

Facilitator Values and Ethics

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General use of the term facilitator makes no distinction between the professional group facilitator who skillfully guides the group process from a basis of cooperative values and ethics and other professionals, such as managers, consultants, and trainers, who use some facilitative techniques but may operate from differing value sets and competencies. To appreciate the values and ethical dilemmas that group facilitators confront, imagine you are faced with the following three scenarios:

Scenario 1: You have been invited to facilitate team building. Your contact is the manager of the team, who will, however, not be attending the team-building sessions. She asks you to report back to her on team progress and keep a special eye on a particular team member who seems to be a disruptive influence on the team. How do you respond to this request?

Scenario 2: You have been hired to facilitate a strategic plan for a business. During the process, you become aware that you have information that vitally affects the competitiveness of the business. You have this information because you facilitated a strategic plan for a competitor a few weeks ago. Do you share this information?

Scenario 3: During a break in a day-long workshop, you are approached by a participant who wants to give you some confidential information about one of the other group members. The participant insists that you need to have this information. What do you do?

The desire to resolve such issues led to a project by members of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF) to develop a professional Statement of Values and Code of Ethics. This chapter documents the process by which the code was developed, which we believe serves as a model collaborative process for a globally dispersed group, explores the key issues that were identified during its development, and touches on some further issues that are now emerging. (The complete version of the code is in Appendix 30A at the end of the chapter.)

IAF VALUES AND COMPETENCIES

The IAF code project builds on previous work by the IAF in the area of the association's values and competencies of group facilitators. The mission of the IAF is to promote, support, and advance the art and practice of professional facilitation through methods exchange, professional growth, practical research, collegial networking, and support services. This is accomplished through peer-to-peer networking, professional development,

and annual conferences, which are crucial means for fulfilling the mission and reflecting their core values.

These core values of the association are (IAF, 2004):

- Inlusiveness—Including the full spectrum of personal, professional and cultural diversity in our membership and in the field of facilitation
- Global Scope—Connecting and serving facilitators locally, nationally, and internationally
- Participation—Advocating participative methodologies that generate ownership of decisions and actions
- Celebration—Celebrating life through spirit-filled quality interchange, activities, and events
- Innovative Form—Modeling a participative and flexible organizational structure that promotes growth, change, and learning
- Social Responsibility—Supporting socially responsible change within private, public, and voluntary organizations

In addition, a set of facilitator competencies was developed as an aid to understanding the role and values of facilitators and what they do. The eighteen competencies, which serve as the framework for this book, are grouped into six categories: engage in professional growth, create collaborative partnerships, create an environment of participation, utilize multisensory approaches, orchestrate the group journey, and commit to a life of integrity (Pierce, Cheesebrow, and Braun, 2000).

DEVELOPMENT OF THE CODE

The project to develop the code was initiated by a small group of IAF members (Sandy Schuman, Roger Schwarz, and Dale Hunter) at the global conference in Toronto in May 2000. Schuman and Hunter subsequently cochampioned the project. The Ethics and Values Think Tank (EVTT), convened after the conference as an on-line group for IAF members, became the primary vehicle for the development of the code. The rationale and purpose of the code project was described as follows:

Rationale

IAF has moved forward in adopting a set of competencies and a certification program for the same. An important complement to competencies is a coherent set of values or ethical standards that guide the application of those competencies. A “code of profession ethics” or “statement of core values” or similar document (hereinafter referred to as “code”) will further strengthen the credibility of group facilitation as a profession, enhance the professional identity of group

facilitators, and avoid misconceptions of group facilitation by existing and potential customers.

Purpose

To create a “code of professional ethics,” “statement of core values” or similar document that can be formally adopted by the IAF and made available for adoption by individual members. Members may then indicate to existing and potential customers that they have agreed to adhere to the code and may provide the customer with a copy of it [Schuman, e-mail to EVTT, Oct. 24, 2000].

