

Ensure Good Preparation of all Participants

Step 1

Welcome and introduction: *(N.B.—Italics and / are options and when in (brackets) are explanation)*

“Welcome, as you know my name is and I have been asked to facilitate this meeting. *(Introduce participants if this is necessary).*”

“I have spoken to all of you about the incident *(briefly describe what happened)* and remind you that you are here to discuss what has happened, not the character of anyone involved. I will invite you all to talk about how you and others may have been *affected / harmed / hurt* by what has *happened / is happening*. This will help everyone understand what needs to be done to help *repair the harm caused / make things right.*”

FAIR
RESPECT
ENGAGE
SAFE
HONEST

Step 2

Start with most affected/harmed person *(theme in views when not present)*:

“I would like to start by asking to talk about his/her/their experience(s) which has led up to us being here today”

“Tell us what happened and how you became involved?” *or* “What did you do?” *or* “How did you react when you heard what had happened?”

“What happened then?” *(repeating as necessary to fully unfold their story)*

“What were you thinking about at the time?”

“What have your thoughts been since?”

“How has this incident affected you and others?”

“What has been the *hardest / worst* thing for you?”

Step 3

NOW ASK ALL PARTICIPANTS IN TURN THE ABOVE QUESTIONS

In turn, invite all participants (including family and support people) to speak asking the above questions *(theme in views when not present)*.

Step 4

Now say to all participants:

“You have all had the opportunity to speak and listen to others. You have heard how people have been affected by what has happened and the harm that has been caused. Is there anything anyone wants to say at this stage?”

“Do you all see that harm has been caused?”

“Do you all think something needs to be done to repair the harm done?”

Step 5

Address the whole group and seek individual responses:

“What would you like to see come out of today's meeting?”

(where appropriate, record any agreement made)

Step 6

Return to any identified wrongdoer/s (otherwise address the whole group) to comment as any outcomes are suggested and agreement formed:

“What do you *think / feel* about what has been said?”

Optional questions: “Would you do anything differently now?” / “What other choices could you have made?” / “What have you learned from this meeting?”

(Summarise any agreement made)

Step 7

Give participants the opportunity to express positive outcomes:

“What do you think about what has happened here today?”

Step 8

Final invitations to speak—ask all:

“Before I close the meeting, is there anything else anyone wants to say or ask.”

Step 9

Closing the meeting:

“Thank you for participating in this meeting. I hope your time together has helped you deal with this matter.”

Step 10

Reintegration and refreshments after the conference:

Invite all participants to stay for refreshments and talk informally while you prepare the agreement/conclude paperwork etc.

Facilitators Guide - Explanatory Notes

Failing to Plan is Planning to Fail - Ensure Good Preparation

STEP 1:

If necessary introduce each participant and indicate their relationship to one another and the reason why they are taking part or let them introduce themselves.

Consider using the following in your own words as appropriate to the meeting you are facilitating:

"This is an informal process which will attempt to deal with the issues raised."

"I will not keep transcripts or other records and any notes taken to assist me during the meeting will be destroyed at the end of it."

"Prior to commencing the meeting, to avoid disturbance, I want to ask you to check that pagers and phones are switched off please."

"All of you have been directly or indirectly affected. I will remind you that you are here voluntarily and at any time we can either take a break or call a halt to it."

Or - Where the attendance of the wrongdoer/s is mandatory, say to them:

"I must tell you that you do not have to participate in this conference and are free to leave at any time, as is anyone else. If you do leave, the matter may be: (use as appropriate) referred to court / dealt with under the relevant discipline policy / handled in another way. Do you understand?"

"I would ask that anything discussed here remains within this room and that all of you respect the confidential and personal nature of this group."

"You will each get the opportunity to speak and be listened to by others. I ask that you offer the same respect when others are speaking. Is that fair?"

STEPS 2 & 3:

You can prompt conversation at any time by asking any of the participants: "What do you think / feel about what has just been said?" after a participant has spoken. Using this approach will ensure that you avoid asking inappropriate questions which could affect your neutrality.

ALLOW ALL PARTICIPANTS TIME, REMEMBER THIS IS THEIR CONFERENCE

Consider using the following in your own words as appropriate to the meeting you are facilitating:

When all questions, asked by facilitator and/or other participants have been answered:

"Thank you for what you have told us, I will come back to you again to give you an opportunity to respond to what is said by others.

Where Harmed /Affected Persons are not present:

If a person harmed /affected is not present, theme in their views covering all the questions saying:

"I have spoken to (use their name) who has been harmed/affected and they have asked me to say:"

STEP 4:

Consider using: "It is important we now consider what needs to happen to repair some of the harm done".

STEPS 5 & 6

Where Harmed/Affected persons not present:

"I have spoken to the person(s) harmed/affected..... (name(s) and they have told me"

(Theme in what they would like to see come out of the meeting at this point).

Where appropriate: as suggestions are made ask any of the Participants: - "**Is that fair**"

Participants must be given space and time to discuss what they want to see come out of the conference. All can communicate with each other and engage with person(s) who may have caused harm. From these discussions the basis of an agreement can be formed

Persons who caused harm may agree to undertake actions to repair the harm without any action or comment from the facilitator.

As any agreement develops, clarify each item and make any written document as specific as possible, including details, deadlines, which participants have taken responsibility for what actions and follow up arrangements. Where complex it may prove useful to have an assistant write all the comments on a flip chart and after all comments have been written down, give the group the opportunity to prioritise them. (First steps towards an action plan to solve the problem in the future).

N.B. WRITTEN AGREEMENT IS NOT ALWAYS NECESSARY OR APPROPRIATE.

If any person(s) who appear to have caused harm have not commented on or agreed to any actions to repair the harm the facilitator should say to them: "**You have heard what everybody has said. What do you think is the right and fair thing to do to repair the harm?**" Wait for reply.

Ask the other participants to comment on what has been said, communicate together and engage **with the person(s) who caused harm.**

The facilitator needs to be aware that any agreement is achievable and appropriate.

As you sense that the agreement is drawing to a close, **where applicable** say to the participants: - "**Before I prepare the written agreement, I'd like to make sure that I have accurately recorded what has been decided**". Read the items aloud and look to the participants for acknowledgement. Make any necessary corrections.

STEPS 7 & 8:

ALLOW ALL PARTICIPANTS SUFFICIENT TIME TO COMMENT AND COMMUNICATE TOGETHER IN RESPONSE TO EACH OF THE QUESTIONS AT STEPS 7 & 8, ENSURING YOU GET ALL RESPONSES TO THE FIRST, BEFORE ASKING THE SECOND QUESTION

STEP 9:

Where applicable: The facilitator now writes up the details (If a flipchart was used, e.g. Community Problem Solving Conferences, the facilitator or their assistant writes up the details from the flip chart) and gives a copy to all participants. If too complex, undertake to get the details typed and then send copies to all participants.

STEP 10:

ALLOW PARTICIPANTS AMPLE TIME TO HAVE REFRESHMENTS AND INTERACT. THE INFORMAL PERIOD AFTER THE FORMAL CONFERENCE IS VERY IMPORTANT