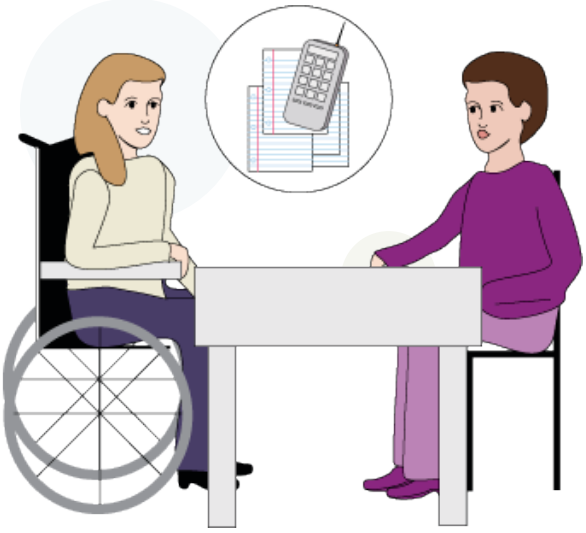
SCDD State Council on Developmental Disabilities

FACILITATION



PURPOSE – PLANNING – PRACTICE

The State Council on Developmental Disabilities gratefully acknowledges the assistance and feedback provided by many self-advocates who have served on governance boards, councils or advisory committees and support persons who have provided facilitation services.

We would like to extend special thanks to the Department of Developmental Services Consumer Advisory Committee and the State Council on Developmental Disabilities Self-Advocate Advisory Committee.

State Council on Developmental Disabilities

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or go to http://www.scdd.ca.gov

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Facilitation and advocacy publications
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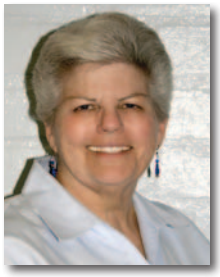
From the Executive Director

The disability rights movement has demonstrated that individuals with diverse abilities can play an active and principal role in shaping public policy when provided with suitable support. However, it has often been difficult to provide appropriate assistance or accommodations to achieve this goal.

This guidebook was developed to emphasize a commitment to providing customized supports that promote inclusion and sustain meaningful participation in advocacy and governance groups. This assistance should be viewed as an investment in successful organizational outcomes by expanding the diversity of voices. It is strongly believed that increasing access to fuller participation for some, enriches opportunities for all.

The purpose of Facilitation: Purpose – Planning – Practice is to underscore the State Council's commitment to self and peer-advocate engagement in policy-making by providing a framework for councils, boards or committees who utilize meeting facilitators or mentors. This guide provides background and planning tools that lead to more effective accommodation for individual members as they carry out their responsibilities before, during and after meetings.

The guide draws from strategies developed by self-advocacy groups, tested facilitation practices and published resource materials.



Carol Risley
Executive Director
California State Council on Developmental Disabilities

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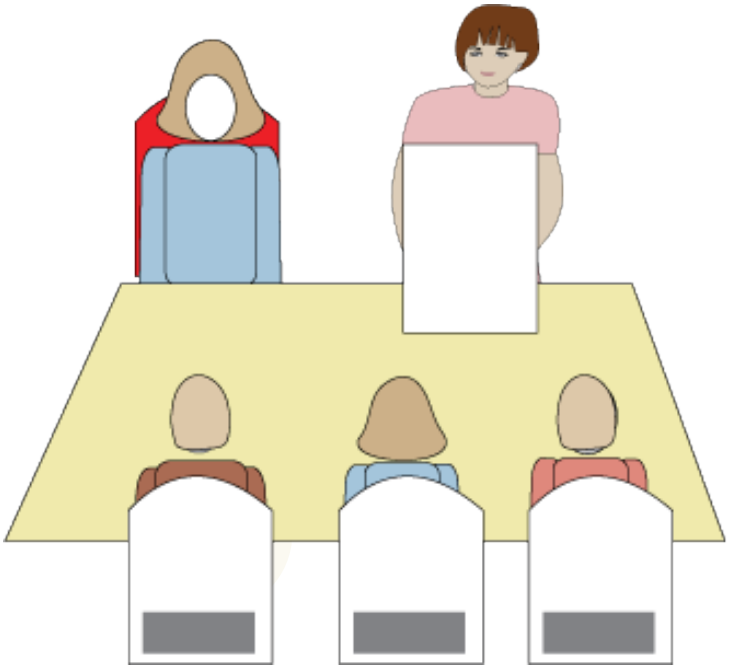
What Is Facilitation?