Plan

An eleven-point plan outlined the major tasks of the project:

- Develop a two-year plan for creating and implementing a code.
- Gather and examine similar documents from other professional organizations.
- Develop among Think Tank members a draft document. Consult with professional ethicists.
- Draft a document for review by the Association Coordinating Team ACT [the IAF’s board of directors].
- Revise and make available a draft to all members.
- Conduct a Think Tank session at IAF Conference 2001.
- Revise and re-circulate a draft to ACT and make available to all members. Develop training materials.
- At IAF 2002 present code to ACT (and perhaps to general membership) for formal agreement.
- Test training materials at Think Tank session at IAF 2002.
- Finalize training materials and make available to IAF members [Schuman, e-mail to EVTT, Oct. 24, 2000].

The EVTT e-mail group, varying over time between forty-seven and eighty-five people, was assisted at times by a small face-to-face subgroup of five to seven people called the task force. The e-group was facilitated for part of the time by Tony Nash and moderated by Sandy Schuman.

Process

The process used to develop the code followed the plan as described above. Additional in-person forums were held at IAF global and regional conferences in Canada, Bolivia, the United States of America, Malaysia, Australia, and New Zealand. Agreement on the exact wording of the code was reached on-line on May 4, 2002, and adopted in draft form by the IAF in Texas on May 22, 2002, with the provision that it be reviewed and presented for final adoption in 2004.

Inclusiveness, participation, and global scope are three of the key values for the IAF. By using the on-line medium, many professional facilitators around the world were able to participate in the code’s development. Although the on-line dialogue was English speaking, face-to-face discussions at regional conferences involved other languages. Different perspectives were

shared from many cultures and facilitation backgrounds. By including as many as possible in the process, wider applicability and greater acceptance of the code was generated.

On-line discussion was useful for generating ideas and for in-depth dialogue over time on key issues and areas of difference. The use of the small face-to-face task force helped with the convergence of ideas. The face-to-face discussion at conference forums provided opportunities for clarification and exploration of differences and misconceptions which had arisen. These forums also provided for relationship building, as people could put a face to the names of others they had previously experienced only through e-mail. At these forums, plans were developed and agreed for the next steps in the process.

The values statement section of the code was agreed to on-line during an intensive conversation between a small number of participants while remaining part of the larger on-line group. A number of other significant amendments were also negotiated on-line toward the end of the development of the final draft. This required commitment and concentration by the participants, who had to keep up with the parallel conversations and not lose the several threads that were unfolding concurrently.

Perhaps the most significant learning regarding the process was that given time, a clear purpose, and a variety of on-line and face-to-face methods, a widely dispersed, internationally diverse group can achieve consensus.

KEY ISSUES

A range of issues were identified and addressed during the EVTT dialogue. In addressing and resolving these key issues, the ethics dialogue played a pivotal role in defining the role of a facilitator.

Facilitator as Process Guide

Facilitators generally agreed their role was that of process expert and process guide who worked with groups to help them be more effective. The preamble to the code begins, “Facilitators are called upon to fill an impartial role in helping groups to become more effective. We act as process guides to create a balance between participation and results.”

These first two sentences contain the essential elements of the facilitator role: a facilitator is impartial—not taking a position with regard to content. A facilitator helps groups to become more effective—focuses primarily on the group and then on individuals and maintains the group’s responsibility for its own effectiveness (rather than taking this responsibility for the facilitator). A facilitator is a process guide—the focus is on process, not content, and on guiding, not imposing. A facilitator balances participation and results—works with both rather than gives precedence to one over the other.

