



Information You Need To Know...

About the Living Values Education and ...

Your Role As a Living Values Facilitator

Introduction: The following material to help you is assembled from:

- **Living Values Website**
- **Living Values Training Guidebook for Educators**
- **Living Values facilitators personal recommendations**
- **Organisations skilled in the facilitation process**

As you read through the material remember that while everyone eventually creates their own style using techniques that they feel comfortable with - all LVE trainers and educators abide by the basic guidelines established by the organisation after years of discovering what truly awakens the individual to their true desires and potential.

The most important of all guidelines is the importance of each facilitator staying in the quality of the 12 core values throughout the workshop and indeed, their own daily lives. Through living representation, the example of demonstrating the quality of each value we create what is known as a Living Values Atmosphere – and in that space everything is possible and unfolds perfectly.

This then is your gift to those who are drawn to you.

LIVING VALUES professional development workshops are highly recommended for educators who wish to help young people optimally explore and develop values. Join us to:

- *reflect on the purpose of education;*
- *reflect on the role values play in your life and in the world;*
- *understand the LVE Approach and process of developing values;*
- *learn skills to create a values-based atmosphere; and*
- *explore how to optimally facilitate the process of young people exploring and developing values.*

LVEP Skills for the Facilitation Process

LVE has a cadre of trainers on every continent. They are a unique group of people – professional educators who are dedicated to helping young people grow toward their potential in safe, caring, quality learning environments and committed to *"living the values."*

LVE trainers volunteer their time to promote the understanding of values education and to help others explore the underpinnings of, and the skills to develop, a values-based atmosphere.

Part of LVE educator excellence is viewed as modelling the values, respecting student opinions, and empowering children and young adults to enjoy learning and implementing values.

There are a variety of LVE professional, individual, community development workshops and seminars around the world. LVE Training is recommended in order to implement the program most effectively – and help children and youth, and ourselves, move toward "living values".

Cost: LVE trainers lead seminars and workshops often in a voluntary capacity. In most countries, hosting organisations requesting the workshops pay the costs of trainers' travel expenses and any onsite expenses. Participants can be charged a fee to pay the trainer for the training provided. In some countries, individuals and organisations kindly donate funds to the national LVE entity, be it an ALIVE Associate or Focal Point for LVE, when training is given on a voluntary basis.

There are Seven Kinds of LVE Workshops for a Variety of Needs

For Public and Private School Educators: LVE Educator Workshops

- **LVE Educator Workshops**
LVE Train-the-Trainer Workshops
LVE Parent Group Facilitator Workshops
- **At-Risk LVE Workshops for educators working with:**
- **Street Children and Children in Difficult Situations**
Youth in need of Drug Rehabilitation
Young Offenders
Refugees and Children Affected by War

Please note: LVE's educational resource books for young people at-risk are only shared with educators/facilitators that have taken the full LVE at-risk training for that particular population.

- **LVE Educator Workshops**
- **These workshops are conducted most frequently and are designed for:**
- **Educators in Formal Settings teachers, professors, counselors and psychologists in pre-schools, primary schools, secondary schools and universities; and**
- **Educators in Non-Formal Settings: day care center providers, youth workers, girl and boy guide/scout leaders, etc.**

LVE Educator Workshops and Seminars are experiential. Participants are asked to reflect on their own values, offer their ideas on elements within a values-based atmosphere, and imagine an optimal classroom environment in order to reflect on emotions, attitudes and behaviours behind quality teaching methods. What methods allow us to create a values-based atmosphere in which all students can feel respected, valued, understood, loved and safe?

LVE's Developing Values Schematic is explored, demonstrating a clear model about how to help young people explore and develop values in today's world. After they share their ideas, LVE's theoretical model and the rationale behind the variety of values activities are presented.

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The workshop then turns to skills for creating a values-based environment. In a regular workshop this includes: acknowledgement, encouragement, and positively building behaviours; active listening; conflict resolution; collaborative rule making; and values-based discipline. These sessions are intermingled with small group sessions in which participants take part in Living Values Activities for children and youth.

- Diane Tillman Active Listening Intro
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-3gZl2viGkE>
- Diane Tillman Active Listening Steps
<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-dso9FAtMfU>

LVE Educator Workshops and Seminars range from two to four days. Four day workshops are highly recommended for adults not familiar with conflict resolution and/or child-centered, participatory teaching methods.

Note: Information source from www.livingvalues.net

So you've been asked to facilitate a Living Values meeting.

What preparation do you need to do? How do you manage the event, and how exactly do you pull the whole thing together?

In many types of group situation, and particularly in complex discussions or those where people have different views and interests, good facilitation can make the difference between success and failure.

As a facilitator, you may need to call on a wide range of skills and tools, from problem solving and decision making, to team management and communications.

Our Definition of a Facilitator

The definition of facilitate is "to make easy" or "ease a process". What a facilitator does is plan, guide and manage a group event to ensure that the group's objectives are met effectively, with clear thinking, good participation and full buy-in from everyone who is involved.

