

**At your table, share what do you want
to get out of today's session?**



Small Group Facilitation Essential Skills

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The University of Vermont
LARNER COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

Ground rules for today

MINIMIZING DISTRACTIONS

- Put phone away, give yourself permission to step away

BEING PRESENT

- For this hour, commit to being a member of this group

STAYING ENGAGED/QUESTIONS

- Ask clarifying questions, be an active participant

RESPECT YOURSELF AND OTHERS

- Masks optional

MOVE UP/MOVE UP

- Invite members to move into roles they don't usually take

NAMING

- Name tag-- Preferred name, last initial, pronouns (if you would like)



Objectives



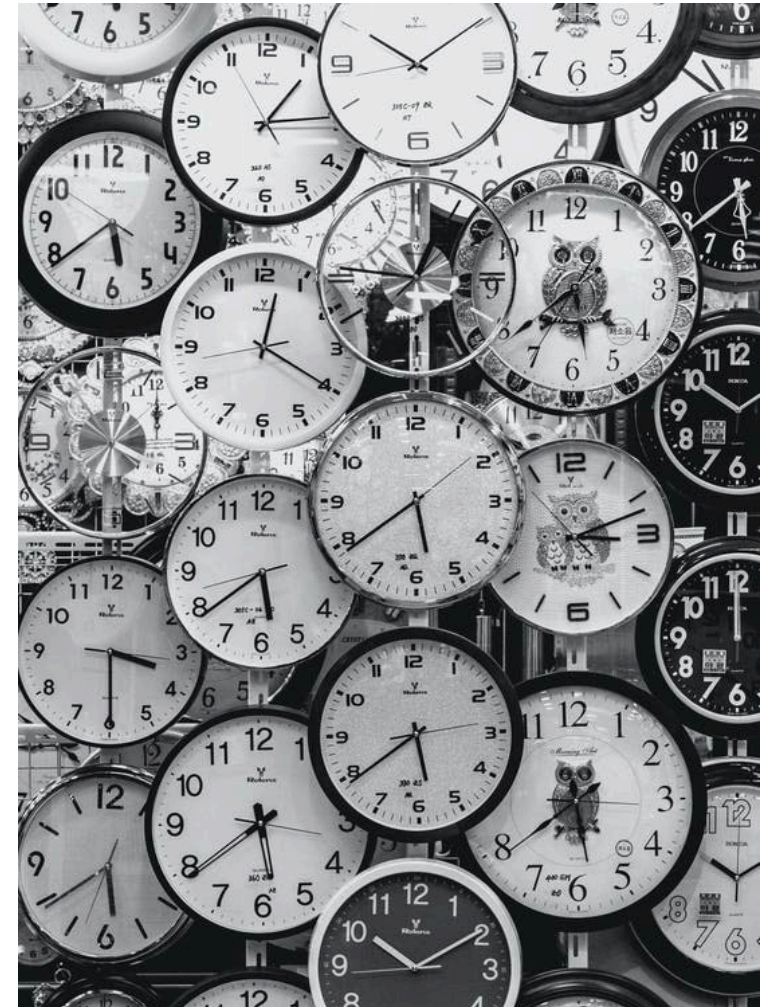
By the end of this session you will be able to:

- Define the role of a facilitator
- Identify educational opportunities to facilitate a small group
- Recognize the importance of creating a brave space (or environment) for effective communication and learning
- Name strategies for effective facilitation (preparation, staying on task, engagement, deepening conversations)
- Apply facilitation principles to an inperson small group session
- Practice key strategies in facilitation



Schedule

- Introductions & Ground Rules (10 min)
- Facilitation Overview (10 min)
- Facilitation Skills (20 min)
 - Practice Skills (20 min)
- Virtual Skills Tips (5 min)
- Close (10 min)



Introductions

3 minutes to share:

- Name
- Where you work
- Outside of work, what is one skill you wish you had?



"Idabo! What a coincidence—I'm from Idabo."



What is a Facilitator?

