



# Prosper Canada

CENTRE FOR FINANCIAL LITERACY

## Facilitation Guide



## **FACILITATOR GUIDE**

This guide is designed as a supplement to the Prosper Canada Financial Literacy Facilitator Training - Facilitation module. It provides the user with additional information, including how to create a group contract, ice breakers, tips for dealing with challenging groups and a facilitation checklist.

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## 1. What is a Facilitator?

As you begin to facilitate workshops, keep in mind the role of the facilitator.

**A Facilitator is a/an:**

Enabler	Mediator	Initiator
Supporter	Neutral perspective	And More!!
Motivator	Organizer	

## 2. Facilitation vs. Teaching

Facilitation is sometimes considered to be “teaching.” There are many similarities between the two and a good teacher most likely incorporates many facilitation strategies into their teaching style. However there are some differences between “traditional teaching” and facilitation.

**Source:** <http://www.fao.org/docrep/014/i2134e/i2134e03.pdf>

Teaching	Facilitation
Teaching starts from a teachers own knowledge	Facilitating starts by assessing the knowledge of the group
Follows a pre-set curriculum/discussion	Addresses issues identified by the group or their community and adopts new ideas to the needs and culture of the group
Delivers lectures to a group of learners– usually from the front of the room	Uses practical, participatory methods (e.g. group discussion and activities) in which all members of the group participate
Information flows mainly in one direction – from teacher to student	Information flows in many different directions between the facilitator and the individual group members
Teachers are concerned with students understanding the right answer	Encourage and value different views/opinions
Have a formal relationship with learners, based on the status of a teacher	Are considered as an equal and develop relationships based on trust, respect and a desire to serve

### 3. Facilitation in Action

The following section will provide you with some activities, tools and resources to use as you prepare your workshop.

<b>Activity One:</b>	<b>Creating a Safe Space/Group Contract</b>
<b>Objective:</b>	To have the group develop a set of rules that they collectively will abide by throughout the training
<b>Timeframe:</b>	30 minutes
<b>Tools:</b>	Large piece of flipchart paper Several coloured markers
<b>Format:</b>	Large group discussion, brainstorm

In facilitation most discussion is prompted by a source of stimuli, often in the form of an activity. By engaging a participant in a process or activity it ideally connects them to the importance of the topic being explored. In order for this process to take place, you must create a safe environment for participant discovery and learning. A safe environment is a group that is free from discrimination and is built on the concepts of sharing, equal participation, trust and engagement. Establishing this safe space should happen at the start of facilitation

#### **Facilitator: Introduce the topic**

***“In order for us to be able to get the most out of this workshop and our time together, what do we need from each other? How should we treat each other?”***

This is the process of establishing the collective behaviours and attitudes that are going to be used by the group during their time together. Since they establish their rules together they are more likely to follow them and then hold each other accountable to them.

1. Ask for a volunteer to assist with recording the answers from the group onto a flipchart. Only document words that are possible for you/the group to be able to feasibly do.
2. Once the list has been compiled, ask the group members to look around the room and commit to following these guidelines created by one another. Ask them to look into each other’s eyes or to shake hands on it.
3. As a final step get everyone to sign the piece of paper. Together you just created a group contract.

### Common Words Found on Group Contracts

Respect	One speaker at a time	Equal involvement
Good listening	Have fun	No cell phone
Empathetic	Be on time	Make connections

#### Facilitator tip:

As you guide the process of forming the group contract feel free to explore some of the meaning behind the words that the group provides. By having the group hear exactly what each person needs; they will have an easier time providing it for them.

#### Key points:

- Encourage everyone to participate – it isn't a group contract unless everyone group member contributes and agrees

#### FACT:

The process of having the group create their own rules makes it more likely that they will follow them. Often you will see the participants referencing the group contract to others. Since they have ownership of the rules, they will uphold them themselves.

