

- The first few moments after participants walk in the door will be important ones in influencing your perceptions of them and their impressions of you. Observe the individuals. You can learn to pick up quite a bit of verbal and nonverbal information which may indicate how well people will work with each other.
- Are people talking with each other as they walk in? If so, what are they talking about? If not, what kinds of expressions are on their faces?

- If the participants vary in terms of age, sex or ethnic group, do they mix freely? If not, there could be tensions and miscommunication among them.
- It is important for you to be present on time, if not a little early. Even if you have had a chance to work with or observe the group in the past, this will give you an opportunity to pick up on people's moods and feel out the situation on the particular day of the session. It is also a matter of simple courtesy and respect to the group to be on time.

6.3 Seating arrangements

In workshops where participants must communicate and cooperate with each other, the seating arrangement can exert a strong influence on group dynamics. It can affect who talks to whom and who is likely to dominate group activities.

It is important for each participant to be able to make eye contact with each of the other participants as much as possible. (It is especially important for the Facilitator to be able to make eye contact with everyone.) A circle is ideal for this. It lets people look at each other to the greatest possible extent, thus encouraging openness and concern in the group.

Tables give people a point of common contact, allow them to sit comfortably, and provide a place to write and to put work materials.

A disadvantage of table is that they restrict movement and sometimes may act as a barrier between people.

Tables influence the way group members interact; people are most likely to talk to those sitting at right angles to them, next most likely to talk to those sitting next to them, and much less likely to talk to those sitting across from them. In addition, whoever is seated at the end of the rectangular table tends to do more talking and have a greater influence on the outcome of the discussion than other members. So, if possible, use a round or square table. (You can often put two rectangular tables together to make a square.) These shapes allow group members more eye contact with each other.

If you must use a rectangular table, you should probably sit at the head of it yourself since you will be more aware of the advantage of that position and can restrain yourself from dominating the group.

Who sits where? Since people will be more likely to interact with individuals sitting close to themselves, you may want to ask people not to sit near their close friends or the people they know best, if a different arrangement is comfortable for them. This is especially important for many different individuals in the group to interact.

By sitting next to people they do not know as well, group members will be encouraged to get to know others in the group. This will promote a friendly atmosphere and help counteract any "cliquishness" in the group. In some situations, for reasons of solidarity, local people may choose to sit with their neighbours. If that is their clear choice, they should not be forced to separate themselves from their neighbours.

6.4 Introductions

Introductions are very important: both the Facilitator's introduction to the group and the introduction of group members to you and each other.

Your introduction

Your introduction (as Facilitator) should include your credentials - what it is about you that justifies your being there.

Introduction of the group members

We strongly recommend that you learn the participants' names as quickly and as best you can. This requires some extra attention, but the group will appreciate it and it will allow you to relate to participants more personally. One way to help yourself to do this is to draw a seating chart with each person's name as participants go around the room introducing themselves. This will allow you to learn names without having to ask each individual for his or her name over and over. Name tags are another good aid, especially when the participants are strangers to each other.

7.0 CODE OF RESPONSIBILITIES: ETHICS FOR FACILITATORS

There are a number of ways that the role of Facilitator can get out of hand or be used unfairly. Often this happens without either the group or the Facilitator realising it. It is your responsibility to prevent abuse of your position as Facilitator. Maintaining your integrity is significantly easier if you have thought through the following code of responsibilities and perhaps discussed them with other Facilitators.

1. It is not enough that you yourself have the values of cooperation and egalitarianism. Most people are accustomed to participating in groups where one person acts as leader and where that one person is treated as someone important, someone with special power and wisdom. Unless the group understands your role, they will probably perceive of you as an authority and allow you to influence them unduly. It is important for you to come down off your "pedestal" and let the group see you as "human". This is called demystifying your role as Facilitator.
2. Even though you conscientiously demystify your position, however, you may find that people depend on you. They may concede some of their power as participants to you and look to you to make decisions, define a situation, etc. This is probably the strongest test of your own values - whether you accept and use this power, or whether you reflect back to the group their need to take responsibility for decisions and definitions. The temptation to use the power delegated to you to fill your own needs (increase self-esteem, manipulation of a situation for your own benefit, even simple expedience) will be strong. The fact that the group has delegated the power to you is no excuse.
3. A similar potential for abuse arises out of the fact that the Facilitator performs a subtle, non-directive role. The passive friendly, well-meaning Facilitator can be manipulative in ways that an aggressive, forceful leader could never get away with. The difference between a charming manipulator and a domineering dictator may only be a matter of whether or not the group is conscious that their leader is controlling them. It is your responsibility not to use facilitation techniques to control a group. This is especially true for group participants, not in any open leadership role, who are using these techniques during a workshop.

4. Being a Facilitator does not mean that you are qualified to be a psychotherapist, either with a group of people or in a one-to-one situation. Because of the stress on human values and feelings that facilitation involves, Facilitators are often seen as resources for personal psychological problems as well as for organisational problems. So participants sometimes reach out to Facilitators, either directly or indirectly, with their emotional needs. This reaching out can be interpreted as a statement on the lack of resources available for people's problems rather than as a comment on your skills as a therapist. Please be careful.
5. Also, please remember that you, as Facilitator, cannot expect that you will meet your own emotional needs working with groups.
6. Finally, it is the Facilitator's responsibility to be sure the group understands what you are doing with them: what your goals are, how you expect to meet their needs, what you can give them and how you are going to do it. It is your responsibility to represent yourself fairly, to be open to criticism from the group (you are there for their benefit), and to consider altering your own goals to meet the group's goals. It is the group's right to hold you accountable for what you do with them.

