



FACILITATING DISCUSSIONS

Focus Discussion

- Focus on discussion process rather than the detail of the content.
- Use questioning strategies.
- Restate the question if the group gets off track.
- Summarize main points.
- Transition between the conclusion of one issue and introduction of the next.

Practice Effective Discussion Skills

- Refocus discussion by restating the issues at hand.
- Ask probing questions to clarify ambiguous issues.
- Promote listening, not analyzing, of members' input.
- When a particular topic is exhausted, direct discussion to the next topic.
- Periodically summarize the group's position on an issue.
- Identify areas of agreement and disagreement.
- At the end of every session, review highlights of the discussion.

Create a Positive Group Environment

- Be accepting of other people's viewpoints.
- Focus on ideas, not people.
- Don't let disagreements become personal.
- Discourage a win/lose approach to discussion.