- a person who helps a group of people to work together better, understand their common objectives, and plan how to achieve these objectives, during meetings or discussions. (Wikipedia)
- an individual who guides the group to work more effectively, to collaborate and achieve synergy, and support the group to do their best thinking and practice.



Role of Facilitator

- Set agenda (1)
- Listen (2)
- Build upon participants' contributions (3)
- Summarize (4)
- Keep group on task (5)
- Not a leader (10)
- Not a participant (in most cases) (fist)

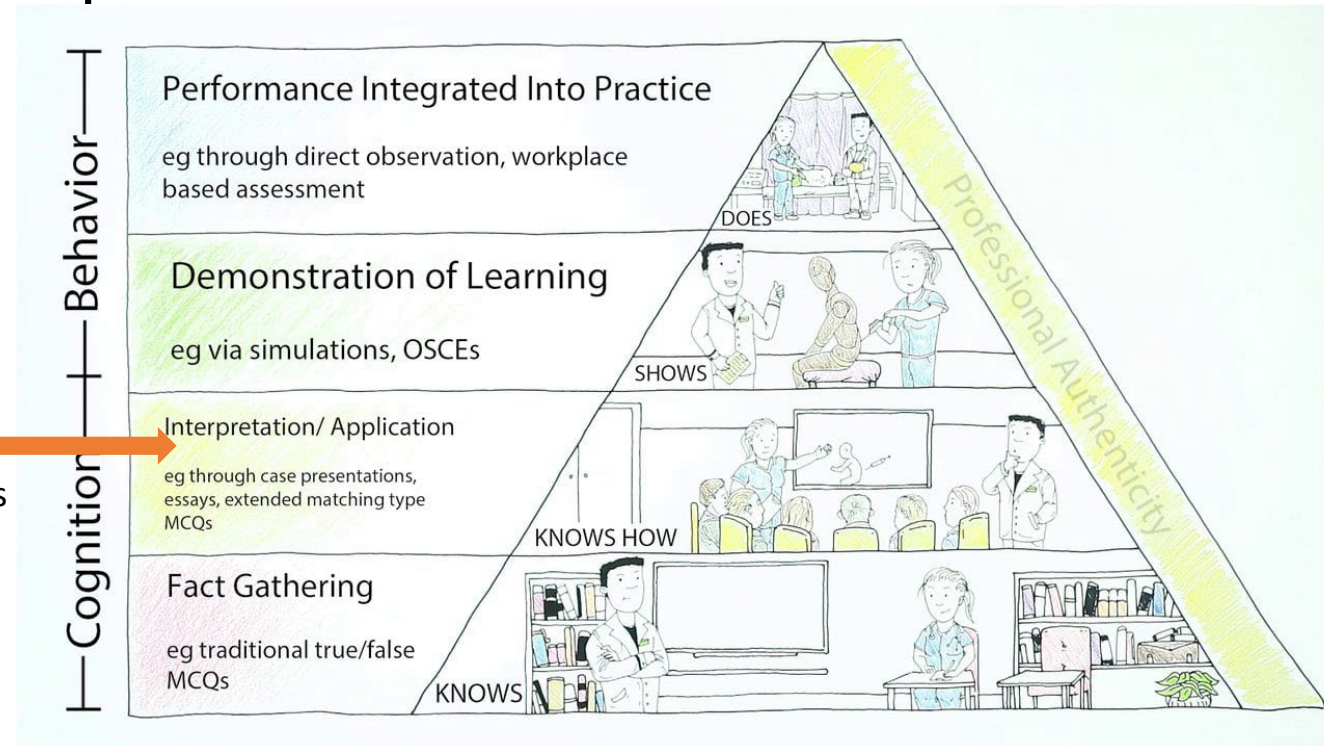


Opportunities for Small Group Facilitation

- When you want to go deeper in a topic
- Accomplish a task
- Controversial or complicated
- Connecting/Community building
- Processing

