

**In the Chat, share what do you want to  
get out of today's session?**



# Virtual Small Group Facilitation Essential Skills

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LARNER COLLEGE OF MEDICINE

# Ground rules for zoom today

## MINIMIZING DISTRACTIONS

- Minimize windows, put phone away, permission to step away

## BEING PRESENT

- Video on, silent but unmuted, set to gallery view

## STAYING ENGAGED/QUESTIONS

- Use the chat, annotate

## MOVE UP/MOVE UP

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

## NAMING

- Add first name, last initial, pronouns (if you want)

# Objectives

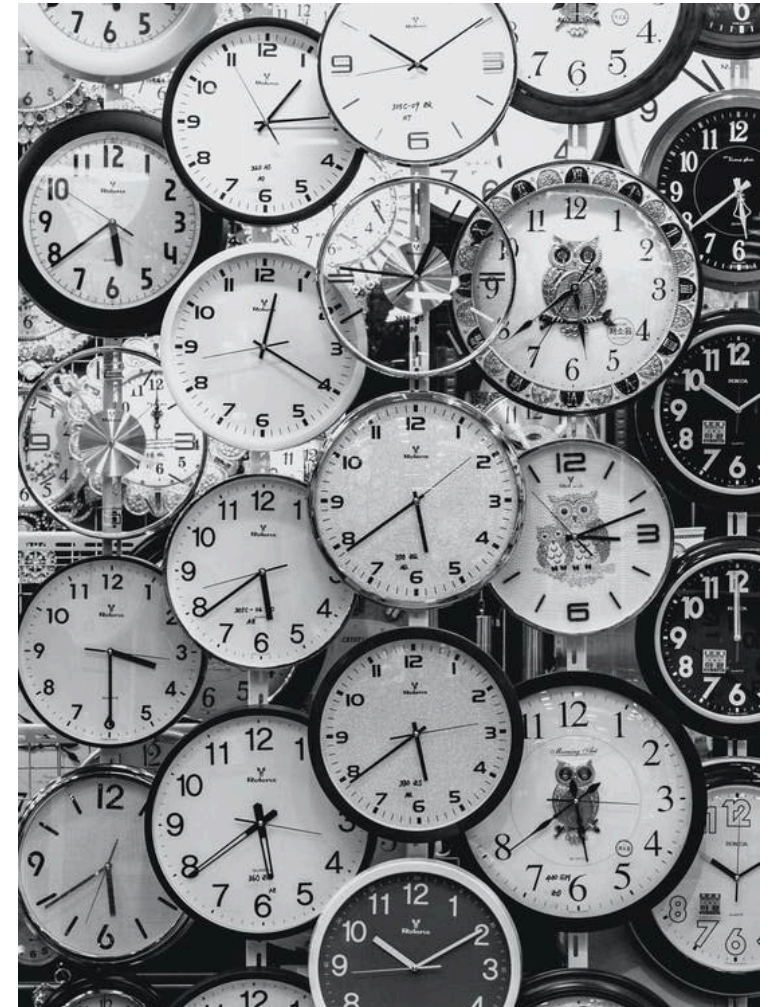
By the end of this session, you will be able to:

- 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 virtual small groups
- Practice key strategies in facilitation



# Schedule

- Introductions & Ground Rules (5 min)
- Facilitation Overview (15 min)
- Facilitation Skills (20 min)
  - Practice Skills (20 min)
- In-Person Skills (10 min)
- Close (5 min)



# Introductions

3 minutes to share:

- Name
- Where you work
- An item of importance in the room where you are right now



