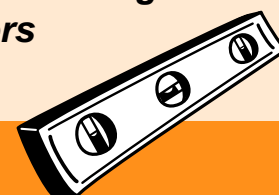


HIV Prevention Community Planning

HIV Prevention

*Tools for Community Planning
Group Members*



Facilitating Meetings: A Guide for Community Planning Groups



Academy for Educational Development

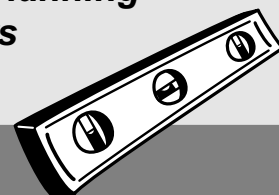


Academy for Educational Development
Center for Community-Based Health Strategies

funding provided by
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

HIV Prevention

***Tools for Community Planning
Group Members***



**Facilitating Meetings:
*A Guide for Community
Planning Groups***



Academy for Educational Development



Academy for Educational Development
Center for Community-Based Health Strategies

funding provided by
The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

July 2001

Dear Community Planning Co-Chairs and AIDS Directors:

This guide, *Facilitating Meetings: A Guide for Community Planning Groups*, is intended to assist community planning group (CPG) co-chairs, committee chairs, members, and external facilitators in preparing for and facilitating CPG meetings.

The guide provides tools that will be valuable to both new and experienced facilitators. Topics covered in the guide include:

- An overview of the facilitation skills useful for CPG meetings
- Specific tools for all parts of a CPG meeting
- Guidelines for dealing with challenging situations
- Checklists for pre-meeting tasks and facilitator assessment
- Additional resources about group facilitation

CDC would like to thank the Academy for Educational Development's Center for Community-Based Health Strategies (CCHS) and Aplomb Consulting for developing this important resource tool. In addition, I would also like to acknowledge the CDC DHAP-IRS staff, as well as numerous health department staff and community planning groups members, for their invaluable contributions to this document.

Single copies of *Facilitating Meetings: A Guide for Community Planning Groups* may be obtained by calling CDC's National Prevention Information Network (NPIN) at (800) 458-5231. Please cite identification number D162. The document may also be downloaded from: www.hivaidsta.org.

Thank you for your continued commitment to HIV prevention.

Sincerely,



Robert S. Janssen, M.D.

Director, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention
Surveillance & Epidemiology

Acting Director, Division of HIV/AIDS Prevention
Intervention Research & Support

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

National Center for HIV, STD, and TB Prevention

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Carolyn Mulford served as senior editor. 202design designed the document.

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For additional copies of this publication, please contact the National Prevention Information Network at (800) 458-5231. Ask for publication identification #D162. You also may download the guide from www.HIVAIDSTA.org.

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Introduction

Productive community planning group (CPG) meetings play a critical role in developing effective HIV prevention plans. Given a group's diversity of culture and professional and personal experiences, facilitating CPG meetings can be both challenging and rewarding.

What is facilitation, and why is it important?

The art and science of managing meetings and group processes, facilitation involves guiding meetings and groups while using a specific set of skills and tools. Facilitators create an environment in which group members share ideas, opinions, experiences, and expertise in order to achieve a common goal. A skilled facilitator smooths the way for group members to brainstorm options, identify viable solutions, and develop and implement action plans.

Who are the facilitators?

In some CPGs, the role falls to the CPG co-chairs. In other CPGs, outsiders facilitate meetings. In some circumstances, the co-chairs may delegate facilitation to a CPG committee chair or other CPG member.

Good facilitators possess a variety of qualities and skills. Some of the qualities spring from such innate personality traits as being able to recognize one's own biases while remaining neutral, enjoying interaction with diverse groups, and inspiring trust. Although some people possess a natural talent for facilitation, most develop the skills through experience and with guidance from experienced facilitators. The skills include

- Making everyone feel comfortable and valued
- Encouraging participation
- Preventing and managing conflict
- Listening and observing
- Guiding the group
- Ensuring quality decisions
- Ensuring outcome-based meetings

"Everyone at the meeting is very vested personally in this disease."

"CPGs are made up of people with a wide variety of perspectives."

"Meetings have an unparalleled level of rawness and honesty."

— Comments from CPG co-chairs

Who should read this guide?

Community planning group co-chairs, committee chairs, CPG members, external facilitators, and anyone else interested in facilitating CPG meetings should study this guide. Those who have little or no formal training in facilitation will find a pragmatic summary of basic concepts and skills. Those with facilitation training or experience will find a targeted review.

Both new and experienced facilitators will value specific suggestions for coping with routine problems and challenging situations.

How do you use this guide?

The guide presents facilitation skills and tools in the order in which they most commonly occur in a meeting. Nevertheless, it is not a guide to open and follow during a meeting. Study it before you facilitate a meeting or after a meeting to determine ways to do a better job the next time.

If facilitation is new to you, you should read, or at least scan, all sections and then go back and concentrate on those you find most useful. Remember that this small guide offers only an introduction to facilitation. CDC supports technical assistance (TA) and training for your planning group on facilitation and other community planning tasks. For other resources and information about obtaining TA, see Appendix F: Additional Resources.

If you have experience or training as a facilitator, you may want to flip through the entire guide or go straight to the sections that meet your particular needs.

Section II gives an overview of the skills and tools that you will use throughout most meetings.

Sections III, IV, and V each suggest specific tools to use during a particular part of a meeting, namely

- The opening
- The discussions and decisions
- The conclusion

Section VI presents tools for coping with challenging situations, such as members carrying on private conversations during the meeting.

Appendices A through F provide assistance with pre- and post-meeting tasks, such as deciding whether to use external facilitators and assessing your facilitation skills.

Five Cautions

- One size does not fit all. You will need to tailor your facilitation style to your CPG's unique blend of bylaws, ground rules, operating procedures, people, history, and circumstances.
- It is important to be familiar with the Center for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) *Guidance: HIV Prevention Community Planning for HIV Prevention Cooperative Agreement Recipients* (the Guidance). This document provides the basic framework for implementing HIV prevention community planning.
- CPGs choose most co-chairs for their leadership skills and strong rapport with CPG members, not for their facilitation skills. Leaders develop and inspire a shared vision for the group. Facilitators, in contrast, manage the group process (often from a neutral perspective) to help the group reach that vision. When a co-chair serves as facilitator, the roles may conflict. CPGs should establish the co-chair's roles and responsibilities in the group's bylaws.
- Don't shoulder the burden alone. Encourage all members to take responsibility for having productive meetings. Consider asking those with facilitation skills to support and guide your efforts.
- It does not matter how well you facilitate if you do not earn your CPG members' trust and respect. These are the foundation of a strong CPG process.

Using Core Skills and Tools

2

Each CPG must develop a comprehensive HIV prevention plan that meets the needs of its geographic region. It does so using a process that incorporates the nine steps and fifteen principles of community planning put forth by the CDC. To be effective, this process must unite people with diverse priorities and agendas.

Succeeding in this task requires numerous facilitation skills. This section identifies the major skills and lists some tools for each. You will use most facilitation skills throughout the meeting. Specific applications of the tools for particular tasks appear in the sections on the three key parts of meetings: the opening, the discussions and decisions, and the conclusion. You will need to judge which tools to apply to your particular CPG or your meeting agenda.