Facilitators provide personalized support to persons with diverse abilities serving on boards and committees.

Increased diversity is one of the greatest changes happening across society today. Many organizations are examining their policies and practices to address opportunities offered by the range of differences that make up their communities, such as race, ethnicity, gender, age, disability, family structure and more.

With the success of consumer and disability rights movements came service models that focus on the individual, with basic rights to speak and be heard. As a result, persons with varied abilities have joined advocacy groups, advisory committees or governing bodies that oversee services and supports. As organizations recognize the importance of including community members who use their services, it is clear that support in this leadership role is an essential accommodation.

As boards, committees or councils welcome diverse participation, it may be difficult for them to provide satisfactory support that allows all members to be heard.



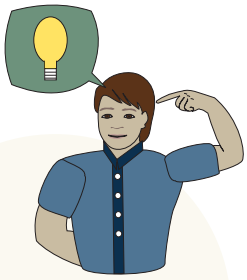
Borrowing from other human service fields and the business community where a "facilitator" assists employees or small groups to find success, individualized support for board, committee or council members has come to be called "facilitation."

Think – Plan – Do

To ensure participation, meeting organizers, participants and their facilitators need to identify the type of support required by a member, develop a facilitation plan, and carry it out.

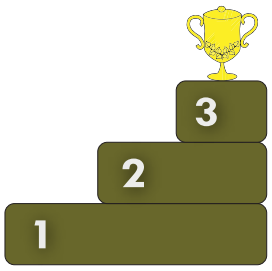
Think – Plan – Do, a straightforward process for planning and taking thoughtful steps to achieve success, is a helpful tool for any user. As a basic learning strategy, it can be applied to develop and implement a personalized facilitation plan for any member of a governing board, advisory committee or council.

Think – Plan – Do is easily utilized to identify group member responsibilities and support that will assist with effective participation.



THINK: What is required to be a successful board, committee or council member?

PLAN: Type of support needed to be an active and effective member.



DO: Take steps to carry out the facilitation plan.

Accessible Meetings

Meetings must have an understandable purpose and be structured to accommodate all participants.

Because boards of directors, committees and councils are structured to accomplish specific purposes, meeting organizers must be clear about the function of their groups. Whether organized to provide advice, deliver recommendations or take action, member responsibilities should also be clear for successful participation.

It is important that organizational leaders create ground rules for group process that include and support all meeting members. Typically, participants are expected to follow basic meeting rules that direct interactions and fulfill the purpose of the meeting. While helpful, these do not alone guarantee that meetings are accessible to individuals with diverse abilities.

> "Facilitation is a functional equivalent of a wheelchair, personal attendant, communications computer, or ramp."
>
> *1989 (Capitol People First)*

Meeting organization and practices should be designed to ensure that all participants have equal access to information, opportunity to participate, and responsibility to carry out duties.

Accessible Meetings

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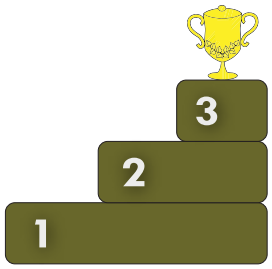
Meeting organization and practices should be designed to ensure that all participants have equal access to information, opportunity to participate, and responsibility to carry out duties.

Think: Do our meetings accommodate members' needs?

Plan: Restructure meeting schedules, processes and practices to better include all members.



Do: Gather input from members and carry out restructuring.

Group Facilitation

Member participation is affected by both the meeting leader's style and the process. Traditional meeting procedures and communication methods may need to change to hear contributions from all members. Leaders may need more open approaches, or provide more time for discussion and interactions among group members.

Inclusive practices by meeting leaders to ensure participation:

✔ Direct a reasonable pace and adequate time for meeting business.

✔ Check-in with members for general understanding by all group members.

✔ Provide multimedia presentation of topics. Provide practical examples.

✔ Summarize significant points, positions, actions.

✔ Monitor group discussion so all members have opportunities to contribute.

✔ Use plain language to ensure better understanding .

