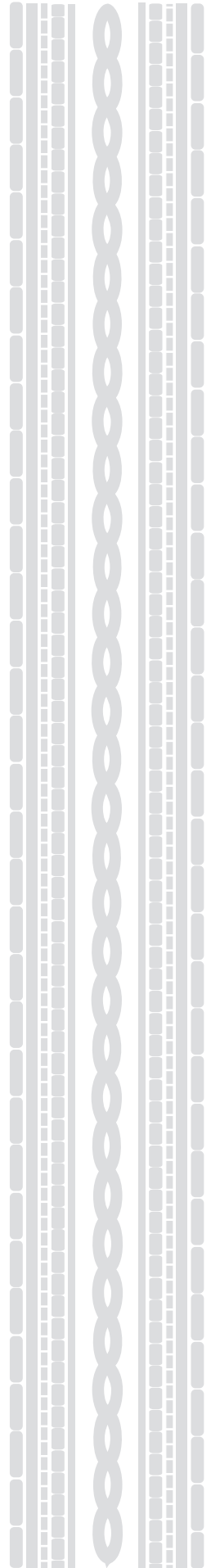


## **BOOKLET #4**

# **MODEL SESSIONS: SKILLS TRAINING IN OBSERVATION, INTERVIEWING, AND FACILITATION**

Fundamental to learning about others and building relationships are good skills in observation, interviewing, and facilitation. GAD and PACA methodologies cannot be carried out without them. In new cultural settings, old skills need to be revisited, cultural assumptions challenged, and new culturally appropriate language and behaviors learned. The three session plans that teach skills in these areas are designed to be modified to fit each culture's practices and norms.



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# SKILLS TRAINING - OBSERVATION

## RATIONALE

The PACA techniques are successful only to the degree that they can be skillfully used. Skills required are culturally appropriate (1) interviewing and (2) facilitation, and accurate (3) observation. Observation is important in the richness of the data that can be gathered non-intrusively, the confirmation or questioning of information gained verbally, and the clues to reliability and comfort of community members who are involved in PACA techniques.

This session, as all of the skills training sessions, should be modified and made culturally appropriate by working with language and cross-cultural trainers. As language skills permit, Trainees should be encouraged to record and describe their observations in the host language.

This design is most appropriate for pre-service training (PST). However, the major points should be reviewed when PACA tools are introduced at any time.

## TIME



1 1/2 hours

Several additional time periods, depending on how much practice is planned (see Section IV)

## GOAL AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL

To see the importance, and difficulty, of objective observation which can add to, confirm, or question verbal information received in community work.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To identify influences on one's perceptions.
2. To practice non-judgmental statements about observations.
3. To sharpen observation skills of community resources and infrastructure, current forms of activity, and labor by gender and age.

## SESSION OUTLINE

- I. Introduction (30 minutes)
- II. Filters (40 minutes)
- III. Balancing for Filters (20 minutes)
- IV. Suggested Observation Practice Opportunities (1-2 hours, throughout training)

## TRAINER PREPARATION



Review this session plan with language instructors and cross-cultural trainers.

1. Modify any parts that are inappropriate in the host culture.
2. Determine which video segment will be used in the introduction; if none of these tapes appeal to you or you don't have access to them, replace them with a similar length clip from a video you prefer.

At one time or another, most posts have received copies of the following video tapes. Short segments from each tape have been identified and described for possible use in this training session. A short segment of any other video available can be used. The important aspects of the video clip are that a number of things are occurring at the same time or in close sequence, and that both men and women are involved.

The number cues are based on 0000 when the video starts, not from the title. Watch the clips from the videos that you have. Determine which you will use and make your own notes for the session.

Be sure to cue the video in advance of the session; use the numbers as well as the description, as numbering systems may vary by machine.

Possible video segments include:

### ROAD TO LAMESEN -

- |                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| <b>#0000-0060</b> | A variety of scenes: man painting face, group singing and playing instruments, market scene, city street.<br><b>Observables:</b> roles of men, women, and children; dress; activities   |
| <b>#0264-0360</b> | Village gathering, faces singled out; walking through village; outsiders interviewing villagers.<br><b>Observables:</b> faces, clothing, roles, housing, outdoor furniture.<br>(There is some superscript but it can be ignored.) |
| <b>#0480-0581</b> | School room (children, adults), non-formal education, clinic<br><b>Observables:</b> clothes, faces, roles   |
| <b>#0620-0680</b> | Village gathering: singing, playing instruments, local theater<br><b>Observables:</b> roles, dress, what is happening   |

## WATER OF AYOLE

- #0159-0117** Getting water at river  
**Observables:** roles (gender, ages), dress, equipment
- #0656-0670** Celebration  
**Observables:** Who is dancing, playing instruments; what instruments there are; dress and jewelry
- #0790-0846** Meeting  
**Observables:** Who is there and speaking, behaviors (standing, raising hands)  
 (There are some subscripts but can be ignored.)
- #0965-0993** Construction of building: making cement, bricks, carrying water  
**Observables:** tasks (gender, age); dress; tools

## GENDER ANALYSIS — STRENGTHENING WINROCK PROJECTS

- #0065-0390** Variety of scenes: different countries; both men and women  
**Observables:** roles and tasks, dress

- Determine culturally appropriate ways to practice observation skills in the community or host family.

Meet with other PST training staff to determine how and when this session, in whole or in part, might be introduced, and when participants can practice the skills. It is recommended that it be introduced very early, even the first week, as it has major cross-cultural implications, and trainees start observing, *and making judgments on those observations*, immediately in an effort to learn about, and understand, their host country.

Consider having several trainers for this session, including at least one language or cross-cultural trainer.

The practice sections, or others you create, can take place throughout the training; all of the practice should not directly follow the instruction. As language skills permit, encourage Trainees to record and describe their observations in the host language.

## MATERIALS



- Blank flip chart paper
- Markers
- Tape
- Video player and TV
- Video: *The Water of Ayole, The Road to Lamesen, Gender Analysis–Strengthening Winrock Projects*, or other of your choice

## HANDOUTS

- Filters

## FLIP CHART

- Filters (chart and rectangles of colored paper with the following words written to attach: life experiences, culture, respect, self-image, religion, prejudice, biases, background, trust, parents, sex and gender roles, likes and dislikes)

## PROCEDURE

### I. INTRODUCTION (30 minutes)

Explain:

This session will focus on observation skills we need to develop. You have already done lots of observation in the time you have been in this country. Let's see how we can improve the quality of what you learn from observations.

Introduce the video segment:

We are going to watch about five minutes of a video. I would like for you just to watch. After we watch the segment, I'll give you a little time to make a few notes on what you saw.

Start the video selected during trainer preparation at the indicated number.

After the video segment, give participants a few minutes to write down what they saw.

Explain:

Now please pull your chairs together in groups of five or six. Talk with each other about what you saw, and prepare a list on a flip chart to share with the whole group. You will have 15 minutes to complete this task.