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



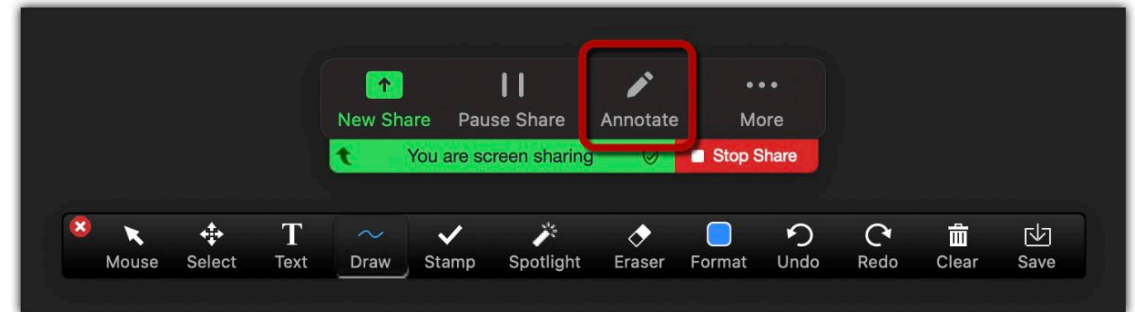
# What is a facilitator?

- 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
- Listen
- Build upon participants' contributions
- Summarize
- Keep group on task
- Not a leader
- Not a participant (in most cases)



Annotate what you think is the most important

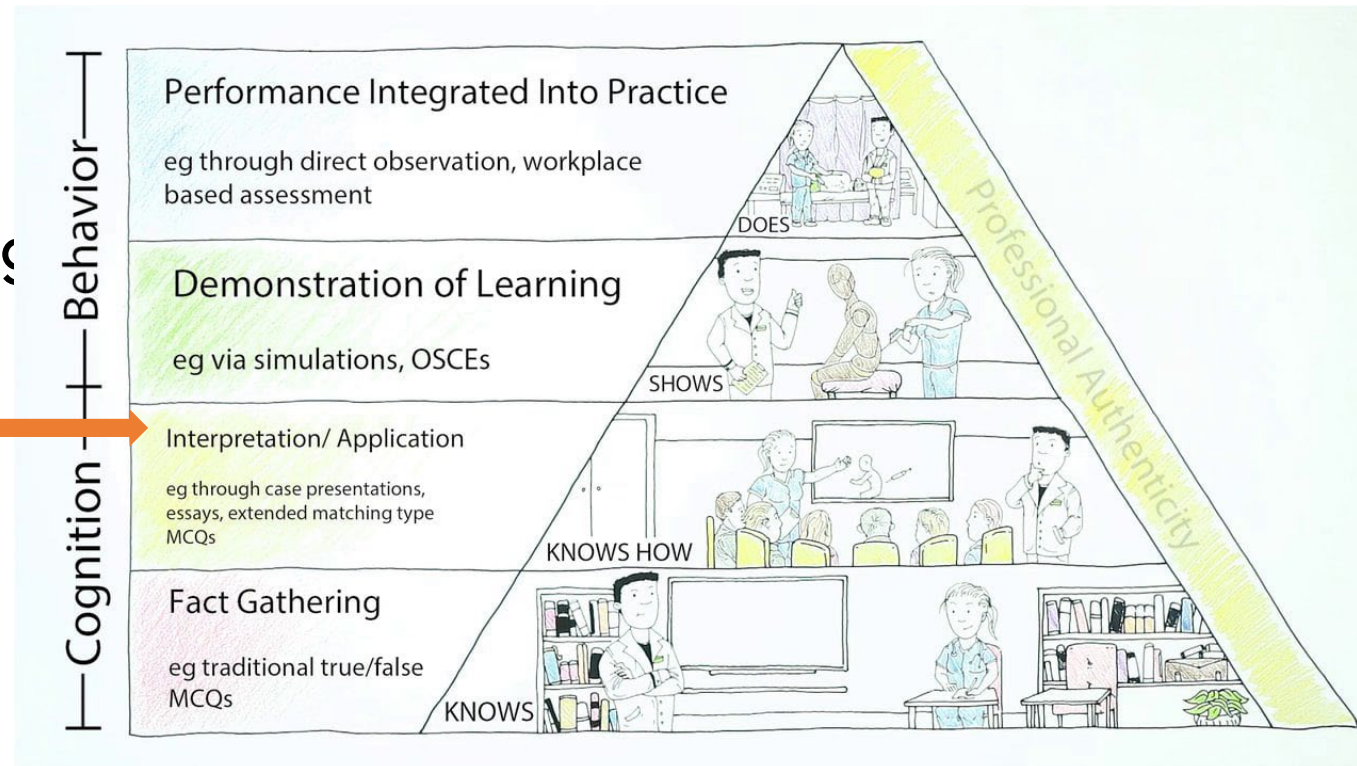


# Opportunities for Small Group Facilitation

- 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 Any Small Group?