✔ Rely less on traditional meeting format, modify schedules, rules.

✔ Be observant! Check in with members to see if a break is needed.

✔ Provide time for interactions between meeting members.

Finding Support

Organizations reinforce inclusive practices by using meeting mentors. Experienced members volunteer to provide support to new participants who may require assistance to be successful.

Mentoring is a strategy that provides encouragement and instrumental support in "learning the ropes," and becoming more engaged with the group. Using mentoring as a natural support helps all participants know what is expected of them and their responsibilities as group members.

The mentoring process provides an opportunity of increased communication between members outside of regular meetings. The experienced board member can share ways of adjusting to demands of board participation and help prevent a new member from feeling overwhelmed or isolated.

Mentor strategies may include:

✔ Introduce the new member to others and encourage social connections.

✔ Familiarize a new member with the organization and its structure.

✔ Meet with a new member to review agenda and action items.

✔ Review meeting outcomes and follow-up responsibilities after the meetings.

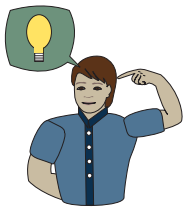
✔ Explain background on issues presented at meetings.

Finding Support

For the Person Mentored:

Mentors are interested in every member being successful and a contributor to the meetings and organization. As a natural support, he or she is experienced in areas that a new member may not be. A mentor leads by example to help other members understand the organization and how meetings are conducted. When working with a mentor, keep in mind they are volunteering and are not paid meeting facilitators.

Member Responsibilities when Working with a Mentor:



Think: What assistance is needed from a mentor to be a successful?

Plan: Create a plan with a mentor.

Do: Take steps to accept guidance from the mentor.

Remember to:

✔ Follow agreements. ✔ Ask questions. ✔ Share ideas and concerns.

Member and Mentor Teams:

✔ Interview each other to make sure the team wants to work together.

✔ Meet on a regular basis and plan how to work together.

✔ Encourage social relationships and information-sharing among members.

Facilitation Basics

Facilitation is support that meets the individual needs of a member so he or she can perform the general functions of the board, committee or council position. It includes:

BEFORE

- ✔ Study the meeting materials to provide knowledgeable support.
- ✔ Assist member to prepare by reviewing meeting materials, explaining and adapting materials.
- ✔ Provide impartial analysis of issues, when needed.
- ✔ Help member identify questions and positions on issues that will be brought up at the meeting.

DURING

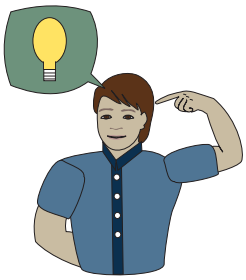
- ✔ Explain meeting materials and related information.
- ✔ Explain concepts, terms, acronyms, etc.
- ✔ Take notes on key issues, discussions, action items.
- ✔ Provide guidance on meeting process, agenda items and actions.
- ✔ Assist with communicating comments, positions, votes.

Facilitation Basics

A facilitator must be prepared in order to successfully assist members.

AFTER

- ✔ Review notes from meetings.
- ✔ Provide copy of the meeting notes to member in their preferred format.
- ✔ Review actions taken at meetings and important discussions.
- ✔ Assist with related tasks, such as travel arrangements and calendars.
- ✔ Follow-up on assigned duties.



Think: What is needed before, during and after meetings?

Plan: Create preparation schedule and agree on facilitation strategies using facilitation worksheets at back of the book.

Do: Carry out schedule and facilitation support.

Partnerships

Effective facilitators are flexible, willing to learn, and knowledgeable about the organization.

Successful facilitation depends on a respectful partnership between a facilitator and a member. The facilitator extends him or herself by providing support effectively so the member is confident and productive.

Before beginning facilitation, it is helpful to observe a meeting to learn about the process and significant issues facing the organization.

- ✔ Get to know each other's needs, skills, values, preferences.
- ✔ Give and receive constructive help.
- ✔ Give and receive "pats on the back."
- ✔ Preserve privacy.

Facilitation involves assistance the member can understand and learn from, and is always done with a tactful and respectful approach. Choosing moments carefully during meetings to promote independence is critical for the member to be a connected participant.

