

FACT SHEET

Network meeting facilitation tips

This fact sheet provides some tips to help meet the challenges of facilitating a network meeting.

The purpose of MHPN meetings

While each network will determine their own purpose, the overarching objective of all MHPN activities is to promote interdisciplinary practice amongst mental health practitioners. To this end, MHPN encourages coordinators to allow time for networking during meetings.

Top tip...

An easy way to encourage members to learn about each other's field of expertise is to allow 10 minutes at the beginning of each meeting for introductions.

Who can facilitate a network meeting

While each network will agree upon its own way of deciding who facilitates each network meeting, the opportunity to do so can provide a development opportunity for practitioners who may not have had this experience before.

General facilitation guidelines

Generally speaking, in the MHPN context a facilitator is the person who works with the group to help them achieve the network's objectives. The facilitator's focus is often on helping to create a collaborative culture within the group where people share and communicate readily, where different perspectives are valued and where it is safe to have an opposing view.

Tips and guidelines for facilitating a network meeting

Depending on the type of meeting, different challenges may be encountered.

Group discussions of any kind

A group discussion can include a variety of meeting styles – discussion of a case study or peer reviews.

The table on the following page provides some suggestions on how to overcome some common challenges in facilitating group discussions.

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Tips to help overcome common challenges in group discussions

CHALLENGE	TIP
Straying off topic	Bring to group’s attention by making a statement like, “We agreed to meet to discuss the case study. By talking about [alternative topic] we aren’t doing that. Perhaps we could talk about [alternative topic] in our next meeting. What do others think?”
A particular avenue of discussion is upsetting or alienating some participants	Stop the session briefly and address what’s happening. For example, “It looks to me like some people aren’t comfortable with the current discussion. What would you like to happen so you feel more at ease?”
Dealing with dominators	<ul style="list-style-type: none">> Remind the group that everyone is encouraged to actively participate.> Ask other people in the group for their opinion/experience.
Time management	Set an agenda that clearly allocates time for different parts of the meeting/discussion.
Conflict resolution	Acknowledge the conflict and ask the group how they’d like to proceed.
Involving quiet participants	Make eye contact with a quiet participant when you are asking a direct question of the group.

Did you know ...
Your project officer can provide further advice about strategies to help successfully facilitate network meetings. Call MHPN to learn more.

Want more information? Contact MHPN

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