After 15 minutes, have all flip charts brought to the front and posted. Have one group read quickly through their list. Have each other group add only items not previously mentioned.

Ask:

In your small group discussions and from these lists, do you find things that you observed and others didn't? or items other people noted that you did not see at all? If so, what were they?

Why do you think this happened? (Note reasons on a blank flip chart.)

Explain:

We will be studying in more depth how our observations are colored, and how we can work to become aware of more things going on around us that perhaps now would go unnoticed.

## II. FILTERS (40 minutes)

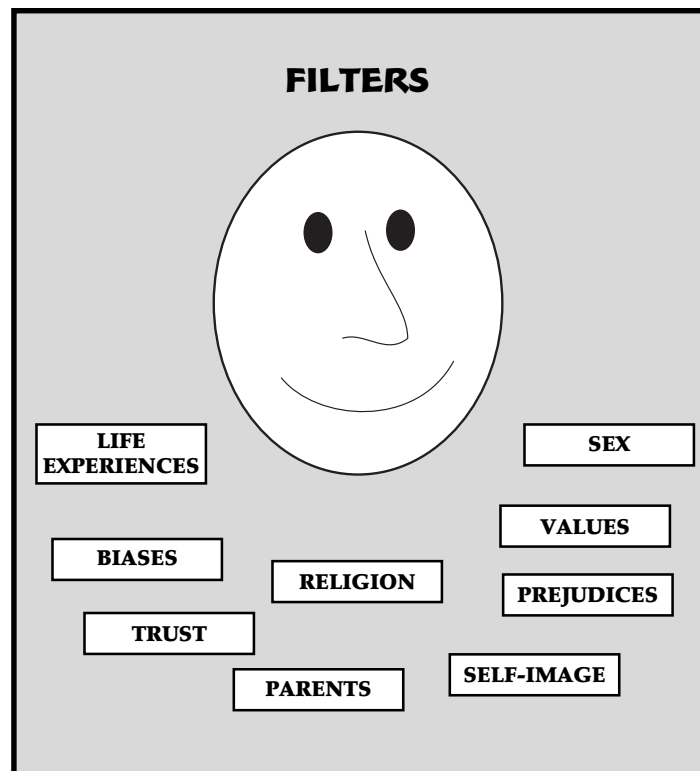
Explain:

As we have just seen, because we are all human beings, all raised differently, we do not all perceive information (receive messages) the same way. For instance, if a car backfires, one man may perceive it as a backfire. Another man may perceive it as a gunshot, because he was in a war. One person may see the killing of a pretty song bird as a cruel act against a pet; another may see it as procuring a meal.

Filters are biases, values, or beliefs that influence the way we see something. They come from the concepts we learned in childhood and have acquired over the years through experience. Filters shape our perceptions of how and what we see, what people say and do, how we choose to participate, and our choices about whom to ask questions of and listen to. Many of our filters are determined by our culture or subculture(s). Others are individual values or tastes.

Filtering is automatic and will go unnoticed unless we make an effort to understand it. It is important to understand our filters because they may cause us to distort information, miss seeing things, or interpret things differently than they were intended. Some filters are very positive, such as believing everyone is trustworthy. In order not to let our filters interfere with our cross-cultural learning and interactions, we need to identify what our filters are. Then, if overly positive, we need to question their situational applicability, or if overly negative, consciously try to overcome them.

Use the flip chart "Filters" and the colored paper with topics on them to give examples. If possible, get examples from the group. Hopefully, they will have examples of some of these points from the exercise in the Introduction to this session. As topics are mentioned, affix the label over part of the face.



Samples of filters are:

- **LIFE EXPERIENCES:** what you have gone through, e.g., the example of the man and the backfire.
- **CULTURE:** the norms with which you were raised, e.g., if a certain culture teaches that cleanliness is next to godliness, a person from that culture may have a very strong reaction to another culture where sanitation standards are not high. That same person may tend to listen more carefully to someone who is neatly dressed as opposed to someone who appears unkempt and sloppy.
- **RESPECT:** whom you are taught to respect and how you respect them, e.g., if a person is taught to respect elders she or he may respond to and listen to someone who is elderly, and show a good deal of courtesy even if what that person says is irrelevant to the listener.
- **SELF-IMAGE:** how you perceive yourself, e.g., a low self-image or too high a self-image may hinder a person's ability to perceive objectively what is going on around him or her.
- **RELIGION:** the norms your religion teaches you, e.g., a person who is taught the golden rule or "do unto others as you would have them do unto you" might approach the world differently from someone who believes "an eye for an eye."
- **PREJUDICE:** the races, ethnic groups, and social groups you are prejudiced for or against, e.g., a person who is taught that a certain race is lazy or crafty might have difficulty dealing objectively with a person of that race.
- **BIASES:** the things you have a predilection for or against, e.g., a person may be biased towards others like herself or himself who are young and take risks, and therefore may easily communicate with these kinds of people. On the other hand, the same person might have a bias against older, more conservative individuals, and thus have more difficulty in viewing or communicating with them objectively.
- **BACKGROUND:** where, how, and with what groups you were raised, e.g., a person from a very small town might have preconceived notions about large towns or people from the city. There are certain barriers established even before communication is initiated.
- **TRUST:** whom you learned to trust as a child. The things you learned affect who you will and will not trust as an adult. For example, you may have learned it is a sign of dishonesty not to look someone in the eyes, or that certain people in certain occupations are untrustworthy.
- **PARENTS:** you were taught many things by your parents, such as how to be polite. You may therefore be drawn to people who demonstrate your idea of politeness (speech, behavior). You might have a strong negative reaction to a person or culture you perceive as rude.
- **SEX AND GENDER ROLES:** the way you react to sexes and gender roles, such as not thinking very highly of a woman who is a mechanical engineer if you think women should work in "gentler occupations" such as teaching. Also, how you perceive the world based on your sex. There is a significant amount of research showing that men and women see things differently.
- **LIKES AND DISLIKES:** if you like something or someone, you will tend to respond favorably, and vice versa.



Ask:

Can you think of other filters? (Add them to the flip chart.)

Distribute the handout “Filters”. Ask participants to review the handout and make notes about any filters they know they have.

### III. BALANCING FOR FILTERS (20 minutes)

Ask:

What are some examples of observations you made in the first exercise that show evidence of filters? (These probably include interpretation or judgments.) List them on a flip chart.

How can we identify statements that show bias, or interpretation? (The words describing the event include judgments or assign values.)

One way to address our filters is to rewrite to eliminate our interpretation. That is, to try and state what happened as objectively as possible. (Work on several of the statements listed until they are objectively stated.)

Example, (take from the video)

Another is to look at our objective statements, and think of **more than one** possible interpretation. This forces us to be conscious of other frames of reference than the one we hold.

Example, (take from the video)

Take the examples given from the earlier exercise and ask participants to think of possible explanations for the behaviors noted.