Neutral or Impartial

The facilitator’s role is often described as neutral, content neutral, or substantively neutral (Schwarz, 2002a). The facilitator competencies developed in association with the IAF include the term modeling neutrality (Pierce, Cheesebrow, and Braun, 2000). The facilitator does not contribute

directly to content or take part in decision making (unlike a committee chairperson who has voting rights). The first draft of the code described the role of the facilitator as “objective” and maintaining “neutrality.” Some facilitators in the dialogue were, however, concerned about the use of these words to describe the facilitator role, believing that “the facilitator is not and never will be” neutral and that “the neutral facilitator is a myth.” In response to these objections, the word impartial was substituted. One participant suggested: “We are impartial with regard to potential outcomes. We do not favor one individual or sub-group over another. However we are not impartial in respect to process issues: rather we are process leaders and advocates, exercising our process expertise to help groups achieve their purpose” (Schuman, 2002).

There are problems with the word impartial too, as it has a static feel suggesting plurality—parts and parties—and is more applicable to the role of a mediator. The skills of mediation are allied to those of facilitation (in that both are process guides); however, a mediator works with parties in conflict, assisting them to come to an agreement. Although the facilitator may often also work with conflict, facilitation is associated with collections of individuals in often shifting group configurations, and the systemic context is arguably that of a single group, however large or diverse, such as a community or region with many stakeholders (Hunter, Bailey, and Taylor, 1994).

Relationships or Results

Some facilitators emphasize the importance of encouraging full participation and good relationships within the group, believing that this will strengthen trust and understanding and minimize feelings of lack of inclusion and rejection. With strong, healthy relationships, decisions are made more easily and results tend to flow. Other facilitators believe that relationship building in groups is not a priority within the often tight time frames provided. Such facilitators prefer to concentrate on the issues—on making decisions and obtaining measurable results.

The type of group situation is obviously a factor in deciding the appropriate emphasis, and the debate tends to be based on personal experience. Rather than creating a polarization between participation and results, it was agreed that some kind of balance is needed and this is a matter of judgment by the group and the facilitator.

Trust

Another issue that arose was the meaning of the word trust. The dialogue around this included an essay and facilitated discussion by Joan Firkins (2001) on the topic of trust, safety, and equity. The first draft of the code included in the preamble: “We understand that by engaging us, our clients have placed a trust in us. As members of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), we recognize the importance of defining and making known the ethical principles that will help us act in such a manner that we honor and respect that trust.”

Some facilitators wanted further clarity as to the meaning of trust, and Firkins (2001) considered that cultural difference in the use of language was involved. Different editions of the Oxford Dictionary (U.K. and Australian) were

cited. As the dialogue unfolded and understanding of differing perspectives developed, the wording in the various drafts of the preamble was altered first to, “We believe our role is one of trust and that our profession gives us a unique opportunity to make a positive contribution to individuals and society.” A more explanatory sentence was used in the final version: “Our effectiveness is based on our personal integrity and the trust developed between ourselves and those with whom we work. Therefore we recognize the importance of defining and making known the values and ethical principles that guide our actions.”

Facilitator Values

Discussion took place around the key values that underpin or are inherent in facilitation, and some facilitators expressed the desire for a statement of values as part of the code. In the statement of values, the debate centered on the relationship between the facilitator and the group, including to whom the facilitator is accountable and the importance of consensus decision making.

The first draft of the statement of values stated, “As facilitators we believe in the inherent value of the individual and the collective wisdom of the group understanding that participants come with varying levels of familiarity, readiness, knowledge, and ability to engage in the process.” This proviso (in italics) implied that individuals and the group may not necessarily be competent and laid open the possibility of dependency on the facilitator and their expertise. This was changed in the final version to: “As facilitators we believe in the inherent value of the individual and the collective wisdom of the group. We strive to help the group make the best use of the contributions of each of its members.”

