Virtual Tool Box

In the spirit of collective learning, the following tips offer ideas on how to create healthy spaces for bringing people together for collective learning and inclusive dialogue.

**Roles in a Group**
When people have a role in a group they are more likely to stay involved over the long-term because ownership of the process has been cultivated through their role. Borrowing from a consensus building model, there are at least four roles that can set the framework for involving everyone.

There are several roles, which if filled, can help consensus decision-making run smoothly.

- **The facilitator(s)** guides the group in having a healthy and respectful conversation. The facilitator is aware of who is and who is not actively participating, and gently invites those who are more quiet or disengaged to participate. The facilitator models and describes basic guidelines for good group facilitation:
  - **Setting Context and Goals**: Why we are doing what we're doing and what we want
  - **Establishing Ground Rules**: How we'll work together to accomplish our goal
  - **Developing Ideas**: Creating options and possibilities
  - **Making Decisions**: Clarifying the way forward
  - **Taking Action**: Reviewing next steps and roles
  - **Getting Feedback**: What worked and what needs improvement

- **A scribe** can take notes during the meeting or if small group work is being done. Scribes generally:
  - **Capture** key points that come up in the discussion
  - **Check-in** with participants to ensure their contributions are clearly noted
  - **Communicate** with the group by reviewing main points during and after the meeting

- **A time-keeper** is someone who gently reminds the group about the time. This helps everyone in the process stay focused on the process and moving forward.

- **All meeting participants** are encouraged to be active participants in the process. This involves listening to understand, asking questions, sharing ideas, and watching the “dynamics” (exchanges between people, mood, and disposition) of the group.
**Gallery Walk**

A gallery walk is a simple facilitation method that allows people to take in or to share a lot of information in a short period of time. The gallery walk method can be used anytime during a gathering. The gallery walk method is an excellent approach to accommodate different learning styles (visual, auditory, kinesthetic) and different personalities.

- **Content Gallery Walk:** Information about a subject is on flip chart paper posted around the room. Each chart paper contains only 1 or 2 concepts.

- **Ideas Gallery Walk:** Information, usually created in small work groups, post their ideas on a chart paper and stick it up on the wall to share with others.

One way to make the gallery walk engaging is to give all participants a small stack of post-it notes and have them place a comment on the post-it and then stick it on a poster. Although most often gallery walks are done in silence, it is also possible to have someone who has had a hand in creating the flip chart stand next to it and answer any questions viewers might have.

**Debriefing an Activity or a Meeting**

There are many ways to debrief a meeting or an activity; what is important in any debriefing process is to identify what is the purpose of debriefing the meeting or activity.

Some questions that are helpful in determining what the purpose of a debriefing include

- What is important for us to know from this meeting that will assist us in the future?
- What will the debriefing information be used for?

When asking debriefing questions it is most helpful to ask open-ended questions (instead of yes or no questions). Some examples include

- What worked during this meeting/activity?
- What group values did we positively demonstrate during the meeting/activity?
- What can we do better?
- What questions do we have?
- What is the one thing I am looking forward to for the next meeting/activity/time we are together?