### IV. SUGGESTED OBSERVATION PRACTICE OPPORTUNITIES

(1-2 hours throughout training)

Planned opportunities to observe, describe, and discuss should be built into the training program as time permits. Learning to become more objective and open with observations is a skill that needs practice and reinforcement. Wherever possible, include focus on gender roles.

Some opportunities may include the following:

#### 1. In the classroom:

Repeat the first exercise with another video segment; have the participants work in pairs to review their observations, rewrite statements to make them objective, and explore several possibilities for the actions they observed.

**2. In their host families:**

- a. Have trainees observe specific times: for example, meal times, other “family” times, mornings before people leave for work or school. (Caution against taking notes if that would be inappropriate.)
- b. Observe activities of specific family members at various times: mother, children of various ages, grandparents.
- c. Observe and describe how typical household chores are done: washing clothes, cleaning house, meal preparation.

**3. In the community:**

- a. Neighborhood streets at different times of day, evening, weekends.
- b. Community places: markets, bus or taxi stands, churches, restaurants, etc.
- c. At a worksite typical for their job with the Peace Corps: who is there, what are the tasks, the time schedule, etc.

**REFERENCES**

1. *Nonformal Education Manual*, pages 57-58, [ICE – M0042].
2. *The New Role of the Volunteer in Development*, pages 106-112, [ICE – T0005].

**NOTES**

# FILTERS

No two people perceive the same external stimuli in the same way. Filters are what make us perceive information differently; we all have them.

Filters are biases, values, or beliefs that influence the way we see something. They come from the concepts we learned in childhood and have acquired over the years through experience. Filters shape our perceptions of how and what we see, what people say and do, how we choose to participate, and our choices about whom to ask questions of and listen to. Many of our filters are determined by our culture or subculture(s). Others are individual values or taste.

Filtering is automatic and will go unnoticed unless we make an effort to understand it. It is important to understand our filters because they may cause us to distort information, miss seeing things, or interpret things differently than they were intended. Some filters are very positive, such as believing everyone is trustworthy. In order not to let our filters interfere with our cross-cultural learning and interactions, we need to identify what our filters are. Then, if overly positive, we need to question their situational applicability, or if overly negative, consciously try to overcome them.

Samples of filters are:

- **LIFE EXPERIENCES:** what you have gone through.
- **CULTURE:** the norms with which you were raised.
- **RESPECT:** who you are taught to respect and how you respect them.
- **SELF-IMAGE:** how you perceive yourself.
- **RELIGION:** the norms your religion teaches you.
- **PREJUDICE:** the races, ethnic groups, social, and other groups you are prejudiced for or against.
- **BIASES:** the things you have a predilection for or against.
- **BACKGROUND:** where, how, and with what groups you were raised.
- **TRUST:** whom you learned to trust and distrust as a child.
- **PARENTS:** the many things you were taught by your parents.
- **SEX AND GENDER ROLES:** the way you react to sexes and gender roles; how you perceive the world based on your sex.
- **LIKES AND DISLIKES:** your personal likes and dislikes.

# SKILLS TRAINING – INTERVIEWING

## RATIONALE

The PACA techniques are successful only to the degree that they can be skillfully used. Skills required are culturally appropriate (1) interviewing and (2) facilitation, and accurate (3) observation. Though interviewing individuals is not part of PACA techniques, the interviewing skills of building rapport, appropriate question forms, and showing respect for the interviewee are just as critical for successful group discussions (which might be considered “group interviews” in some ways) as for individual interviews.

This session, as all of the skills sessions, should be modified and made culturally appropriate by working with language and cross-cultural trainers. The skills should be introduced and practiced in English, if necessary, but also practiced in the host country language as soon as possible.

This design is most appropriate for pre-service training (PST). However, the major points should be reviewed when PACA tools are introduced at any time.

## TIME



2 hours for session

Several additional time periods during training, depending on how much practice is planned (see Section V).

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL 1

To learn culturally appropriate ways to establish rapport and ask questions.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To identify appropriate and inappropriate statements and questions that help to establish rapport with host country people.
2. To use several indirect question structures.
3. To use open-ended questions.
4. To interview several host country people to practice the isolated skills.

### GOAL 2

As able, to conduct short interviews in the host country language.

## SESSION OUTLINE

- I. Introduction (15 minutes)
- II. Essential parts of interviewing (30 minutes)
- III. Question structures (30 minutes)
- IV. Practice in groups (45 minutes)
- V. Individual practice interviews (1-3 hours, throughout training)

## TRAINER PREPARATION



Review this session plan with language instructors and cross-cultural trainers.

1. Modify any parts that are inappropriate in the host culture.
2. Determine culturally appropriate rapport building, language structures, and topics.
3. Determine culturally appropriate ways to practice interviewing skills at the training site or in host families.

Meet with other PST training staff to determine how and when this session, in whole or in part, might be introduced, and when participants can practice the skills. It is recommended that it be introduced very early, even the first week, as it has major cross-cultural implications, and trainees will start asking questions immediately to learn more about their host country.

Consider having several trainers for this session, including at least one language or cross-cultural trainer.

The practice sections, or others you create, can take place throughout training; all of the practice should not directly follow the instruction. As language skills permit, revisit parts of the session, teaching the question structures in the foreign language and doing practice in that language.

Look for as many opportunities as possible within different phases of training (cross-cultural, technical, language, personal safety, etc.) to give practice in interviewing with feedback.

## MATERIALS



- Blank flip chart paper
- Markers
- Tape

## HANDOUTS

- Essential Characteristics of Interviewing
- Question Structures
- Group Task
- Interview Observation Guide

## FLIP CHARTS

- Essential Characteristics of Interviewing
- Question Structures

## PROCEDURE

### I. INTRODUCTION (15 minutes)

Do a quick demonstration.

1. Walk up to one or two Trainees, introduce yourself (name only) and ask a few questions. Use questions that might seem somewhat invasive if asked by a total stranger, such as “Do you have brothers and sisters? What does your father do? Does your mother work?”
2. Ask Trainees who were approached how they felt.
3. Ask Trainees who observed how they felt.
4. List their comments on a flip chart.

Ask:

Why do we ask questions? (Answers may include: get specific information, learn more in general about a country and people, establish a relationship by looking for commonalities.)

Explain:

In this session they will be learning about culturally appropriate ways to establish rapport and ask questions.