8.0 RECORDING

8.1 The role of a Recorder

Recording or writing down the content of group discussions is a useful function in many situations. The Recorder can be either a Facilitator (in the case of team facilitation) or a group member. In either case, participants should understand the purpose of this role and how it will be useful to the group.

8.2 The role of the Recorder has seven essential elements

- The Recorder does not contribute to the discussions at the table beyond seeking clarification of a particular point.
- The Recorder sets the pace at that the table works and can therefore halt discussion in order to ensure that a point is recorded or to ask a participant or Facilitator what is meant by their comments.
- Everything must be written down publicly and clearly. Usually large sheets of butcher's paper are pinned on notice boards for public recording of the discussion. It is better to record on a vertical surface so everyone can see as the public record emerges, and comment upon and correct your recording if it is inaccurate in any way. It is difficult to record on the table surface, which is likely to be cluttered with cups and papers.
- In order to help in the interpretation of your notes, it is imperative to use **verbs**, that is, a word that asserts action, occurrence or being. For example to record "traffic" as an issue is meaningless, but by recording "traffic is a problem" or "traffic causes no problems" gives substance to the issue.
- Remember that all information that you record will be included in the appendix of a report. Please record everything legibly and accurately and so others may understand that it.

- It is all right for you to seek clarification from the group you are recording. This can be done by simply asking: "Is this what you meant by that statement?" or "I didn't quite get that, could you repeat it please?" It's also a good idea to record as much information verbatim.
- Generally, it is not the role of the Recorder to report back at the plenary session. The Facilitator will report back to the group as a whole and this will be done from the notes that you record publicly. Please print very clearly.
- Please be sure that each piece of paper that is recorded on has your table number, the session number from the agenda and also the page number. This is a crucial detail that avoids misinterpretation in the analysis of the information generated.

8.2 ADVICE TO RECORDERS ON GETTING STARTED: THE VERY FIRST STEPS IN A GOOD MEETING

Before you begin

- Take time for yourself to be alone before the session begins. These allows you time to clear your mind, leave your other activities and concerns of the day behind, and focus on the session ahead.
- Make sure your agenda is clear in your mind. This will keep you from getting confused once the meeting begins. In addition, if you are familiar with your plans and purposes, you can be more flexible. It will be easier to modify the agenda if this becomes necessary.

As you enter the room

The first few moments after participants walk in the door will be important ones in influencing your perceptions of them and their impressions of you. Observe the individuals. You can learn to pick up quite a bit of verbal and nonverbal information which may indicate how well people will work with each other.

- Are people talking with each other as they walk in? If so, what are they talking about? If not, what kinds of expressions are on their faces?
- If the participants vary in terms of age, sex or ethnic group, do they mix freely? If not, there could be tensions and miscommunication among them.

It is important for you to be present on time, if not a little early. Even if you have had a chance to work with or observe the group in the past, this will give you an opportunity to pick up on people's moods and feel out the situation on the particular day of the session. It is also a matter of simple courtesy and respect to the group to be on time.

Introductions

Introductions are very important: both the Facilitator's introduction to the group and the introduction of group members to you and each other.

Your introduction

- Your introduction (as Recorder) should include your credentials - what it is about you that justifies your being there. This is also an opportunity to begin laying groundwork for egalitarian participation, by presenting yourself as a "person" as well as an "expert". According to the situation (whether it is formal or informal, a mood of seriousness or fun) you can make yourself accessible to the participants and let them get to know you.
- If another person is introducing you, consider how you would like that done. How much detail do you want the introducer to give about you? Would you rather fill in the details yourself?

Introduction of the group

We strongly recommend that you learn the participants' names as quickly and as best you can. This requires some extra attention, but the group will appreciate it and it will allow you to relate to participants more personally. Name tags are a good aid, especially when the participants are strangers to each other.

8.3 CODE OF RESPONSIBILITIES: ETHICS FOR RECORDERS

It is important that all information that is generated through the table discussion be recorded publicly, clearly and concisely. Remember the function of a record is to record and not to interpret, this is vital to ensure legitimate and unbiased data.

9.0 SOME FINAL COMMENTS

You are probably reading these *Notes* because you have been asked to act as a Facilitator, Recorder, Listener, Helper or Resource Person at a workshop, *SpeakOut*, search conference, community forum, or other community participation event. Please try not to allow the material in these *Notes* to intimidate you. People everywhere--and especially in groups--generally respond to clarity of intent and an open heart. Be your natural self. Look people in the eye and stay focused on your task as.

It is work.

It will be demanding.

But it should also be rewarding.

And it should be fun.

REFERENCES CONSULTED

The contents of these *Notes* draw on published material on group dynamics, meeting format, communication, search conferences, interpersonal dynamics, creativity, conflict resolution and participation methods. The following sources have been used:

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