You also may think of the skills according to whether they focus on people, process, or product. For more on that approach, see *Appendix B: People, Process, and Product*. Remember, you may find it difficult to develop these skills simply from reading this guide. To learn and practice these skills, you may wish to ask an experienced facilitator to serve as a mentor or request training tailored for your CPG. CDC provides this kind of technical assistance. (See *Appendix F: Additional Resources*.)

■ **Skill: Make everyone feel comfortable and valued**

Most people will not participate fully in a meeting unless they feel comfortable with other members and believe their opinions will be heard. You, with members' support, must create an environment in which members value the potential contributions of those with different perspectives.

TOOLS

Use body language.

You send messages with your movements as well as your voice, so be aware of what your body language is saying. By using body language to show warmth and acceptance, you encourage others to relax and respond in kind.

Thank participants.

By thanking CPG members, you validate and legitimize their comments and contributions.

"It's difficult to achieve a good outcome through a faulty process."

"Because we were finally able to trust and respect each other, our entire process went much more smoothly. This eventually resulted in a well-developed prevention plan."

— Comments from CPG co-chairs

■ **Skill: Encourage participation**

Some members are outspoken and energetic. Others are quiet and reserved. As facilitator, you should balance these extremes so that everyone has an equal opportunity to participate.

TOOLS

Encourage silent members.

If members are silent or disengaged, catch their eye or ask them (or even an individual) to share their expertise.

Use open-ended questions.

Ask questions people can't answer with a *yes* or *no*. Questions beginning with *when*, *what*, or *how* usually encourage members to provide detailed answers, which can spark additional ideas from other members.

Divide into small groups.

Speaking in front of large groups intimidates some members. When feasible, divide the CPG members into small discussion groups and then have them report to the entire group.

Consult the group.

When a CPG member addresses a question to you, prompt participation from other members by consulting the group. This is also an effective technique for shifting the focus of discussion from one member to the whole group.

Use visual aids.

Most people process information better if they see it, so write it on newsprint, an overhead, handout, etc.

■ **Skill: Prevent and manage conflict**

One of the best ways to deal with conflict is to prevent it, but some conflict is inevitable and even helpful to the process. Use it to develop options the group would not have considered otherwise.

TOOLS

Use team-building activities.

Help members get to know each other better and develop a better understanding of each other's motivations and intentions. Their rapport lessens tension when conflict does arise.

Set ground rules.

Members' agreement on these makes your job easier when conflict arises. Basic ground rules may be that the group will hear all views and no one will make personal attacks.

Search for agreement.

Drawing attention to points that CPG members agree upon helps create an atmosphere of positive collaboration and forward momentum.

Use conflict to improve decisions.

Conflict can be used to clarify individual points of view and to underscore how strongly people feel. Disputes don't have to mean disrupted meetings.

Agree to disagree.

Although you would like to resolve all conflicts, you may not be able to. Urge members to treat each other with respect even when they disagree.

■ Skill: Listen and observe

Throughout a meeting keep your eyes and ears open and stay attuned to the group. Pay attention not only to the group as a whole but also to individuals.

TOOLS**Listen actively.**

Apply the basic skills of one-on-one conversation. Truly listen before speaking.

Scan the room.

While maintaining eye contact with the speaker, note how other members are responding to that person.

■ Skill: Guide the group

At any point in a meeting you may have to guide the group to move along or to stick to the topic.

TOOLS**Delegate a timekeeper.**

It's easy to lose track of time when facilitating a meeting, so ask someone to help you stay on schedule.

Refer back to the meeting objectives and agenda.

When the group strays, remind members of their decision to accomplish specific objectives in an agreed upon period.

Stray from the agenda when necessary.

Recognize that an agenda is a tool to reach an end, not an end unto itself. If your CPG is having a particularly useful discussion, consider straying from your agenda, but ask the group's permission before doing so.

Use a parking lot.

If members bring up important topics or questions unrelated to the current discussion, put these in the "parking lot," which may be a sheet of newsprint taped to a wall. Don't end the meeting without discussing or otherwise disposing of these topics.

■ **Skill: Ensure quality decisions**

Quality decisions are based on agreed-upon criteria backed by sound information that decision makers consider thoroughly. They use an agreed-upon process that all understand and, at a minimum, they agree to accept the outcomes. They make decisions in time to support the group's work, and the group records and disseminates those decisions.

TOOLS

Remind the group of decision deadlines.

Provide a calendar that details key dates in the planning cycle when members must make decisions (e.g., the date the CDC grant application is due).

Review criteria and supporting information.

Remind the group of the criteria it is using to make a decision and of the information the members received related to those criteria.

Review the decision-making process.

Make sure everyone understands what process the group is using in this situation.

Poll the group before major decisions.

Avoid surprises. The group should know before making a big decision that different perspectives exist. Poll the group before the official decision making to clarify the different points of view and to work toward compromise.

Review the decision.

Ask that a group member restate the decision while someone else writes it where everyone can see it.

■ **Skill: Ensure outcome-based meetings**

HIV prevention encompasses many related topics, and members sometimes try to discuss all of these at once. As the facilitator, you bear primary — but not sole — responsibility for focusing discussions on accomplishing the objectives of the meeting and of the planning process.

TOOLS

Review objectives for each agenda item.

Keep group members focused on the task at hand by providing objectives for each presentation, discussion, or other activity on your agenda. Remind members of the objectives as you take up each item.

Record decisions.

Your group must record activities and decisions. While taking minutes is not the facilitator's responsibility, you can assist by writing key decisions on newsprint, a chalkboard, etc. that members can see.

Develop an action plan.

For each decision, write down when action steps need to occur and who is responsible for these.

Facilitating the Opening

This section discusses some common tasks and the facilitation tools you may use at the beginning of a CPG meeting as you

- Welcome participants
- Introduce participants and yourself
- Set the tone and pace
- Go over and approve meeting objectives and agenda
- Review minutes

No tool fits every situation, and those that follow don't exhaust the possibilities. You must decide what applies for each particular meeting and develop new skills and tools to meet your special needs. Remember that some of the skills and tools you use in opening a meeting also work well throughout the meeting.

NOTE: Before you go to a meeting, you should prepare carefully for your role as facilitator. To assure thorough preparation, refer to *Appendix C: Pre-Meeting Checklist*.

Welcome participants

Before diving into the main agenda, take a few moments to welcome participants.

If you and key group members make everyone feel welcome, all will participate. Full participation is vital, for each person brings a different perspective that can contribute to the CPG's success.

TOOLS

Formally start the meeting.

Some facilitators use a gavel, gong, or other instrument to signify the start of the meeting. Some begin with a moment of silence. In some way, show that it's important for everyone to come together.

"The process needs to feel inclusive from the beginning, so it's important not only to encourage but also to validate all input."

"When a co-chair is not comfortable with the rules and procedures, it can hinder his or her ability to properly handle a meeting."

— Comments from CPG co-chairs

Are you using your facilitation skills?

- **Making everyone feel comfortable and valued**
- **Encouraging participation**
- **Preventing and managing conflict**
- **Listening and observing**
- **Guiding the group**
- **Ensuring quality decisions**
- **Ensuring outcome-based meetings**

Welcome everyone officially.

