

Should we surf or deep sea dive?

Ideas about assessing how “deep” your facilitation of processing should go.



Facilitation is the art of opening doors and windows for others...facilitation helps the group discover its own wisdom and learning. (The Appreciative Facilitator)

*The voice is a wild thing, it cannot be bred in captivity.
--Willa Cather*

CHALLENGE OF CHOICE

Simply put, the degree to which participants have choice in their process and content is the degree to which the outcome will be theirs. Choice allows participants to feel emotionally and physically safe. Individuals who feel safe are more likely to take risks: in physical challenges, in being open with others, and in considering other points of view. For some individuals, the profound discovery is that they *have* a choice – for their actions, words, thoughts, and even feelings. Choice can transform the entire tone of an experience. Consider the difference between someone who goes skydiving, and someone who is thrown from a plane. Choice is complex, and requires practice. It is about finding one’s voice. It is about being allowed to make mistakes. Individuals who choose an experience are more likely to take ownership of their mistakes, and learn from them. “Challenge of Choice” lets participants choose the level of challenge that works best for them. Even if they choose to observe, there is always a way for them to participate. Giving other people choice builds trust. Of course, as a facilitator, you too have choice... giving your group choice does not mean you have to endure choices that are dangerous, emotionally damaging, unethical, or illegal. The key is to refer back to the ground rules – all choices must occur within that framework. And finally, what if they won’t play? This can be the scariest part of encouraging choice. When this happens, don’t panic. Treat it as relevant information, and ask yourself: what need is going unmet? It might be time to take a break, adjust the activity to make it more fun or challenging, to shift the focus back onto the participants, or to open the floor to observations about what is happening in the group.

Sample Questions

MAKING DECISIONS

1. What major decision point(s) did you have?
2. How did you decide? Who decided?
3. On a scale of 1-5, how happy are you with the way your family made the decision?
4. What’s the ideal way for this family to make decisions? How would this impact the family?
5. What would your family be like back at home if your family made decisions this way?
6. When will you plan to make decisions in this way?

PROBLEM SOLVING

1. When did you clearly identify the problem to solve?
2. How many times did you try an idea before moving on to another idea?
3. Was that an effective number of times? Too few/too many? What’s an ideal number?
4. What did you learn about how your family solves problems?
5. When we get to an even harder problem, what do you think we should do?
6. Tell me about an unsolved problem you have waiting at home. What will you do differently now?

SUPPORTING

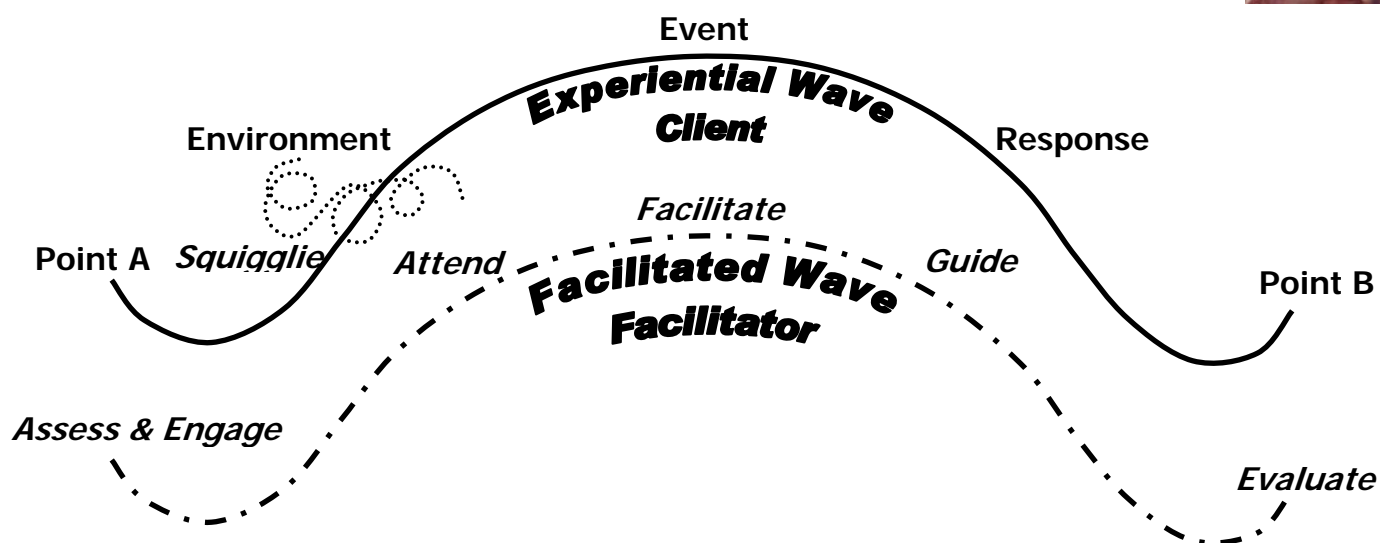
1. Go around the group... each person describe what someone did to support others.
2. Tell me about a time when support was high. How did that impact the group?
3. When support gets low, how can you boost it?
4. How does it feel to be supported by the rest of the family?
5. What will you do to show support in the next initiative?
6. If you were a highly supportive family back home, what would that look like?