The Group as the Client

The first draft of the code distinguished between “clients” and “participants,” creating an opening for these being separate categories. A spirited on-line debate ensued about “who is the client” and to whom the facilitator is accountable. Some facilitators believed that the client was the specific sponsor, project manager, or other individual person who hired the facilitator. One person went as far as to say that only one person could be the client and that identifying this person was part of the preparation for facilitation. Other facilitators were very clear that the client was always and only the group of participants being facilitated. Roger Schwarz wrote a discussion paper on the topic of “Who Is the Client?” which said this, in part:

Who is the client? I believe that the entire group is the client—not the group leader, the group leader’s manager, or some other subset of the group. . . . To inform our conversation about who is the client, I need to explain how I think about what it means to be the client. Being the client means you get to decide whether you want to work with me as the facilitator. It also means that you get to decide what issues will be addressed in the facilitation. Together with me you also get to decide how these issues will be addressed. . . . I believe that the entire group is the client. . . . If you are not a member of the group being facilitated you are not a member of the primary client group [Schwarz 2002b, pp. 325-328].

Schwarz added to his model by naming some subcategories of the client group—contact clients, intermediate clients, and ultimate clients:

I consider my primary client to be the group that has accepted responsibility for working on the issue—the group that I may eventually facilitate. . . . The contact client makes the initial contact with the facilitator. The contact client may be a staff member or a secretary who is not a member of the primary client group but has been asked to contact the facilitator on behalf of the primary client. Intermediate clients serve as links between contact clients and primary clients and are involved in early parts of contracting. . . . Finally, ultimate clients are “stakeholders whose interests should be protected even if they are not in direct contact with the consultant or manager” (Schein, 1987, p. 125). The ultimate clients include the organization as a whole, the customers who use the services of the organization or buy its products, and the larger community or society [Schwarz 2002a, pp. 274–275].

There was a suggestion in response to Schwarz’s paper that “we should simply refer to the group as the people we facilitate and the client as the people that hire us, or get us involved” (Marvin, e-mail to EVTT, Mar. 4, 2002). Other e-group members did not agree with this definition.

The final agreed wording was: “Our clients include the groups and those who contract with us on their behalf.” It could be argued that there is still work to be done in clarifying this issue.

Consensus Decision Making

Although consensus decision making is closely linked with the practice of facilitation, there are different understandings of what consensus means. Papers on consensus were contributed to the dialogue by Freeman Marvin and John Butcher, and they also commented on one another’s papers. Marvin considers consensus decision making essential for cooperative groups: “I believe that consensus is at the core, at the heart, and is primary to our profession of facilitation. It is more than a technique. It is more than best practice. It is part of who we are when we facilitate. A facilitated group process without consensus is like inhaling without exhaling” (Marvin and Butcher, 2002, p. 4).

Butcher suggested a “situational approach” and considers consensus to be desirable but not essential for a group to make durable decisions that can be fully implemented. “Making consensus a ground rule for group decisions is unnecessary and may inhibit a group from doing good work. It may create ‘false closure’ by pressuring participants to publicly agree when it may be equally effective if a dissenter can say: ‘I expressed my concerns and they heard me, but the general view was to move forward. Because I respected the significant majority of the group in its wishes, I can still have influence as this decision is implemented’” (Marvin and Butcher, 2002, p. 7).

The difference between these two views is in the definition of consensus. Butcher’s scenario could be accommodated in a more flexible definition of consensus, which includes the option of expressing one’s view but not blocking the group from moving forward. Marvin explains this in his

response to Butcher. However, Butcher is not fully convinced, believing that “it is not consensus decision making [that] is at the heart of facilitation, as Freeman states, but the creation of an atmosphere that will permit true dialogue among the group’s members, and growth in the group’s capacity to manage its thinking and its internal relationships” (p. 10).

The wording agreed for the statement of values was: “We believe that collaborative and cooperative interaction builds consensus and produces meaningful outcomes.”

Group Autonomy

Underpinning many of the dialogue discussions, such as consensus decision making and the identification of the facilitator’s client, was the issue of group autonomy. This issue was inherent in the discussion but not often named. Does a group have rights? How do these relate to individual rights? How do group and individual rights play out in relation to the facilitator? Who is in charge of the facilitated group session: the facilitator, the group, the leader? To whom is a facilitator accountable? Who chooses the facilitator?