Acknowledge that they are contributing their valuable time to attend this meeting and thank them for coming. By doing so you validate and legitimize their comments and contributions.

Use body language and tone of voice to show your comfort level and encourage others to relax.

- Lean forward slightly to signify your interest.
- Smile, when appropriate, to help you look and sound receptive.
- Do not cross your arms. This can send the message that you are “closed off.”
- Do not clutch items (pen, paper, microphone, gavel, back of chair, lectern, etc). Clutching something indicates that you are tense.

 Introduce participants and yourself

Introductions help participants feel welcome and remind them who their team members are. Introductions also give you an opportunity to clarify your role as co-chair and/or facilitator for the meeting and to explain the role of any outsider. Require everyone to say a few words, even if only, “*My name is ... but I want to pass on this.*” Once people have heard their voices in a large group, they feel more inclined to speak up again later. If you have limited time or numerous attendees, find ways to ensure that introductions are brief.

TOOLS**Consider an icebreaker.**

You may ask people to share their favorite ice cream flavor, their first pet’s name, or anything else light and personal but nonthreatening as they introduce themselves.

Give precise instructions.

Orally or on newsprint list the information you would like members to give as they introduce themselves, e.g., name, role, and relevant identifying information (location, agency, at-risk populations they represent). Consider asking them to each limit the introduction to 10 to 20 seconds.

Allow brief announcements.

This is an opportunity to build a sense of community and collaboration and to break the pattern of name, rank, and serial number.

Check in.

If your group has the time, consider inviting participants to expand their introductions by briefly talking about their expectations for the meeting. This can help CPG members clear their minds and focus on the meeting.

The Importance of Having Operating Procedures

Every group should have a set of operating procedures that ensure fairness and equity. A number of CPGs use *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised* or some variation thereof. Robert's Rules focuses on voting, but many CPGs prefer a consensus model.

Whether your CPG uses Robert's Rules or other operating procedures, be sure the rules include

- How to establish speaking order
- How to make motions
- How to decide various types of questions

It's important that all members are familiar with your operating procedures and know how to follow them. Consider dedicating part of your orientation to teaching these procedures.

For more information about *Robert's Rules*, visit <http://www.robertsrules.com>.

Set the tone and pace

It's always important to establish a spirit of collaboration, trust, and respect early in the meeting, and it's absolutely critical when you expect conflict. While conflict can promote the airing of different perspectives and increase the options being considered, conflict that is hurtful or angry can impede the process. One of the best ways to deal with negative conflict is to prevent it from happening.

TOOLS

Help the group develop ground rules.

Having ground rules that group members agree with makes your job as facilitator a little easier in any meeting and may save the day when conflict arises. Review the rules briefly before discussion begins. Elaborate if several new members are present or if you expect contention. Always post a copy of the rules.

Set the stage for agreement.

If you have agenda items that could cause conflict (e.g., reviewing the budget, voting off a member who rarely attends, deciding on concurrence), remind CPG members of their past successes in working together and agreeing on similar issues.

Clarify the role of CPG members.

Some co-chairs have found it helpful to remind members of their mission: to develop the comprehensive HIV prevention plan that will prevent the most HIV infections.

Go over and approve meeting objectives and agenda

Focus participants on the desired outcomes of the meeting (e.g., reviewing the epidemiologic profile, finishing the concurrence process).

TOOLS**Post meeting objectives.**

Distribute a handout or post newsprint that lists the meeting objectives so that members can see these throughout the meeting. Review these objectives with members.

Ask for input on the objectives and agenda.

It's better to know up front if members want to discuss any other issues than to let these percolate as hidden agendas throughout the meeting. *"Is there any other topic that you feel we need to discuss today?"*

Point out any changes to the agenda.

This fosters an open and trustful environment and lessens chances members will assume you have a hidden agenda. *"Dr. Martinez is unable to join us today due to a family emergency. In place of her presentation, we will have an update from our ad hoc committee."*

 Review minutes

The minutes remind participants of what has gone before. Reviewing the minutes also will help you in your role as the facilitator.

TOOLS**Allow adequate time to review and approve minutes.**

If possible, distribute the minutes prior to the meeting. At the opening of the meeting, members can offer their additions or corrections prior to the call for approval.

Address follow-up items.

If there were questions at a previous meeting, acknowledge when and how these are being addressed. Continuity ensures trust in the process.

Building a Team

Throughout your work with the CPG, use team-building techniques. Through teambuilding, members get to know each other and develop a rapport. They also better understand each other's motivations and intentions, and that helps when conflicts arise.

- Icebreakers, if chosen well, allow group members to relate to each other on a personal level. You can make up your own or find ideas in such sources as *Setting HIV Prevention Priorities: A Guide for Community Planning Groups* (see Appendix F: Additional Resources).
- Meals may be a good time to conduct quick team-building activities. For example, have each member fill out a blank index card answering the question “What is one thing we would not be able to tell about you just by looking at you?” Collect all the cards and redistribute one card to each member. During the meal, each member has to determine who filled out the card received.
- Plan social time, such as coffee breaks, so that participants may talk to each other informally.

Facilitating Discussions and Decisions

As facilitator, your main tasks during this portion of the meeting are to

- Keep the group on task
- Assess the group's concentration and engagement
- Clarify confusing discussions
- Provide feedback to the group
- Enforce ground rules

Keep the group on task

Often agendas are packed with discussions, presentations, guest speakers, and report-backs. To ensure that the group meets its objectives, you must focus attention and energy on the objectives for that meeting and for the CPG. It helps to review the objectives for each agenda item.

A group makes quality decisions after all CPG members have had an opportunity to contribute relevant expertise and experience and the majority have come to support the best possible solutions. Rushing can lead to ill-considered decisions and the loss of members' support. If you are running out of time faster than you are running out of agenda items, stop and choose one of the following options.

- Determine if you have enough time to complete the agenda and the closing tasks.
- Extend the meeting.
- Help the group set priorities and decide which remaining agenda items to address in the time remaining.

"The most important thing to keep in mind about facilitating CPG meetings is objectivity. It is difficult, especially when as a co-chair it is my responsibility to bring together the vested interests of urban areas, rural areas, and the health department."

"Our CPG meetings last for a day and a half. It is challenging for one co-chair to focus effectively for the entire meeting. Our community co-chair and our health department co-chair share the facilitation responsibilities."

— Comments from CPG co-chairs and staff

Are you using your facilitation skills?

- **Making everyone feel comfortable and valued**
- **Encouraging participation**
- **Preventing and managing conflict**
- **Listening and observing**
- **Guiding the group**
- **Ensuring quality decisions**
- **Ensuring outcome-based meetings**

TOOLS FOR ENCOURAGING PARTICIPATION

Use open-ended questions.

Ask questions so members will give detailed answers that spark others' ideas. For example, *"What are some reasons for including community outreach on our list of prioritized interventions for people of color?"* may yield more discussion than *"Do we want to include community outreach for people of color?"*

Encourage silent members.

