

Background

Innovative Models Promoting Access-to-Care Transformation (IMPACT) is a participatory action research program that aimed to increase access to primary healthcare for vulnerable populations in three Canadian and three Australian regions. In each region, a local innovation partnership was built:

Who? Local & regional stakeholders, including decision-makers, researchers, health professionals and community representatives.

Why? To collectively identify access needs & co-design, implement and evaluate an innovation to improve access.

How? Coordinators supported partnership development in each region. Regular meetings were held with stakeholders to engage in deliberative processes & collective decision-making. Coordinators and other research team members were trained in **group facilitation to support deliberative processes**.

Purpose

To share how IMPACT used group facilitation to engage diverse stakeholders in local partnerships to improve access to primary healthcare for vulnerable populations.

What is Group Facilitation?

The art of organizing, guiding, tracking and supporting a group's discussions, deliberations and processes to optimize the group's performance and help it reach its goals (1).

Facilitator roles:

- Remain as neutral as possible
- Focus the group on the task
- Help clarify roles & expectations
- Foster participation of all stakeholders
- Promote mutual understanding

References: 1. Moore, A. B., & Feldt, J. A. (1993). *Facilitating Community and Decision-Making Groups*. Krieger Publishing Company, Malabar, Florida. 2. Lipmanowicz, H. & McCandless, K. (2014). *The Surprising Power of Liberating Structures: Simple Rules to Unleash a Culture of Innovation*. Liberating Structures Press.

Building Capacity for Facilitation

Common Tools

Supervised Facilitation

Community of Practice

Facilitation Training

Mentoring

Feedback & After-Action-Review

Meeting Facilitation 101



Prepare

Objectives & Participants

- Meet with group "leaders" to define objectives
- Learn about participants & group dynamics

Storyboard

- Break down meeting into specific objectives, activities, roles & timing
- Plan icebreaker & activities (2)

Facilitation Kit

- Gather needed materials (e.g. post-its, markers, notecards)



Facilitate

Objectives & Agenda

- Describe objectives
- Review agenda
- Adapt to group's expectations

Manage Participation

- Pay attention to non-verbal cues
- Manage group dynamics
- "Translate" to ensure mutual understanding

Keep on Track

- Use a "parking lot" to track issues to address later
- Establish & enforce "rules"
- Refocus on task at hand



Debrief

Summary & Next Steps

- Summarize key points & decisions
- Identify next steps (who, what, when?)
- Draft agenda for next meeting

After-Action-Review

- What was supposed to happen? What really happened? What could we have done differently? Could everyone participate? Was this time well spent?

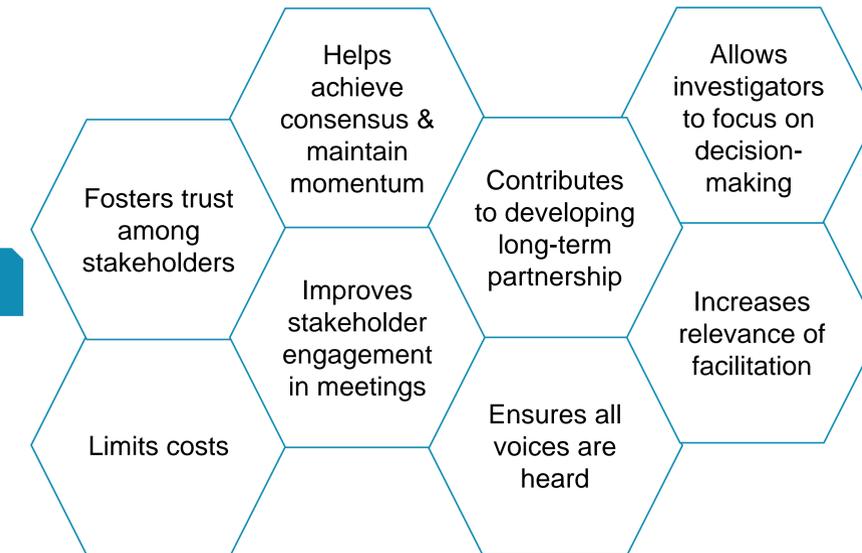
Example of Facilitation Activity

Context: Major primary healthcare reforms in Quebec. Change fatigue & pessimism. Difficulty gaining momentum on the type of innovation.

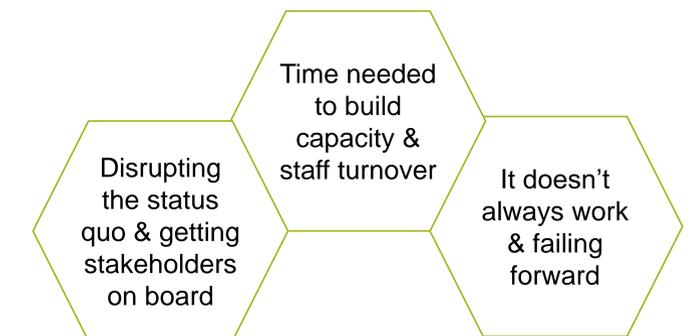
Objective: Reach consensus on type of innovation to implement.

Activity: "Let It Live" – 10 minutes per potential innovation. Stakeholders can only discuss the advantages of the innovation, how it could work & how we could make it happen. This avoids "shooting" down valid ideas because of difficult context.

Advantages



Challenges



Conclusion

Group facilitation is a novel form of capacity building within research teams and has been a winning strategy to promote stakeholder engagement throughout our research program.

Capacity building for group facilitation can help support patient-oriented research conducted in partnership with various stakeholders.