Knowledge and Skills

A Facilitator

1. Has knowledge about the organization, type of meetings, role of members (or will obtain).
2. Has knowledge about meeting rules and procedures (or will obtain).
3. Supports member with making "informed decisions."
4. Adapts meeting materials and explains related information.
5. With member, creates strategies for assisting before, during and after meetings.
6. Encourages member inclusion during meetings.
7. Is flexible and adapts to changing needs of member.
8. May act in these roles:

Note Taker—Take notes using accessible plain language the member desires.

Meeting Coach—Guide the member on meeting structure and rules.

Adaptation Specialist—Provide materials the member understands.

Scheduler—Assist the member to maintain meeting calendar.

Researcher—Find information the member may need for meetings.

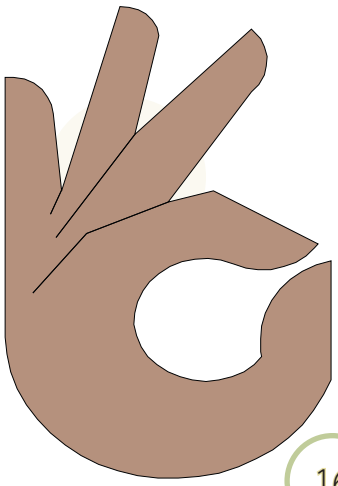
Code of Ethics

Facilitators support members without influencing them with their own opinions or beliefs.

A productive partnership between the member and facilitator extends mutual respect, trust and dependability. It is important that both facilitator and member observe workplace boundaries so the member contributes and the facilitator performs professionally.

While challenging at times, a facilitator must avoid any influence of their own personal beliefs, opinions or conflicting interests. This requires a facilitator to be self-aware and be a watchful partner, not a self-promoter. While another party may be a facilitator's "employer of record," the member is a facilitator's "boss" and responsibility to that arrangement must be remembered.

- ✔ Avoid influence on the member's voting and decision making.
- ✔ Avoid speaking up or acting "like a member" at meetings.
- ✔ Recognize you may not always agree, and address in a respectful manner.
- ✔ Acknowledge and address barriers faced in being a facilitator.
- ✔ Do not use the organization or facilitation position for personal advantage.
- ✔ Maintain confidentiality, do nothing to violate the trust.
- ✔ Maintain confidentiality regarding discussion and decisions from "closed" meetings.



Resources

PLAIN LANGUAGE

Center for Plain Language
Nonprofit organization promoting the use of plain language in the public and private sectors. http://www.centerforplainlanguage.org

Is it Plain? A Manual for Language Writers (2001). Janet Pringle. Vocational and Rehabilitation Research Institute, 3304 33 Street N.W. Calgary, Alberta T2L 2A6.

Plain Language Action & Information Network
Promotes plain language for all government communications. Strategies to improve communication from the federal government to the public. http://www.plainlanguage.gov

ACCESSIBLE MEETINGS

Accommodations and Supports for Including Special Populations in Leadership and Decision Making Activities (2002). NY State Developmental Disabilities Planning Council. http://tcsip.tarjancenter.ucla.edu/docs/AccommodationforSpecial_Populations.pdf

Board Resource Center (BRC) "Making Complex Ideas Simple"
Advocacy publications and media emphasizing strategies that ensure inclusive boards and committees. Focus group developed tools, using graphics and plain language developed for public agencies. Download library available http://brcenter.org/lib_library.html

Developmental Disabilities Planning Council's Promoting Leadership Opportunities Demonstration Project (2002). Esther Kabuga and Cheryl Spear. Technical Assistance and Resource Center, Center on Human Policy, Syracuse University, 805 South Crouse Syracuse, NY 13244-2340.

Facilitation: A Ramp to Success. Tools to Assist Members with Effective Participation (2006), Supported Life Institute (for Alta California Regional Center). 2035 Hurley Way, Suite 250 Sacramento, CA 95825 (916) 567-1974.