A few increasingly intense methods follow. (For suggestions on handling members who dominate conversations or pose similar problems, see *Section VI: Dealing with Challenges.*)

- Smile and nod at members who want to speak but are hesitating.
- Ask the group indirectly. *"Let's get a few comments from some of the members we have not heard from yet."*
- Ask a member directly. *"Michael, you look like you are about to say something."*
- Be aware of factions who aren't speaking and invite them to address the CPG. *"I'm noticing that we haven't heard comments from our members from rural areas. What opinions do you have on this topic?"*

Why avoid why?

Be careful when using why questions as why can imply judgment and cause some members to become defensive. Instead of saying "why," say, *"What are some of the reasons ...?"*

Consult the group.

After one person has given his or her input, ask the group to comment: *"What do other CPG members think about Pat's suggestions?"*

Another example: A CPG member asks you, *"Who are we sending to the next conference?"* You consult the group: *"Who does the group think we should send?"*

Probe for agreement.

Measure the group's feelings about a few members' comments: *"Do other members share Esperanza's and Andre's concern?"*

Thank members for their contributions.

People like to feel you and other members' value their input. Nevertheless, don't thank everyone who says something. Members may view repeated or effusive thanks as lip service. Tell the person exactly why you are saying thank you.

- Thank members individually. *"Doug, thanks for sharing that information about the recently passed HIV legislation."* *"Pat, we appreciate your telling us about your bad experience in a similar situation."*
- Thank group members collectively. *"Thank you for returning promptly from the break. This will help us stay on schedule."*

Post key points.

To help members follow the discussion, put key points where they can see them.

Divide into small groups.

Small groups are particularly useful if your CPG is brainstorming options or solutions or if new members feel uncomfortable expressing their opinions to the entire CPG. Each small group should choose its own facilitator, recorder, and a person to report back.

TOOLS FOR LISTENING AND OBSERVING

Pay attention not only to the group as a whole but also to individual participants. Who is actively engaged? Who is falling asleep? Who has been dominating the discussion? Who has yet to contribute?

Be responsive.

- Let speakers know that you are listening to them by making eye contact with them.
- Nod your head in agreement to encourage members to continue talking.
- Seek clarification of statements you do not understand.
- Summarize lengthy comments into focused points that everyone can understand.

Scan the room.

Note how members are responding to the speaker.

TOOLS FOR GUIDING THE GROUP

Guide the group through the agenda and keep it focused on the business at hand.

Delegate a timekeeper.

Set a time limit for discussion on each topic and ask someone to help you stay on schedule.

“Since we still have four other agenda items to discuss today, let’s give ourselves about ten minutes for discussion on this item. Ralph, can you let us know when ten minutes have passed?”

Refer back to the meeting objectives and agenda.

When the group strays, remind members of their decision to accomplish specific objectives in an agreed upon period. *“It seems like people want to discuss some things that aren’t covered by our objectives today. Am I right? Should we re-assess what we want to accomplish today?”*

Allot extra time if needed.

Don’t cut short a valuable discussion or let a conflict fester because the allocated time is up. Ask the group to approve the departure from the schedule. *“We originally planned to discuss new member elections until noon. It seems that may take a few minutes longer. Is everyone okay with delaying lunch until we finish talking about elections?”*

Postpone non-agenda topics.

Use a parking lot (usually newsprint taped to the wall) as a tool for staying on topic, not as a way to ignore comments on other topics. *“Leilani, that is definitely an issue we will need to discuss. Would it be all right to place it in the parking lot for now so that we can refocus on deciding about new members?”*

Restate the question.

If the discussion loses focus and drifts on to other topics, summarize key points that members have made and state the question again. *“We have heard quite a few pros and cons for including this risk group in our list of priority populations. Definitely keep this in mind for later, but the question we need to answer now is whether to schedule an extra CPG meeting this year.”*

Speed the group up.

At times, members may prolong a discussion because of their interest rather than new ideas. To push the group to wrap it up and come to a decision, summarize the main points. Then you may say, *“Did I accurately summarize the issues regarding a new ad hoc committee? To keep on schedule, should we make a decision?”*

Slow the group down.

At times, members may be tired or uncomfortable and rush through an issue. Say something like, *“I know that we’re almost at the end of the meeting, but it seemed to me we rushed through that last discussion. This is a fairly important decision. Let’s step back and make sure we’ve identified all the potential barriers.”*

TOOLS FOR ENSURING QUALITY DECISIONS**Poll the group.**

Polling helps when you are attempting to build consensus because it allows the group to assess the amount of support for a proposed decision.

A polling technique called handful of fives involves asking members to raise from zero fingers (a closed fist) to signify strong opposition to five fingers to signify strong approval. One finger, for example, indicates disagreement but willingness to compromise on a mutual decision.

Ask those with a closed fist, *“How can we amend this option to gain your support?”* Your goal is to have no closed fists in the room.

Record decisions.

Before the meeting, delegate the responsibility for recording all or particular decisions. If the decisions are complex or controversial, ask members with special expertise to assist the person taking minutes in keeping a detailed record.

To help CPG members keep track of what they have decided, write summaries of key decisions on newsprint and post these where all can see.

Assess the group's concentration and engagement

Monitor the group as a whole and individual participants.

TOOLS

Read the group's energy level.

Assess the tone in members' voices as they speak. Are they energized? Are they tired? What is the group's body language telling you?

Check involvement.

How involved is the group? What are people asking? How are people responding to you as a facilitator? How are people responding to each other?

Avoid presentations after lunch.

Schedule something that requires participation by the entire group if possible. A presentation with dimmed lights is deadly after lunch.

Give them a break.

If you sense the group is losing energy or the ability to concentrate, take a stretch break. Use energizers, quick exercises, or games that last no more than five minutes. *"How many three- to six-letter words can you make out of the word 'community' in the next two minutes?"*

Provide snacks.

These can give a slow and steady boost of energy for CPG members.

Clarify confusing discussions

As a discussion twists and turns, it's easy to lose a couple of members. You can do several things to make sure that all stay with you and participate fully and equally.

TOOLS

Listen for unfamiliar terms.

When members use acronyms or terms that others may not know, clarify these by asking the speakers to explain them or use them in context. Some CPGs provide a handout explaining commonly used acronyms to new members. Others post these at each meeting.

Restate the issue before a decision.

Summarize key points yourself, ask the speaker to clarify (*"I'm not sure we all understood that. Do you mind clarifying that point?"*), or ask someone to write the points on newsprint. Be sure that the group agrees on what the issue is.

Before the group decides on an action, make sure that any stakeholders present have had the opportunity to comment. *"Before we decide on establishing the Prevention and Care ad hoc committee, let's check in with Ms. Kim, the co-chair of the Ryan White Planning Council."*

□ **Provide feedback to the group when necessary or appropriate**

Always maintaining an objective perspective on the group's discussion, provide feedback to individuals and to the group to support and encourage positive group behavior and address unconstructive behavior.

TOOLS

Check your personal biases.

Be aware of and manage your own personal biases. Stay as objective as possible. Evenly distribute your feedback. Do not favor or disfavor any individual or group.

Be specific in describing what you observe.

