

# Helpful Phrases and Ideas for Your Facilitation Toolbox

## For presenting or sticking to the agenda:

- “How many of you have had meetings that have gone on too long? I’m here to help us put together a good plan and be finished in two hours.”
- “I’m committed to getting us done by 9:30 and doing that by keeping to the agenda. Is that OK?”
- Acknowledge the need to talk and acknowledge people’s lives are busy, that’s why the meeting will be done in 2hrs.
- Reference a specific time to complete the meeting.

## Naming situations out loud/recognizing a difficult situation:

- “I see you need to get going, can we finish up this last point in the five minutes or less?”
- Say how long the next section will take.
- Flip though the rest of the consultation to show where it is going.
- Have people write things down. Go around the room.
- Use people’s names.
- Ask open-ended questions.
- Bring the rest of the group into the situation.
- Don’t ignore issues.
- Add to the agenda.

## For refocusing the group:

- “Can I tell you something interesting...”
- Use “And” instead of “But.”
- Say the person’s name: “Kim...”
- “I have an opinion about that. Do you want to hear it?”
- “Let me interrupt you...”
- Walk near the person.
- Use humor.
- Take a 5 minute break.
- Have people take out a piece of paper and write things down to shift the dynamic.
- Ask a pointed question.

## For answering a challenging question or trying to help decide on thorny issue:

- “In our experience here’s what works and here’s why...”
- “You’ve heard from Sally and you’ve heard from me, what do the rest of you think?”
- Show people consequences of one side and the other- pros & cons as a last result

## For dealing with a negative perspective or challenging personality:

- “That’s one perspective, what do the rest of you think?”
- “Clearly you’ve given a lot of thought to this AND I want to hear what others think.”
- “I’m here to help work with you at the point that you think it can be worked on. What do you think can be done?”
- “It’s great you’re playing the devil’s advocate AND what do the rest of you think?”
- “With all due respect, I see it differently and so do others here it seems.”
- “Matt, hear me out...”

## For encouraging discussion/brainstorming:

- “You’re all experts of your community, so let’s hear from each of you...”
- “Alyssa, what do you think?”
- Have everyone write something.
- Have people partner up.
- Tell a story and then ask a question.
- Go around the room and everyone says one thing.
- Call out people. Compliment people.