Learning Tools:
Facilitator Guide

Intentions of the Guide

This resource is designed to help you plan, facilitate, and expand community engagement through practical tools and guidance. Whether you are a housing manager, community leader, or advocate, this guide empowers you to lead informed and impactful sessions. Here you will find the facilitation tools you need to bring valuable learning to your community with confidence!

Intentions of the Project

These resources are shared as part of the *Democratizing Knowledge Initiative*, ensuring that knowledge is accessible and relevant, and aligns with the needs of rural and remote Indigenous communities. The project aims to support Indigenous sovereignty by sharing knowledge on topics that increase awareness of the impacts of colonization and respond with varying steps toward self-determination, decolonization, and cultural revitalization.

What's in the Guide?

Below is a brief outline of the contents of this facilitator guide. Please feel invited to access this guide as a whole or by accessing the specific sections relevant to your interests.

Workshop Facilitation Checklist 2
Fillable Workshop Budget 3
Workshop Outline 5
Workshop Preparation & Delivery for Facilitators 6
- Before the Workshop 6
- During the workshop 7
- After the Workshop 8

References 9

Workshop Facilitation Checklist

Here is a checklist of the key to-dos when planning and facilitating a session.

Prior to Workshop	Have all necessary funds been secured and arranged for the workshop?	☐
	Have you had the necessary consultations with community members and/or potential participants?	☐
	Has a room or space for the workshop been booked, and do you know how you will access the space on the day-of?	☐
	Have participants been invited with advanced notice in multiple ways?	☐
	Have you arranged any technology or facilitation support needed?	☐
	Have you prepared all the necessary workshop materials? (i.e., printed handouts, digital tools, activity-specific items such as pens, paper, markers, etc.)	☐
	If needed, have you arranged and/or planned catering for refreshments?	☐
	If needed, have honoured guests been invited and have their honoraria been arranged?	☐
	If needed, have any gifts or special offerings been arranged?	☐
	If needed, has notetaking and/or recording for the session been arranged?	☐
During the Workshop	Has consent been taken for any notes (including AI, if applicable), photographs, and/or video recordings of the session?	☐
	Have participants been informed of the safety information of the building (i.e., location of the bathrooms, emergency exits, etc.)?	☐
	Has the room been arranged for physical and learning accessibility for all participants?	☐
	Have participants been provided with hard copies of the handouts and/or resources?	☐
	Has contact information been provided for follow-up questions or continued support?	☐
	If needed, have gifts and/or honoraria been distributed?	☐
After the Workshop	Have digital files, handouts, and/or agreed upon follow-up actions been sent to participants?	☐
	Has there been a debrief with co-facilitators and/or supporters of the workshop?	☐
	Have any outstanding and/or necessary honoraria or gifts been distributed and received, with receipts, if applicable?	☐
	Has there been an invitation for feedback from participants sent out that can inform future sessions?	☐

Fillable Workshop Budget

Here is a fillable budget planning tool for facilitating a workshop.

Space & Food	**Estimated Calculation**	**Estimated Cost per Unit(s)**	**Estimated Total Cost**
Building/Room Rental	Cost per day (**x** number of days)		$
Technology (as needed)	Cost per day (**x** number of days)		$
Refreshments	Cost of coffee, tea, water, and light snacks (**x** number of people **x** number of days)		$
Meals/Food (including catering)	Cost per person (**x** number of participants **x** number of days)		$
Subtotal			**$**

Honoraria & Gifting	**Estimated Calculation**	**Estimated Cost per Unit(s)**	**Estimated Total Cost**
Elders & Knowledge Keepers	Cost per day **x** number of days **x** number of recipients		$
Lead Facilitator	Cost per day **x** number of days		$
Co-Facilitator	Cost per day **x** number of days		$
Traditional or Honoured Gifts	Cost per gift **x** number of recipients		$
Participant Gifts	Cost per gift **x** number of gifts		**$**
Subtotal			**$**

Travel	**Estimated Calculation**	**Estimated Cost per Unit(s)**	**Estimated Total Cost**
Facilitator Mileage	Number of kilometres driven **x** cost per kilometre **x** number of facilitators		$
Facilitator Airfare	Cost of a return flight **x** number of facilitators		$
Facilitator Hotel Stay	Cost per night **x** number of nights **x** number of facilitators		$
Facilitator Rental Car (as needed)	Cost per rental car **x** number of days		
Facilitator Expenses	Per diem rates **x** number of facilitators		$
Subtotal			**$**