The identification of group autonomy as an ethical issue was one of the last clauses added. The group autonomy clause was worded as, “We respect the culture, rights, and autonomy of the group. We seek the group’s conscious agreement to the process and their commitment to participate. We do not impose anything that risks the welfare and dignity of the participants, the freedom of choice of the group, or the credibility of its work.”

Handling Conflict of Interest

In the initial draft of the code, it was stated in the preamble, “We understand our responsibilities have the potential to be in conflict: responsibilities to the client; to the group participants; to ourselves; to society and to our profession.” As well as separating the role of the client and the participants, this wording drew attention to a possible problem, conflict of interest, without giving the facilitator any responsibility for resolving it or even attending to it.

In the final draft, this issue was comprehensively addressed in the code: “We openly acknowledge any potential conflict of interest. Prior to agreeing to work with our clients, we discuss openly and honestly any possible conflict of interest, personal bias, prior knowledge of the organization or any other matter which may be perceived as preventing us from working effectively with the interests of all group members. We do this so that, together, we may make an informed decision about proceeding and to prevent misunderstanding that could detract from the success or credibility of the clients or ourselves. We refrain from using our position to secure unfair or inappropriate privilege, gain, or benefit.”

EMERGING ISSUES

Now that the code is in use, new issues are emerging relating to its application in an increasingly diverse context.

Application

IAF promotes the code on its Web site and in Certified Professional Facilitator materials. Workshops have been held at a number of facilitator conferences to promote the code and educate facilitators on its use. An increasing number of facilitators provide the code to their clients, referring to it in work proposals and contract negotiations.

Nonetheless, there is continuing need for training facilitators in values and ethics. IAF sees the code as a set of strongly recommended guidelines; there is no move at this time to introduce an enforcement process. The draft code was reviewed after the first two years of use and formally adopted by the IAF in June 2004

On-Line Facilitation

Group dialogue using and mixing telephone, video, and Internet is growing exponentially. A variety of software tools have been designed to assist in these processes on-line, including sorting, polling and priority-setting tools. Although these technologies for virtual groups are more widely used, much remains to be learned and written about online facilitation (Rangarajan and Rohrbaugh 2003). As new software is released more online group processes are developed. This process is ongoing.

Many aspects of face-to-face communication such as visual cues, body language, and tone of voice are not always available on-line. Without rich feedback, the facilitation of an on-line group can be challenging, as participants do not always respond, and the boundaries of the group are often unclear.

Although the IAF code process was conducted mostly on-line, the focus of the dialogue was mainly around face-to-face issues. The consensus was that on-line facilitation involves substantially the same ethical concerns as face-to-face, but with some specific variations.

One concern relates to privacy. Confidentiality (clause 7 of the code) cannot be guaranteed on-line because written material cannot be secured once it is posted on the Internet. Also, different countries have differing legal requirements for public disclosure, including relating to on-line material.

Another concern relates to participation. Although the importance of matching processes, methods, and tools to the needs and skills of the group is addressed in the code, the wording of clause 4 may not be sufficient for on-line settings where there are limited mechanisms to find out why some participants are "mute" or "invisible" (N. White, E-mail message to EVTT, Jan. 1, 2002).

There are also widespread and endemic world, regional, and societal barriers and inequalities relating to access that must be addressed in any consideration of ethical issues relating to technology and text-based communication.

Diversity and Complexity

While the code has sought to bring together the values and ethics underpinning the breadth of group facilitation practice, diversity and complexity in the field of facilitation has proliferated. As well as the mediums

of facilitation, such as on-line facilitation, this diversity also comes from the following factors:

- Growing use of group facilitation worldwide in diverse geographical, cultural, political, and community settings; in organizational sectors (business, public, and nonprofit); and recently in international peacemaking.