To facilitate effectively, you must be objective. This doesn't mean you have to come from outside the organization or team, though. It simply means that, for the purposes of this group process, you will take a neutral stance. You step back from the detailed content and from your own personal views, and focus purely on the group process.

The "group process" is the approach used to manage discussions, get the best from all members, and bring the event through to a successful conclusion. How you design this depends on many factors, and we'll explore this in a little more detail later in the article. The secret of great facilitation is a group process that flows – and with it will flow the group's ideas, solutions, and decisions too.

Your key responsibility as a facilitator is to create this group process and build an environment in which it can flourish, and so help the group reach a successful decision, solution or conclusion.

The Qualities of a LVE Facilitator

Assuming the role of a Living Values Facilitator...this is what you can expect

As you embody the values - for self first - owing them as your friends you then are able to invite others to open to the values with sincerity and honesty. You facilitate others to discover the values and the benefits themselves.

It is very much about not bringing personality to the workshop but being the observer without any judgement, to be aware of not teaching but inviting people - teaching is ego. You find compassion for another changes everything – there is no need to intellectualise, just being totally present throughout. To watch and feel the mood and shifts in the group dynamic being careful not 'leading' workshop which pollutes the atmosphere, desensitising the feelings often new and emerging for the first time. To be humble and with a genuine desire to share.

You can be fearless because there is no requirement to convince anyone and feel that it is an honour to be a facilitator.

How we experience a Living Values workshop seeing participation and engagement, willingness to share openly, witnessing others discovering a new experience of themselves with a fresh commitment to living life differently.

To facilitate an event well, you must first understand the group's desired outcome, and the background and context of the meeting or event. The bulk of your responsibility is then to:

- **Design and plan** the process, and select the best tools (activities) that you have personally experienced that lead the individual's progress towards that outcome.
- **Guide and control** the group process to ensure that:
 - There is effective participation.
 - Participants achieve a mutual understanding.
 - Their contributions are considered and included in the ideas, solutions or decisions that emerge.
 - Participants take shared responsibility for the outcome.
- Ensure that outcomes, actions and questions are properly **recorded and actioned**, and appropriately dealt with afterwards.

Design and Plan

Bringing each person to acceptance of their role as a Living Values Facilitator firmly in mind, preparation for the meeting or event is all-important. Your job is to choose and design the right group and individual process(es), by developing an effective agenda for the occasion. There is a wealth of information on this subject development from experienced facilitators engaged with many different groups of people.

Tip 1: Focus on Outcomes

Whether you're planning a straight-forward meeting – ie the standard LVEP or a specific LV series of activities aimed at supporting a specific group – ie parents, youth at risk it's important to keep in mind always the **outcome** – and how you are helping each one in the group reach it.

Tip 2: Involve your client!

If you've been asked to facilitate a Values based event for another organisation, group or corporate

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enterprise, make sure you consult him or her carefully and ensure their understanding as to true purpose of LVEP and the growth/change potential of the participants.

Choose and design the group process

Two key aspects of the design and planning are choosing the right group process, and designing a realistic agenda. Please use the workshop guidelines laid out in the LV Training Guide as a basis for creating your own particular 'brand' or style of workshop. There are key elements that are intrinsic to each LVE workshop used internationally. These are proven stepping stones to awakening the Values in each of us, we recommend that to achieve desired opening and awareness of the values structure that you follow what others have found successful.

Here are some of the just some of the factors and options to consider:

- **Do you want an open discussion, or a structured process?**

For LVE a blend is essential. An open discussion, well facilitated, may be the simplest option for your group process. But ask yourself whether you will be able to achieve the participation you need, and manage the discussion with the number of participants involved with this format. Can you cover the variety of topics needed? Can you generate enough ideas and solutions? And can you involve everyone, and get their buy-in, can each one find their values in the process?

- **What structured process should you choose?**

If you need to accommodate participation from a group, always use smaller "break-out" groups of two or three ideally so that everyone can participant. Invite a representative to report back with the discoveries of the group to the full group's consideration.

- Encourage questions, you don't have to answer – allow the group to have input. And get ideas flowing. then consider including a brainstorming session. Use mind mapping as a resource to note the various responses.

- **Other factors to consider**

You won't be able to change some constraints. However, you may be able to change others to optimise your process and agenda. As part of this, consider:

- The ideal number of participants remembering this is a personal experience indicates that between 12 – 20 is optimum.
- The type of involvement people need to have
- How well they know the subject and each other
- The time you have available

Remember, whatever group process you define, it's a question of keeping your focus on outcomes. Find the best way to achieve the LVE objectives of the overall event.

Designing a realistic agenda

Taking into account the LVE recommended agenda, designing your agenda goes hand in hand with designing the group process. As you iterate between designing the process and designing the agenda, the event starts to take shape. Among the factors to consider when planning the agenda are:

- **In what order should the topics be presented?**
- **How will participants get to know each other?**

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- How will they gain a common understanding of the objectives?
- If an event is to be broken into separate sessions, how much time should be allocated to each item?
- Will all participants be involved each session?
- Or will some be in smaller, break-out groups?
- How and when will break-out groups' feed back to the wider group?
- When will you recap and summarise?
- How will the outcomes of one session flow into the next?
- How will you achieve closure of the overall event?

