



TOOLS DISCUSSION LEADERS USE IN OPEN DISCUSSIONS

TOOL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Paraphrasing	Calms and clarifies. Uses own words to restate what <i>you</i> think the speaker said. Also helps when you think someone else misunderstood. Benefits entire group by encouraging them to think out loud.	
Explore Further	Guides people in clarifying and expanding on their own ideas. It sends the message, “I understand so far, now tell me more.”	
Mirroring	Repeating the exact words of the speaker. Use their words, not yours. Mirror the words, not the tone of voice. The tone of voice should be yours. Speeds up slow-moving discussion and builds trust.	

WORKSHEET: Tools For Effective Group Discussion

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Stacking	Helps people take turns when everyone wants to talk at once. It lets everyone know they will get their chance. Basically it involves asking for a show of hands from people who want to speak, and assigning a number for the order of speaking. After everyone has finished speaking, ask if anyone else wishes to speak.	
Encouraging	Creates an opening for people to participate without putting any one individual on the spot.	
Balancing	Encourages the group to look at the opposite perspective or other views. It sends the message, "It is alright to express opposing viewpoints."	

WORKSHEET: Tools For Effective Group Discussion

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<p>Making Space</p>	<p>Lets quiet members know they don't have to talk, but gives the opportunity to speak if they wish to. Some hold out because they are new to a group and are shy or hesitant to speak up. This helps them feel part of the group.</p>	
<p>Intentional Silence</p>	<p>A brief (few seconds) of quiet time that gives participants time to think and discover what they want to say.</p>	
<p>Listening for Common Ground</p>	<p>Summarize both similarities and differences that have surfaced, letting all participants know that they are being heard. First summarize the differences and follow with the common ground. It is important as groups become polarized to keep the points of agreement in front of them as the foundation for working toward mutual agreement.</p>	

Kaner, Sam. *Facilitator's Guide to Participatory Decision-Making*. Montpelier, VT: New Society Publishers, 1996.