



HOW TO FACILITATE A GSA MEETING

WHAT IS A FACILITATOR?

The facilitator is the person in charge of meeting. They move the meeting along, keep track of time, and ensure that the discussions and activities proceed according to plan. The facilitator should work closely with the note-taker or scribe to make sure that the conversation is not moving too fast for accurate notes to be taken.

STRATEGIES FOR GOOD FACILITATION

- Ask the person who put a specific item on the agenda to give a brief introduction and say what they want done
- Give 5 minute warnings when moving on to another agenda item – appoint a separate time-keeper if necessary
- Put off “off-subject” topics – create a list for items to be discussed at another time
- Paraphrase to check for the sense of the discussion
- Help people avoid repeating themselves by summarizing discussion and asking only for comments in areas that haven’t been mentioned
- Make suggestions for how to move forward
- Ask questions
- Be positive and encourage full participation – make sure everyone gets to speak, try to notice when someone is holding back
- Focus on issues, not personalities – don’t let things devolve into gossip
- Ask someone else to facilitate if you want to actively participate in the discussion
- Check briefly for agreement before moving on – make sure everyone understands decisions and responsibilities

TECHNIQUES FOR MAKING DECISIONS IN MEETINGS

- Brainstorming
- Prioritizing/ranking items
- Pros and Cons list
- Straw voting (informally polling to see how people are feeling on a given topic)

FACILITATOR RESPONSIBILITIES

- Achieving agreement on the agenda & proceeding with it before & during the meeting
- Conducting the meeting – making sure the group adheres to ground rules, time limits, etc.
- Guiding discussion
- Staying neutral, asking questions, and suggesting ways to approach the agenda
- Making sure the group comes to decisions and work is divided among members
- Keeping the group on track when they get onto tangents
- Watching the vibe of the meeting and helping to keep the energy up
- Making sure everyone participates and no one dominates



- Intervening if problems arise and dealing with concerns
- Creating a safe & comfortable environment – using language that makes everyone comfortable (e.g. pronouns, gender-neutral terms)

USEFUL LINKS



[HOW TO FACILITATE A MEETING](#)

[PLANNING EVENTS](#)

[DECISION-MAKING IN GSA CLUBS](#)

Seeing such a long list of responsibilities may be intimidating, but meeting facilitation is a useful business skill to hone – and it gets easier the more you do it. If you're someone who naturally likes to keep things on task, try facilitating your next club meeting!