By the end of the design and planning stage, you should have a solid agenda, which focuses on outcomes, and provides a good flow and structure for the event.

Other design and planning considerations

In addition to process and agenda, you should also consider the following:

- Information and handout materials – What do participants need to know before or at the event? How will this be provided and when?
- Room arrangements – What room set-up will best encourage participation? Are separate rooms needed for break out groups?
- Supplies – What supplies and props do you need? Pens, flip charts, post-it notes are just the starters – make sure you have everything you need for the agenda and process you've planned. And make sure you have backups for things like data projectors, just in case these fail.
- We recommend a two pin folder that has plenty of blank paper and can be added to as the workshop handouts are distributed.

Guide and Control the Event

With the agenda and group process in place, it's time to think about how you'll guide and control the proceedings. There's still some preparation to do for this, and then there's whole business of guiding and controlling the event itself.

The final stage of preparation is to think about how you'll guide and control the meeting. This is where you prepare the ground rules for the event, polish your facilitation skills, and also consider some what-if scenarios: What if there is major disagreement? What if a solution does not emerge? and so on.

At the meeting itself, as facilitator, you'll set the scene and ensure that participants are clear about the desired outcome, the agenda, the ground rules and expectations for the event. By doing this, you help everyone focus on the task at hand. At the start of the meeting, and throughout, your role is to use to ensure the meeting keeps progressing towards a successful outcome.

To guide and control the meeting, you will need to:

- Have the participants set the ground rules – let them consider what rules should participants follow in the meeting? How will people interact? How will you ensure that people respect each others ideas? How will questions be handled? Seek everyone's agreement to these at the start of the event.
- Set the scene – Here, you'll run through the objectives and agenda. Make sure everyone understands their role and freedom to participate.
- Get things flowing – You'll make sure everyone introduces themselves, or perhaps use

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- appropriate icebreakers to get the meeting off to a positive start.
- Keep up the momentum and energy – You might need to intervene as the proceedings and energy levels proceed. Make sure people remain focused and interested. (If energy levels are beginning to flag, perhaps it's time to take a break?)
 - Listen, engage and include – Even though, as facilitator, you're taking a neutral stance, you need to stay alert, listen actively, and remain interested and engaged. This sets a good example for other participants, and also means you are always ready to intervene in facilitative ways. Is everyone engaged? If not, how can you bring them in? How can you get better participation?
 - Monitor checkpoints, and summarise – Keep in control of the agenda, tell people what they've achieved and what's next; Summarise the values that you are or have explored often.
 - Include plenty of group interaction – songs to sing, games to play, always start sessions on a high note. Your participation is important.
 - Intervene in group discussion only if absolutely required.

Tip: Interventions

As a facilitator, there are many situations in which you may need to intervene. Rehearse when and how you'll do this. Keep the lightest of touch. And bear in mind the need to remain objective, keep focus on the desired outcomes, and generally maintain a positive flow.

In normal groups the most difficult types of intervention are those involving conflict, anger and disagreement. This is usually not expected to occur in Living Values but remembering your role, it's important to focus on the needs of the whole group, whilst considering the feelings and position of individuals involved in any disagreement. ALWAYS use the appropriate values to demonstrate the message surrounding the difficulties, e.g. ask the individuals and open to the group inviting reflection of where are we living outside the values in that moment.

To keep the event flowing and positive:

- Watch for and close any side conversations. These limit the ability of others to focus, and often people are exchanging ideas that should be brought to the group.
- Keep a close eye on the timing. Be flexible, and balance the need for participation with the need to keep things running efficiently. Change your program to suit the participants awakening not your agenda.
- Learn what to do when a discussion isn't reaching a natural conclusion. Is more information or a further activity needed? Has an understanding been reached or felt by everyone. Park topics that cannot be concluded, and ensure that action time is scheduled to address these issues. Offer to be available for individual clarity in the next break if required.
- Be on the lookout for people who aren't participating fully. Are they experiencing discomfort? What is the source of the discomfort? What can you do to bring them into the conversation?
- Pay attention to group behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal. Some of the most damaging behaviour is silent, so know how to spot it and stop it effectively.
- Step in and mediate immediately if there are obvious personal attacks. Effective facilitators look for the least intrusive intervention first, so reminding everyone of the ground rules is often a good place to start. Whatever the issue, you can't allow bad behaviour to continue so be prepared to take the steps necessary to stop attacks.

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Record and Action

Last but not least among the responsibilities of a facilitator is the recording of activities (or failure) success in bringing values to the surface. What works, what doesn't – always refine your approach.

The key to successful recording of outputs from an event is to be clear about what will be recorded, how and by whom. Make sure people's responsibilities are 100% clear, whether they are yours or others' involved. If taking photographs ensure you have everyone's acceptance. If not given, respect that person's choice.