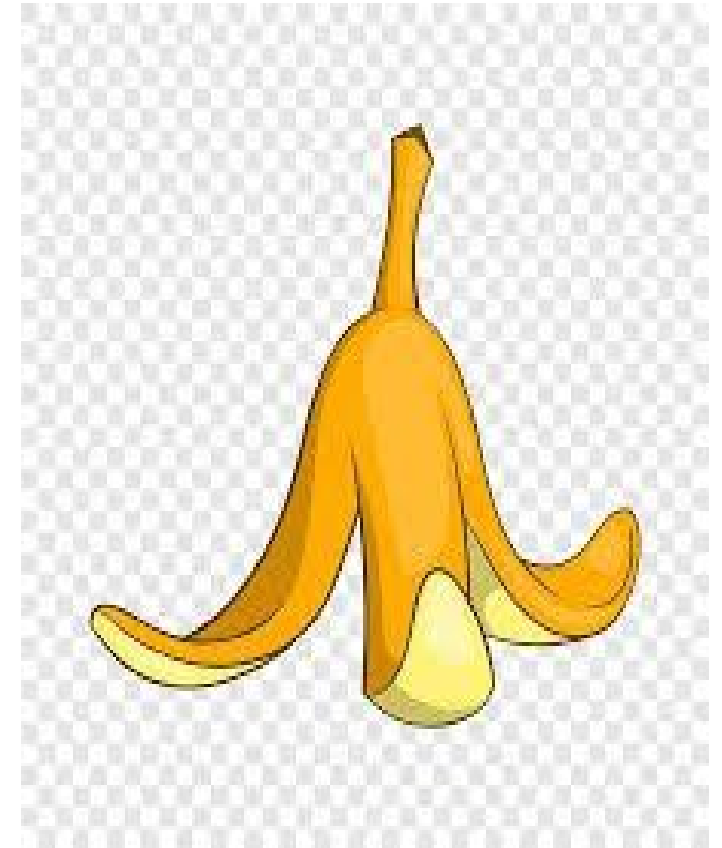


**Breakout rooms**



# Common Challenges and Pitfalls

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



# What are Common Virtual Challenges in Small Group Facilitation?



**Chat waterfall**



# Virtual Pitfalls

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

# Skills for Small Group Facilitation

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# 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 Virtual Session

## Review feedback

- If you have presented material previously

## Review the materials

- If there is a complicated activity, make sure you practice it so that it runs smoothly during the real session.
- Get to know your virtual platform and its capabilities

## Plan with your co-facilitator

- Establish host/tech person
- 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.
- Sign on early
- Practice the tech





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

chat waterfall



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# Create and Maintain BRAVE SPACE for Virtual Settings

## Start w/ lower stakes

- Using an Icebreaker that connects people virtually
- Virtual ground rules
- Pair and Share in Breakout rooms
- Pop up rules

