

FACILITATING EFFECTIVE MEETINGS

**Need some tips on holding your next meeting?
NYLC has some ideas to make your meeting a success!**

Safe Space: A space that is safe for everyone to learn and grow is one of the most important parts of facilitating meetings because without a safe space, you run the risk of creating an environment where people can be harmed and leave feeling upset or worse. Creating an atmosphere where people feel comfortable with each other leads to trust and better conversations and work

Creating a safe space:

- **Awareness of the Group:** make sure that your activities are inclusive of everyone. Consider ability when planning activities and icebreakers to ensure no one is left out
- **Gender Inclusive Language:** Before beginning a meeting, ask people to share their pronouns to avoid any misgendering. In addition, address groups of people with gender neutral language such as y'all, folks, everyone, etc
- **Space:** Encourage everyone, including yourself, to be conscious and respectful of space. If one person seems to be speaking quite often, encourage them to share the space and allow other voices to be heard. Make a note to keep track of who tends to talk the most and encourage others to jump in. If it seems as though no one has anything to say, embrace the silence and allow folks to have time to collect their thoughts. Honor that silence and allow people to still have space even if they have nothing to say
- **Establish Group Norms:** have the group come up with group norms and expectations for the meeting, the group, and the space
 - Document norms and place in a visible space
 - Be sure to come back to them each time you meet
 - Let members know this is a "living document," meaning it can be changed and altered at any time with the group's approval
 - The group should create the norms together as it enforces ownership of the document for everyone

Ice Breakers: Ice breakers help create community and provide an opportunity for members to get to know each other through making connections and establishing relationships among members. As mentioned, consider different types of icebreakers to help ensure every member is able to participate

Agendas

- Agendas make sure the meeting stays on time, all the tasks are able to be accomplished, and you don't forget anything
- For a meeting with a multiple action items or parts, consider sending out an agenda ahead of time or print copies for folks at the meeting

Facilitation of Conversations

- What type of meeting is it? Social? Educational? Make sure to tell your members/ participants what type of meeting you are holding so they are prepared
- For social meetings, if you have money bring snacks! People love snacks. Make sure to have space and activities planned so people are engaged. These meetings are important for building community and bringing people together
- For educational meetings or meetings that are more lecture/work, consider inviting outside speakers. Have a mix of mediums when presenting (PowerPoint, video, images, interactive activities) to ensure folks aren't bored and want to pay attention and stay engaged
- Follow the tips suggested before about creating space for people to talk and share ideas

Reflection/Discussion/Questions

- Reflection is important! Hold a reflection so folks can talk about what they learned, how they felt, and tie up any loose ends. Offer this as a space to ask questions and gain clarity on anything that may have been confusing; you don't want members leaving feeling like their needs for the meeting were not met
- If you want a more formal reflection, here are some ideas:
 - 3-2-1
 - Have half-sheets of paper with 3-2-1 written on them have members answer with the following
 - Three things you learned
 - Two things that you found interesting
 - One question you have
 - Chalk talk
 - To prepare, have three large sheets of paper on the wall and write a question on each. Questions can include things like, "What did I learn today?" "What do I want to know more about?" "How am I feeling?"
 - Or go another route of asking "What?" "So What?" "Now What?"
 - What? = what did you learn?
 - So what? = Why does it matter?
 - Now what? = What are you going to do about it? What are your next steps?
 - One Word Reflection
 - Have participants stand or sit in a circle and say one word to describe how they're feeling or how the meeting went for them
- Also check out our webinar on reflection here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CQO2vmdco5E&t=4s>

Follow-Up

Consider sending up follow up emails with notes from the meeting, reminders from the meeting, and a time/location/date for the next one. Even though you'll send out an email prior to the meeting, it's good to plant a seed for the next meeting

For more information about planning meetings and workshops, check out these **Tips & Tricks for Developing a Workshop Session**: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L-SlloAnU9c>.

**ANY QUESTIONS? FEEL FREE TO CONTACT US AT
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