Tip:

When we think of a facilitator, it's the recording function part of their role that most often comes to mind. We see a person standing in front of an easel that is packed with paper, with felt pen in hand, and ready to write furiously when the ideas start flowing. While this is an important function, remember that, for the ideas to flow, the planning, and guiding and controlling functions must be attended to first. You can have all the paper in the world but if your meeting is not well planned, guided, you could be facing an empty piece of paper at the end of the event.

When you are recording and actioning, here are some things to remember:

- You are responsible for making sure the participants hear, see, and understand the information that is presented and offered. Make sure you keep an accurate record of what's going on. If in doubt, record now and summarise later.
- Try to use words that the group chooses, and when in doubt, ask them to provide the words for you to record.
- Ensure all decisions and actions are recorded. You may want to use a scribe to do this, so that you can stay focused on the group and the process.
- As you record decisions and actions, check with the group that the information you're recording is a fair and accurate reflection of what's been discussed.
- Remind the group what has been discussed, and keep them focused and moving forward.
- If in doubt, ask for clarification before the discussion moves on.
- Make sure that responsibility for, and commitment to, action, is obtained and recorded when necessary.
- After each session, display the recordings prominently so they can be referred back to
- After the event, follow up to ensure that outstanding actions and issues are progressed, and that the proceedings are brought to a successful conclusion.

Key Points:

To be an effective facilitator you must know when to take a leadership role, and when to be neutral and take a back seat. This is a difficult balance to maintain! The key to being proficient in the role is to plan and guide the proceedings effectively, and remain focused on the group process and outcomes, rather than specific content and opinions involved.

Facilitation is an interesting, rewarding and important role to take on. When facilitating, take time to think about the process and agenda, and learn the skills you need to take the event through to a successful conclusion. Take pride in the role of facilitation, and enjoy watching the ideas, solutions and successful outcomes flow!

Remember: If in doubt always go inside and ask “Am I in alignment with the 12 core values”.

Further qualities and methodology for the new Facilitator

- ✓ Why do you need facilitation skills?
- ✓ How do you facilitate?
- ✓ How do you plan a good facilitation process?
- ✓ Facilitating a meeting or planning session: What's it all about?
- ✓ Facilitator skills and tips
- ✓ Dealing with disrupters: Preventions and interventions

Whether it's a meeting (big or small) or a training session, someone has to shape and guide the process of working together so that you meet your goals and accomplish what you've set out to do. While a group of people might set the agenda and figure out the goals, one person needs to concentrate on how you are going to move through your agenda and meet those goals effectively. This is the person we call the "facilitator."

So, how is facilitating different than chairing a meeting?

Well, it is and it isn't. Facilitation has three basic principles:

- A facilitator is a guide to help people move through a process together, not the seat of wisdom and knowledge. That means a facilitator isn't there to give opinions, but to draw out opinions and ideas of the group members.
- Facilitation focuses on HOW people participate in the process of learning or planning, not just on WHAT gets achieved.
- A facilitator is neutral and never takes sides.

In the world, the best meeting chairs see themselves as facilitators. While they have to get through an agenda and make sure that important issues are discussed, decisions made, and actions taken, good chairs don't feel that they have all of the answers or should talk all the time. The most important thing is what the participants in the meeting have to say. So, focus on how the meeting is structured and run to make sure that everyone can participate. This includes things like:

- Making sure everyone feels comfortable participating
- Developing a structure that allows for everyone's ideas to be heard
- Making members feel good about their contribution to the meeting
- Making sure the group feels that the ideas and decisions are theirs, not just the leader's. Supporting everyone's ideas and not criticising anyone for what they've said.

Why do you need facilitation skills?

If you want to do good planning, keep members involved, and create real leadership opportunities in your organisation and skills in your members, you need facilitator skills. The more you know about how to shape and run a good learning and planning process, the more your members will feel empowered about their own ideas and participation, stay invested in your organisation, take on responsibility and ownership, and the better your meetings will be.

How do you plan a good facilitation process?

A good facilitator is concerned with both the outcome of the meeting or planning session, with how the people in the meeting participate and interact, and also with the process. While achieving the goals and outcomes that everyone wants is of course important, a facilitator also wants to

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make sure that the process is sound, that everyone is engaged, and that the experience is the best it can be for the participants.

- In planning a good meeting process, a facilitator focuses on:
- Climate and Environment
- Logistics and Room Arrangements
- Ground Rules

A good facilitator will make plans in each of these areas in advance. Let's look at some of the specifics:

Climate and Environment

There are many factors that impact how safe and comfortable people feel about interacting with each other and participating. The environment and general "climate" of a meeting or planning session sets an important tone for participation. For example, key questions you would ask yourself as a facilitator include:

- Is the location a familiar place, one where people feel comfortable? Face it, if you're planning to have an interactive meeting sitting around a conference table in the Mayor's office, some of your folks might feel intimidated and out of their environment. A comfortable and familiar location is key.
- Is the meeting site accessible to everyone? If not, have you provided for transportation or escorts to help people get to the site? Psychologically, if people feel that the site is too far from them or in a place they feel is "dangerous," it may put them off from even coming. If they do come, they may arrive with a feeling that they were not really wanted or that their needs were not really considered. This can put a real damper on communication and participation. Another reminder: can handicapped people use the site as well?
- *Intrinsic to LVE is the opportunity for personal expression and sharing of intimate feelings. Breakout space is important for one on one interaction.* Is the space the right size? Too large? Too small? If you're wanting to make a planning group feel that it's a team, a large meeting hall for only 10 or 15 people can feel intimidating and make people feel self-conscious and quiet. On the other hand, if you're taking a group of 30 folks through a meeting, a small conference room where people are uncomfortably crunched together can make for disruption: folks shifting in their seats, getting up to stretch and get some air. This can cause a real break in the mood and feeling of your meeting or planning session. You want folks to stay focused and relaxed. Moral: choose a room size that matches the size of your group.
- If you can interface the outdoors with the indoors this can be of benefit. Seek a venue with good space for breaks and access to fresh air.

Logistics and Room Arrangements

Believe it or not: how people sit, whether they are hungry and whether they can hear can make or break your planning process. As a facilitator, the logistics of the meeting should be of great concern to you, whether you're responsible for them or not. Some things to consider are:

- Chair arrangements: Having chairs in a circle or around a table encourages discussion, equality, and familiarity. Speaker's podiums and lecture style seating make people feel intimidated and formal. Avoid them at all costs.
- Places to hang newsprint: You may be using a lot of newsprint or other board space during

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- your meeting. Can you use tape without damaging the walls? Is an easel available? Is there enough space so that you can keep important material visible instead of removing it?
- Sign-In sheet: Is there a table for folks to use?
- Refreshments: Grumbling stomachs will definitely take folks minds off the meeting. If you're having refreshments, who is bringing them? Do you need outlets for coffee pots? Can you set things up so folks can get food without disrupting the meeting? And who's cleaning up afterwards?
- Microphones and audio visual equipment: Do you need a microphone? Video cameras? Can someone set up and test the equipment before you start?

To build a safe as well as comfortable environment, a good facilitator has a few more points to consider. How do you protect folks who are worried their ideas will be attacked or mocked? How do you hold back the big talkers who tend to dominate while still making them feel good about their participation? Much of the answer lies in the Ground Rules.

Ground Rules

Most meetings have some kind of operating rules. Some groups use Robert's Rules of Order (parliamentary procedure) to run their meetings while others have rules they've adopted over time. When you want the participation to flow and for folks to really feel invested in following the rules, the best way to go is to have the group develop them as one of the first steps in the process. This builds a sense of power in the participants ("Hey, she isn't telling us how to act. It's up to us to figure out what we think is important!") and a much greater sense of investment in following the rules.

Common ground rules are:

- One person speaks at a time
- Raise your hand if you have something to say
- Listen to what other people are saying
- No mocking or attacking other people's ideas
- Be on time coming back from breaks (if it's a long meeting)
- Respect each other.

A process to develop ground rules is:

- Begin by telling folks that you want to set up some ground rules that everyone will follow as we go through our meeting. Put a blank sheet of newsprint on the wall with the heading "Ground Rules."
- Ask for any suggestions from the group. If no one says anything, start by putting one up yourself. That usually starts people off.
- Write any suggestions up on the newsprint. It's usually most effective to "check -in" with the whole group before you write up an idea ("Sue suggested raising our hands if we have something to say. Is that O.K. with everyone?") Once you have gotten 5 or 6 good rules up, check to see if anyone else has other suggestions.
- When you are finished, ask the group if they agree with these Ground Rules and are willing to follow them. Make sure you get folks to actually say "Yes" out loud. It makes a difference!
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Facilitating a meeting or planning session: What's it all about?

- So much for background. Now, let's cover the three basic parts of facilitation:
- The process of the meeting
- Skills and tips for guiding the process
- Dealing with disrupters: preventions and interventions

The Meeting Process

As we've already said, the facilitator is responsible for providing a "safe" climate and working atmosphere for the meeting. But you're probably wondering, "What do I actually do DURING the meeting to guide the process along?" Here are the basic steps that can be your facilitator's guide:

1. Start the meeting on time

Few of us start our meetings on time. The result? Those who come on time feel cheated that they rushed to get there! Start no more than five minutes late, ten at the maximum and thank everyone who came on time. When latecomers straggle in, don't stop your process to acknowledge them. Wait until after a break or another appropriate time to have them introduce themselves.

2. Welcome everyone

Make a point to welcome everyone who comes. Don't complain about the size of a group if the turnout is small! Nothing will turn the folks off who DID come out faster. Thank all of those who are there for coming and analyse the turnout attendance later. Go with who you have.

3. Make introductions

There are lots of ways for people to introduce themselves to each other that are better than just going around the room. The kinds of introductions you do should depend on what kind of meeting you are having, the number of people, the overall goals of the meeting, and what kind of information it would be useful to know. Some key questions you can ask members to include in their introductions are:

- How did you first get involved with our organisation? (if most people are already involved, but the participants don't know each other well)
- What do you want to know about our organisation?
- What makes you most angry about this problem? (if the meeting is called to focus on a particular problem)

Sometimes, we combine introductions with something called an "ice breaker." Ice breakers can:

- Break down feelings of unfamiliarity and shyness
- Help people shift roles--from their "work" selves to their "more human" selves
- Build a sense of being part of a team
- Create networking opportunities
- Help share participants' skills and experiences

Some ways to do introductions and icebreakers are:

- In pairs, have people turn to the person next to them and share their name, organisation and three other facts about themselves that others might not know. Then, have each pair introduce EACH OTHER to the group. This helps to get strangers acquainted and for people to feel safe--they already know at least one other person, and didn't have to share

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information directly in front of a big group at the beginning of the meeting.

