Welcome

Listen to the webinar by streaming audio through your computer speakers or calling in on your phone.

Phone number: 877-309-2071
Access code: 564-721-414
Effective Facilitation of Support Groups

Webinar | December 12, 2018

Barb Clark
Parent Support Coordinator, North American Council on Adoptable Children

Kim Stevens
Program Manager, North American Council on Adoptable Children

AdoptUSKids
Together we hold their future
Housekeeping

• This interactive webinar will be 60 minutes long and will include time for questions via the online chat function.
• We will record this webinar. We will share the recording with you and post it on adoptuskids.org/publications.
• Your line will be muted throughout the webinar.
• The webinar will include poll questions and opportunities for you to share information via the chat function, including if you are having technical difficulties.
• Please evaluate the session when you leave the webinar.
About AdoptUSKids

Our mission:

• Raise public awareness about the need for foster and adoptive families for children in the public child welfare system

• Assist states, territories, and tribes to recruit, engage, develop, and support foster and adoptive families
Goals for this webinar

• Discuss what effective facilitation of groups looks like and why it’s important
• Build group facilitation skills
• Explore strategies for facilitating difficult conversations in groups
• Explore strategies for managing challenging behaviors in groups
Poll questions 1 and 2
Defining facilitation

- Facilitation is the act of making something easier
- In parent group meetings, facilitation is the art of guiding the group’s discussions and protecting the structure of the meetings to help the group be as effective, efficient, and productive as possible
Effective facilitation matters

• Effective facilitation keeps groups focused on the task at hand

• Participants get the support they need because they are not distracted by the group’s process challenges
Keys to facilitation

- Understanding group process
- Structuring the meeting
- Guiding discussion
Understanding group process

How groups make decisions

Group members’ roles

Human dynamics
Understanding group process

• Forming – coming together for mutual concerns
• Storming – frustration, venting issues, looking for validation
• Norming – essential for group health and longevity
Understanding group process

Unbalanced storming:

- One or more persons can’t let go of an issue
- Frustration and resentment grows
- Participation drops
- Attendance drops
- Group fails
Proactive facilitators will:

- Seek solution-focused speakers, instruction, discussion
- Interrupt and redirect unrelenting storming
- Anticipate difficult behaviors
- Address issues head-on
Poll question 3
Structuring the meeting

• Preparation is key
• Solicit volunteers to bring refreshments, act as time keepers
• Set up the room in a way that encourages interaction
• Have a clear agenda
• Include time for socializing
Structuring the meeting

Beginning: Ground rules
Middle: Business
End: Closure
Guiding discussion

• Survey group for shared interests and mutual concerns
• Focus conversation on moving from issues to strategies and solutions
• Seek everyone’s voice—make room for quieter members
Guiding discussion

- Monitoring who speaks
- Choosing topics
- Inviting guest speakers or doing presentations yourself
Guiding discussion

• Be positive
• Set ground rules and stick to them
• Engage everyone in the first 5-10 minutes
• Be aware of yourself and others
Guiding discussion

• Know that 10% of our communication is verbal and 90% is non-verbal

• Accept that conflict is normal; work through it

• Remain committed to the group process
Guiding discussion

Land the plane
Make your point and wrap it up

Three, then me
Let three people speak before you speak again

One diva, one mic
No side talking
Leaders are self-aware

• Find the balance between how much you share or don’t share about things going on in your life
• It is important that the members know you are human, but you don’t want to consume the meetings with your needs
• Remember, you may be facilitating the group, but it is not yours
Facilitating difficult conversations

- Sensitive or emotional topics
- Controversial topics
- Crises
Facilitating difficult conversations

• Make your group a no-judgment zone
• Ask: Do you want advice or just to be heard?
• Have tissues handy
• Avoid “one-upsmanship”
• Provide a time frame in advance
Managing difficult behaviors

- Set the ground rules in advance and post/distribute them so they’re easy to refer to
- A gentle hand on the shoulder if you are able
- Parking lot for a future discussion
- “Can we talk outside the group?”
- Remember—your role is to protect the group, even if it means losing a member
A successful parent group facilitator…

- Upholds structure and order at meetings
- Honors the group process above their own personal needs or agenda
- Values the contributions of all members as equal participants
- Helps to identify key points of discussion as they emerge
- Helps the group work through conflict
- Is adaptable
A successful parent group facilitator…

• Has a sense of humor
• Seeks balance in discussions
• Draws out quiet members and manages members who tend to dominate the discussion
• Redirects discussions that get off track
• Asks the group to reassess its goals when the group is not making progress toward its stated goals
A successful parent group facilitator…

- Is self-aware and self-accepting
- Sees all interactions as relevant to the group process
- Maintains confidentiality
- Checks in with the group regularly
- Understands how to share without dominating group discussion
We will be offering more training for parent group leaders and managers of programs that include support groups.

Type in the chat your answer: What future training topics would help you further develop your support group?
Questions?
Parent group resources

- **Starting, Nurturing, and Maintaining Adoptive Parent Groups: A Guide for Leaders**

- **Developing a Parent-to-Parent Support Network**

- **Taking a Break: Creating Foster, Adoptive and Kinship Respite Care in Your Community**
Brookdale Foundation

- Relatives as Parents Program (RAPP)
  http://www.brookdalefoundation.org/RAPP/rappp.html

- Relatives as Parents Program guidebook
  http://www.brookdalefoundation.org/RAPP/07-080_n4a_Brookdale_final.pdf
AdoptUSKids resources

AdoptUSKids “supporting families” web page
https://www.adoptuskids.org/for-professionals/publications/supporting-families

- Publications
- Tip sheets
- Recorded webinars, including Engaging Parents and Caregivers in Support Groups (October 2018)
Britt Cloudsdale, Family Support Program Coordinator
AdoptUSKids
(763) 312-3333
brittcloudsdale@nacac.org

Barb Clark, Parent Support Coordinator, North American Council on Adoptable Children
(651) 644-3036, ext. 13
barbclark@nacac.org

Kim Stevens, Program Manager, North American Council on Adoptable Children
(508) 254-2200
kimstevens@nacac.org