*No new material

Small groups are great for this



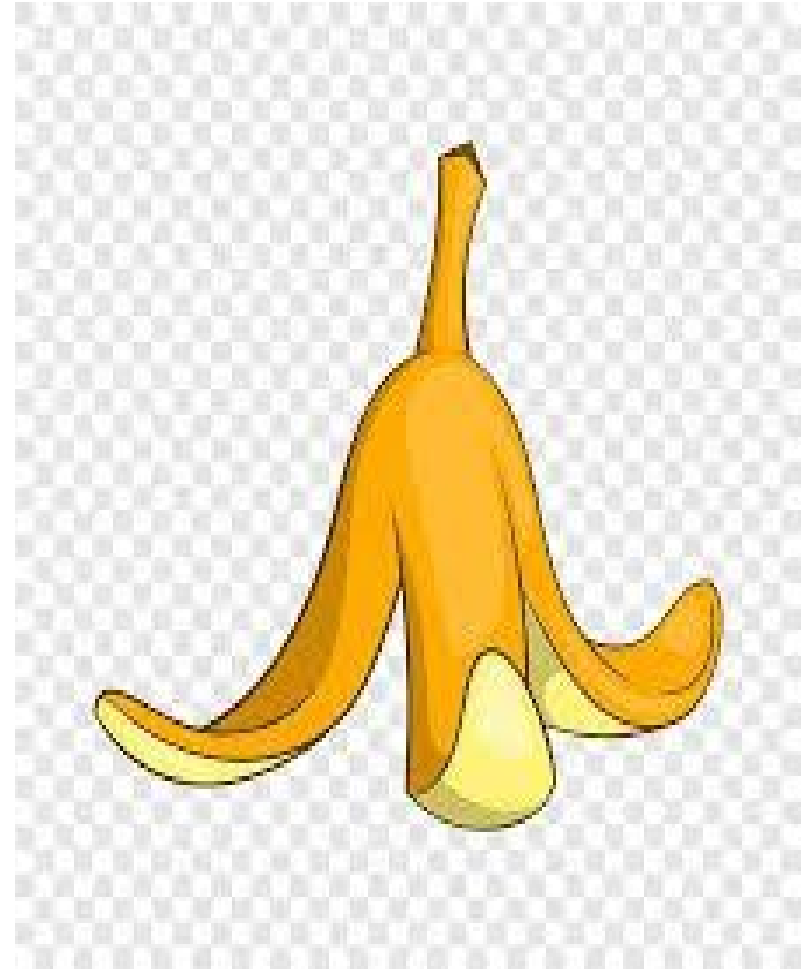
What are Common Challenges in Facilitating Small Groups?

snowball



Common Challenges and Pitfalls

- Time management
- Engagement of participants
- Safety
- Lack of clarity
- Preconceived agendas
- Mismatched expectations
- Superficial conversations



Skills for Small Group Facilitation



5 Strategies for Small Group Facilitation

- PREPARE for the session
- Create and maintain a BRAVE SPACE
- STAY on task
- ENGAGE the group
- DEEPEN conversations and learning



PREPARE for the Session

Review feedback

- If you have presented material previously

Review the materials

- If there is a complicated activity or use of technology, make sure you practice it so that it runs smoothly during the real session.

Plan with your co-facilitator

- Questions to ask your cofacilitator:
 - “What is the most important goal you want to achieve for this session?”
 - “What parts do you want to lead? Here is how I might ask for help?”

Strategize the session

- Gather supplies that are needed including a timer.



What can you do to create and safe/brave space?

pair/share



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Create and Maintain BRAVE SPACE

Start w/ lower stakes

- Using an Icebreaker
- Pair and Share

Model vulnerability

- Going First: “Let me share with one of the hardest moments for me when I was in middle school”
- Admitting mistakes, saying I don’t know

Encourage

- Expressing Gratitude: “Thank you so much for sharing that”
- Precise Praise: “That’s a really touching example of active listening”