This helps group members focus on a specific behavior or comment. *"I have noticed that every time we have said the word 'kids,' our youth members have winced."*

Describe or probe the impact of what you observe.

Let group members express their feelings. *"Can one of our youth representatives explain their reaction to the word 'kid'?"*

Ask for and summarize suggestions.

Request suggestions from the group and then summarize these. *"Perhaps we should all use the word 'youth' instead of 'kids.'"*

Point out consensus.

Consensus requires that all members accept (although they may not fully agree with) the group's decision. *"We all seem to agree that a retreat would be an appropriate time for additional technical assistance presentations."*

Point out similarities between members' statements.

Use this technique when you sense that people are close to agreement but may not understand or recognize their common ground. *"Esperanza, both you and Andre expressed concern over the lack of CPG members living with HIV/AIDS."*

Use conflict to improve decisions.

Conflict can be used to clarify individual points of view and to underscore how strongly people feel. *"Bob, you feel really strongly that we need to consider the focus group findings. Anthony, you feel the results aren't valid. Is there a way we can address both concerns?"*

□ **Enforce ground rules**

Ground rules help maintain a comfortable, productive environment for all participants. Often the group sets these rules to address past or anticipated problems. But ground rules are only effective if they are enforced. The entire group is responsible for monitoring and pointing out when group members violate any of the rules and lessen the chances of accomplishing the group's objectives. As facilitator, you can support this process.

TOOLS

Know the ground rules.

To monitor the bylaws, ground rules, and operating procedures, everyone needs to be familiar with them. Renegotiate, or at least revisit, ground rules each time new members join the group. Groups find it helpful to post these rules.

Create nonthreatening mechanisms to enforce the rules.

One of your ground rules should include ways to address violations. These can range from one person being the primary "rule watchdog" to the whole group playing a lighthearted role. For example, give all members a red flag to wave or a noisemaker to blow to note a rule violation. Lighten it up even more by choosing a humorous code word or phrase to call out or supplying soft balls to toss at violators. If handled in the right spirit, these techniques can take the initial sting out of being called a "violate."

Correct violations the first time — and as soon as — they occur.

Be gentle. Simply address the behavior and move on. *"Carole, what you just said could be taken as a personal attack, something our ground rules try to guard against. Would you or anyone else like to reframe what you said so we understand your concern about the issue? If not, we can move on with the discussion."*

If possible, don't embarrass as you enforce. Remember you or your designated watchdogs don't have to call the group's attention to every violation. For example, if two members are carrying on a side conversation, someone sitting close by can quietly ask them to stop.

Be fair and consistent in enforcing rules.

Take great care to be evenhanded in pointing out violations. Follow the rules consistently throughout all meetings, not just those in which you anticipate disagreements.

NOTE: See also *Managing Conflict: Six Steps* on page 29.

Facilitating the Conclusion

5

During the meeting's conclusion, you can help the group tie everything together and outline the next steps. Your primary tasks are to

- Identify the next steps
- Evaluate the meeting
- Adjourn on a positive note

If members leave the meeting feeling they've had their say and the group has accomplished its goals, you have laid the foundation for success at your next meeting.

Identify the next steps

Looking at the next steps instills a sense of momentum.

TOOLS

Complete an action plan.

Keep a sheet of newsprint on the wall throughout the meeting and add to it whenever the group identifies a "next step." At the end of the meeting, review the items on the sheet and develop an action plan that specifies what needs to be done, who will take each action, and when each action is to be completed.

Visit your parking lot.

This is your last chance to review the topics you put in the parking lot. If time doesn't allow the group to discuss all these items, propose adding some topics to the next meeting's agenda or assigning them to a committee.

Update the CPG calendar.

Remind group members to jot down the next steps that apply to them. Announce upcoming CPG committee meetings or conference calls.

"The most important lesson I learned about facilitating CPG meetings is to use my facilitation skills to role model respect, attentiveness, and a sense of accomplishment after each meeting."

"A lot of CPG members are juggling being in the planning group with the other roles in their everyday lives. You want people to have the desire to come back to the next meeting."

— Comments from CPG co-chairs

Are you using your facilitation skills?

- **Making everyone feel comfortable and valued**
- **Encouraging participation**
- **Preventing and managing conflict**
- **Listening and observing**
- **Guiding the group**
- **Ensuring quality decisions**
- **Ensuring outcome-based meetings**

Evaluate the meeting

The CPG planning process needs to be evaluated just as HIV prevention programs do, so your CPG probably has a process evaluation system in place. (If it does not, refer to *Appendix F: Additional Resources* or contact your technical assistance provider.)

TOOLS

Do a group evaluation.

You can do this in many ways, written or oral. One way is to conduct a simple meeting evaluation with the entire group. Quickly poll the group on the things they liked about the meeting and the process. Write these on a sheet labeled “Positives.” On a sheet labeled “Changes,” record the group’s suggestions of what to do differently at the next meeting.

Another way to consider is collecting CPG members’ comments on index cards.

Debrief after the meeting.

After the CPG meeting, the facilitator and co-chairs should meet to evaluate the meeting from their perspectives. If you cannot meet immediately, schedule a conference call as soon as possible. Debriefings provide an excellent opportunity for a facilitator to receive feedback from a mentor and other experienced facilitators.

Adjourn on a positive note

Before adjourning, take a few minutes to accent the positive.

TOOLS

Thank members for their perseverance and hard work.

Recall agreement.

Remind participants of decisions that received strong support.

Make it official.

Close the meeting by using a gavel, gong, or other instrument just as you did when you opened the meeting.

NOTE: Refer to *Appendix D: Facilitator Self-Assessment Questions* for a helpful tool to assess how well you are facilitating meetings.

Dealing With Challenges

Occasionally you will face challenging behaviors and situations as you facilitate CPG meetings. Your goals are to promote positive behaviors and encourage full participation in the process.

The suggestions in this section supplement, not replace, those covered in earlier sections.

General guidelines

Always look for the positive.

Usually a person's negativity comes from a deeply felt concern. Everyone wants to stop HIV. Tap into that.

Go easy.

Begin with the most subtle and least threatening option because that is less likely to provoke an unnecessary confrontation.

Put prevention before intervention.

Do what you can before or at the opening of the meeting to reduce potential challenges. For example, remind members of the group's objectives, roles, decision processes, and ground rules.

Look to the group for support.

Share responsibility for the group's behavior with the members.

Seek outside assistance.

For especially difficult situations, you may want to get technical assistance or an outside mediator. Often an objective outsider can help to ease tensions.

Convene a retreat.

Many CPGs convene annual retreats where the extended time (one to two days) allows them to address group process or planning tasks. Also consider using retreats to discuss openly any ongoing facilitation challenges and to solicit ways the group can assist in addressing these challenges.

"The most important lesson I learned about facilitating CPG meetings is that things don't always go as planned. You never know what to expect."

— Comment from a CPG co-chair

Are you using your facilitation skills?