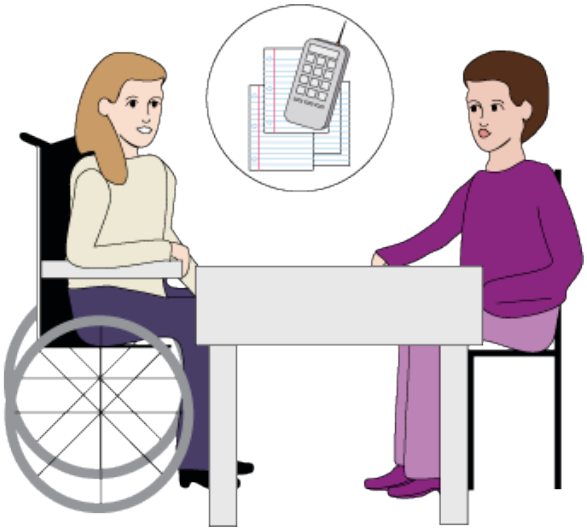
Get on Board and Make a Difference: Effective Practices for Including People with Developmental Disabilities and New Members on Boards and Committees. Green Mountain Self-Advocates and the Arc of Vermont http://www.ddas.vermont.gov/ddas-publications/publications-dds/publications-dds-documents/dds-publications-advocacy/dds-advocacy-get-on-board

The Guide: NASDDDS Handbook on Inclusive Meetings and Presentations (2006). National Association of State Directors of Developmental Disabilities Services. 113 Oronoco Street Alexandria, VA 22314 (703) 683-4202. http://www.nasddds.org

Making Meetings Accessible: How to Enable Real Participation. Vermont Division of Disability and Aging. (802) 241-2614.

Not Another Board Meeting: Guides to Building Inclusive Decision-Making Groups (1995). Oregon Developmental Disabilities Council.

FACILITATION



PURPOSE – PLANNING – PRACTICE

Facilitation Plan

All members of boards, committees and councils must be able to participate equally and make informed decisions. It is important that members who need assistance on a board, committee or council be encouraged and made aware that accommodations are available to enhance their participation.

The following worksheets are designed as a self-survey that addresses a range of facilitation support needs to help identify the type and amount of support that may be useful. The worksheets are designed to be completed by the member and facilitator. Discussion by the facilitation partners is an important component of the self-survey. It provides an opportunity to learn how the team will work together and best ways to provide support.

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Organization:

1. Does the organization have a job description for facilitators? (If so, review)

   _____

   _____

2. Can the organization or meeting leader add the facilitator to important mailing lists?

   _____

   _____

3. What adaptations does the member currently use at work or home?

   _____

   _____

4. Would these adaptations be useful at meetings? (Which ones)

   _____

   _____

5. How will personal care needs be met, if required?

   _____

   _____

6. Is there specific support the member wants? (List)

   _____

   _____

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Personal Needs:

1. Mobility (walking, help with stairs and elevators, transferring in/out of wheelchair, opening doors, etc.)

   Support I want:

   _____

   _____

2. Meeting Site (location, contact information, meeting room, bathroom)

   Support I want:

   _____

   _____

3. Transportation (making arrangements)

   Support I want:

   _____

   _____

4. Hotel Accommodations (accessible room, locating people, meeting room, etc.)

   Support I want:

   _____

   _____

5. Food and Drink (assistance with meals, eating or drinking)

   Support I want:

   _____

   _____

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Personal Needs:

6. Medication (reminders to take, and medication effects)

   Support I want:

   _____

7. Personal Appearance
   - ❑ Grooming
   - ❑ Professional Image
   - ❑ Hygiene

   Support I want:

   _____

8. Bathroom Assistance (opening doors, transferring, etc.)

   Support I want:

   _____

9. Transportation (arranging: public, private, special)

   Making arrangements _____

   Paying for transportation _____

   Waiting until ride arrives _____

   Support I want:

   _____

10. Other:

    Support I want:

    _____

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Member Duty Needs:

1. Understanding organization's structure and process

   - ❑ How meeting is run, Robert's Rules
   - ❑ Review by-laws or operating rules
   - ❑ How members communicate with each other and make decisions
   - ❑ How the meeting makes decisions

   Support I want:

   _____

2. Reviewing materials for the meeting

   - ❑ Minutes
   - ❑ Agendas
   - ❑ Action items
   - ❑ Other materials in packet

   Support I want:

   _____

3. Speaking up

   - ❑ Talking about ideas before meetings
   - ❑ Highlighting main points to talk about
   - ❑ Preparing statements, reports

   Support I want:

   _____

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Member Duty Needs:

4. Asking questions and making comments

- ❑ Writing down questions or comments to bring to meetings
- ❑ Making sure my points get across to the group
- ❑ Remembering at the meeting:
  - ❑ ask my question
  - ❑ make my statement