STAY on Task

Communicate clear instructions

- Be clear about time constraints.
- Show or demonstrate instructions

Watch the Time

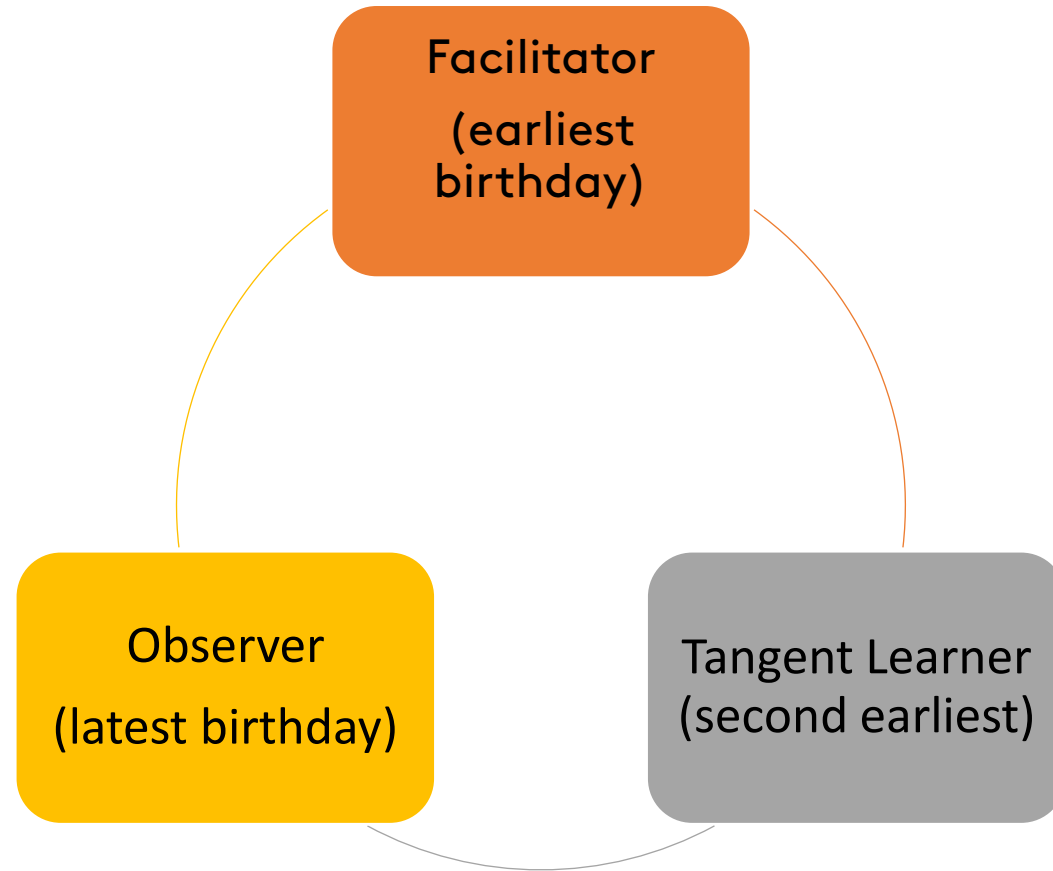
- Using a timer or watch (Time Timer app).
- Calling attention to time: “I am noticing that we have 15 more minutes left to the session”

Interrupt if needed

- Ask permission: “Would it be ok if we talk about our own experiences with discrimination?”
- Acknowledge and redirect: “I am hearing some really good comments here, how might a patient’s relationship to religion influence a new cancer diagnosis”