Supplies & Printing	**Estimated Calculation**	**Estimated Cost per Unit(s)**	**Estimated Total Cost**
Posters & Promotion	Cost of printing posters, handouts, and/or resources **x** number of each resource		$
General Event Supplies	Cost of pens, markers, paper, sticky notes, etc.		$
Activity-Specific Materials			$
Subtotal			**$**

Misc./Other	**Estimated Calculation**	**Estimated Cost per Unit(s)**	**Estimated Total Cost**
			$
			$
			$
Subtotal			**$**

Total Estimated Cost	**$**

***Note:** Estimated totals do not include any applicable sales taxes.

Workshop Outline

Each workshop is intended to be approximately 1 to 1.25 hours. Below is a general outline that guides the structure of each session.

Timing	Focus	Notes
~10 – 15 minutes	Session opening	As appropriate, open with local protocols. Introduction to the intentions, guidelines, and safety practices of the space.
~15 – 20 minutes	Workshop Content	Use this time to walk through the main points of the module, including a brief description of what it is and why it is important.
~10 – 15 minutes	Facilitated Activity	Choose and lead an activity from the workshop learning tools. Ensure the activity selected aligns with your audience's needs and demographics, and centres the learning intentions of the session.
~5 – 10 minutes	Important Terms & Ideas	Highlight key terms and ideas, bringing participants back to the key learnings of the session, while making connections to the activity and/or discussion held.
~5 – 10 minutes	Facilitated Dialogue	Facilitate a group discussion using one of the sample questions provided and/or by asking participants to draw connections between the module and the activity.
~10 – 15 minutes	Closing	Take a moment to emphasize the key takeaway of the workshop. What is the one thing that you want participants to remember? Intentionally close the space with a cultural or reflective closing.

Each module's learning tools include a tailored version of this outline to guide your content, activities, and group discussions. The learning tools also include sample activities, learning objectives, and support in tailoring to the intended audiences.

Workshop Preparation & Delivery for Facilitators

Guiding the session requires more than knowing the module; it requires preparing both the physical & relational space, developing a facilitation mindset, and developing practices that support a safe space. The guidelines below offer recommendations and support for facilitators.

Before the Workshop

1. **Establish Clear Intentions:** Determine when the workshop will happen, why you're facilitating it, and how it should be delivered. Consider the values and practices to be brought into the space. Generally, the values behind these workshops are rooted in supporting Indigenous sovereignty through decolonizing, revitalizing culture, and strengthening community.

   Reflective Questions

   - Who is the intended audience of your workshop, and why is this learning relevant to them?
   - What is the core takeaway or skill that you want your audience to learn?
   - What ideas and beliefs are you carrying with you into the session?

2. **Establish Cultural & Emotional Safety Practices:** What tools will you use to ensure this is a safe space for participants and for yourself as a facilitator? How will you support holding heavy emotions or conflict if/when they appear?

   Example Practices

   - **Co-Create Boundaries & Agreements:** Open spaces by co-creating a list of agreements that will support participants, centring what they need to feel safe throughout the workshop. For example, "no talking over one another" could be an agreement.
   - **Giving Tension Space:** When tensions surface, hold space to slow down. Offer a quiet moment or a short break to ground and reflect. For example, this could look like inviting participants to spend 5-10 minutes connecting with the Land!
   - **Provide a Grounding Object:** Providing participants with small physical objects during the workshop is a tactile way to keep emotions grounded throughout the session. This could look like providing small stones, fidget toys, weaving materials, etc.
   - **Validate & Invite One-on-One Chats:** Sometimes emotions are high, and participants may need more time to work through tensions that arise during the workshop. In these scenarios, it can be helpful to validate this common experience and to invite one-on-one conversations between you, the facilitator, and participants who may need additional support during breaks or after the session. This is a safety practice that balances individuals' diverse experiences and truths with the overall group's well-being.

3. **Align with Community Values & Governance:** Reflect on how the workshop can invite your community's values, beliefs, and culture into the facilitation.

