

TIP CARD FOR FATHERHOOD PRACTITIONERS

GROUP FACILITATION



DID YOU KNOW?



Participation in peer learning and support groups is a key ingredient of many fatherhood programs. When done effectively, group sessions can be the “glue” that keeps men involved in a wider program and leads to powerful life changes for them and their families.



Effective group facilitators build a foundation of trust that encourages self-reflection, personal sharing, peer support, and ongoing growth.



Facilitators play four basic roles:¹

1. **Engaging**—establish trust and rapport; create a welcoming, safe environment.
2. **Informing**—provide meaningful and useful knowledge and information.
3. **Involving**—ensure all group members participate and benefit from activities.
4. **Applying**—encourage the use of new awareness, knowledge, and skills.

MORE INFORMATION

NRFC Resources

- Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Group Work <https://www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit/work/group-work>
- DadTalk Blog Post: Create a Winning Team through Group Facilitation <https://www.fatherhood.gov/dadtalk-blog/create-winning-team-through-group-facilitation>
- DadTalk Blog Post: Facilitating Fathers' Groups: Advanced Preparation is Key <https://www.fatherhood.gov/dadtalk-blog/facilitating-fathers-groups-advanced-preparation-key>
- Webinar: Working with Fathers in Groups: Tips to Enhance Your Facilitation Skills <https://www.fatherhood.gov/content/working-fathers-groups-tips-enhance-your-facilitation-skills>

Other Resources

- *Facilitating Fathers' Groups: 22 Keys to Group Mastery*, Haji Shearer, 2013.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Be authentic** – you will be more successful in creating group buy-in if your actions and words are from the heart.
- **Get to know your participants** – this will help you better meet their needs and connect on deeper levels.
- **Establish some basic ground rules** – e.g., be on time, maintain confidentiality, share the time, be respectful.
- **Be prepared** – know your curriculum, review objectives and goals, set the room up for group discussion, have copies of handouts and any other materials ready to share.
- **Recognize you are not the only expert in the room** – your job is to facilitate sharing and discussion among group members.
- **Observe other facilitators in action** and make note of techniques that work for them.
- **Make time** at the beginning and end of each group session for participants to reflect on lessons learned and share how they are using new knowledge and skills.
- **Keep it interactive and fun** – people only remember 20% of what they hear, but 80% of what they see, hear, and experience!
- **Invite colleagues to observe** your group facilitation and provide feedback.
- **Allow time** for joint planning and debriefing if you work with a co-facilitator.



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¹ Brooks-Harris, J.E. and Stock-Ward, S.R. (1999). *Workshops: Designing and Facilitating Experiential Learning*.