

# What Should I Expect From The Facilitator(s)?

## In facilitation, the parties can:

- ▶ Share or obtain information that is important to the working relationship.
- ▶ Identify and clarify miscommunications and misunderstandings.
- ▶ Develop processes for group interactions that will enhance performance.
- ▶ Retain the right to pursue other processes such as the EEO complaint process, negotiated or administrative grievance procedure to address issues in dispute.

## What Is The Facilitator's Role?

The facilitator is trained and experienced in active listening and managing conflict.

### Facilitators:

- ▶ Provide structure for effective discussions and meetings.
- ▶ Ease group interactions and assist with the flow of information and ideas.
- ▶ Focus on procedural assistance and remain impartial to the topics under discussion.
- ▶ Assist parties in working through strained relationships, long-standing conflict, distrust, and emotional communications.
- ▶ Hold information in confidence unless disclosure is required by law or authorized by the parties.

# How Can I Obtain a Facilitator?

A Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA) facilitator may be requested through your local ADR Coordinator/EEO Manager or the Workplace ADR Program. Alternatively, non-VA facilitators may be obtained through local Sharing Neutrals Programs. Facilitation may be requested at any time by any VA employee or manager to address communication or relationship problems in the workplace.

For more information on facilitation contact:

- ▶ Local ADR Coordinators/EEO Program Managers
- ▶ Workplace ADR Program **202-501-2800**
- ▶ Local bargaining unit

## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS

### ADR Coordinator Name

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### Facility Location

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### Phone

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### Fax

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### Email

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## DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS



OFFICE OF RESOLUTION  
MANAGEMENT (ORM)



# Facilitation

*Improving  
Communication  
Between Individuals  
and Groups*

*It Works!*

# What Is Facilitation?

## Facilitation is:

Facilitation is an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process less formal than mediation. Facilitation involves a neutral third party, referred to as a facilitator, to assist employees, managers, and groups exchange information, obtain answers to questions, discuss decision-making, and otherwise support efficient and effective communication.

The ultimate goal of facilitation is to open lines of communication; thereby promoting awareness and understanding and preventing/resolving disputes. Facilitation can involve a face-to-face meeting(s) between individuals or groups or it can merely involve relaying information through the facilitator.

## Why Should I Consider Facilitation?

Facilitation should be considered when individuals or groups are unable to communicate effectively; thereby adversely affecting the mission of the organization. Facilitation encourages and assists with communication in order to complete and accomplish tasks or objectives more efficiently.

# When Is Facilitation Recommended?

## Facilitation is recommended when:

- ▶ An employee/manager is having difficulty communicating with another employee/manager; i.e., conversations lead to raised voices, unproductive or incomplete outcomes, misunderstandings, or lines of communication have shut down.
- ▶ A conversation/meeting needs to take place about a matter where one or both parties fear the discussion could become emotional or unproductive.
- ▶ Something has occurred in the workplace leading to gossip, rumors, suspicions and an employee/manager wants to initiate a conversation to clear up the matter.
- ▶ A question needs to be asked and answered but the employee/manager is concerned about saying anything without another person present.
- ▶ A new employee/manager has joined a group and changes are about to be initiated and there is concern about how the changes will be received.
- ▶ Morale is low within a team and there is interest in having a discussion about the situation and developing ways to improve the environment.

## Facilitation is not recommended when:

- ▶ The individuals or group members want someone to decide right or wrong.
- ▶ The issues causing the conflict involve allegations of waste, fraud, patient abuse, or criminal activity.

# How Does The Facilitation Process Work?

## How Does Facilitation Compare With Mediation?

Facilitation and mediation both involve a neutral third party. In neither process does the neutral party exercise decision-making power. Facilitation can address issues affecting both individuals and groups. Mediation is designed mainly to address disputes between two parties.

Facilitation:	Mediation:
▶ No formal steps or stages.	▶ Formal steps and stages.
▶ Keeps conversations/meetings on track and allows everyone to be heard.	▶ Structured process designed to identify issues and solve problems.
▶ Opportunity to talk about something that has or is about to happen and prevent conflict from escalating.	▶ Opportunity to talk about the past and bring closure to a dispute.
▶ May or may not involve face to face discussion.	▶ Face to face session with the mediator.
▶ Goal is to improve communication and understanding.	▶ Goal is to reach a mutually acceptable outcome to a dispute.