## 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
- Tech forgiveness

## 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
- Multiple monitors

## Watch the Time

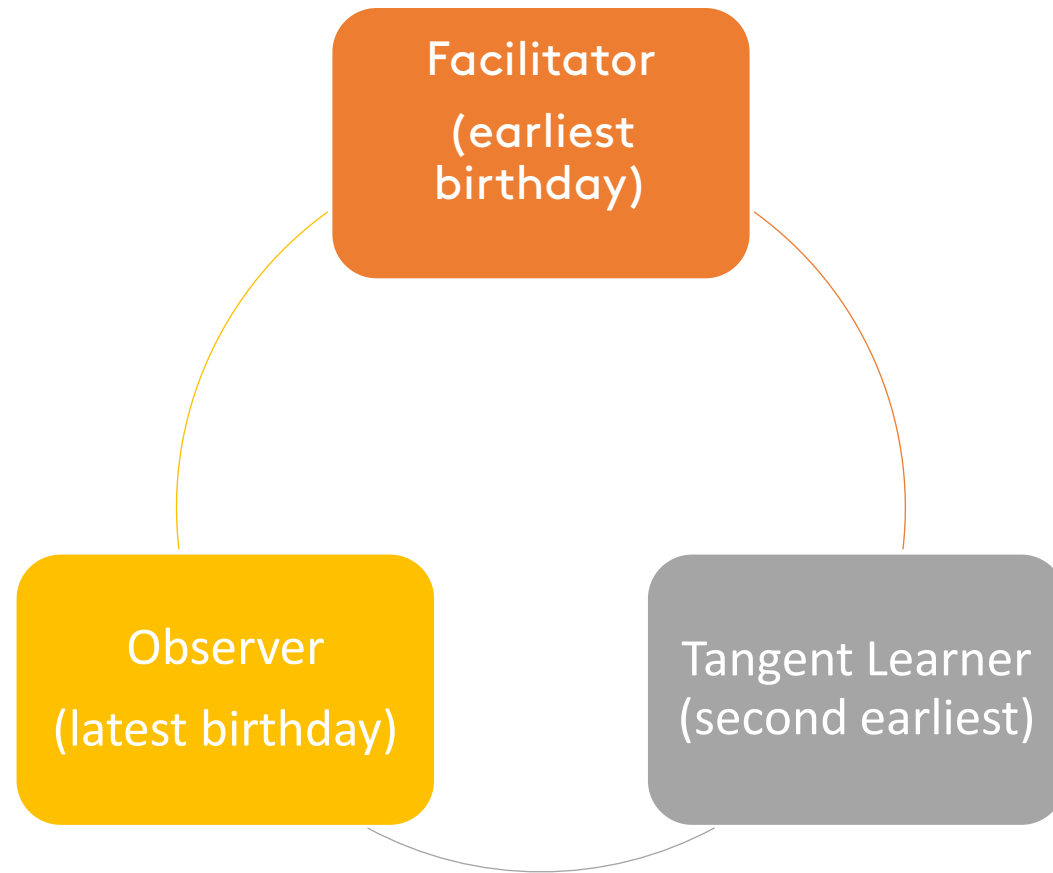
- Using a timer or watch (Time Timer app), time functions in platform
- Calling attention to time: "I am noticing that we have 15 more minutes left to the session"

## 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"
- Cold call or popcorn for flow



# Group Practice for Interruptions (5 min)



# Two Situations for Practice

## Conference Room Space: WOW

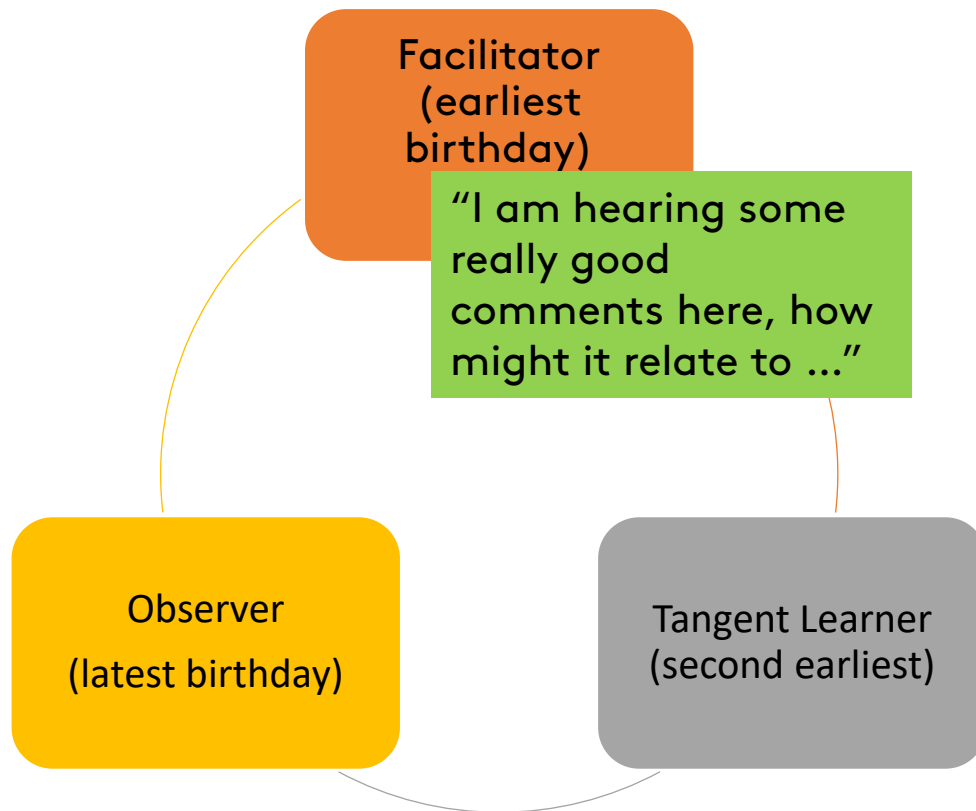
- Chair of your department has charged you with addressing complaints about the lack of diversity in the pictures on the wall in your conference room
- You are leading a discussion with key members of your department to discuss next steps