### II. ESSENTIAL PARTS OF INTERVIEWING (30 minutes)

State:

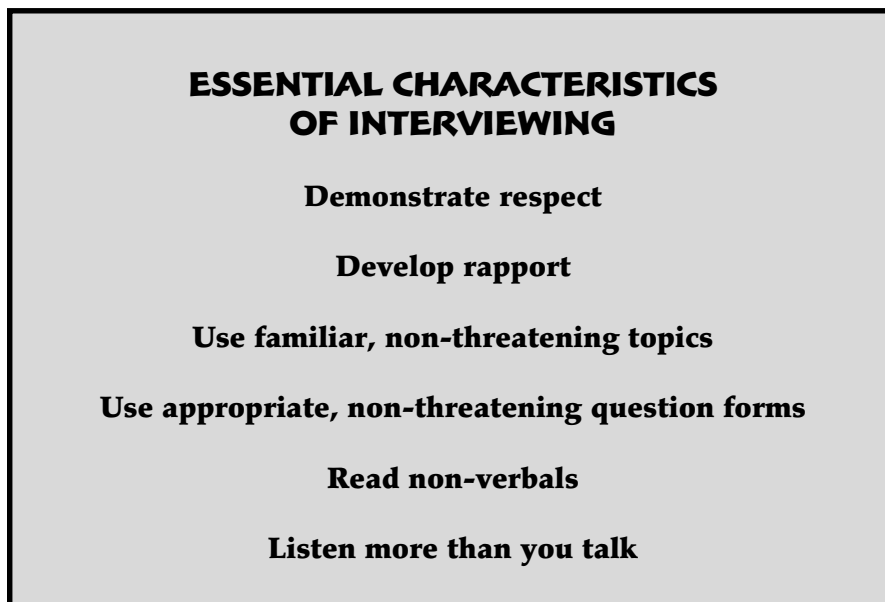
Asking questions, or more formally interviewing people, is the form of communication most basic to getting to know people. We use it constantly as we meet new people. If done well, we can

- establish trust;
- create a human bond; and
- begin a partnership between ourselves and those we came to work with.

Ask:

What are the results of inappropriate question asking? (Ideas should have been noted above after the demonstration.)

The skills we need to develop, or make more appropriate in our new setting, for asking questions and interviewing include the following: (flip chart)



Distribute the handout “Essential Characteristics of Interviewing.” Encourage trainees to follow along and make notes during the discussion of these points.

Review each of the points in a question and answer format, adding appropriate cultural information.

### **1. Demonstrate respect.**

What are some ways you have used to display respect to other people? (Answers may include behavior, dress, use of titles or other polite speech, concern for someone else’s time, etc.)

Are there any specific behaviors or language patterns you have noticed here that are important to showing respect?

(Add others provided by cultural informants.)



## 2. Develop rapport.

How would you develop rapport with someone at home? (Initial questions or statements, behaviors.)

Here you are an outsider, foreigner. It is important to try to dispel all false or misinterpretable expectations which that status might bring. What are the attitudes towards foreigners here? Do they vary according to where in the country you are? By social classes, gender, age, or ethnic groups?

What are ways to begin to develop rapport through behavior, conversation, and questions that are non-threatening?

(Add notes from cultural informants.)



## 3. Use familiar, non-threatening topics.

In our demonstration, what made you uncomfortable about the topics?

What might have been more appropriate topics for you (for a relative stranger) to ask?

The topics that are familiar and non-threatening differ by cultures and their particular history. Why do you think most Americans begin with the question “What do you do?” (Culturally for most Americans, what one does is how one is known, as opposed to what family they are from. This probably evolved out of a combination of the mobility of most Americans—their family would be unknown—and a conscious effort by many to value someone by their own efforts as opposed to who they are—egalitarianism rather than classism.)

If we need to begin the interview with topics that people enjoy talking about and which neither pose a threat nor break an acceptable cultural level of intimacy, we need to identify those in this cultural context.

(Add appropriate notes below.)





#### 4. Use appropriate, non-threatening question forms.

Not all people are comfortable with personal questions, such as “What do you think about the health care in this town?” etc. A less personal question form may be more appropriate, such as “What are people saying about the health care in this town?”

Does the form of a question make a difference to you? Does it depend on the topic?

We will spend much more time on this in the next part of the session.

(Add additional notes below.)



#### 5. Read non-verbals.

In our demonstration, were there any non-verbals that the interviewer might have picked up?

What examples of non-verbals have you experienced that gave you a clear message during a conversation or an interview? (Expressions of boredom, uncomfortableness with questions, etc.)

(Add notes on specific non-verbals in this culture that trainees may not recognize.)



**6. Listen more than you talk.**

How do you feel about silence?

What can you do to keep from “jumping in” with another question when your interviewees may just need some time to think and answer?

(Add any notes on tolerance for silence in this culture.)

**III. QUESTION STRUCTURES** (30 minutes)

Introduce the topic with the flip chart:

### QUESTION STRUCTURES

Closed questions: (yes or no)

Do you like to eat goat?

Do you use the health clinic?

Either/or questions:

Do women... or do they... ?

Is the clinic free or is there a fee?

Open questions: (why, what, when, where, how)

What are some foods you like to eat?

When might you take your children to the health clinic?

Personal question forms:

Do you throw your trash in the river?

How many children do you have?

Generalized question forms:

Do people throw trash in the river?

How many children do most families have?

Present culturally appropriate question formats, language structures, and when and where they each might be appropriately used, if ever. Though the Trainees may need to do this in English, have them learn somewhat equivalent structures, if possible, so that they practice the correct patterns.

Discuss question sequencing:

1. Sometimes starting with yes or no questions is a good way to start a discussion, followed by open questions.
2. If a discussion starts to falter, yes or no questions and either/or questions are a way to get people talking again and summarizing what perspectives have been presented.
3. Sometimes open ended questions can be vague and difficult to answer. It may be necessary to move back to more closed questions.

(Add other notes.)



#### IV. PRACTICE IN GROUPS (45 minutes)

Explain:

To practice what we've been learning, you will work in small groups of three or four persons.

Form that size groups and sit together.

After they have moved, distribute the handout "Group Task", and review it with them.

Together you will do the following:

#### **GROUP TASK**

1. Select a topic you think would be interesting and appropriate (in the host country's view) for you to ask about.
2. Determine who you might interview about that topic.
3. Prepare an outline of how you would conduct the interview about this topic, planning each step from the list of essential characteristics.
4. Write your questions to conform with cultural norms. Prepare no more than eight questions.

You will have 15 minutes to prepare.

Trainers should circulate, keeping groups on task, and giving help if necessary. Host country staff can be particularly helpful in determining cultural appropriateness of what Trainees are planning.

After 15 minutes, either have pairs of groups present to each other, or if there are less than five groups, have each group present to all of the rest. They should describe their interview situation and go through the points, including reading their questions.

Discussion of the presentations should focus on how well they addressed the essential characteristics, as well as on the appropriateness of the questions.

## V. INDIVIDUAL PRACTICE INTERVIEWS (Suggested Methods and Opportunities)

(1-3 hours, over time)

Opportunities for practice using appropriate behavior, language, and topics for interviewing should be provided throughout training. Trainees need to prepare for practice interviews, have their preparation reviewed, and their interviews debriefed, so that they are learning and improving with each experience. An “Interview Observation Guide” handout is provided for Trainee feedback on interview practice.

As Trainees are able, they should practice in the language of the host culture.

