

Facilitation Skills & Mindsets

Compiled by Carrie Landrum, University of Michigan, March 2019

Skills to Begin With

Build Rapport – Get to know people first and foremost. Find commonalities.

Build Trust – Clarify confidentiality, be as transparent as possible, be sincere and non-judgmental.

Practice Multipartiality¹ – Be equitably partial to all participants. Respect and care for each person.

Hold Space – Be present with the person’s experience. Use silence. Be an affirming presence.

The “OARS” of Motivational Interviewing²

Open-Ended Questions – Ask questions that cannot be answered by a yes or no.

Affirmations – Express appreciation and respect, validate as helpful.

Reflections – Instead of asking a question, reflect back what you heard in a statement.

Summaries – Summarize what you heard, ask if you understood accurately what was shared.

The LARA Method³

Listen – Actively listen to what is said and unsaid. Notice terminology and body language.

Affirm or Acknowledge – Verbally acknowledge what was shared, affirm where possible.

Respond – Respond in an honest, respectful, and helpful manner to what was surfaced.

Add – Add relevant additional information in a respectful and empathic way.

Additional Skills

Use Silence – Practice the use of silence to honor what’s shared, and to offer space for reflection.

Offer Choice – Pose options and honor agency whenever possible; ask before adding thoughts.

Convey Empathy – Understand, empathize with, and be sensitive to others’ experiences, thoughts.

Practice Mirroring – Use the terms they use and match their energy as helpful, mirror body posture.

Breathe Mindfully – Breathing deeply and mindfully can calm a facilitator as well as participants.

Non-Violent Communication⁴

Observations – Use objective observations (not subjective statements, evaluations, or judgments).

Feelings – Explore underlying emotions behind statements, requests, or needs.

Needs – Identify and explore unmet universal human needs behind stated positions or strategies.

Requests – Establish requests (and not demands) that could satisfy unmet needs and interests.

Facilitator Mindsets⁵

Offer Hope and Vision – Express optimism, possibilities, and hope for a future ideal state.

Accompaniment – A facilitator accompanies and guides participants through the process.

Presence – “It may be that the facilitator’s presence is more fundamental than any specific skills.”⁶

Maintain presence through being grounded, empathic, open-minded, attentive, and caring.

¹ www.mediate.com/articles/assegued-multi-partiality.cfm

² www.myacpa.org/sites/default/files/Intervention%20Handout.pdf, pachiefprobationofficers.org/docs/MI_Workbook_Final.pdf

³ cpb-us-e1.wpmucdn.com/blogs.cornell.edu/dist/c/7047/files/2016/12/LARA_UPDATED-24wheci.pdf

⁴ www.nonviolentcommunication.com/aboutnvc/4partprocess.htm

www.schooltransformation.com/wp-content/uploads/2012/06/Expressing_Empathy.pdf

⁵ *Serving Crime Victims through Restorative Justice: A Resource Guide for Learners and Practitioners*

Alberta Restorative Justice Association, 2018 docs.wixstatic.com/ugd/adb2db_0aa56dae8ae149808afac83b6869546d.pdf

⁶ Ibid. 79.