## 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
- 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

- Break out rooms
- Chat/chat waterfall
- Unmute/Video on
- Get them on their feet

## Encourage shared airtime

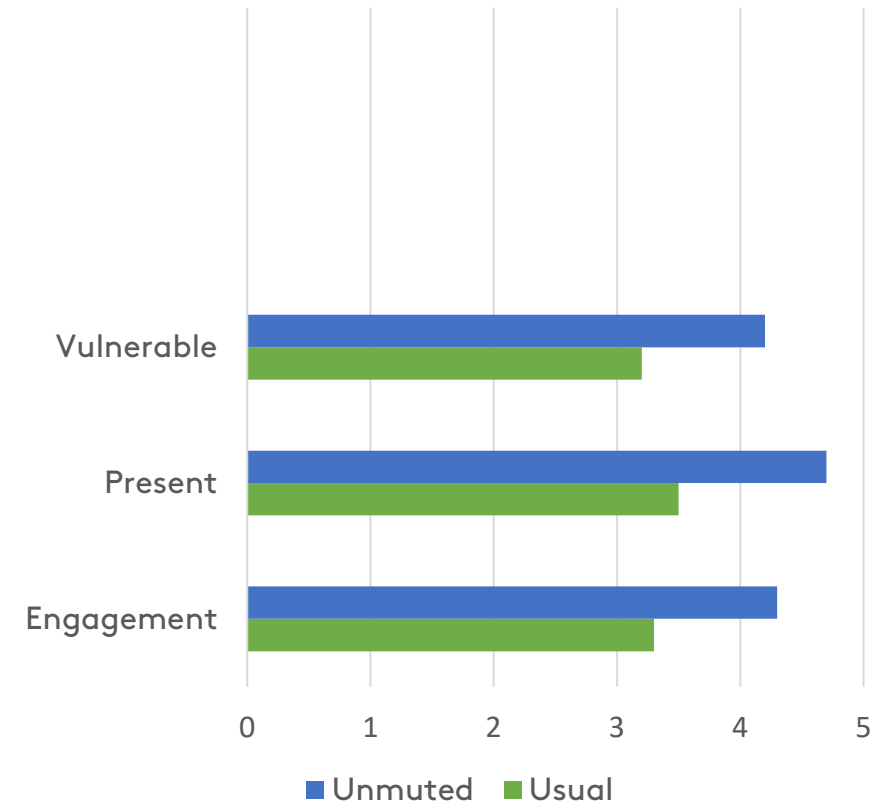
- Warm call: “Can I hear from someone who hasn’t gone yet? Let’s here from someone who works with residents”
- Round Robin: “I will go around the room and ask everyone to share 1 idea they came up with”
- Write it down first: Some people just need extra time. Asking people to write an answer down first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