Some suggested interview situations are the following:

1. In the classroom setting, practice interviews in trios: one interviewer, one interviewee, and one observer. The observer uses the “Interview Observation Guide” handout. At the end of each interview, the observer gives feedback from the form and then gives the interviewer the form. The three change roles and repeat the exercise until each person has had a chance to interview.
2. Practice interviews with host national training staff.
3. Practice interviews with host family members.
4. Practice interviews related to technical area with relevant person.

## REFERENCES



1. *Nonformal Education Manual*, pages 59-64, [ICE – M0042].

## NOTES



# ESSENTIAL CHARACTERISTICS OF INTERVIEWING

**Demonstrate respect**

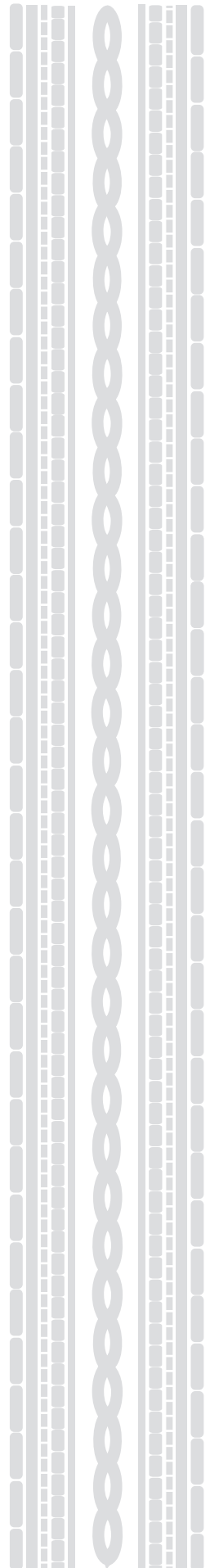
**Develop rapport**

**Use familiar, non-threatening topics**

**Use appropriate, non-threatening question forms**

**Read non-verbals**

**Listen more than you talk**



## QUESTION STRUCTURES

Closed questions: (yes or no)

Do you like to eat goat?

Do you use the health clinic?

Either/or questions:

Do women... or do they... ?

Is the clinic free or is there a fee?

Open questions: (why, what, when, where, how)

What are some foods you like to eat?

When might you take your children to the health clinic?

Personal question forms:

Do you throw *your* trash in the river?

How many children do *you* have?

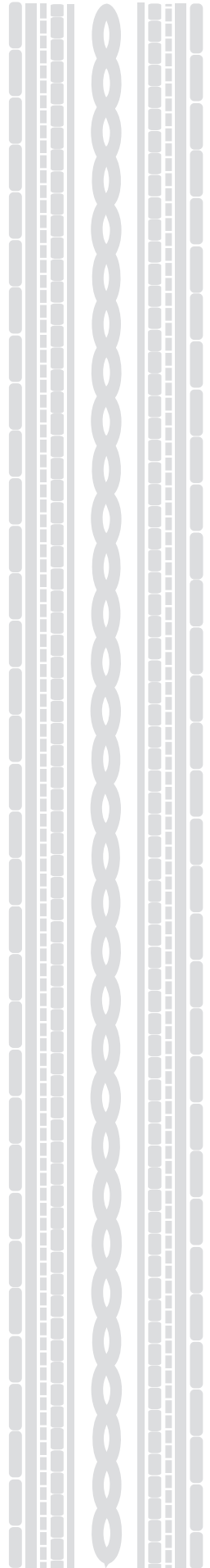
Generalized question forms:

Do *people* throw trash in the river?

How many children do *most families* have?

## GROUP TASK

1. Select a topic you think would be interesting and appropriate (in the host country's view) for you to ask about.
2. Determine who you might interview about that topic.
3. Prepare an outline of how you would conduct the interview about this topic, planning each step from the list of essential characteristics.
4. Write your questions to conform with cultural norms. Prepare no more than eight questions.



# INTERVIEW OBSERVATION GUIDE

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**Interviewer:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Observer:** \_\_\_\_\_

Make specific notes (e.g., specific behaviors, questions) related to each topic:

**Rapport:**

**Familiar, non-threatening topics:**

**Question forms:**

**Attention to non-verbals:**

**Listening:**

**Evidence of respect:**



# SKILLS PRACTICE – FACILITATION

## RATIONALE

For Peace Corps Volunteers to be effective, they must be able to communicate with their host country colleagues and community, to establish rapport and trust, and to listen to what people need and want to do for themselves. To be able to facilitate discussions among groups of people is a critical skill; it is the key to using PACA methodologies effectively.

Facilitation is a skill which encourages the members of a group to express and discuss their own ideas. It requires the use of questions that elicit ideas, probe, and encourage everyone to participate and express views. It also requires paraphrasing and summarizing. It demands attention to the process of the group, including encouraging quiet and reticent people, and controlling dominant or disruptive participants. It builds on the skills that were introduced and practiced in the interviewing session.

This session, as all of the skills sessions, should be modified and made culturally appropriate by working with language and cross-cultural trainers. The skills should be introduced and practiced in English, if necessary, but also practiced in the host country language as soon as possible.

This design is most appropriate for pre-service training (PST). However, the major points should be reviewed when PACA tools are introduced at any time.

## TIME



2 hours

Several additional time periods, depending on how much practice is planned (see Section VII).

## GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

### GOAL 1

To learn how to facilitate discussions.

### OBJECTIVES

1. To identify differences or similarities between interviewing and facilitating.
2. To use several phrases that redirect, verify, and summarize ideas raised in a group discussion.
3. To identify types of difficult (non-participating) members of a group and strategies for working with them.
4. To facilitate a discussion among a group of adults.

## GOAL 2

As able, to facilitate short group discussions in the host country language.

## SESSION OUTLINE

- I. Introduction (10 minutes)
- II. The Facilitator's Role (20 minutes)
- III. Language Patterns (10 minutes)
- IV. Practice (30 minutes)
- V. Working with Difficult Group Members (20 minutes)
- VI. Practice Working with Difficult Group Members (30 minutes)
- VII. Other Practice Suggestions and Opportunities (4-6 hours, spread out during training)

## TRAINER PREPARATION



Review this session plan with language instructors and cross-cultural trainers.

1. Modify any parts that are inappropriate in the host culture.
2. Determine culturally appropriate rapport building, language structures, and explanations for and ways of handling difficult members of a group.
3. Determine culturally appropriate ways to practice facilitation skills at the training site or with host families.

Meet with other PST training staff to determine how and when this session, in whole or in part, might be introduced, and when participants can practice the skills. It should follow the Skills Practice – Interviewing session as it builds on those skills.

If possible, have a host country trainer lead or assist with this session. Every aspect of the material needs to be culturally appropriate, and, as questions arise, a host country informant is the best source of information.