#### a) Other resources: Group contracts

<http://www.seedsforchange.org.uk/groupagree>

[http://rhizomenetwork.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/facilitating\\_group\\_agreements.pdf](http://rhizomenetwork.files.wordpress.com/2010/12/facilitating_group_agreements.pdf)

#### Activity Two: Introductions

**Objective:** To have the group members and facilitator introduce themselves and begin to learn more about each other and feel comfortable as a group

**Timeframe:** 5-10 minutes

**Tools:** can use a flipchart to document expectations of the group, if desired

**Format:** Large group

## WHY?

Introductions are important because it will help the group to feel comfortable with their facilitator. It is also an opportunity to show the facilitators passion/interest/accreditation.

## HOW?

“Hi my name is John Smith and I am a case manager here at Na-Me-Res. I have been working here for about 7 years but this is the first time I have ever done a full course on financial literacy. I am really excited to try it out with all of you because I truly believe that there are some great pieces of information and tools that each one of you will be able to use to enhance your financial situation.”

**TIP:** Having your own story will set a good example of how a facilitator should introduce themselves to groups. Put some time into it and really have a story that will engage and loosen up your participants. Alternatively, 20 Questions is a fun and easy game you can play which will also allow for the opportunity for your group to get to know you. To do this you allow the group to ask you 20 appropriate questions about who you are, what you do, what makes you tick, your favourite activities etc... If you ask them for goofy questions, you will normally get the class to loosen up and laugh together which is great for bonding.

### b) Other resources: Introductions

<http://workshops.350.org/facilitation/>

#### Activity Three: Name Games, Ice Breakers, Energizers, Team Builders, Tasked Breaks and Reflections

**Objective:** To change up the pace for the group and to allow avenues for the group members to engage in fun spirit building activities.

**Timeframe:** Time varies depending on the nature of the activity; should take 10-15 minutes maximum

**Tools:** Depends on the activity; may require pen and paper, cup,

**Format:** Partners, small groups or large group, depending on activity

**Name games** are normally used at the start of facilitation as a way to introduce each of the group members.

**Examples:**

**Circle name game**

In this most basic “name game”, names are said around the circle along with an adjective or animal that starts with the same letter as their name, and if you’d like, a movement which everyone repeats.

**One-minute intros**

Everyone in the group gets one minute (need a firm timekeeper for this!) to introduce themselves in whatever way they want. This allows for different types of expression such as dance, song, or just speaking.

**Icebreakers** can ease tension and give a welcomed change of attention. They are most commonly used during the first stages of team/group development (e.g., at the introductory class). They can also be helpful whenever group energy is low and people need re-energizing, or when new members join the group.

Icebreakers work best when they are fun and engaging and they draw out information or qualities of the participants that may not be obvious (e.g. talents, attitudes, or previous experiences). Learning more about each other while laughing can help people relax and get a sense of their commonalities or appreciate their differences.

**Examples:**

**Fact or Fiction?**

Ask everyone to write on a piece of paper three things about themselves that may not be known to other members of the group. Two are true and one is not. Taking turns, they read out the three “facts” about themselves and the rest of the group votes which are true and which are false. There are always surprises that help the group and facilitator get to know one another.

**Questions Cup:**

Each member of the group writes a “get to know you” question on an index card and places it folded in a cup. Make sure to encourage participants to ask discussion questions, rather than questions that solicit a yes or no response. The facilitator then selects one card at a time and asks the group members (or 1 member of the group) to respond.



**Sample Questions:**

1. What is the weirdest thing you have ever eaten?
2. What would you do if you didn't have to go to work every day?
3. What makes a good friend?
4. What superhero did you want to be when you were a kid? (or now)?
5. What outdoor activities do you like?
6. What are your three favourite smells?
7. What is the kindest thing anyone has ever done for you?
8. If you had a time machine to take you back into any period of time, where would you go and why?
9. Do you have any hidden talents?
10. What is your least favorite chore around the house?
11. What bad habits of other people drive you crazy?
12. Name two things you think you are really good at.
13. Name two things you think you are really bad at.
14. What is your favorite kind of dog?
15. If you lived under the sea, what animal would you be?
16. What is something that most people don't know about you?
17. If you could/had to live in any country in the world, where would you go?
18. What is 1 thing you really miss about being a kid?
19. What is something you are really afraid of?
20. If money were not an issue, what would you buy?

c) **Other resources: Icebreakers**

[http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40\\_icebreakers\\_for\\_small\\_groups.pdf](http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf)

**Team builders** quickly form cohesion in the group. Games, tricks and puzzles help team building, motivation, and warm up any gathering.