- ***Making everyone feel comfortable and valued***
- ***Encouraging participation***
- ***Preventing and managing conflict***
- ***Listening and observing***
- ***Guiding the group***
- ***Ensuring quality decisions***
- ***Ensuring outcome-based meetings***

Challenging behaviors and situations you may encounter as a CPG facilitator include:

- Side conversations
- Conversation domination
- Repeaters, parrots, and ramblers
- Verbal attackers
- Disruptive audience
- Absolute silence
- Inability to reach consensus
- Revisiting of decisions
- Charges of being culturally incompetent

When Conflict Is a Good Thing

Not all conflict is negative. Conflict is an essential part of working together in a group. In fact, too little conflict can be just as *harmful* to the group's progress as too much.

The hallmarks of positive conflict are respectful disagreement and the willingness to consider various options.

"I disagree with Tim's interpretation of the epi data and would like the epi committee to ask the Department of Health for more information about the African American MSM community."

Negative conflict is marked by anger, disrespect, and a refusal to consider options.

"You are wrong about that epi data. I don't want to hear anymore from you about it."

As a facilitator, you don't want to squash all conflict. Focus your efforts on directing the energy of a conflict toward a positive result. Help the group stay open to different perspectives. Use the tools discussed in previous sections that encourage participation and enforcement of ground rules. See *Managing Conflict: Six Steps* on page 29.

Side conversations

While facilitating a discussion regarding your CPG's resource inventory, you notice two members whispering loudly to each other. Those sitting near the pair are glaring at them.

Why is it happening?

- The conversations relate to the subject.
- The conversations are personal.
- The members are bored because the meeting is dragging on.
- They always do that.

TOOLS

Call for courtesy.

You can correct this behavior more easily if you ask members to be courteous to speakers during the opening or following a break.

Catch their eye.

Making eye contact with the whisperers may be enough to get them to stop.

Bring them into the discussion.

Call one of the pair by name, restate the last remark made by the group, and ask for an opinion on that topic.

Walk towards the whisperers.

If you move around the room during meetings, saunter over and stand casually behind them.

Approach them during the break.

Inform them that their side conversation is distracting and ask them to either refrain or share with the group.

Confront them.

As a last resort, confront them in front of the entire group. Try to do so without being accusatory. *"Is there something you'd like to share with the group?" "Do you need a moment to settle something? Shall we wait for you?"*

Conversation domination

While leading a discussion on instruments to use for your CPG's needs assessment process, one member repeatedly interjects opinions on focus groups. He also has already offered several comments even though many other members haven't spoken.

Why is it happening?

- He feels compelled to share his knowledge.
- He wants to make sure he conveyed his points.
- He feels he is not being heard.

TOOLS

Set ground rules on recognizing speakers.

Remind the group that the facilitator must recognize members before they speak.

Invite others to comment.

Balance participation by asking others to respond to the dominator's comments. Hearing that other members share his views may diminish his need to repeat them.

Propose a time limit.

Set a reasonable time limit for each person's comments. Ask an official timekeeper to enforce it or operate a timer that sounds when time is up.

Record key points.

Record each point or suggestion members make on newsprint or an overhead so that they feel the group has acknowledged their perspective.

Use a round-robin.

Go around the room and give each person an opportunity to comment briefly.

Establish a speaking order.

Assign someone to keep track of the order of hands being raised and follow that order when calling on speakers.

Hear all first.

Propose that no one speak a second time until everyone else has spoken (or passed on the opportunity) at least once.

Repeaters, parrots, and ramblers

A member continually raises her hand to speak. When called on, she repeats others' comments, sometimes almost verbatim. At other times, she rambles for a minute or two to make the same point a previous speaker made in five seconds.

Why is it happening?

- She may be naturally wordy.
- She may want to make sure a point is conveyed.
- She may want to endorse a good point.

TOOLS

Suggest brevity.

Say, for example, *"If you agree with something someone else has said, don't repeat it. Just say 'I agree.'"*

Point to similar comments.

Record the gist of comments on newsprint. When someone begins repeating others' comments, point out that you have already noted that, mark it on the list, and move on.

Thank the speaker.

By doing so you acknowledge that the member has contributed to the discussion.

Demonstrate your understanding.

Acknowledge the person's point by summarizing what you heard. *"So your point is _____. Did I hear that correctly?"*

Managing Conflict: Six Steps

In general, when conflict arises, you should:

1. Make sure that all sides have an opportunity to be heard
2. Help to clearly define the issues, perhaps by having each side of the debate restate the position of the other side to its satisfaction
3. Keep discussion focused on the substance rather than the individuals

4. Encourage the various sides to meet separately and come back to the full group for further discussion
5. Help individuals to save face and be able to change their position
6. Bring in outside assistance—individuals not directly involved in the situation—to help provide an outside perspective

Adapted from *Training Guide: A Resource for Orienting and Training Planning Council and Consortium Members*. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Rockville, MD, 1997.

Verbal attackers

In the middle of an intense debate on prioritizing target populations, one member begins to insult the intelligence of another member.

Why is it happening?

- Attackers may feel that they have been attacked and retaliate.
- Attackers may lack the skills or confidence to make their point.
- Attackers may be trying to distract the group.

TOOLS

Enforce ground rules.

Define in your ground rules what constitutes a personal attack. This enables you to be specific in rejecting a member's behavior.

Use body language.

Position yourself physically between the verbal combatants as a way of disrupting their ability to argue back and forth.

Check in.

Give each member an opportunity to say how he or she is feeling so that the group can process the situation.

Talk privately with the attackers.

During a break, speak to the individuals involved in order to defuse the situation. Acknowledge their passion and ask that they use a different method for expressing their point of view. If necessary, remind them of the consequences of further attacks.

Disruptive audience

Your group has invited a guest speaker from a local university to speak on the basics of using epidemiologic profiles. During the presentation, one member repeatedly challenges the presenter's knowledge and expertise in front of the entire group. That person also whispers snide comments about the guest speaker to those sitting nearby.

Why is it happening?

- The person may feel the speaker, or the CPG, is not addressing an issue.
- The person may want to disrupt the presentation.
- The person may dislike either the speaker or the speaker's point of view.

TOOLS

Enforce ground rules.

Do not allow personal attacks on anyone at any time.

Schedule a Q&A.

Before a presentation, ask the speaker to tell the group whether he/she prefers to take questions at the end of or during the presentation.

Refer to the agenda.

Point out opportunities when members can make comments.

Give other options.

Respectfully inform the participants of additional opportunities and venues to make comments, such as community forums and written submissions to the CPG.

Absolute silence

When you ask for comments on a new ground rule that you are proposing, no one responds. A few group members are staring down at the table. Others are glancing about the room.

Why is it happening?

- They may not understand what is going on.
- They may be tired or indifferent.
- They may be angry.

TOOLS

Allow some silence.

Give them time to process what is happening.

Acknowledge the situation.

Check in with the group by saying, *"I notice that everyone is being quiet. Can someone tell me what you're thinking?"*

Take a break.

Perhaps the group is emotionally drained or tired and could use a rest. Or perhaps someone should conduct an energizer exercise to get people motivated.

Inability to reach consensus

The group has been discussing the health department's application to CDC and is preparing to decide on concurrence. Members have contributed differing opinions, and the group seems to be split.

Why is it happening?

- People may feel strongly about their positions.
- Some may want to disrupt the process.
- People may feel their perspectives have not been adequately expressed or acknowledged.