- A growing variety of approaches, methods, techniques, and schools of facilitation, including the Interaction Method (Doyle and Straus, 1976), the ToP Method of the Institute of Cultural Affairs (Spencer, 1989), Open Space Technology (Owen, 1992), appreciative inquiry (Cooperrider, Sorensen, Whitney, and Yaeger, 2000), graphic facilitation (see Chapters Ten and Twenty-Three), future search conferencing (Emery, 1993), and the Zenergy co-operacy approach (Hunter, Bailey, and Taylor, 1997). In addition, facilitator accreditation systems have been introduced by the IAF and other bodies.

- The generalized use of the word facilitation—group facilitation, meeting facilitation, learning facilitation, self-facilitation, organizational facilitation, community facilitation, facilitation of personal development, facilitation of public consultation, disaster relief facilitation, facilitative management, and facilitative leadership. The list of applications continues to grow.

Are there limits to how the word facilitation can be applied without losing its meaning? It is becoming necessary to distinguish between the generic use of the word facilitation as a general “easing of the way” and the specific use as a set of professional competencies, skills, and ways of being. Although the code clarifies the domain of facilitation and implicitly distinguishes it from other disciplines, such as management, consultation, training, and mediation, it does not specifically address all the above applications.

CONCLUSION

The IAF Statement of Values and Code of Ethics for Group Facilitators has made a positive contribution to clarifying the role of the group facilitator. In its work, the EVTT demonstrated the application of these values and ethics. As the practice of facilitation grows and develops, there will be further deepening of facilitator values and ethical standards.

Finally we refer back to the three scenarios described at the beginning of this chapter. In scenario 1, the manager asks you to report back to her on team progress and specifically on the behaviour of one participant in team-building sessions. Here you are guided by clauses 5, 7 and 1 of the code. Reflection on these clauses will lead you to decline the request for specific information about a participant’s behaviour, and you may also invite the manager to take part in the team-building session, or themselves meet with the team after the session rather than you report back to her, even in general terms. Scenario 2, describes a situation where you have content information from one client interaction that vitally affects a competing client who hires you to facilitate a similar strategic planning process. If you are aware of this situation in advance, clause 2 suggests that you consult with both clients to determine the suitability of your involvement with the second client. You will

address with them the possibility of any perceived conflict of interest and misunderstandings that could arise. You may advise the second client to hire another facilitator for this particular piece of work. If you become aware of this situation during the process itself, you will be best guided by clause 7, and observe complete confidentiality of the key information. This situation is especially problematic because clause 6 appears to give conflicting advice. This situation is a potential minefield for the facilitator if any content information is shared, even indirectly. In scenario 3, a participant in a workshop wants to confidentially share with you information about another participant. Referring to clause 5, you are very likely to decline to hear the information and request that the participant shares their concerns directly with the participant involved and/or in the whole group.

Readers may find themselves wanting to debate the above interpretations of the code. EVTT is the vehicle through which IAF members are able to do this. (For others you might like to contact the authors at zenergy@xtra.co.nz. Note that in opening up these ethical debates it is a matter of integrity to provide an opportunity for readers to respond.)

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APPENDIX 30A: STATEMENT OF VALUES AND CODE OF ETHICS FOR GROUP FACILITATORS

This is the statement of values and code of ethics of the international association of facilitators (IAF). The development of this code has involved extensive dialogue and a wide diversity of views from IAF members from around the world. A consensus has been achieved across regional and cultural boundaries.

The Statement of Values and Code of Ethics (the Code) was adopted by the IAF Association Coordinating Team (ACT), June 2004. The Ethics and Values Think Tank (EVTT) will continue to provide a forum for discussion of pertinent issues and potential revisions of this Code.