**Examples:**

**Back-to-Back Drawing**

Divide your group into pairs, and have each pair sit on the floor back to back. Give one person in each pair a picture of a shape, and give the other person a pencil and pad of paper.

Ask the people holding the pictures to give verbal instructions to their partners on how to draw the shape – without actually telling the partners what the shape is. After they've finished, ask each pair to compare their original shape with the actual drawing, and consider the following questions:

- How well did the first person describe the shape?
- How well did the second person interpret the instructions?
- Were there problems with both the sending and receiving parts of the communication process?

**Survival Scenario**

This exercise forces your group to communicate and agree to ensure their 'survival.' Tell your group that their airplane has just crashed in the ocean. There's a desert island nearby, and there's room on the lifeboat for every person – plus 12 items they'll need to survive on the island. Instruct the team to choose which items they want to take. How do they decide? How do they rank or rate each item?

Other resources: Team builders

[http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM\\_52.htm](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTMM_52.htm)  
<http://hrweb.berkeley.edu/files/attachments/Team-Building-Toolkit-KEYS.pdf>

**Energizers** are activities that get people up and moving, laughing, interacting and focusing on something different for a little bit. They should always be about a different subject than what was last being discussed.

**Line-ups**

You can use this general idea with many options. The idea is for the group to line up in a particular order without speaking. Speed and safety is key!

Try any of these: birthday, number of siblings, timeline (who has been here the shortest to longest), etc.

**Make a Machine**

Select a machine. (The more unusual the better!) The group must replicate the machine involving everyone in the process. If the group is large, divide them into groups of 6-8 and have them act out the machine while the other groups guess! Be creative!

Possible machines:

Fax, telephone, typewriter, computer, Nintendo game, donut hole maker, car assembly line.

**Other resources: Energizers**

<http://www.slideshare.net/vickthorr/100-energizers>

**Tasked breaks** are a dismissal of the group for a set amount of time with something to think about or something to do while they are on their break. These should be used sparingly to avoid burn out.

**Example:**

Ok we are going to take a 15-minute break but when we get back I want you to come with three ideas of how we can change the room so that it is more comfortable.

**Reflections** are silent time to think/process something the group has just experienced. Journaling is encouraged. This can be facilitator led through a visioning exercise or story.

**Example:**

**Buddy pairs**

Pair people up into “buddies” at the beginning of the training. It’s important to “randomize” buddy selection so that people don’t end up with people they already know – one way to do this is to create two circles, one inside the other, of people holding hands, with equal numbers of people. Then you have each circle rotate a different way – when you say stop, people will be facing their buddy. You can have buddies check in to reflect and share what they are learning at different points throughout the training. Here are some good prompts to open and close:

**Opening:**

“Some wishes I have for this workshop are...”

“Some fears or reservations I have for this workshop are...”

“Some support I could use from you might be...”

“You’ll be glad I’m your buddy because...”

**Closing:**

“Something I learned that I can’t wait to take home is...”

“Some ways I noticed you shine in this workshop are...”

“My hope for you is that....”