TOOLS

Emphasize agreement.

Restate all of the points that the group agrees on in order to isolate the specific points of disagreement.

Attempt a compromise.

- Ask the people who are not in agreement, *"What would it take for you to agree to this decision? What aspect would need to be changed?"*
- Go back to the full group and see if this new proposal is acceptable. If not, determine what changes must be made for it to be acceptable.
- Continue going back and forth with each side, and continue probing to understand the true nature of the disagreement.

Predetermine a fallback decision-making process.

Your group's bylaws should be specific about decision making. Go to your alternative if the group can't reach a consensus. For example, the committee chairs will meet and decide, or a subgroup of committee members will decide, or the group will vote.

Revisiting decisions

Near the end of your meeting, a member argues for including in the CPG's priorities a risk group that the CPG had decided to exclude earlier.

Why is it happening?

- The person may not have been paying attention.
- The person may be trying to stall the process.
- The person may not accept the group's decision.

TOOLS

Post decisions.

Refer to the newsprint where the group's decisions have been recorded.

Review decisions.

When making decisions, make sure everyone understands what the group has decided. Ask members (particularly the revisitors) to articulate the decision.

Charges of being culturally incompetent

During a discussion on criteria for selecting new CPG members, several members become very upset. They voice the concern that the CPG discriminates against their demographic group.

Why is it happening?

- The process itself may not be respectful of diverse cultures.
- Some group members may be culturally incompetent.
- Individuals may not feel part of the process.
- Individuals may not understand the decision-making process.
- Individuals may not feel that the process is fair.
- Individuals may be trying to disrupt the process.

TOOLS

Use team-building activities.

Increase trust with and among CPG members by using team-building activities. (See *Building a Team* on page 13.)

Consult the group.

Ask those who are upset for suggestions on how to make the CPG meeting and process more culturally competent.

Solicit feedback.

Use such methods as

- Small group report-backs
- Written comments submitted in advance
- Structured discussion in which everyone speaks at least once before a decision is reached
- One-on-one conversations with members

Acknowledge the concerns.

Let the group members express their concerns, but work to build consensus on when to address these. Will the group address the cultural problems at the time of the incident, later in the meeting, or at another meeting?

Consider diversity training.

Many groups have found it useful to set aside time to address this important issue directly.

Obtain technical assistance to improve your process.

TA is available. Do not hesitate to use outside help. (See *Appendix F: Additional Resources* for information on obtaining TA.)

Using External Facilitators

APPENDIX

A

External facilitators may have no connection to the CPG process, and some may not even have any experience with HIV prevention. They do, however, possess experience and skills in the art and science of facilitation that are applicable to any group or meeting. Some CPGs use external facilitators to manage all CPG meetings. Some use external facilitators only to manage specific meetings or particular topics.

When should I use an external facilitator?

That depends on the situation and the CPG. Having an external facilitator allows your co-chairs to participate more fully in the meeting. Hiring an external facilitator, however, will add a cost. Your CPG may be able to identify external facilitators willing to volunteer their services.

Below are some situations when external facilitators may be appropriate.

- The CPG co-chairs wish to participate in a particular discussion or throughout the entire meeting.
- The meeting contains emotionally or politically charged agenda items.
- The group has had a particularly contentious meeting and may benefit from a neutral outsider who can enforce ground rules and make sure all points of view are expressed.

What should I look for in an external facilitator?

- An understanding of (or willingness to learn) the basics of the CPG process
- The capacity to provide services on a consistent and continuous basis
- A proven track record of facilitating diverse community groups
- A personality that does not overshadow the group
- Availability to meet with the group prior to facilitating the meeting(s) in order to understand the CPG's culture

Where should I look for external facilitators?

- CPG members
- CDC National Technical Assistance Providers' Network
- Community-conflict resolution centers
- Co-workers who facilitate good meetings
- Professional facilitation organizations and consulting firms
- Local universities and graduate schools

People, Process, and Product

APPENDIX

B

One way to approach facilitation is to think of it in terms of people, process, and product.

- **People:** How do members feel about their involvement? How do they relate to one another? In a well-facilitated meeting, members trust and respect the facilitator and, more importantly, each other. All feel their expertise and opinions are valued.
- **Process:** How are decisions made? How are meetings run? In a well-facilitated meeting, members understand how the group decides and how the facilitator runs the meetings. The decision-making methods encourage members to participate, yet respect the limited time members have together.
- **Product:** What are the key deliverables or results from the meeting? According to the CDC, the CPG's main product is a comprehensive HIV prevention plan. Some CPGs, however, create additional products, such as conferences, statewide marketing campaigns, and collaborative outreach efforts. In a well-facilitated meeting, members produce quality products in a timely manner.

The chart on the next page places the facilitation skills in this framework. Certain skills, of course, may be used in more than one area.

3 Ps	Skills	Tools
People	<i>Make everyone feel comfortable and valued</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use body language ■ Thank participants
	<i>Encourage participation</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Encourage silent members ■ Use open-ended questions ■ Divide into small groups ■ Consult the group ■ Use visual aides
	<i>Prevent and manage conflict</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Use team-building activities ■ Set ground rules ■ Search for agreement ■ Use conflict to improve decisions ■ Agree to disagree
Process	<i>Listen and observe</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Listen actively ■ Scan the room
	<i>Guide the group</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Delegate a timekeeper ■ Refer group back to objectives and agenda ■ Stray from the agenda if necessary ■ Use a parking lot
Product	<i>Ensure quality decisions</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Remind the group of deadlines ■ Review criteria and supporting data ■ Review decision-making process ■ Poll group before major decisions ■ Review the decision
	<i>Ensure outcome-based meetings</i>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ Review objectives for agenda items ■ Record decisions ■ Develop an action plan

Pre-Meeting Checklist

APPENDIX

C

To make your role as facilitator easier, help the group take care of the following before the meeting.

Agenda preparation: Does the group's agenda have ...

- Clear objectives for the meeting, including
 - What you want to accomplish
 - Why you are meeting
- Enough time for each agenda item
- Enough meeting breaks scheduled (roughly one every 90 minutes)
- Guest speakers or presentations scheduled at times other than immediately after meals
- An agreement on who will record decisions, take minutes, transcribe newsprint, etc.

Member preparation: Have all members received ...

- Notification of the meeting time, location, agenda, and objectives
- Maps and directions (especially important for new members)
- Public notification of the meeting (in accordance with public disclosure laws)
- The materials they need to review with adequate time for reading

Rules/operating procedures: Has your group established ...

- Bylaws that explain clearly the role and responsibilities of co-chairs, members, and committees
- Ground rules and other operating procedures
- Methods of decision making (see AED's *Setting HIV Prevention Priorities: A Guide for Community Planning Groups*), such as
 - Group consensus
 - Voting (simple majority, super majority)
 - Complex methods (nominal group technique, delphi technique)
- Policies regarding conflict of interest
- A method for taking and distributing meeting minutes
- An overall planning timeline that details when the parts of the comprehensive plan will be completed and who is responsible for completing them

Facilitator preparation: Has the facilitator ...

