



# International Association of Facilitators

## *Core Facilitator Competencies*

### Background

The International Association of Facilitators (IAF™) is the world-wide professional body established to promote, support and advance the art and practice of professional facilitation through methods exchange, professional growth, practical research and collegial networking. In response to the needs of members and their customers, IAF established the Professional Facilitator Certification Program.

The Professional Facilitator Certification Program provides successful candidates with the professional credential “Certified Professional Facilitator™” (CPF™), as signified by a Certificate. This credential is the leading indicator that the facilitator is competent in each of the basic facilitator competencies. This document, *Core Facilitator Competencies* © IAF™ 2003, provides an overview of the competency framework that is the basis of the CPF certification.

The competency framework described in *Core Facilitator Competencies* was developed over several years by IAF with the support of IAF members and facilitators from all over the world. The competencies reflected in the document and assessed in the Certification Process form the basic set of skills, knowledge, and behaviors that facilitators must have in order to be successful facilitating in a wide variety of environments. Copies of this document are available free of charge from the IAF web site (<http://www.iaf-world.org>) or from the certification Program Administrator, at [certify@iaf-world.org](mailto:certify@iaf-world.org)

### The Competencies

#### A. Create Collaborative Client Relationships

##### 1) Develop working partnerships

- Clarify mutual commitment
- Develop consensus on tasks, deliverables, roles & responsibilities
- Demonstrate collaborative values and processes such as in co-facilitation

##### 2) Design and customize applications to meet client needs

- Analyze organizational environment
- Diagnose client need
- Create appropriate designs to achieve intended outcomes

- Predefine a quality product & outcomes with client

### **3) Manage multi-session events effectively**

- Contract with client for scope and deliverables
- Develop event plan
- Deliver event successfully
- Assess / evaluate client satisfaction at all stages of the event / project

## **B. Plan Appropriate Group Processes**

### **1) Select clear methods and processes that**

- Foster open participation with respect for client culture, norms and participant diversity
- Engage the participation of those with varied learning / thinking styles
- Achieve a high quality product / outcome that meets the client needs

### **2) Prepare time and space to support group process**

- Arrange physical space to support the purpose of the meeting
- Plan effective use of time
- Provide effective atmosphere and drama for sessions

## **C. Create and Sustain a Participatory Environment**

### **1) Demonstrate effective participatory and interpersonal communication skills**

- Apply a variety of participatory processes
- Demonstrate effective verbal communication skills
- Develop rapport with participants
- Practice active listening
- Demonstrate ability to observe and provide feedback to participants

### **2) Honor and recognize diversity, ensuring inclusiveness**

- Create opportunities for participants to benefit from the diversity of the group
- Cultivate cultural awareness and sensitivity

### **3) Manage group conflict**

- Help individuals identify and review underlying assumptions
- Recognize conflict and its role within group learning / maturity
- Provide a safe environment for conflict to surface
- Manage disruptive group behavior
- Support the group through resolution of conflict

### **4) Evoke group creativity**

- Draw out participants of all learning/thinking styles
- Encourage creative thinking
- Accept all ideas

- Use approaches that best fit needs and abilities of the group
- Stimulate and tap group energy

## **D. Guide Group to Appropriate and Useful Outcomes**

### **1) Guide the group with clear methods and processes**

- Establish clear context for the session
- Actively listen, question and summarize to elicit the sense of the group
- Recognize tangents and redirect to the task
- Manage small and large group process

### **2) Facilitate group self-awareness about its task**

- Vary the pace of activities according to needs of group
- Identify information the group needs, and draw out data and insight from the group
- Help the group synthesize patterns, trends, root causes, frameworks for action
- Assist the group in reflection on its experience

### **3) Guide the group to consensus and desired outcomes**

- Use a variety of approaches to achieve group consensus
- Use a variety of approaches to meet group objectives
- Adapt processes to changing situations and needs of the group
- Assess and communicate group progress
- Foster task completion

## **E. Build and Maintain Professional Knowledge**

### **1) Maintain a base of knowledge**

- Knowledgeable in management, organizational systems and development, group development, psychology, and conflict resolution
- Understand dynamics of change
- Understand learning/ thinking theory

### **2) Know a range of facilitation methods**

- Understand problem solving and decision-making models
- Understand a variety of group methods and techniques
- Know consequences of misuse of group methods
- Distinguish process from task and content
- Learn new processes, methods, & models in support of client's changing/emerging needs

### **3) Maintain professional standing**

- Engage in ongoing study / learning related to our field
- Continuously gain awareness of new information in our profession
- Practice reflection and learning
- Build personal industry knowledge and networks

- Maintain certification

## **F. Model Positive Professional Attitude**

### **1) Practice self-assessment and self-awareness**

- Reflect on behavior and results
- Maintain congruence between actions and personal and professional values
- Modify personal behavior / style to reflect the needs of the group
- Cultivate understanding of one's own values and their potential impact on work with clients

### **2) Act with integrity**

- Demonstrate a belief in the group and its possibilities
- Approach situations with authenticity and a positive attitude
- Describe situations as facilitator sees them and inquire into different views
- Model professional boundaries and ethics (as described in ethics and values statement)

### **3) Trust group potential and model neutrality**

- Honor the wisdom of the group
- Encourage trust in the capacity and experience of others
- Vigilant to minimize influence on group outcomes
- Maintain an objective, non-defensive, non-judgmental stance