

## **Preparing to Facilitate – Activity Guide**

In the social skills domain, the fundamental competency is having the ability to facilitate. Facilitating refers to the skill of recognizing how to meet the needs of others and then meeting those needs.

How well are you able to facilitate? Use this activity to plan ways to use the facilitating techniques to improve your ability to recognize how to meet the needs of others and to then meet those needs.

### **Facilitating Techniques**

Facilitating is the fundamental competency in the social skills domain. It refers to the skill of recognizing how to meet the needs of others and then meeting those needs. There are three main techniques involved in facilitating:

#### ***Using evocative comments***

Evocative comments focus on the "why" or "how" of behavior, not on the "what". They bring out the reasons behind behaviors and help people understand and deal directly with possible conflict. A leader can ask for observation without judgment.

Evocative comments also focus attention on inconsistencies, which can be ideal in a review situation. For example, a leader tells an employee, "The team charter says the team is self-directed, but you're requiring my input into every decision" and "You don't seem to be fully invested in this task." The leader uses evocative comments to explore underlying reasons for behavior. He might ask the employee "Could your work delays be happening because you're upset about the layoffs?"

#### ***Letting people express themselves and participate***

A leader with high EQ will let people express themselves and participate in what's going on. Then your employees can move beyond anger and worry and work together.

When there are problems, brainstorming and solving problems as a group channels energy and facilitates buy-in. When you share information about why tough choices are needed, employees will cooperate and try to make changes work. Participation builds self-confidence, loyalty, and motivation by empowering people to be part of the solution.

For example, if you have been told you need to cut your department's expenses by eight percent, you should talk to your employees honestly, saying "This is the situation. What do you think we can do to decrease expenses?" While emotions and fear will no doubt come to the surface, employees will be participating in shaping their future. As a result, they will have less resistance to change, less anger, and more motivation.

#### ***Keeping people informed***

Keeping people informed about both good and bad news builds trust and enhances motivation. Keep employees in the loop about how their work fits with the organization's goals, about decisions made by upper management, and of course, about their personal progress. When providing such feedback, make sure it's accurate, positive, clear, and objective.

For example, if you need to give an employee a job review and his current work isn't up to standard, you need to give your feedback in a way that motivates and inspires, and doesn't discourage or anger him. To do this, you could make notes in advance of the meeting about what the employee does well, and compliment him on that. You should be accurate, clear, and nonjudgmental in what you say. Use statements like "This is what I need from you" or "You're not meeting your commitments". Avoid using phrases like "You're irresponsible."

## Activity

Use the table below to list some examples of common workplace situations where you might find yourself facilitating. For each situation, note some evocative comments that you might use to tease out the reasons behind behaviors. One example has been provided.

### Using evocative comments

Situation	Evocative comment
Conflict during a team meeting	"How well are we working together on this?" "What's really going on here?"

Next use the table provided to identify how you can deal with the different ways your employees might express themselves and encourage them to participate. First, list the emotion they might express, then determine what you might say to confirm that you have understood the emotion correctly, and finally list some ways that you might deal with it. One example has been provided.

**Letting people express themselves and participate**

Reaction	Confirmation	Action
Anger	"I notice that you're having trouble sitting still. Are you angry about what I'm saying?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Remain calm – refuse to be intimidated</li> <li>• Allow employee to express anger</li> <li>• "Can you explain your anger to me?"</li> </ul>

Now complete the table provided to plan ways you can keep your employees informed. For each of the ways to keep people informed, identify how you could implement this in your daily job. An example has been provided.

**Keeping people informed**

Way to Keep People Informed	Action
<p>Keeping people in the loop about how their work fits with the organization's goals.</p>	<p>Have regular one-to-one meetings where you go through the employee's key responsibilities and explain how their work contributes to the organization achieving its overall goals.</p>
<p>Informing people about decisions made by upper management.</p>	
<p>Keeping people up to date about their personal progress.</p>	
<p>Informing people in a timely manner of good and bad news.</p>	
<p>Keeping people informed of what's going well and what's not going well.</p>	