

MULTIPARTIAL FACILITATION IN DIALOGUE

The key to any good and useful dialogue is keeping people safe while engaging multiple perspectives, especially those that are forgotten or just plain left out.

We believe that multipartial facilitation fosters an environment where people are:

- ✔ motivated to express their thoughts
- ✔ challenged to consider other perspectives
- ✔ listening attentively and respectfully to others.

This approach ensures a balanced, equitable, and inclusive dialogue that enriches the discussion and promotes a deeper understanding of the issues most important to communities.



DOMINANT NARRATIVES

A dominant narrative is a story that supports the goals and beliefs of people with power. In dialogues, the dominant narrative may be the only one voiced, or the only one taken seriously.



MULTIPARTIALITY

Multipartiality gives attention to multiple identities and experiences, especially ones that might be left out or historically unheard. In dialogues, this can balance power disparities and enhance learning and understanding.



HOW DOES IT WORK?

See tips and ideas on the next page.



MULTIPARTIAL FACILITATION IN PRACTICE



How to Take a Multipartial Approach



Ask questions

Try, "What do others think about this?" and "Does anyone have a different perspective?" These questions can help bring out perspectives other than the dominant narrative.



Introduce other perspectives

Bring up ideas that participants have not mentioned with empathy, dignity, and respect. Be sure to have an intentional focus on non-dominant narratives.



Maintain safety

Intervene if the conversation becomes hurtful or unproductive.



Challenge misinformation, myths, or falsehoods

Use directed questions, while promoting dialogue and checking for resources and accuracy. This might include intervening when opinions are presented as facts.



Seek to balance power among participants

Be aware of and name how power dynamics show up in a dialogue as well as the impact they have on the participants.

Multipartial vs. Neutral Facilitation

MULTIPARTIAL FACILITATION

- Encourages multiple viewpoints
- Acknowledges power imbalances due to social identity and inequity
- Interrupts dominant norms to hear a broader set of views/experiences
- Works to rebalance power where inequities exist

NEUTRAL FACILITATION

- Does not take a stance
- Does not acknowledge power imbalances that exist in society
- Reinforces the status quo by letting dominant norms/voices remain the focus
- Benefits dominant norms/groups, leaving inequities in place

Adapted from Program on Intergroup Relations, University of Michigan by Natalie Zappella, Fall 2007.

Learn More

Everyday Democracy provides facilitators with training, instructions, and tools to support a multipartial and trauma-informed approach in dialogues. For more information contact:
Larissa Vasquez, lvasquez@everyday-democracy.org