- Form small groups and have each of them work on a puzzle. Have them introduce themselves to their group before they get to work. This helps to build a sense of team work.
- In a large group, have everyone write down two true statements about themselves and one false one. Then, every person reads their statements and the whole group has to guess which one is false. This helps folks get acquainted and relaxed.
- Give each participant a survey and have the participants interview each other to find the answers. Make the questions about skills, experience, opinions on the issue you'll be working on, etc. When everyone is finished, have folks share the answers they got.

When doing introductions and icebreakers, it's important to remember:

- Every participant needs to take part in the activity. The only exception may be latecomers who arrive after the introductions are completed. At the first possible moment, ask the latecomers to say their name and any other information you feel they need to share in order for everyone to feel comfortable and equal.
- Be sensitive to the culture, age, gender and literacy levels of participants and any other factors when deciding how to do introductions. For example, an activity that requires physical contact or reading a lengthy instruction sheet may be inappropriate for your group. Also, keep in mind what you want to accomplish with the activity. Don't make a decision to do something only because it seems like fun.
- It is important to make everyone feel welcome and listened to at the beginning of the meeting. Otherwise, participants may feel uncomfortable and unappreciated and won't participate well later on. Also, if you don't get some basic information about who is there, you may miss some golden opportunities. For example, the editor of the regional newspaper may be in the room; but if you don't know, you'll miss the opportunity for a potential interview or special coverage.
- And don't forget to introduce yourself. You want to make sure that you establish some credibility to be facilitating the meeting and that folks know a bit about you. Credibility doesn't mean you have a college degree or 15 years of facilitation experience. It just means that you share some of your background so folks know why you are doing the facilitation and what has led you to be speaking up.

4. Review the agenda, objectives and ground rules for the meeting

Go over what's going to happen in the meeting. Check with the group to make sure they agree with and like the agenda. You never know if someone will want to comment and suggest something a little different. This builds a sense of ownership of the meeting and lets people know early on that you're there to facilitate THEIR process and THEIR meeting, not your own agenda.

The same is true for the outcomes of the meeting. You'll want to go over these with folks as well to get their input and check that these are the desired outcomes they're looking for. This is also where the ground rules that we covered earlier come in.

5. Encourage participation

This is one of your main jobs as a facilitator. It's up to you to get those who need to listen to listen and those who ought to speak. Encourage people to share their experiences and ideas and urge those with relevant background information share it at appropriate times.

6. Stick to the agenda

Groups have a tendency to wander far from the original agenda, sometimes without knowing it.

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When you hear the discussion wandering off, bring it to the group's attention. You can say "That's an interesting issue, but perhaps we should get back to the original discussion."

7. Avoid detailed decision-making

Sometimes, it's easier for groups to discuss the colour of napkins than the real issues they are facing. Help the group not to get immersed in details. Suggest instead, "Perhaps the committee could resolve the matter." Do you really want to be involved in that level of detail?

8. Seek commitments

Getting commitments for future involvement is often a meeting goal. You want leaders to commit to certain tasks, people to volunteer to help on a campaign, or organisations to support your group. Make sure adequate time is allocated for seeking commitment. For small meetings, write people's names down on newsprint next to the tasks they agreed to undertake.

One important rule of thumb is that no one should leave a meeting without something to do. Don't ever close a meeting by saying "We'll get back to you to confirm how you might like to get involved." Seize the moment! Sign them up!

9. Bring closure to each item

Many groups will discuss things ten times longer than they need to unless a facilitator helps them to recognise they're basically in agreement. Summarise a consensus position, or ask someone in the group to summarise the points of agreement, and then move forward. If one or two people disagree, state the situation as clearly as you can: "Tom and Leoni seem to have other feelings on this matter, but everyone else seems to go in this direction. Perhaps we can decide to go in the direction that most of the group wants, and maybe Tom and Leoni can get back to us on other ways to accommodate their concerns." You may even suggest taking a break so Tom and Leoni can caucus to come up with some options.

Some groups feel strongly about reaching consensus on issues before moving ahead. If your group is one of them, be sure to read a good manual or book on consensus decision making. Many groups, however, find that voting is a fine way to make decisions. A good rule of thumb is that a vote must pass by a two-thirds majority for it to be a valid decision. For most groups to work well, they should seek consensus where possible, but take votes when needed in order to move the process forward.

10. Respect everyone's rights

The facilitator protects the shy and quiet folks in a meeting and encourages them to speak out. There is also the important job of keeping domineering people from monopolising the meeting or ridiculing the ideas of others.