Support I want:

_____

_____

_____

_____

5. General Reminders

- ❑ Completing calendars, meeting dates and times
- ❑ Making phone calls and writing emails
- ❑ Getting information
- ❑ Completing assigned work
- ❑ Bringing materials to meetings

Support I want:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Member Duty Needs:

6. Making materials understandable

Adaptations:

- ❑ large print
- ❑ pictures and text
- ❑ pictures only
- ❑ computer disk
- ❑ Braille
- ❑ language translation
- ❑ plain language: easy-to-understand words

Support I want:

_____

7. Reading materials

- ❑ Turning pages, highlighting main points
- ❑ Writing summaries
- ❑ Reading materials aloud
- ❑ Explaining hard-to-understand language
- ❑ Explaining acronyms or new terms

Support I want:

_____

8. Taking notes

- ❑ Writing down important points, actions, decisions
- ❑ Take notes on paper or a computer
- ❑ Explaining notes

Support I want:

_____

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Professional Needs:

Do you want help with:	**YES**	**NO**
UNDERSTANDING HOW THE GROUP WORKS		
Ground rules	❑	❑
Voting procedures	❑	❑
Meeting structure	❑	❑
Remembering people and their jobs	❑	❑
Staying on topic	❑	❑
DECIDING WHAT IS MOST IMPORTANT TO DO		
Which project to do first	❑	❑
Which projects or committees to join	❑	❑
REVIEWING OR READING MEETING MATERIALS		
Minutes	❑	❑
Agendas	❑	❑
Action items	❑	❑
Additional information	❑	❑

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Professional Needs:

Do you want help with:	**YES**	**NO**
REMEMBERING THINGS		
Meeting times	❑	❑
Scheduling the calendar	❑	❑
Making phone calls	❑	❑
Writing letters	❑	❑
Finding information	❑	❑
Completing assigned work	❑	❑
Bringing materials to meetings	❑	❑
COMMUNICATION		
Using the phone	❑	❑
Leaving messages	❑	❑
Helping others understand me	❑	❑
Sending or receiving emails	❑	❑
Printing emails	❑	❑

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Professional Needs:

Do you want help with:	**YES**	**NO**
DOCUMENTS		
Signing documents	❑	❑
Signing my name with permission	❑	❑
Explaining what needs to be signed (and what the document means)	❑	❑
READING MATERIALS		
Reading materials aloud	❑	❑
Reading together during prep time	❑	❑
Putting important written ideas into pictures	❑	❑
UNDERSTANDING NUMBERS		
Showing numbers as pictures (chart/graph)	❑	❑
Writing numbers as words	❑	❑
Removing zeros, rounding off	❑	❑
Understanding meaning of the numbers	❑	❑
REMEMBERING IMPORTANT INFORMATION		
About members of board, committee, council	❑	❑
Things I have read	❑	❑
Important discussions	❑	❑
Questions to ask	❑	❑
Comments to make	❑	❑

Other:

_____

_____

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Partnership:

The best way for us to:

Communicate between meetings

_____

_____

_____

_____

Work together at meetings

How do we sit at meetings? (at the person's side, in the audience, etc.)

_____

What kind of cues to use during the meeting? (physical, pointing, verbal, writing)

_____

How will the member present positions/statements at meetings? (speak independently, with assistance, read member statements)

_____

Make adaptations

_____

_____

_____

_____

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Summary Page:

Personal Needs:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Member Duty Needs:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Professional Needs:

_____

_____

_____

_____

Facilitation Worksheet

Facilitator and Member to complete.

Agreement

As partners we will communicate openly and honestly with each other.

As the member, I agree to:

a. Work as a partner with my facilitator.

b. Communicate when I have questions or concerns about facilitation.

c. Be prepared and professional.

d. Communicate when I need to change my plan.

e. Respect confidentiality of the facilitator.

f. Other

_____

_____

As the facilitator, I agree to:

a. Work as a partner with the member.

b. Communicate when I have questions or concerns about facilitation.

c. Be prepared and professional.

d. Respect confidentiality of the member.

e. Other

_____

_____

_____

signature (member) date

_____

signature (facilitator) date

_____

signature (organization) date

Make copies for facilitator and organization