

TOOLKIT | 5 PRACTICAL TOOLS FOR MEETING FACILITATION



Note: This chapter has explained skills and methods for facilitators from the aspects of how to encourage constructive discussions, how to resolve conflicts, etc. This toolkit aims to provide some other tools in practice.

1 TAKING STACK	The Stack is a way of arranging the order in which participants speak. In large-scale meetings, one or two talkative participants can easily dominate the discussion. The purpose of <i>Taking Stack</i> is to facilitate discussion in which all participants have equal say in a conversation. If a participant raises his or her hand to say something, the Stack Keeper puts them on “Stack” by putting his or her name at the bottom of the Stack list. When the person at the top of the Stack has finished speaking, the facilitator crosses their name off and announces who the next two participants on the Stack are.
2 PROGRESSIVE STACK	In the regular Stack, people speak in the order they were added to the queue by raising their hands. However, in some specific situations, white, male, and older participants tend to speak more than non-dominant groups, including women, non-white people, young people, and other minorities. <i>Progressive Stack</i> aims to increase the latter’s participation by letting them speak first.
3 PARKING LOT	Non-agenda items always seem to find their way into meetings. It is nevertheless important to acknowledge and recognize the existence of these important non-agenda items. The “Parking Lot” involves recording these issues on paper and sticking them onto the wall, insuring that they will be addressed at the end of the meeting.
4 ROTATION	When nobody volunteers to speak, the facilitator can use the <i>Rotation</i> method (Taking Stack addresses the opposite situation, meaning that many people want to speak). It is a simple tool that asks each person to contribute their thoughts. Give participants one to two minutes to think before starting the rotation.
5 OBSERVATION, PRACTICE AND TEACH	<i>Observation, practice and teaching</i> is a training tool to develop leadership and facilitation skills among volunteers and staff. Let the person to observe how you facilitate before arranging for him or her to facilitate. Ask the person to be the facilitator, while you observe his or her performance, and then provide directions and feedback to him or her. After his or her facilitation, this person can transfer the methods and experience to the rest of the group. After adopting this tool, you can assign the facilitator role to your staff on a rotating basis.