



TOOLS DISCUSSION LEADERS USE IN OPEN DISCUSSION

TOOL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Paraphrasing	Calms and clarifies. Uses own words to restate what you think the speaker said. Also helps when you think someone misunderstood. Benefits entire group by encouraging them to think out loud.	<p>“It sounds like you’re saying...”</p> <p>“I hear you saying . . .”</p> <p>“Let me see if I understand you . . .”</p>
Explore Further	Guides people in clarifying and expanding on their own ideas. It sends the message, “I understand so far, now tell me more.”	<p>“I understand you so far, now tell me more.”</p> <p>“I hear you saying . . . , now can you tell me more?:</p> <p>“What do you mean by . . . ?”</p> <p>“How so?”</p>
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.	<p>Speaker: “I like giving two book awards.”</p> <p>Facilitator: “You like giving two book awards.”</p>
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.	<p>“Bill you first, Nancy second, Tom you’re third.”</p>



TOOL	DESCRIPTION	EXAMPLE
Balancing	Encourages the group to look at the opposite perspective or other views. It sends the message, "It's alright to express opposing viewpoints."	<p>"Okay, now we know their position, does anyone have a different position?"</p> <p>"Are there other positions?"</p> <p>"What does someone else think?"</p> <p>"Is there another way to look at this?"</p>
Making Space	Lets quiet member 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>"Would you like to speak to this?"</p> <p>"What are your ideas?"</p> <p>"Did you want to add anything?"</p> <p>"You looked like you wanted to add something."</p>
Intentional Silence	A brief (few seconds) of quiet time that give participants time to think and discover what they want to say.	" "
Listening for Common Ground	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.	"We agree on these points. . . and disagree on these . . . "