Two practice sections are included in the session. The first is to practice language forms and keep the conversation moving within the group. The second is to practice dealing with difficult group members. Other practice suggestions, or ones you create, can take place throughout training. Look for as many opportunities as possible within different phases of training (cross-cultural, technical, language, personal safety, etc.) to give practice in facilitating. For example, let Trainees take turns conducting discussions following small group work and field work, employing facilitation skills.

As language skills permit, revisit parts of the session, teaching the language patterns in the host country language and doing the practice in that language.

## MATERIALS



- Blank flip chart paper
- Markers
- Tape

## HANDOUTS

- Facilitation
- Key Steps in Facilitating a Group
- Facilitation Observation Guide
- Working with Difficult Group Members

## FLIP CHARTS

- Differences between Leading and Facilitating a Discussion
- Language Patterns
- Key Steps in Facilitating a Group

## PROCEDURE

### I. INTRODUCTION (10 minutes)

Explain:

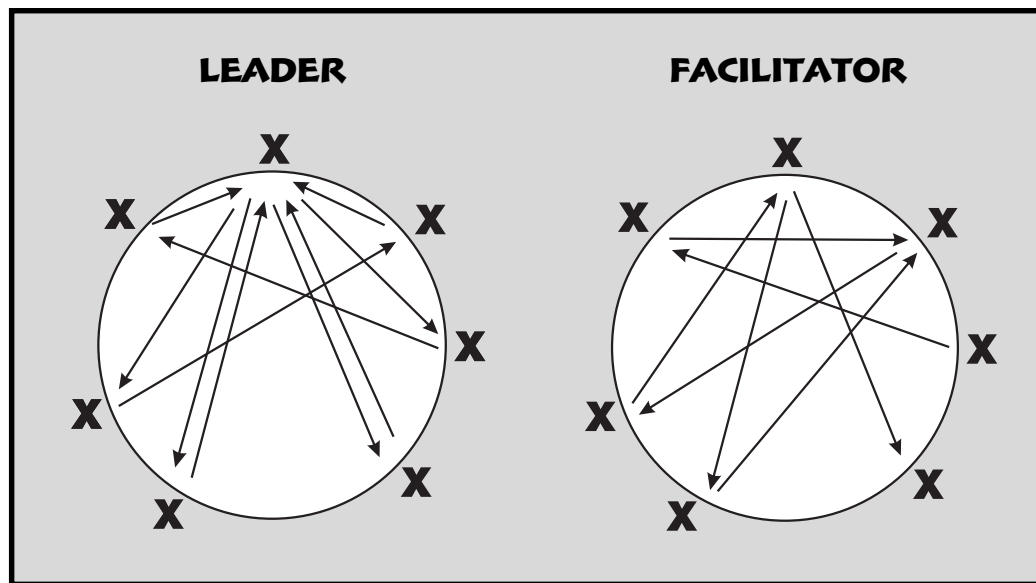
In this session we are going to discuss and work on a very important skill: facilitation.

What does the word “facilitate” bring to your mind? (List on blank flip chart.)

Being able to facilitate discussions will be an important skill for you to have as you begin to work with your community and colleagues. In this session, we will further define how we use the term, why we employ this methodology, and begin to learn how to do it.

### II. THE FACILITATOR’S ROLE (20-30 minutes)

Use the flip chart “Differences between Leading and Facilitating a Discussion” and discuss what each diagram implies and what each leader role would be useful for.



Possible ideas generated by the group may be:

**Leader-centered:**

- Introduce new ideas
- Lead through series of steps
- Test knowledge
- Review activity

**Facilitator:**

- Help group process own ideas
- Knowledge resides in group
- Manage process, not content
- Encourages all to participate

Ask:

Have any of you had experiences with facilitating group discussions? What were the situations?

When would you lead a group and when would you facilitate?

Explain:

In PACA, both types of group leader styles are used. The leader may direct the group through a series of steps to arrive at information, such as creating a map or a calendar. Then the role changes and a facilitation style is employed because the group has the knowledge; the facilitator helps them discuss it, make comparisons, and draw conclusions.

Distribute the handout "Facilitation" and review the roles the facilitator takes.

**III. LANGUAGE PATTERNS (10 minutes)**

Use the flip chart "Language Patterns", the handout "Facilitation", and the notes below to discuss the types of questions and phrases that facilitators use.

## LANGUAGE PATTERNS

### 1. Question asking

Open ended: Can you give some examples of ...?

Probing: Will you explain a little more about that?

Moving to other participants: Who has other ideas about this?

Encouraging other points of view: Can anyone provide another point of view about this?

Summarizing: Will someone summarize the points presented so far?

### 2. Paraphrasing

Paraphrase starters:

What I heard you say was.... Is that correct?

I think you said that.... Is that right?

It seems to me your point of view is.... Is that stated correctly?

You differ from (Mary) in that you think.... Is that right?

### 3. Summarizing

Starter phrases for summaries:

If I understand, you feel this way about the situation.

There seem to be the following points of view about this.

We seem to have presented the following issues so far.

I think we agree on this decision: what we are saying is that we....

### 1. Question asking

Facilitators use questions to help group members bring out relevant information, clarify points of view, summarize information, and draw conclusions.

### 2. Paraphrasing

By paraphrasing, the facilitator demonstrates that she or he understands what participants have said and may clarify issues. The process of paraphrasing is much like catching a ball and throwing it back. It requires very careful listening.

### 3. Summarizing

The purpose of summarizing is to:

- a. pull important ideas, facts, or information together;
- b. establish a basis for further discussion or make a transition;
- c. review progress; or
- d. check for clarity or agreement.

Summarizing requires careful listening as it requires organization and systematic reporting back of information expressed. Summarized information ensures that everyone is clear about what transpired in that portion of the discussion. Whenever possible, encourage someone in the group to do the summarizing.

Ask:

How is facilitating different from interviewing? (Some suggestions may include the following:)

**Facilitating:**

Group  
Less directed questions  
Ideas represent group

**Interviewing:**

Individuals (usually)  
More specific questions  
Ideas or opinions of one person

What are some benefits of group discussion when trying to understand other people's reality? problems?

For you?

For the group?

**IV. PRACTICE** (30 minutes)

Post flip chart and distribute the handout "Key Steps in Facilitating a Group." Go through the steps.



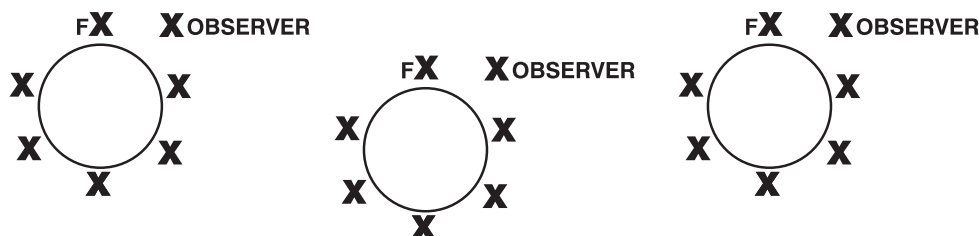
Explain that they will have a chance to participate in a facilitated discussion.