PERSONAL FEELINGS

1. Go around the group...name a feeling you had at any point during this challenge.
2. What feelings do you believe others were having? How can you tell? (Check with others for accuracy.)
3. What personal beliefs were responsible for generating the feeling(s) you experienced?
4. Would you like to feel differently in a similar situation? If so, how?
5. What beliefs would you need to have in future situations in order to feel this way?
6. Which difficult feelings would be helpful to express appropriately in future situations? Can you commit to doing that?

Experiential Wave!¹

The process involved in experiencing life is familiar to all of us. We engage in it multiple times daily when assessing and understanding personal issues, planning home activities, managing our work lives, our friendships, and negotiating issues within our neighborhoods. We are also regularly involved in the facilitation of experiences, either as participants or leaders, for other people including our children, co-workers, students and friends. The experiential wave provides us a model so that we may better understand how to facilitate play with more



purpose.

	Point A	Environment	Event	Response	Point B
Student	The whole of one's past experiences, values, beliefs, goals, etc.	External circumstances, e.g., space, weather, location, time of day, norms/values/ beliefs of the setting, etc. Squiggles are anything that takes energy, focus, & attention from the event.	The activities one engages in throughout life.	Generally guided by one's idealized view of life, life direction & goals (Point B) as well as one's identity & life experience (Point A).	One's idealized view of life, life direction, or life goals.
Facilitator	<i>Assess: Prepare by understanding the past history. Facilitate by finding out who showed up, what accompanied them, immediately issues to address, & the current experiential functioning.</i>	<i>Assess & Attend: Prepare by considering previously existing environmental conditions & determining what needs attention. Facilitate creating the desired environment by assessing current operational conditions (safety, trust, connection, enjoyment, challenge, freedom, & communication), what needs attention (the squiggles), & matching activities to address these needs.</i>	<i>Facilitate: Prepare by knowing Point B & planning how you might get there. Facilitate the process that will get you there (matching intervention, sequencing, etc.).</i>	<i>Guide Learning: Facilitate every opportunity to point the participants toward the experiential learning cycle as the experience unfolds, create opportunities for participants to think about their interactions/ thoughts/behavior in the here-& -now, & importance of self-understanding.</i>	<i>Evaluate: Prepare by observing what happened and noticing progress toward point B. Facilitate by engaging participant(s) in the experiential learning cycle, observing what happened, reflecting on the experience, generalizing beyond the here-&-now, & applying learning to life.</i>

¹ The Experiential Wave theory is excerpted from a work in progress excerpted by Alvarez & Stauffer. They acknowledge & appreciate the work of Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe in *Islands of Healing*, the first to use the wave analogy.

Intentional Sequencing for Community Building²

Outcomes:	Making Connections	Developing Identity (Team & Individual)	Mutual Support	Valuing Differences	Developing Synergy
Metaphor	Seed opens...	Noticing the type of tree...	Growing roots...	Growing Branches...	Blossoming
Assessment (participant behavior entering this stage)	Group is polite, hesitant “What are we going to do?” “Is it okay to be myself?”	Group identifies coping strategies and habits of individuals	Group identifies needs and wants	Group identifies differences in task, process, identity, group membership	Group commits to put aside personal baggage in service to the greater good/ super-ordinate goal
Group Dynamic Goal	ID “public” details, make connections	Emphasize roles, norms that create equilibrium	Commit to addressing needs/wants of members, group	Learn how to use differences as resources	ID and manifest highest good
Facilitator Role	Lead, invite, model, redirect, set tone/pace	Invite, challenge, shift to resource, allow time, listen for common ground, redirect, “Did you notice...?”	Clarify, reframe, normalize, contain, invite, “Did you notice...?”	Reframe, make space, hold accountable, invite, “What did you notice?”	Observe, reflect, inquire, invite, challenge, “What did you notice?”
Tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge of choice Learning names Curiosity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge of choice Phantom rules Ready circle One hand, one voice 5 finger contract Creating rituals “And... we’re back!” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge of choice I statements Behaviors, not people (feedback) Thumbs consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge of choice Reframe Mental models Dialogue vs. discussion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Challenge of choice Contribution mapping Process mapping
Types of Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Acquaintance Deinhibitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Deinhibitors Communication: basic skills Goal Setting: Task/Individual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication: open opinions Consensus Support (leads to trust) Goal Setting: Group Oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Communication: conflict resolution Support (leading to trust) Goal Setting: value oriented 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group problem-solving Communication: speaking the vision Goal Setting: vision oriented
Example Activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Name Games Have You Ever 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Team Cheer Team Name Warp Speed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Rocket Launch Human Camera Leaf Lift 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Values on the Line 90 second history 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2B or Knot 2B Infinite Circle
Assessment (participant behavior exiting this stage)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established climate of fun, safety, challenge, purpose, and value Awareness of behavior/impact; focused on present ↑ interaction OK to be curious 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identified culture-valued resources, Developing task goals and norms, commitment to goals Responsible for own behaviors, knowledge ↑ rituals/ metaphoric ID OK to be a member 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared values, processing goals/norms Balance honesty with care for others Willing to experiment with new ways of being ↑ intentional risk-taking OK to be imperfect 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Making room for people to truly be themselves Starting to generalize to larger picture – long-term for this group and/or other groups ↑ transparency OK to be different 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Group commits to manifesting highest good. ↑ flow/integration OK to jut be/just do

² Developed in collaboration with Pathfinder, Inc. & Life Adventures Counseling & Consulting