Facilitator Tips
by Adriana Temali-Smith

Observe the group dynamics, encouraging balance and open conversation. Keep the group focused and moving, minding the time each person speaks. Provide a courageous, secure environment, where honesty and sharing our stories is valued and respected. Ensure that everyone has the opportunity to speak. Remember you are the facilitator, not a participant. You don’t need to be an expert or provide any answers. At work we tend to tie these conversations back to three themes: How does this impact you? How does this impact your community? How does this impact our organization?

Qualities of a good facilitator:
- Listens actively
- Observes group dynamics
- Communicates clearly
- Sensitive to all types of views
- Coaches and guides without dictating
- Keeps group focused and moving
- Recognizes and encourages different types of participation (speaking, silence, etc.)
- Quick thinker
- Perceived as neutral
- Shows respect for others
- Perceptive and analytical
- Maintains confidentiality
- Continually takes action on personal journey around social justice
- Uses various resources for improving facilitation skills and personal development

Common facilitator pitfalls:
- Discounting oneself and apologizing for a lack of experience
- Being unprepared
- Losing track of time and getting side tracked
- Shifting gears without transition or explanation
- Doing all the talking or talking about oneself
- Being an authority
- Lecturing
- Being judgmental
- Assuming a counseling role
- Representing a group (you only ever represent yourself)
- Assuming a teaching role
- Correcting a participant
OTHER RESOURCES

Websites:
- Center for Social Inclusion  
  https://www.centerforsocialinclusion.org/talking-race-toolkit/
- Government Alliance on Race and Equity (GARE)  
  https://www.racialequityalliance.org/
- Project Implicit -  
  https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/  
  Take this Implicit Association Test to find your hidden biases
- The Unconscious Bias Project works to reduce bias in the STEM fields  
  https://unconsciousbiasproject.org/

Books:
- Blind Spot: hidden biases of good people by Mahzarin R. Banaji and Anthony G. Greenwald, re-print 2016; 978-0345528438
- Courageous Conversations about Race by Glenn Singleton, 2nd ed 2014; 978-1483383743