**Activity Four: Debriefing: Summation, Closure and Segues**

**Objective:** To discuss the purpose and to reflect on the event. There are three forms: Summation, Closure and Segues

**Timeframe:** Time varies depending on the nature of the activity

**Tools:** none required

**Format:** Large group discussion

**d) Three common ways to debrief are:**

<b>SUMMATION</b>		
<b><u>What is it?</u></b> Summation is bringing a module or session to an end.	<b><u>Why</u></b> So that you can give a brief description of the most important information about something before moving on.	<b><u>How</u></b> You quickly go over what has been covered and provide a platform for questions. Make sure any questions are answered before moving on.
<b>CLOSURE</b>		
<b><u>What is it?</u></b> In closure (with group or session) you check the pulse of the group to make sure everyone is doing ok and is still on the same page with you and each other.	<b><u>Why</u></b> If it is in the dismissal of a group/end of training you want to appreciate the process/learning that occurred and make sure they are walking away feeling better/more informed than when they first came.	<b><u>How</u></b> Ask for each participant to share one highlight they had from the training. You can then provide them resources such as your work email so they can stay in touch and ask further questions if needed.
<b>SEGUE</b>		
<b><u>What is it?</u></b> Segues try to smoothly transition from one topic to another topic, without it confusing the audience as to why the transition was made.	<b><u>Why</u></b> It is a way of showing polish as a facilitator and interconnectivity on the topics being discussed. If you can take the group along a journey together that flows nicely, it will enhance the enjoyment and knowledge retention.	<b><u>How</u></b> Refer to examples. Use opposing words/ideas Use comparing words/ideas Use visuals (PowerPoint or activities) Take a break.

#### 4. Tools To Avoid Common Facilitator Mistakes

There are some mistakes that beginner or misguided facilitators often make. They include:

- Rushing through content without the chance for the group to absorb and process information
- Not allowing enough time for participants to ask questions
- Failing to give the group members encouraging feedback or recognition of their thoughts or statements
- Moving on to a new topic without checking in with the group to ensure they understand
- Speaking in unclear or in confusing language

To avoid these common facilitator mistakes here are a few tools you can use while facilitating:

<b>Waiting</b>	<b>Summarizing</b>	<b>Paraphrasing</b>
<b>Reframing</b>	<b>Reflecting</b>	<b>Affirming</b>

These are all communication strategies that a facilitator can use at different points in their workshops to engage the group and fuse their thoughts/feedback/sentiments in an easily understandable way for group members.

##### a) Waiting:

WHAT IS IT?	WHY USE IT?
When a facilitator allows for times of silence in an effort for the group to think about what has recently been discovered and to process.	Ensures that group members have a long enough window to be able to feel like they can formulate their response before talking.

##### Example of how to “wait”:

Simply count down from 5 or 10 slowly while maintaining eye contact with the group. If no one speaks after that time then you can move on to the next topic.

##### b) Summarizing:

WHAT IS IT?	WHY USE IT?
Reciting the main points from a lengthy statement back to the person who said it.	This will help you take the main themes from several sentences and simplify them for the group into shorter more condense segments.

**Example of how to “summarize”:**

Facilitator – “So you really get stressed out around budgeting because you have had trouble sticking to your budget in the past.”

Participant – “Yeah, exactly. It just really gets at me.”

**c) Affirming:**

WHAT IS IT?	WHY USE IT?
When a facilitator offers (someone) emotional support or encouragement on something they expressed or discovered.	This will be used by the facilitator to reward new discovery within the group and encourage them to continue to do it.

**Example of how to “affirm”:**

Facilitator - “That’s a great point Anne! Did everyone catch that?”

**d) Paraphrasing:**

WHAT IS IT?	WHY USE IT?
A restatement of the meaning of a text or passage using other words.	Often to simplify or clarify meaning.

**Example of how to “paraphrase”:**

Participant – “A creditor phoned me yesterday and told me I have 90 days to pay my Visa bill or they will come and take my car. “

Facilitator – “So you received some bad news from a creditor that may result in you losing your car?”

Participant – “Yes... that’s right.”

**e) Reflecting/Mirroring:**

WHAT IS IT?	WHY USE IT?
Repeating to a participant in their own words what they just expressed.	This will give the participant the feeling that you are listening and that you are on the same page as them. This can also be helpful as sometimes others need to hear their own words back to get a different feeling for them

**Example of how to “reflect/mirror”:**

Participant – “I hate money....all it brings me is stress.”

Facilitator – “So you are saying you hate money because it only brings you stress?”

**f) Reframing:**

WHAT IS IT?	WHY USE IT?
Offering the group a different way to look at an issue. Usually it is offering more of a positive yet realistic perspective on things that are concerning, worrying or problematic.	To point out how perspectives can be changed to make out the ‘silver lining’ of issues. It can be a tool to point out how a viewed problem is actually leading towards a positive solution.

