

# FACILITATION

# 101

*Facilitation is the skill of creating spaces for open and respectful dialogue, collaboration and active participation.*

## Facilitation Skills

### Active Listening

*Paying close attention and actively showing interest during the speaker's sharing*

Useful for: **Motivating** the speaker to keep sharing, **affirming** the speaker's contributions

- Examples:
  - Eye contact
  - Saying "Mhmm", "Yes", "I hear that", "Thank you"
  - Nodding, varying facial expressions based on tone of conversation
  - Open body language (Uncrossed arms, leaning in)

### Paraphrasing

*Expressing someone else's ideas using your own words*

Useful for: **Clarifying** your understanding of the idea, sharing one person's idea with the whole group

- Examples:
  - "It sounds like what you're saying is"
  - "If I'm understanding you correctly"
  - "I'm hearing that..."

### Linking

*Drawing connections between talking points*

Useful for: When moving from one artwork/site to the next during tours

- Examples:
  - Note similarities/differences
  - Conclude each talking point by referencing overarching theme

### Reading the Room

*Understanding the demographic and mood of participants*

Useful for: **Determining the appropriate communication style** or information to deliver to each unique participant/group

- Examples:
  - Reading facial expressions, posture, body language, tone of voice
  - Do they look disinterested/hesitant? Are they keen to answer questions?

<p><b>Questioning</b>  <i>Asking relevant questions that help the speaker to explore, clarify, or expand on their thoughts and feelings</i></p>	<p>Useful for: Setting the tone of a participative session, <b>reducing information download</b> as participants come up with their own observations and ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Use a variety of open-ended, close-ended, rhetorical questions depending on their willingness to participate</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Redirecting</b>  <i>Steering the discussion back towards its original aims</i></p>	<p>Useful for: <b>Restoring focus</b> when discussion goes off-topic, bringing attention away from a dominant participant</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Examples: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Questioning to seek clarification</li> <li>◦ Paraphrasing to emphasise relevant excerpts or reframe the idea</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
<p><b>Responding Empathetically</b>  <i>Acknowledging another's experience, communicating that understanding, and responding constructively</i></p>	<p>Useful for: <b>De-escalating</b> conflict/complaints</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Active listening</li> <li>◦ Affirm that you have heard them</li> <li>◦ Paraphrase what they said</li> <li>◦ Offer an explanation/ways to move forward</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

# Roleplay Takeaways

Instead Of...	Try...
Avoiding the complaint by remaining quiet	<p><b>Active listening</b> while you think of how to reply</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Nodding, “Mmm”, “I hear you”, “Thank you for raising this” is better than complete silence!</li> </ul>
Freezing if you don’t know how to respond	<p>1. Take a deep breath to <b>compose yourself</b> (Paraphrasing can help stall time!)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ “I hear that you are disappointed because [summarise what they said]”</li> </ul> <p>2. <b>Offering another outlet</b> where you will not have to deal with them</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ “Thank you for your feedback. I am a volunteer so if you’d like to communicate these thoughts directly to the organisers, we have a feedback form whereby your response goes immediately to them”</li> </ul>
Apologising for the sake of it	<p>Responding constructively by offering an <b>explanation</b> and <b>ways to move forward</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ “We made this choice because [...]” and “I hear your feedback and will raise it to the organisers for their future programmes.”</li> <li>◦ Possible explanations: Paying artists fairly, costs go into added operational expenses, we are a non-profit</li> </ul>
Letting the patron leave unhappily	<p>1. Demonstrate <b>appreciation</b> to them for repeatedly supporting OH</p> <p>2. <b>Reframe</b> the conversation as an outlet for feedback and move attention to the positives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ “Thank you for sharing this area for improvement with me, we will take it into consideration for our future programmes. While we are discussing your experience, was there anything you did enjoy about the programme that we should continue doing for next time?”</li> </ul>

Instead Of...	Try...
<p>Dismissing the person by suggesting to move on</p>	<p>First <b>acknowledging</b> their comment and <b>affirming</b> their contribution to the discussion</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Active listening while they speak</li> <li>◦ “I hear your comments, thank you for participating in this conversation”</li> </ul>
<p>Succumbing and agreeing because you don’t know how else to respond</p>	<p>1. <b>Redirecting</b> the conversation to its focus (i.e. the artwork)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ “Just as you have your perspective, the artist has his perspective on the issue that was developed because of his long period of engaging this community”</li> </ul> <p>2. <b>Questioning</b> to link their response to the artwork</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ “Can you tell me which specific aspect of the artwork made you feel that way?”</li> </ul>
<p>Allowing the person to rant/dominate the discussion</p>	<p>1. <b>Directing attention away</b> from them by posing their comments to the group</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ “Maybe we can tackle this as a group. Would anyone like to respond to this comment?”</li> <li>◦ Important! <b>Read the room</b> before doing this—you don’t want to start a fight between your attendees</li> </ul> <p>2. <b>Offering another outlet</b> for them to express</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ “I hear your comments and these discussions are important. We are short of time now so let’s talk about it separately at the end of the tour?”</li> </ul>