- Spent adequate time preparing for the meeting
- Reviewed all of the information that will be presented at the meeting
- Identified someone to assist with facilitation, if need be, in order to
 - Record comments on flip chart/overhead
 - Track when people raise their hands so that people are called on in order
- Anticipated the responses and questions that members may raise on the agenda items
- Developed and discussed the agenda with key committee members
- Arranged for a member with facilitation experience to act as an observer to offer feedback after the meeting

Meeting logistics: Has the group arranged for ...

- A comfortable meeting location
- Refreshments
- Enough chairs, pens, note paper, newsprint, overhead projectors, white boards, markers, and copies of handouts
- Access to bathrooms
- Wheelchair accessibility
- Sign language interpretation
- Other language interpretation as necessary

Facilitator

APPENDIX

D

Self-Assessment Questions

Below is a list of facilitator skills and tools to use in assessing yourself, perhaps during a break.

Facilitation skills: Are you ...

- Making everyone feel comfortable and valued
- Encouraging participation
- Preventing and managing conflict
- Listening and observing
- Guiding the group
- Ensuring quality decisions
- Ensuring an outcome-based meeting

Speaking and presentation skills: Are you ...

- Projecting your voice
- Breathing deeply (but not directly into the microphone) so that you can get enough air to project your voice
- Varying the pitch and pace of your words
- Minimizing your “uhs”

Member participation: Are members ...

- Equally engaged in the discussion
- Staying united, rather than splitting into factions
- Energized and enthusiastic
- Sending you any nonverbal signals

Facilitation tools: Are you ...

- Using body language
- Thanking participants
- Encouraging silent members
- Using open-ended questions
- Dividing into small groups
- Consulting the group
- Using visual aids
- Using team-building activities
- Setting ground rules
- Searching for agreement
- Using conflict to improve decisions
- Agreeing to disagree
- Listening actively
- Scanning the room
- Delegating a timekeeper
- Reminding the group about the objectives and agenda
- Straying from the agenda when necessary
- Using a parking lot
- Reminding the group of decision deadlines
- Reviewing criteria and supporting information
- Reviewing the decision-making process
- Polling the group before major decisions
- Reviewing the decision
- Reviewing objectives for each agenda item
- Recording decisions
- Developing an action plan

Meeting Tasks Reference Sheet

APPENDIX

E

Below is a quick reference sheet of the various facilitator tasks identified in this manual for the meeting's opening, discussions and decisions, and conclusion.

The opening

- Welcome participants
- Introduce participants and yourself
- Set the tone and pace
- Go over and approve meeting objectives and agenda
- Review minutes

The discussions and decisions

- Keep the group on task
- Assess the group's concentration and engagement
- Clarify confusing discussions
- Provide feedback to the group
- Enforce ground rules

The conclusion

- Identify next steps
- Evaluate the meeting
- Adjourn on a positive note

Additional Resources APPENDIX

F

On facilitation

These texts are available at Amazon.com or your local bookstore.

- Doyle, M., and Straus, D. *How to Make Meetings Work*. New York: Berkeley Publishing Group, 1993. Considered by many trainers to be a classic. The authors advocate clear agendas, explicit objectives, and the rotation of meeting responsibilities.
- Hunter, D., Bailey, A., and Taylor, B. *The Art of Facilitation: How to Create Group Synergy*. Tucson: Fisher Books, 1995. Gives specifics on facilitating/leading meetings in the same format as *Zen of Groups* (see below). Contains a toolkit that includes facilitative designs for workshops, meetings, projects, and evaluations; facilitative group process; working with others; role playing.
- Hunter, D., Bailey, A., and Taylor, B. *Zen of Groups: A Handbook for People Meeting With a Purpose*. Tucson: Fisher Books, 1995. Explores the essence of group dynamics and applying the principles of Zen to improve group dynamics. Contains a toolkit of techniques and exercises for generating ideas, defining priorities, thinking creatively, expressing feelings, energizing a group, building a team, using conflict resolution, etc. Focuses more on group participation than facilitation.
- Newstrom, J., and Scannell, E. *The Big Book of Business Games*. New York: McGraw Hill, 1996. Suggests resources for entertaining and group-building activities used in meetings, including ice breakers and discussion generators.
- Rees, F. *How to Lead Work Teams: Facilitation Skills*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass Pfeiffer, 1991. Discusses the key principles of facilitation and the roles of managers and facilitators. Recommends specific steps to build consensus, gain commitment, help others solve problems, and make decisions.
- Robert, H., et al., editors. *Robert's Rules of Order Newly Revised*, 10th edition. New York: Perseus Books Group, 2000. Provides guidelines for using parliamentary procedure to facilitate meetings. Includes rules for raising and voting on motions as a process for decision making. See www.robertsrules.com for additional information.
- Timm, P. *How to Hold Successful Meetings: 30 Action Tips for Managing Effective Meetings*. Franklin Lakes, NJ: Career Press (30-Minute Solutions Series), 1997. Presents action-oriented tips for holding effective meetings by inviting the right people, developing an agenda, and tactfully preserving balanced group dynamics. Contains sample evaluations of meeting processes.

On HIV prevention community planning

Guidance: HIV Prevention Community Planning for HIV Prevention Cooperative Agreement Recipients. Atlanta, GA: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 1998. Available in English and Spanish at www.HIVAIDSTA.org.

HIV Prevention Community Planning: An Orientation Guide. Washington, D.C.: Academy for Educational Development: Center for Community-Based Health Strategies, January 1999. Available at www.HIVAIDSTA.org or from the National Prevention Information Network, ID# D105, at (800) 458-5231. Discusses the roles of CPG members, co-chairs, and staff; outlines the nine steps and fifteen principles of community planning; explains the *Supplemental Guidance*; describes technical assistance and technical resources helpful to CPGs.

Setting HIV Prevention Priorities: A Guide for Community Planning Groups. Washington, DC: Academy for Educational Development: Center for Community-Based Health Strategies, October 2000. Available at www.HIVAIDSTA.org or from the National Prevention Information Network, ID#D340, at (800) 458-5231. Presents information regarding priority setting for HIV prevention community planning, including core steps, planning and designing the process, and managing group process and the workload.

Training Guide: A Resource for Orienting and Training Planning Council and Consortium Members. U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, Health Resources and Services Administration, Rockville, MD, 1997. Available at <http://hab.hrsa.gov/tools/html> or by calling 1 888-ASK-HRSA. Designed for Ryan White planning councils, this guide provides information on recruitment and retention, member involvement, group process, and effective planning and decision making.

Other

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's National TA Providers' Network.

To obtain technical assistance on facilitation and other community planning topics, call your CDC Project Officer at (404) 639-5230 or AED at (202) 884-8952.

National Association for Community Mediation

1527 New Hampshire Avenue, N.W., Washington, DC 20036-1236

Phone: (202) 667-9700; fax: (202) 667-8629; e-mail: nafcm@nafcm.org

This organization offers links to individuals in communities across the United States who are trained to provide mediation and facilitation services.

www.HIVAIDSTA.org

This AED and NASTAD website provides HIV prevention community planning materials, peer samples, links to other CPGs, a listserv, and more. AED community planning publications are available on this site.