Group Practice



Pick one of two Situations for Practice

Conference Room Space: WOW

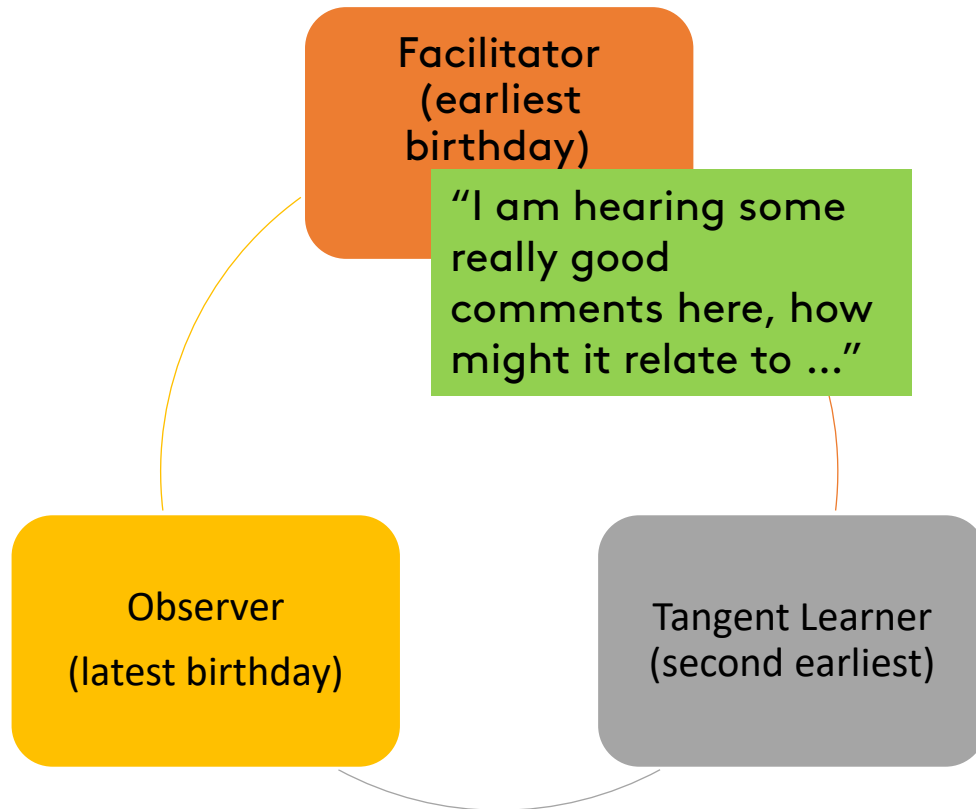
- Chair of your department has charged you with addressing complaints about the lack of diversity in the pictures on the wall in your conference room
- You are leading a discussion with key members of your department to discuss next steps

Student Discussion: National Health System

- As part of your course, your group of students is tasked to discuss the pros and cons of creating a national health system
- You are the facilitator leading this discussion



Group Practice for Interruptions (5 min)



Instructions

1. Facilitator will ask a question
"What are the potential benefits of swapping out the photos of past chairs?"
"What are the cons of a national health system in the US?"
2. Tangent learner goes on tangent
3. Facilitator interrupts and redirects the conversation
4. Observer gives feedback