**Example of how to “reframe”:**

Participant – “I just don’t see the point in budgeting when I only have a few dollars left at the end of every day.”

Facilitator - “I hear what you are saying and I appreciate that you brought that up. It is a very common thing to hear. However, it isn’t about how many dollars we have but how we use them. Also if we can find a way to save a few dollars more every day, it is amazing how quickly they can add up.”

**IMPORTANT:** Never dismiss a participant’s feelings, thoughts or problems. You can validate these things or let the person know that you have heard them without dismissing these problems at all. Re-framing is NOT ignoring others’ problems but offering a different point of view about how things may otherwise be.

Read More from Original Source <http://depressionmentalhealth.com/counseling-and-help/using-reframing-as-a-counseling-skill/>

## 5. Tricky Situations

We all find ourselves in tricky situations as facilitators. Over time we all pick up little tricks to work our way through. Below are a few tips on how to work through specific types of challenging scenarios.

### a) Resistance:

Resistance in the context of facilitation means that the group or group members push against the facilitator or each other. Resistance is common because it is hard to maintain your group's focus and agreement for long periods of time. There are a million different reasons why people create conflict, as everyone and every group are completely different. Sometimes someone is having a bad day; sometimes someone may have negative thoughts associated with the topic being discussed. Whatever the reason, there are ways to work with resistance so that you can still move forward with your training.

By learning to "read your room" as a facilitator you will learn to identify the visual/vocal cues of a group that is starting to unravel/lose focus. If you think that you are starting to feel resistance from your group try using energizers, a reminder of group norms, or team builders to re-establish the group health.

### b) Overly Disagreeable Participant

A group member is highly argumentative or generally antagonistic.

#### **This may be because they:**

- Have a combative personality
- Are upset by others opinions or a specific issue
- Are a show-off by nature
- Are unable to make suggestions constructively
- Feel that they are being ignored

#### **Possible Solutions:**

- Paraphrase the participant's comments, and after their response, recap his/her position in objective terms
- Find merit in the participant's suggestions, express agreement, then move on
- Respond to the participant's comments, not the attack
- Open the discussion of the participant's comments to the group
- Mention that, due to time constraints, the comments can be put on the agenda for the next meeting

#### **Resources:**

<http://facilitationstrategies.wikispaces.com/Managing+difficult+situations>

<http://masterfacilitatorjournal.facilitatoru.com/archives/skill223.html>



## 6. Common Facilitator Challenges:

Let's look at some common facilitator problems and typical mistakes facilitators make. We have added some suggested responses on how to deal with these particular situations.

PROBLEM	TYPICAL MISTAKE	EFFECT RESPONSE
Domination by a highly verbal member.	Inexperienced facilitators will try to control this person. "Excuse me, but do you mind if someone else has a chance to speak?"	When one or a few people are over-participating, everyone else is under-participating. Focus your efforts on the passive majority. Encourage them to participate more. "Ok great, we have had some really great participation but I would love to hear some new voices. Is there anyone out there who would like to share their thoughts that hasn't yet?"
People losing focus and goofing around during group discussion.	Try to organize people by getting into a power struggle with them. "All right everyone, let's get to work" "Focus, people, focus!"	Often a break is the best response as this behaviour is an indicator that the groups' attention is waning. If this fails, you can engage the group by asking, "I see we are starting to drift a little bit, is there anything we should be doing differently?"
Failure to start and end on time.	Announce, "We are going to start in five minutes" then fail to follow through starting much later. Or when it's time to end, go overtime without asking the group if it is ok to do so.	At the start of the course clearly outline that being timely is a show of respect for one another. We all have stuff to do in our lives so if we can stay on schedule we will be able to manage the rest of our time outside of the course. Also clearly outline start, lunch, break and ending times so that the group knows what to expect and can follow it.
Several different topics being discussed at the same time.	"Come on, everyone, let's get back on track!"	Use Linking: "Can you help us link your idea to the central issues for us?" Or create a parking lot to place ideas and issues on a piece of paper that you can return to later.
Side conversations and whispered laughing.	Ignore the behaviour and hope it will go away. Chastise the whisperers, humiliating them.	"As you know, those who don't hear the joke often wonder if someone is laughing at them." This can also be a sign the group is restless and may need a break.