Reflective Questions

- How will you open and close the session in alignment with local protocols and practices?
- What local cultural elements will be present or offered to support the space? Are there protocols, teachings, stories, songs, and/or grounding cultural items that are appropriate to include?
- Are there words, concepts, or teachings in your Nation's language that can capture the heart of this workshop? Could they be meaningfully and appropriately woven into the session?
- Are there specific examples, stories, or experiences from your community that could be shared to ground the learning and discussion of the workshop?

4. **Outline Community Relevance:** Reflect on what your community will gain from participating in this workshop and how the learning will serve them over time.
   Reflective Questions
   - What will your community learn or receive as part of this workshop?
   - How will the workshop be relevant to the attending audience in the short- and long-term?

During the Workshop

Opening & Closing

1. **Opening Space: Setting the Tone**
   - Begin with appropriate local protocols
   - Introduce yourself and share the protocols, safety practices, and agreements of the space
   - Outline the intentions, learning goals, and the relevance of the workshop to participants

2. **Closing Space: A Lasting Impression**
   - Close on notes that are purposeful and relevant
   - Offer time for sharing reflections, questions, and ideas from the workshop
   - Take a few minutes to close in a cultural and/or grounding way, as appropriate
   - Thank participants for engagement and list follow-up steps, a feedback request, and/or other communications

Engaging & Supportive Facilitation

1. **Sharing Knowledge**
   - Ensure knowledge is shared clearly in multiple ways, using accessible language; ensure that topic-specific terms are defined.
   - Balance the 'learning goals' with real-life examples and stories; facilitating isn't just sharing the facts – it's connecting with people.
   - Ensure there is regular interaction and engagement; workshops are intended to be interactive.
   - Check in with participants before transitioning to the next part of the workshop. Ask if the materials and relevance of the section are landing and clarify as needed.

2. **Centre the Participant Experience**
   - Know your audience and ensure the dialogue, tools, and resources align with participants present.
   - Invite participants to engage in multiple ways, recognizing the diversity of learning styles, comfort, and interests; provide different styles for contributing to the conversation.

3. **Holding Space**
    - Acknowledge the weight of heavy topics and offer explicit permission to step away and take a breath before things get too heavy.
    - Build in moments to process and reflect on information; silences are good and necessary!
    - Centre a people-first approach: pause for questions and avoid rushing back to (or rigidly following) the agenda. Workshops ebb and flow like a river! The workshop outline is a guide and should adapt to the people in the room.

4. **Decolonizing the Learning Engagement**
    - Be human – bring *yourself* into the facilitation and discussion.
    - Move away from the dominant 'classroom' structure. It's okay to do things differently! This could look like:
        - Facilitating the workshop on the Land, to be grounded in nature.
        - Building a session around a cultural or creative activity (crafting, storytelling, etc.)
        - Facilitating in an informal, circle-centred way that removes the hierarchy of "teacher" and "learner".
    - Facilitate without hierarchy; learning is a shared experience and responsibility.
        - Position yourself as a co-participant in the room, rather than standing at the front of the room.
        - Share from lived experience, rather than giving generic examples.
        - Acknowledge and hold space for participant voices; everyone brings their own cultural and lived experiences into the space.

5. **Ensuring Emotional & Cultural Safety**
    - Let participants know in advance about any sensitive content in the workshop, giving them time to prepare.
    - Read the energy of a room; if there are heavy emotions, offer a moment of pause.
    - Share or co-create agreements on how heightened emotions or conflict will be managed.
    - Outline the confidentiality of the space, including noting the difference between "anonymous" and "confidential" when sharing.
    - Ensure there is emotional balance. Rotate between talking about the heavy realities and discussing the hope moving forward.

After the Workshop

1. **For the Facilitator**
    - Debrief with co-facilitators and those who were part of the workshop planning process
    - Have a plan for rest and self-care, especially after heavy topics

2. **Participant Feedback**
    - Collect feedback in an accessible way from participants; gauge what connected and what needs adjusting in future sessions

3. **Event Follow-Up & Closing Loops**
    - Send any agreed-upon follow-up information or materials
    - Ensure that honoraria, gifts, thank-you notes, and payments are made (and received) in a timely manner

References

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