ENGAGE the Group

Mix interaction types

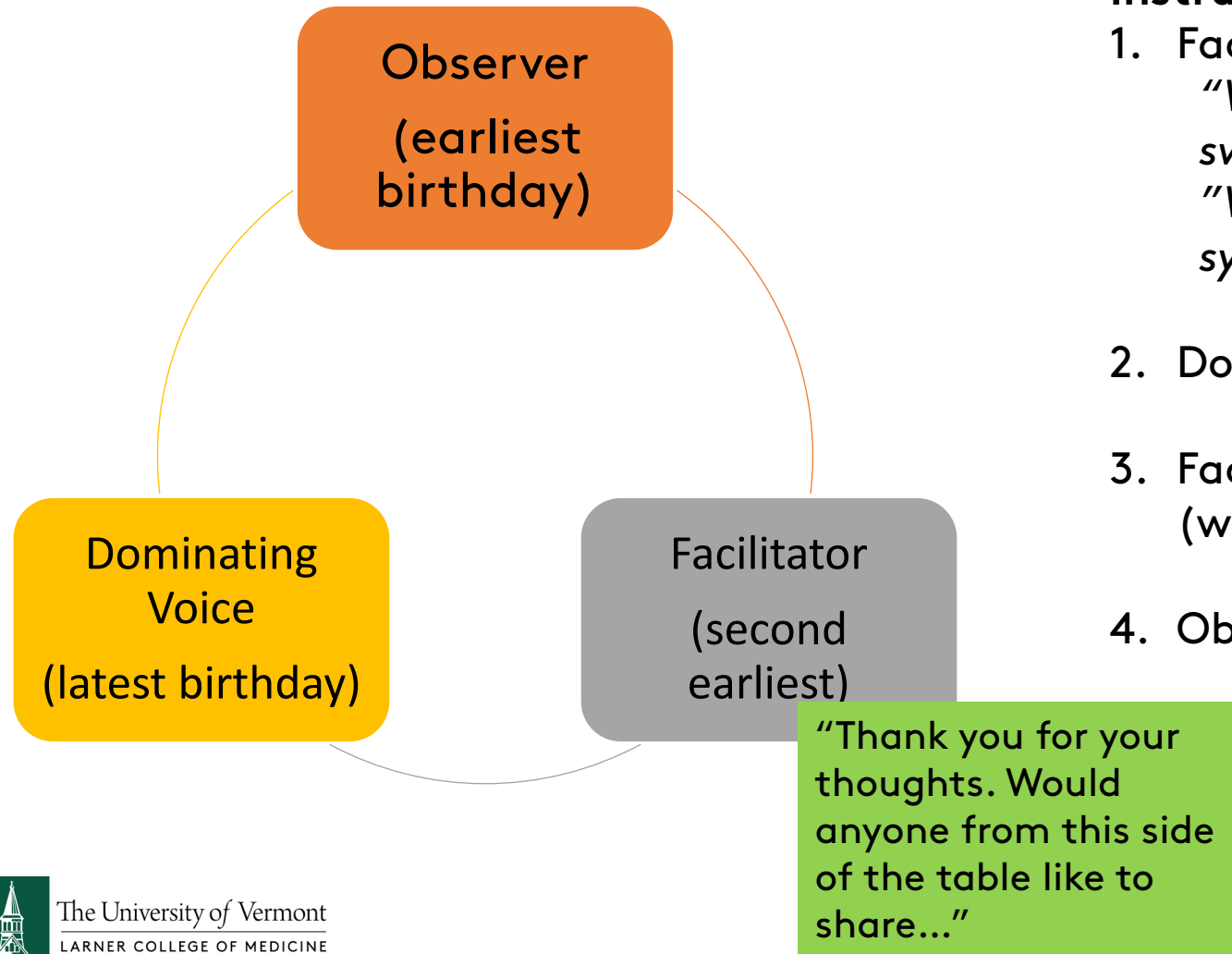
- Think-Pair-Share
- Snowball
- Get them on their feet

Encourage shared airtime

- Warm call: “Can I hear from someone who hasn’t gone yet? Let’s here from someone on this side of the room”
- Round Robin: “I will go around the room and ask everyone to share 1 idea they came up with”
- Write it down first: Some people just need extra time. Asking people to write an answer down first provides time for reflection



Group Practice for Shared-air-time (5 min)



Instructions

1. Facilitator will ask a question
"What are the potential benefits of swapping out the photos of past chairs?"
"What are the cons of a national health system in the US?"
2. Dominating voice tries to dominate
3. Facilitator uses a shared-airtime skill
(warm call, writing the information down)
4. Observer gives feedback

Deepen the conversations and learning

Clarifying

- “That’s a really interesting... can you tell me more about what you mentioned?”