Sometimes, people dominate a discussion because they are really passionate about an issue and have lots of things to say. One way to channel their interest is to suggest that they consider serving on a committee or task force on that issue. Other people, however, talk to hear themselves talk. If someone like that shows up at your meeting, look further ahead in this chapter for some tips on dealing with "disrupters."

11. Be flexible

Sometimes issues will arise in the meeting that are so important, they will take much more time than you thought. Sometimes, nobody will have thought of them at all. You may run over time or have to alter your agenda to discuss them. Be sure to check with group about whether this is O.K. before going ahead with the revised agenda. If necessary, ask for a five-minute break to confer

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with key leaders or participants on how to handle the issue and how to restructure the agenda. Be prepared to recommend an alternate agenda, dropping some items if necessary.

12. Summarise the meeting results and needed follow-ups

Before ending the meeting, summarise the key decisions that were made and what else happened. Be sure also to summarise the follow-up actions that were agreed to and need to take place. Remind folks how much good work was done and how effective the meeting hopefully was. Refer back to the objectives or outcomes to show how much you accomplished.

13. Thank the participants

Take a minute to thank people who prepared things for the meeting, set up the room, brought refreshments, or did any work towards making the meeting happen. Thank all of the participants for their input and energy and for making the meeting a success.

14. Close the meeting

People appreciate nothing more than a meeting that ends on time! It's usually a good idea to have some "closure" in a meeting, especially if it was long, if there were any sticky situations that caused tension, or if folks worked especially hard to come to decisions or make plans.

A nice way to close a meeting is to go around the room and have people say one word that describes how they are feeling now that all of this work has been done. You'll usually get answers from "exhausted" to "energised!" If it's been a good meeting, even the "exhausted" ones will stick around before leaving.

**This material is adapted by us gratefully from
<http://mindtoolbox.com>**

1. Facilitator Skills and Tips

Here are a few more points to remember that will help to maximise your role as a facilitator:

1. Don't memorise a script

Even with a well-prepared agenda and key points you must make, you need to be flexible and natural. If people sense that you are reading memorised lines, they will feel like they are being talked down to, and won't respond freely.

2. Watch the group's body language

Are people shifting in their seats? Are they bored? Tired? Looking confused? If folks seem restless or in a haze, you may need to take a break, or speed up or slow down the pace of the meeting. And if you see confused looks on too many faces, you may need to stop and check in with the group, to make sure that everyone knows where you are in the agenda and that the group is with you.

3. Always check back with the group

Be careful about deciding where the meeting should go. Check back after each major part of the process to see if there are questions and that everyone understands and agrees with decisions that were made.

4. Summarise and pause

When you finish a point or a part of the meeting process, sum up what was done and decided, and pause for questions and comments before moving on. Learn to "feel out" how long to pause -- too

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short, and people don't really have time to ask questions; too long, and folks will start to get uncomfortable from the silence.

5. Be aware of your own behaviour

Take a break to calm down if you feel nervous or are losing control. Watch that you're not repeating yourself, saying "ah" between each word, or speaking too fast. Watch your voice and physical manner. (Are you standing too close to folks so they feel intimidated, making eye contact so people feel engaged?) How you act makes an impact on how participants feel.

6. Occupy your hands

Hold onto a marker, chalk, or the back of a chair. Don't play with the change in your pocket!

7. Watch your speech

Be careful you are not offending or alienating anyone in the group. Swear words at your own risk!

8. Use body language of our own

Using body language to control the dynamics in the room can be a great tool. Moving up close to a shy, quiet participant and asking them to speak may make them feel more willing, because they can look at you instead of the big group and feel less intimidated. Also, walking around engages people in the process. Don't just stand in front of the room for the entire meeting.

9. Don't talk to the newsprint, blackboard or walls--they can't talk back!

Always wait until you have stopped writing and are facing the group to talk.

2. Dealing with disrupters: Preventions and interventions

Along with these tips on facilitation, there are some things you can do both to prevent disruption before it occurs to stop it when it's happening in the meeting. The most common kinds of disrupters are people who try to dominate, keep going off the agenda, have side conversations with the person sitting next to them, or folks who think they are right and ridicule and attack other's ideas.

Try using these "*Preventions*" when you set up your meeting to try to rule out disruption:

1. Get agreement on the agenda, ground rules and outcomes

In other words, agree on the process. These process agreements create a sense of shared accountability and ownership of the meeting, joint responsibility for how the meeting is run, and group investment in whether the outcomes and goals are achieved.

2. Listen carefully

Don't just pretend to listen to what someone in the meeting is saying. People can tell. Listen closely to understand a point someone is making. And check back if you are summarising, always asking the person if you understood their idea correctly.

3. Show respect for experience

We can't say it enough. Encourage folks to share strategies, stories from the field, and lessons they've learned. Value the experience and wisdom in the room.

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4. Find out the group's expectations

Make sure that you uncover at the start what participants think they are meeting for. When you find out, be clear about what will and won't be covered in this meeting. Make plans for how to cover issues that won't be dealt with: Write them down on newsprint and agree to deal with them at the end of the meeting, or have the group agree on a follow-up meeting to cover unfinished issues.