For the practice, create groups of approximately five participants plus one facilitator and one observer. Ask the participants to divide themselves into groups of seven. Have them pull their chairs together. Ask each group to identify one facilitator and one observer.

Give the facilitators a topic that the groups can easily discuss, such as ways to improve the training site. Let them think through how they will begin.

Ask the observers to meet you at one side of the room. Give them each a copy of the handout "Facilitation Observation Guide." Go through it with them. Ask them to sit just outside of their group, and make notes as the discussion proceeds. At the end they will lead a discussion with the group about the process, not the content.

The groups will look like the following:



Once the observers are in place, ask the facilitators to begin. After 10 minutes, ask the facilitators to pull the discussion to a close. Then have observers join their groups and discuss how the facilitation met its purpose.

As a total group, discuss what went well and what did not. Ask:

What things were difficult for the facilitators?

How can those things be addressed?

Thank the group and take a break, or end the session here and begin another session with Step V.

## V. WORKING WITH DIFFICULT GROUP MEMBERS (20 minutes)

Distribute and review the handout "Working with Difficult Group Members." If possible, have a host country trainer in this part of the session to be able to answer questions.

## VI. PRACTICE WORKING WITH DIFFICULT GROUP MEMBERS (30 minutes)

Repeat the practice set-up from Part IV, using a different discussion question, different facilitators, and different observers. Ask facilitators and observers to leave the room to prepare for a few minutes. When they are gone, assign one or two specific roles to members of each group: someone who is not willing to participate, a dominant or disruptive person.

Conduct the practice with 10 minutes for discussion, 10 minutes of observer-led debriefing, and 10 minutes of general discussion.

Ask one or more participants to summarize the major points about facilitating, including the roles the facilitator plays, important language structures, and rules for dealing with difficult participants.

## VII. OTHER PRACTICE SUGGESTIONS AND POSSIBILITIES

(4-6 hours spread throughout training)

Opportunities for practice using appropriate facilitation behavior and language should be provided throughout training. In each case, the Trainees need to prepare for their roles, have an observer, and receive feedback so that they are learning and improving with each experience.

As they are able, Trainees should practice in the language of the host culture.

Some suggestions for opportunities include:

1. In the classroom setting:
  - Weekly Trainee evaluation and recommendations during training.
  - Language staff or other trainers discussing site, making group decisions.
2. With their host families:
  - Group discussions about culturally appropriate topics, such as the meaning and celebration of holidays.
3. During site visits:
  - Group discussion with school children about important things in their lives, at school, etc.

## REFERENCES



1. *Nonformal Education Manual*, pages 65-71, [ICE – M0042].
2. *How to Make Meetings Work*, pages 88-124, [ICE – CD021].

## NOTES





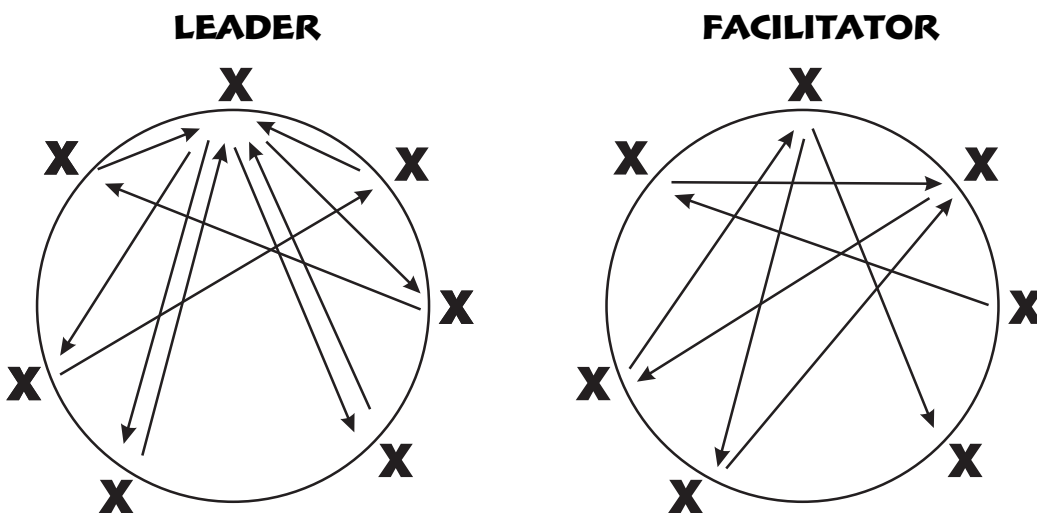
## FACILITATION

Facilitation of a group discussion is a technique that encourages the group to express and discuss their own ideas. The group is the reservoir of knowledge and creativity; the facilitator “serves” the group by building trust, remaining neutral, and not evaluating or contributing her or his own ideas. The role of the facilitator is to encourage the discussion, help clarify when necessary, and assist the group in summarizing their ideas. The facilitator is concerned about the process—what is going on in the group; he or she does not control the content.

Facilitation requires skills in asking questions, paraphrasing, and summarizing. It also demands careful attention to what is happening in the group. The facilitator may need to encourage quiet people, move the conversation away from dominant persons, and deal with disruptive persons.

There is not a prescription for good facilitation. There are rules and descriptions. Skills can be learned and practiced. Then each situation depends on the facilitator’s personality, the situation, and the nature of the people in the group.

The group should do 95 percent of the talking. Facilitators need to be aware of how much they talk. They should not be dominating the conversation, or be a focal point of the conversation. The diagrams below show the difference between controlling and facilitating a conversation.



Facilitators need to tolerate silence. Silence can mean various things: lack of understanding of a question or of the process, confusion, thinking or reflecting, or needing time to translate ideas and language.

Facilitators need to encourage participation by all group members.

“In community gatherings the ‘expectation theory’ often sabotages participation. That is, the poor and uneducated go to meetings with the expectation that the professionals (teachers, principals, city planners, government officials) and other well-educated people will naturally display their verbal prowess and dominate the meeting. Likewise, the latter will expect the minority group to be passive and listen.

It becomes a self-fulfilling prophecy. The same can happen when people from different levels of a hierarchical organization get together.

“Skillful facilitation can greatly broaden the participation in these situations. As the process guide, you [the facilitator] can hold back the highly verbal and aggressive people while you encourage responses from the rest. At first, it’s like pulling teeth, but after a while people will feel more at ease and less shy. What’s more important, as their self-confidence increases, people get used to the reality of participating. Then they begin to expect and demand it.”

from *How to Make Meetings Work*, pages 101-102.

Facilitators need to consider how the group views them. Often, non-verbal behaviors—such as nodding the head negatively, or gesturing toward a point one supports—shows the group the facilitator’s point of view, or what he or she expects from the group.

Specific verbal skills that facilitators need are the following:

### 1. Question asking

Facilitators use questions to help group members bring out relevant information, clarify points of view, summarize information, and draw conclusions. These types of questions are particularly useful:

Open ended: Can you give some examples of .... ?