Building off of/ Piggyback

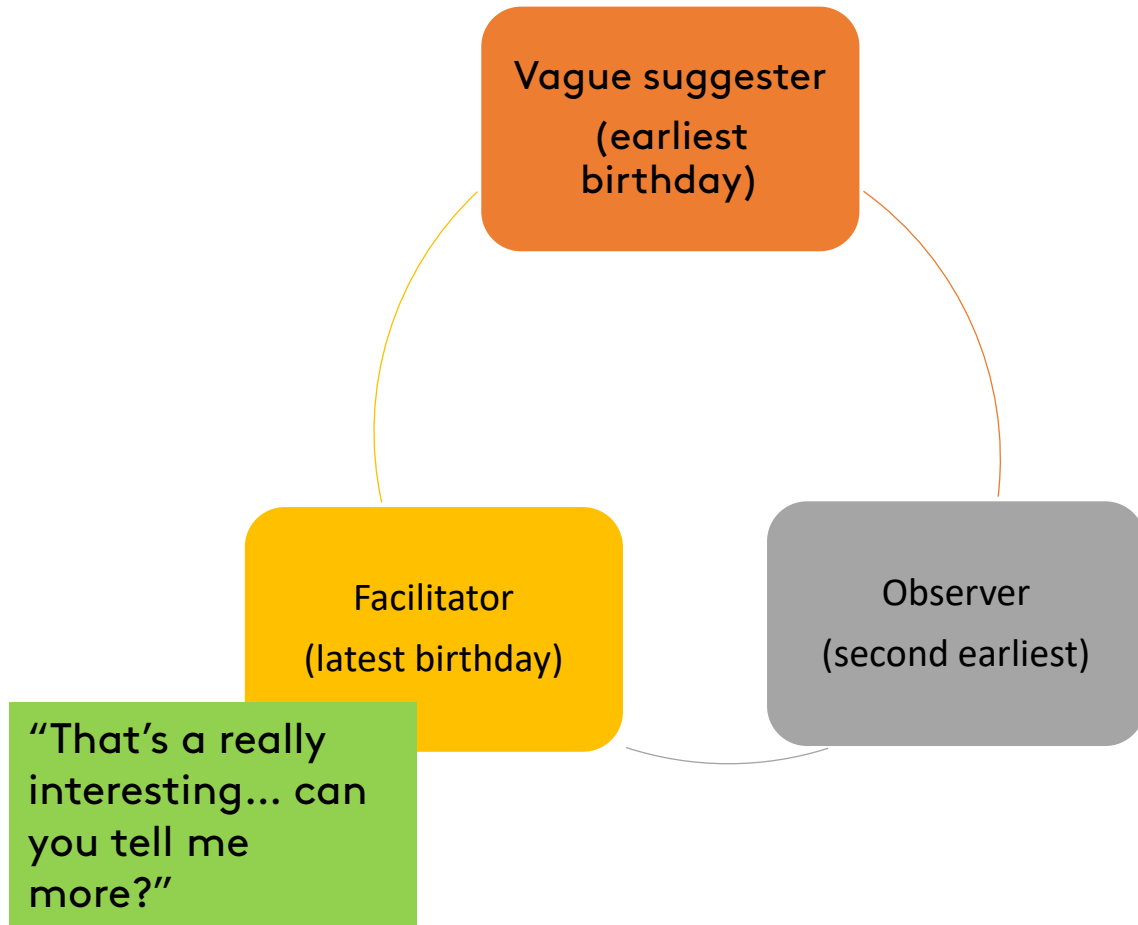
- “Would anyone want to add to Jeremiah’s comment?”

Shifting Perspective

- “We talked about why this is a positive thing, can anyone say why it could be a problem?”



Group Practice for deepening (5 min)



Instructions

1. Facilitator will ask a question
"What are the potential benefits of swapping out the photos of past chairs?"
"What are the cons of a national health system in the US?"
2. Group member gives superficial comment
3. Facilitator uses a deepening skill (clarifying, piggyback, paraphrase)
4. Observer gives feedback



Virtual Small Group Tips



Common Pitfalls for Virtual Facilitation

- Tech gets in the way (no video, echoes)
 - Unstable connections
- Disengaged
- Distractions
- Problematic location
- Fatigue
- Awkward



Applying to the Virtual Environment

Facilitation Skills	Tips
PREPARE	Understand technology Practice using technology Establish host/help Send out expectations
maintain BRAVE SPACE	Reminder of virtual ground rules Ice Breaker with virtual environment Pop up rules (e.g. dog or child comes into room, must introduce them) Tech forgiveness
STAY on task	Use timer functions Multiple monitors More cold calls
ENGAGE the group	Unmute and video rules (good tech and good location) Breakout rooms Chat
DEEPEN the conversation	Poll Function Annotate

What is One Takeaway You Got From Today's Session?

write down on a piece of paper and then share with group



References

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