Preamble

Facilitators are called upon to fill an impartial role in helping groups become more effective. We act as process guides to create a balance between participation and results. We, the members of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), believe that our profession gives us a unique opportunity to make a positive contribution to individuals, organizations, and society. Our effectiveness is based on our personal integrity and the trust developed between ourselves and those with whom we work. Therefore, we recognise the importance of defining and making known the values and ethical principles that guide our actions. This Statement of Values and Code of Ethics recognizes the complexity of our roles, including the full spectrum of personal, professional and cultural diversity in the IAF membership and in the field of facilitation. Members of the International Association of Facilitators are committed to using these values and ethics to guide their professional practice. These principles are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical practice; they provide a framework and are not intended to dictate conduct for particular situations. Questions or advice about the application of these values and ethics may be addressed to the International Association of Facilitators.

Statement of Values

As group facilitators, we believe in the inherent value of the individual and the collective wisdom of the group. We strive to help the group make the best use of the contributions of each of its members. We set aside our personal opinions and support the group's right to make its own choices. We believe that collaborative and cooperative interaction builds consensus and produces meaningful outcomes. We value professional collaboration to improve our profession.

Code of Ethics

1. Client Service

We are in service to our clients, using our group facilitation competencies to add value to their work.

Our clients include the groups we facilitate and those who contract with us on their behalf. We work closely with our clients to understand their expectations so that we provide the appropriate service, and that the group produces the desired outcomes. It is our responsibility to ensure that we are competent to handle the intervention. If the group decides it needs to go in a

direction other than that originally intended by either the group or its representatives, our role is to help the group move forward, reconciling the original intent with the emergent direction.

2. Conflict of Interest

We openly acknowledge any potential conflict of interest.

Prior to agreeing to work with our clients, we discuss openly and honestly any possible conflict of interest, personal bias, prior knowledge of the organisation or any other matter which may be perceived as preventing us from working effectively with the interests of all group members. We do this so that, together, we may make an informed decision about proceeding and to prevent misunderstanding that could detract from the success or credibility of the clients or ourselves. We refrain from using our position to secure unfair or inappropriate privilege, gain, or benefit.

3. Group Autonomy

We respect the culture, rights, and autonomy of the group.

We seek the group's conscious agreement to the process and their commitment to participate. We do not impose anything that risks the welfare and dignity of the participants, the freedom of choice of the group, or the credibility of its work.

4. Processes, Methods, and Tools

We use processes, methods, and tools responsibly.

In dialogue with the group or its representatives we design processes that will achieve the group's goals, and select and adapt the most appropriate methods and tools. We avoid using processes, methods or tools with which we are insufficiently skilled, or which are poorly matched to the needs of the group.

5. Respect, Safety, Equity, and Trust

We strive to engender an environment of respect and safety where all participants trust that they can speak freely and where individual boundaries are honoured. We use our skills, knowledge, tools, and wisdom to elicit and honour the perspectives of all.

We seek to have all relevant stakeholders represented and involved. We promote equitable relationships among the participants and facilitator and ensure that all participants have an opportunity to examine and share their thoughts and feelings. We use a variety of methods to enable the group to access the natural gifts, talents and life experiences of each member. We work in ways that honour the wholeness and self-expression of others, designing sessions that respect different styles of interaction. We understand that any action we take is an intervention that may affect the process.

6. Stewardship of Process

We practice stewardship of process and impartiality toward content.

While participants bring knowledge and expertise concerning the substance of their situation, we bring knowledge and expertise concerning the group interaction process. We are vigilant to minimize our influence on group outcomes. When we have content knowledge not otherwise available to the

group, and that the group must have to be effective, we offer it after explaining our change in role.

7. Confidentiality

We maintain confidentiality of information.

We observe confidentiality of all client information. Therefore, we do not share information about a client within or outside of the client's organisation, nor do we report on group content, or the individual opinions or behaviour of members of the group without consent.

8. Professional Development

We are responsible for continuous improvement of our facilitation skills and knowledge.

We continuously learn and grow. We seek opportunities to improve our knowledge and facilitation skills to better assist groups in their work. We remain current in the field of facilitation through our practical group experiences and ongoing personal development. We offer our skills within a spirit of collaboration to develop our professional work practices.