

FACILITATING A GSA MEETING

What is a Facilitator?

The facilitator is the person in charge of the meeting. They move the meeting along.

The Facilitator is Responsible for:

- Getting agreement on agenda and processes before and during the meeting
- Conducting the meeting - makes sure the group keeps to ground rules, time limits, etc.
- Guiding discussion
- Staying neutral, asking questions and suggesting ways to approach parts of the agenda
- Making sure the group comes to decisions and work is divided among members
- Keeping the group on track when they head off onto tangents
- Watching the vibe of the meeting and helping to keep energy up
- Making sure everyone participates and no one dominates
- Creating a safe and positive environment (protects people from personal attack)
- Intervening if problems come up, dealing with concerns
- Creating a comfortable environment - using language that makes everyone comfortable

Strategies for Good Facilitation:

- Ask person who put specific item on agenda to give a brief introduction on important background information and what they want done
- Give 5 minute warnings when moving on to another agenda item. Appoint a separate timekeeper if necessary.
- Put off off-subject topics - Create a list (a "parking lot") for items to be discussed at another time
- Paraphrase (repeat back in your own words) 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 - after discussion has gone on for a while, try to summarize, look for agreement or sticking points, and come to decision
- 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
- 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

Techniques for making decisions in meetings:

- Brainstorming
- Prioritizing (ranking items)
- Pro's and Con's
- Straw voting (informal poll to see where people are)
- Going around to everyone to check for the sense of the group

This resource sheet was developed with help from CompassPoint Non-Profit Services

PrideWorks Conference for
LGBT Youth and their Allies
November 16th 2010

Downloadable from:
www.prideworksforyouth.org
info@prideworksforyouth.org