There are lots of ways to find out what the group's expectations of the meeting are: Try asking everyone to finish this sentence: "I want to leave here today knowing...." You don't want people sitting through the meeting feeling angry that they're in the wrong place and no one bothered to ask them what they wanted to achieve here. These folks may act out their frustration during the meeting and become your biggest disrupters.

5. Stay in your facilitator role

You cannot be an effective facilitator and a participant at the same time. When you cross the line, you risk alienating participants, causing resentment, and losing control of the meeting. Offer strategies, resources, and ideas for the group to work with, but NOT opinions.

6. Don't be defensive

If you are attacked or criticised, take a "mental step" backwards before responding. Once you become defensive, you risk losing the group's respect and trust, and might cause folks to feel they can't be honest with you.

7. "Buy-in" power players

These folks can turn your meeting into a nightmare if they don't feel that their influence and role are acknowledged and respected. If possible, give them acknowledgement up front at the start of the meeting. Try giving them roles to play during the meeting such as a "sounding board" for you at breaks, to check in with about how the meeting is going.

Try using these "*Interventions*" when disruption is happening during the meeting:

1. Have the group decide

If someone is dominating the meeting, refuses to stick to the agenda, keeps bringing up the same point again and again, or challenges how you are handling the meeting:

First try to remind them about the agreed-on agenda. If that doesn't work, throw it back to the group and ask them how they feel about that person's participation. Let the group support you.

2. Use the agenda and ground rules

If someone keeps going off the agenda, has side conversations through the whole meeting, verbally attacks others:

Go back to that agenda and those ground rules and remind folks of the agreements made at the beginning of the meeting.

3. Be honest: Say what's going on

If someone is trying to intimidate you, if you feel upset or undermined, if you need to pull the group behind you:

It's better to say what's going on than try to cover it up. Everyone will be aware of the dynamic in the room. The group will get behind you if you are honest and up -front about the situation.

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4. Use humour

If there is a lot of tension in the room, if you have people at the meeting who didn't want to be there, if folks are scared/shy about participating, if you are an outsider:

Try a humorous comment or a joke. If it's self-deprecating, so much the better. Humour almost always lightens the mood. It's one of the best tension-relievers we have.

5. Accept or legitimise the point or deal:

If there is someone who keeps expressing doubts about the group's ability to accomplish anything, is bitter and puts down others' suggestions, keeps bringing up the same point over and over, seems to have power issues:

Try one or more of these approaches: Show that you understand their issue by making it clear that you hear how important it is to them. Legitimise the issue by saying, "It's a very important point and one I'm sure we all feel is critical. Make a bargain to deal with their issue for a short period of time (*"O.K., let's deal with your issue for 5 minutes and then move on."*) If that doesn't work, agree to defer the issue to the end of the meeting, or set up a committee to explore it further.

6. Use body language

If side conversations keep occurring, if quiet people need to participate :

Use body language. Move closer to converser, or to the quiet ones. Make eye contact with them to get their attention and convey your intent.

7. Take a break

If less confrontational tactics haven't worked, someone keeps verbally attacking others, shuffling papers, cutting others off:

In case you've tried all of the above suggestions and nothing has worked, it's time to take a break, invite the disruptive person outside the room and politely but firmly state your feelings about how disruptive their behaviour is to the group. Make it clear that the disruption needs to end. But also try to find out what's going on, and see if there are other ways to address that person's concerns.

8. Confront in the room

If all else has failed, if you're sure it won't create backlash, if the group will support you, and if you've tried everything else:

Confront the disruptive person politely but very firmly in the room. Tell the person very explicitly that the disruption needs to stop now. Use body language to encourage other group members to support you. This is absolutely the last resort when action must be taken and no alternatives remain!

This material is adapted by us gratefully from <http://ctb.ku.edu>

PLEASE ANSWER THE QUESTIONS BELOW AS COMPREHENSIVELY AS POSSIBLE TO ASSIST US IN GAUGING YOUR UNDERSTANDING.

In the above notes you will have noticed repetition of certain aspects. These are deliberate as they are vitally important for you to remember as you embark into your role as an LVE Facilitator.

ACTION REQUIRED: Please answer the following questions which will allow us to evaluate your awareness of the role of a LVE Facilitator. **Please send as Word.doc as attachment to your email.**

1. Share with us the qualities you feel are the essence of each of the 12 core Values?
2. What 5 qualities do you feel are the most important for a LVE Facilitator to exhibit?
3. How would deal with a disruptive element in your group?
4. What 6 points are most significant in establishing the ground rules for your workshop?
5. How would you ensure that these points are included in the group's collective agreement?
6. When creating your LVE agenda what key aspects must you include?
7. What number of participants would your group optimum and why?
8. Name a few of the benefits provided by break-out sessions ?
9. How will you go about/steps you would take for promoting your upcoming event?
10. Which segment of the community most interests you from the perspective of offering a LVE workshop?

Both your and other facilitator's offerings may be addressed in the Train the Trainer workshop.

Send to: admin@livingvalues.com.au