Probing: Will you explain a little more about that?

Moving to other participants: Who has other ideas about this?

Encouraging other views: Can anyone provide another point of view about this?

Summarizing: Will someone summarize the points presented so far?

### 2. Paraphrasing

By paraphrasing, the facilitator demonstrates that she or he understands what participants have said and may clarify issues. The process of paraphrasing is much like catching a ball and throwing it back. It requires very careful listening.

Paraphrase starters:

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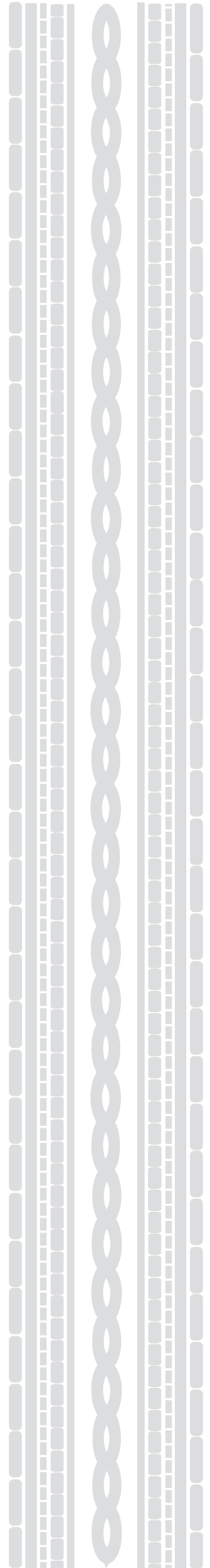
Starter phrases for summaries:

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# KEY STEPS IN FACILITATING A GROUP

**Arrival of group  
(Build rapport)**

**Introductions  
(Demonstration of respect)**

**Facilitation of Discussion**

**Summarizing**

**Closure**

# FACILITATION OBSERVATION GUIDE

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Facilitator: \_\_\_\_\_

Observer: \_\_\_\_\_

## I. ARRIVAL

- Has seating in circular or other informal configuration.
- Greets people as they enter; develops rapport.

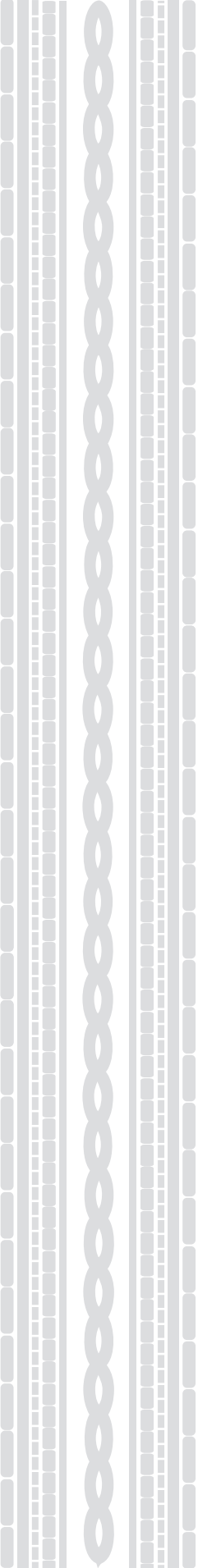
## II. INTRODUCTION

- Formally greets group, thanks them for coming.
- Introduces self.
- Explains purpose of meeting.
- Has participants introduce themselves.

## III. DISCUSSION

- Reinforces that group has knowledge and he or she is there to help them.
- Begins discussion with opening question or statement.
- Uses open, probing, redirecting questions. (List specific examples.)

(continued)

- 
- Paraphrases. (List specific examples.)
  
  - Encourages quiet members. (List specific examples.)
  
  - Controls dominant members in culturally appropriate ways. (List examples.)
  
  - Handles other difficult participants while maintaining their self-esteem. (List examples.)

#### **IV. PULLS DISCUSSION TO CLOSE**

- Summarizes, or has participants summarize.
- Asks participants the value of what was done.

#### **V. CLOSURE**

- Indicates next meeting time and date, or next steps.
- Thanks participants.

Modified from *Promoting Powerful People*,  
Peace Corps, USAID, and the Academy for Educational Development.

# WORKING WITH DIFFICULT GROUP MEMBERS

Ideally, in a discussion all group members participate equally. Rarely does the ideal happen. The term “difficult” is used to indicate group members that either do not participate or have disruptive or controlling behaviors. It is the facilitator’s role to encourage active and equal participation, working to keep disruptive or controlling behaviors in check so that they do not prevent the group from completing its task(s).

Below are some general guidelines for facilitators to keep in mind as they encounter difficult participants:

**1. Keep in mind the goal:**

- To eliminate or minimize the behavior so that it does not continue to disrupt the group process or isolate some members from participating.

**2. Diagnose accurately:** take time to think through

- What is the ‘problem’ behavior?
- Why is it happening?

**3. Wait to respond.**

- Give yourself time to assess the situation carefully.
- Give the person a chance to change his or her behavior.
- Give the group a chance to control the behavior themselves.

**4. Care about everyone in the group.**

- Everyone has needs and should be respected.
- Try to address all group members according to what they need.
- Maintain the self-esteem of the person causing the problem by intervening carefully and appropriately.

**5. Take appropriate action and follow-up:**

- Identify possible alternatives.
- Select best alternative to minimize disruption while maintaining everyone’s self-esteem.

See the following page for descriptions of behaviors and potential actions to alleviate problems.

<b>TYPE OF BEHAVIOR</b>	<b>POSSIBLE REASONS</b>	<b>POSSIBLE ACTION OF FACILITATOR</b>
<p>Domineering Controlling</p>	<p>Eager Well-informed Formal or informal leader in community</p>	<p>Keep silent; let group respond Recognize contribution and redirect to someone else Avoid looking directly at person Establish a procedure whereby everyone contributes one idea before group discusses Ask person to summarize ideas so others can contribute</p>
<p>Argumentative Uncooperative</p>	<p>Combative personality Hidden agenda Personally upset by some other situation Threatened Forced participation</p>	<p>Find areas of agreement Direct conversation away from person Let group handle him or her Set and reinforce rule that all ideas are acceptable</p>
<p>Silent</p>	<p>Timid, insecure Never given a voice (due to age, gender, social class, ethnic group) Thinking about content Insecure about language or needing to translate Uninterested Angry, hostile</p>	<p>Encourage with eye contact or invitation to speak Speak to privately to find what thinking or feeling Use ice breakers to make environment more comfortable Direct questions to this person when he or she has particular expertise or shows non-verbal willingness to speak</p>
<p>Side conversationalists</p>	<p>Need to clarify, maybe through translation Not interested in discussion Culturally appropriate</p>	<p>Set guidelines at beginning of meeting Stop meeting and say everyone needs to hear everything Address needs for translation beforehand Make sure points are clarified throughout discussion</p>