## 7. Planning the Event

One of the roles of the facilitator is Organizer. A great deal of work goes into preparing for a workshop or training event.

### Activities include:

- Agenda
- Choosing the space
- Refreshments
- Handouts, etc.

#### a) Agenda

Source: <http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/RoleofAFacilitator.htm>

Designing the agenda goes hand in hand with designing the group process. Among the factors to consider when planning the agenda are:

- In what order should the topics be presented?
- How will participants get to know each other?
- How will they gain a common understanding of the objectives?
- If an event is to be broken into separate sessions, how much time should be allocated to each item?
- Will all participants be involved each session? Or will some be in smaller, breakout groups?
- How and when will breakout groups' responses report back to the wider group?
- When will you recap and summarize?
- How will the outcomes of one session flow into the next?
- How will you achieve closure of the overall event?

By the end of the design and planning stage, you should have a solid agenda, which focuses on outcomes and provides a good flow and structure for the event.

### **b) Choosing the Space**

1. Survey the location before the session to ensure there is adequate lighting, disability access, parking, bathrooms, etc.
2. Check to make sure that the both the space and lighting is adequate.
3. Be certain that all supplies are ready to go.
4. Check equipment to make sure everything is working and correctly placed.
5. Arrange the room to maximize learning.
6. Be certain that all participants receive pre-training notification and reminders as well as pre-training readings and handouts (this includes an agenda).
7. Know your participants before the training begins. Know their educational backgrounds, age spread, work experience, titles and roles, and their developmental needs.

[http://www.workshopexercises.com/Facilitator.htm#Before the Workshop Begins](http://www.workshopexercises.com/Facilitator.htm#Before_the_Workshop_Begins)

### **c) Refreshments**

It is a good idea to let participants know when they register whether or not refreshments will be provided. If the workshop is a full day, participants will need a mid-morning break, lunch and an afternoon break. If refreshments are not provided for these breaks, let participants know so they can pack themselves a snack or give them time to get one if there is a coffee shop nearby. At the very least, it is a good idea to have some water available for participants.

Keeping your participants hydrated and fed will help keep them focused and engaged! Providing refreshments may also entice people to come to your workshop! Sharing a meal also brings people together. Remember to ask first to see if there are any special dietary needs to accommodate everyone.

Tip: See if there is a local community organization that provides catering to give them your business, or see if there is local restaurant or catering company able to give you a discount in exchange for promoting their business.

### **d) Handouts, etc.**

Participants often appreciate handouts that they can use during the workshop, as well as something to take-away to remind them of what they have learned. Some facilitators provide a copy of their presentation for learners to follow along with and for future reference.

Make sure you have enough handouts for the group, or provide them with links to where they can access the handouts.

It is also helpful if you have some pens and blank paper available for people who like to take notes.

## 8. Final words: Good luck!

There is a lot to do to prepare for a workshop. As a facilitator you truly do wear many hats. Embrace your role and remember to “make it your own.” Add your own personality and stories, and be yourself. Facilitation is a two-way street. You are learning from your participants as they learn from you and the workshop. Remember - have fun on the journey!

## 9. Resources:

<http://onlinefacilitation.wikispaces.com/>

<http://learningforsustainability.net/tools/facilitation.php>

<http://www.globallearningpartners.com/resources/>

<http://ctb.ku.edu/en/table-of-contents/leadership/group-facilitation/facilitation-skills/main>

[http://www.teindia.nic.in/files/teacher\\_trg\\_module/8\\_creative\\_facilitation\\_techniques.pdf](http://www.teindia.nic.in/files/teacher_trg_module/8_creative_facilitation_techniques.pdf)

<http://www.workshopexercises.com/Facilitator.htm#Facilitators%20Guide>

[http://www.teampedia.net/wiki/index.php?title=Main\\_Page](http://www.teampedia.net/wiki/index.php?title=Main_Page)