# UNMUTE the Entire Session

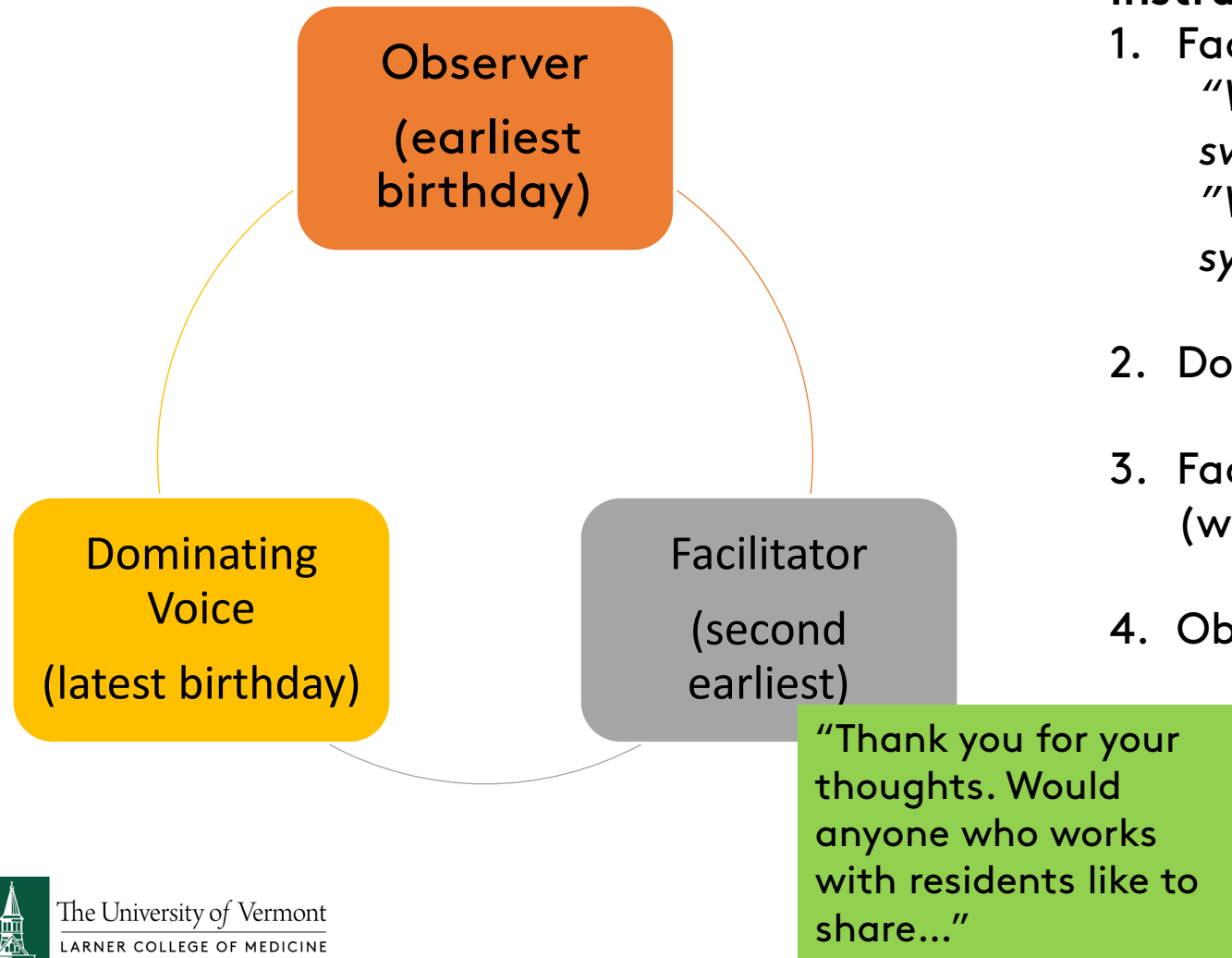


PCR Groups Self Rating





# 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?”**
- **Annotate**

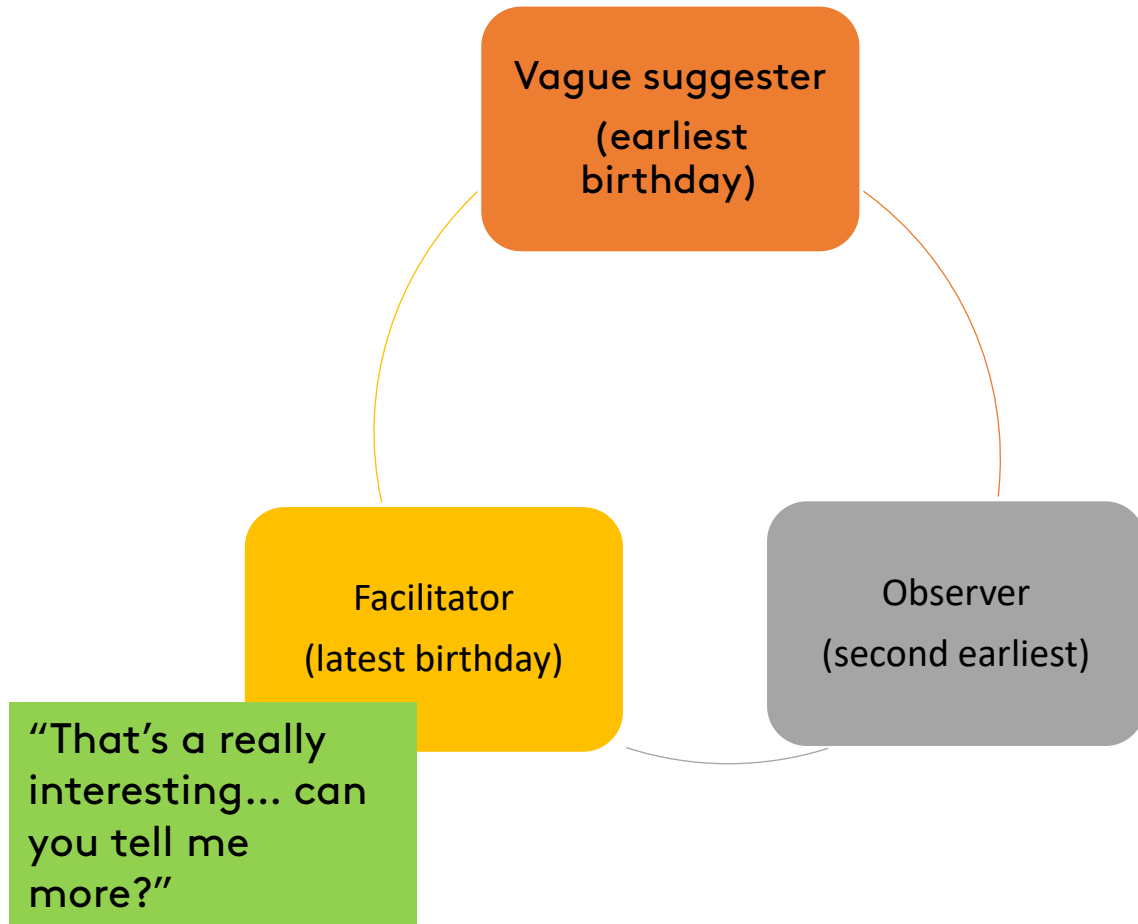
## Paraphrasing

- **“What I am hearing you say is that tracking non-verbal cues are really important to active listening”**

## Shifting Perspective

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

# 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



# Applying to the In Person Environment

Facilitation Skills	Tips
PREPARE	Cofacilitation check in--nonverbal cues Check out the room
maintain BRAVE SPACE	Icebreakers Pair and Share (sides of the room) Food/Treats
STAY on task	Use timers (e.g time-timer app) Agenda on the wall Introduce big goals
ENGAGE the group	Change up activities Pair and Share Snowball Role call Energize-- up on feet
DEEPEN the conversation	Finger polls Debates

# Conversations and Close

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**share one takeaway in chat**



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

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share one takeaway in chat



# References

- Huggett , Kathryn N, and William B.Jeffries. 2014. An Introduction to Medical Teaching. Springer, pp 27-39.
- Jaques, D. (2003), Teaching Small Groups. *BMJ: British Medical Journal*, 326(7387), 492-494.
- Deflavio, JR et al. (2015).“Analysis of Barriers to Adoption of Buprenorphine Maintenance Therapy by Family Physicians”. *Rural and Remote Health*, 15:3019.