

Building Your Virtual Facilitation Skills

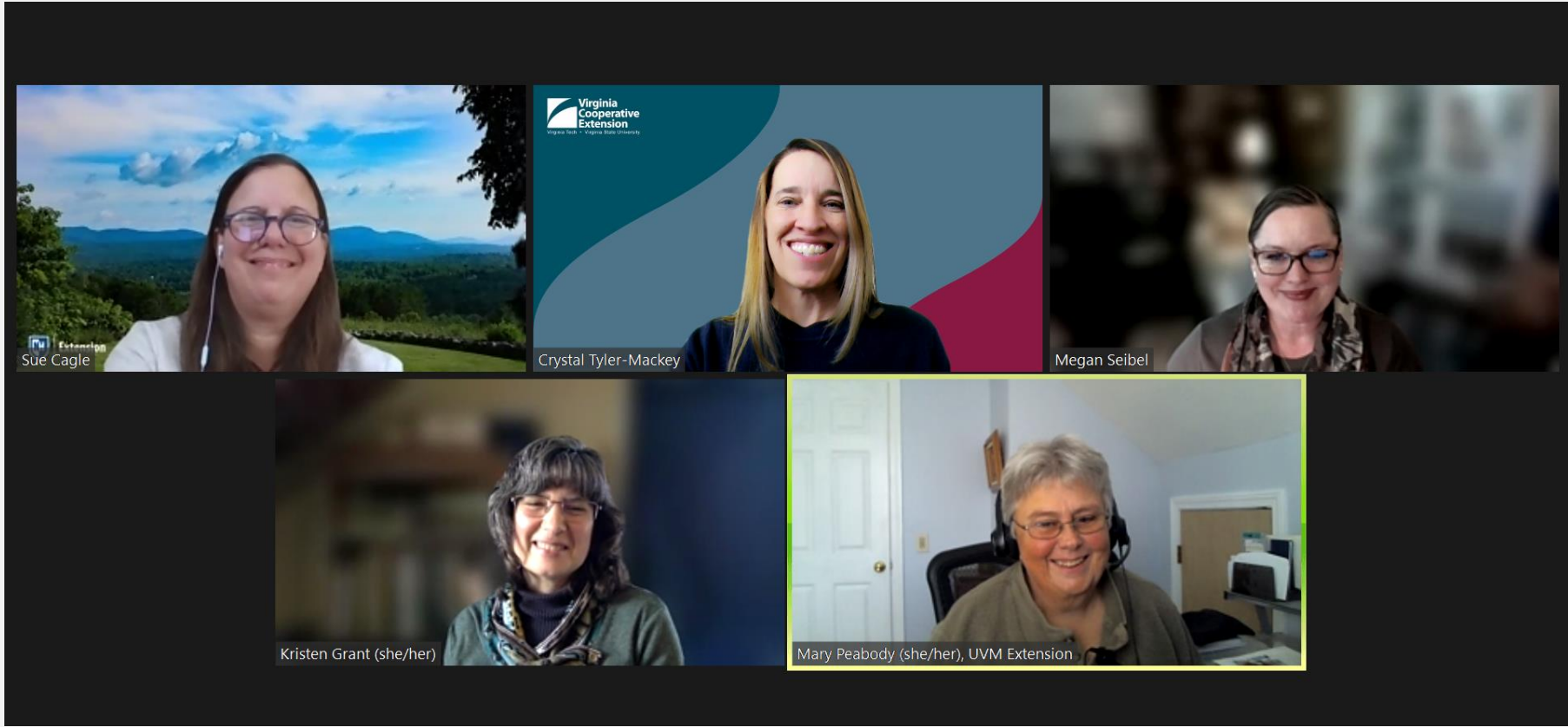
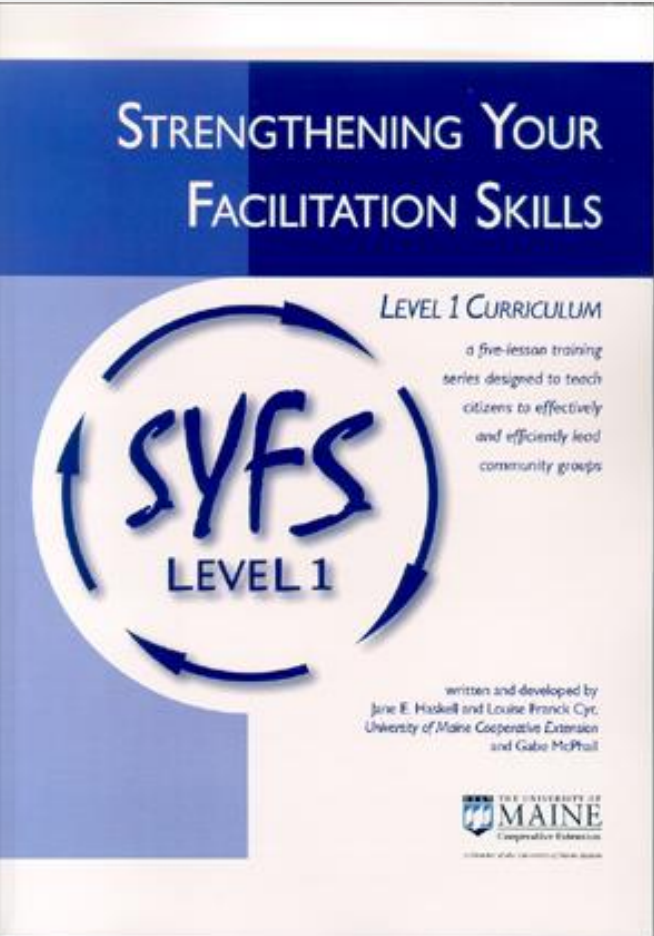
Part of the *Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills Series*

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Great Need, Limited Time



Collaboration



Development Timeline and Priorities

Timeline

Begin planning Jan 2021

Pilot series April 2021

Full rollout Fall 2021

Maintain interactivity and opportunities for participants to practice skills

Balance core facilitation skills with virtual processes/tools

Design structure to consider best practices in virtual learning

Synchronous

Weekly Zoom Sessions: 2 hours/wk

Session 1: Virtual Facilitation Essentials

Session 2: Setting the Stage for Success

Session 3: Facilitation Practice: Putting your skills to work

Session 4: Facilitation Challenges and Opportunities

Session 5: Celebrating Facilitation Success

Asynchronous

eXtension Campus: 45 minutes/wk

Videos

- **Content: 5 minutes or less**
- **Recorded demonstrations**

Resources

- **Articles**
- **Handouts**
- **Course Reader**

Discussion Forum

- **Peer to peer learning**
- **Processing experiences**

Asynchronous Content

Short Presentations



Clarifying Circle Demonstration

Guiding Principles for Facilitators

- Every person's voice matters & provides relevant info needed to make informed decisions
- People in groups are naturally resourceful, creative and whole
- People will follow through on commitments & decisions they help create
- Trust the wisdom of the group
- With training and practice, a group can manage their processes and relationships
- Guiding a group through a cooperative process helps the group achieve goals
- Group decisions are stronger than individual decisions
- You are responsible for the process; the group is responsible for the outcomes

Resources Tools

Demos

THE UNIVERSITY OF MAINE Cooperative Extension

Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills, Level 1

(SYFS) COURSE READER and COURSEWORKBOOK

Part of the Strengthening Your Facilitation Skills Series

FACILITATOR'S GUIDE

Map Your Virtual Meeting

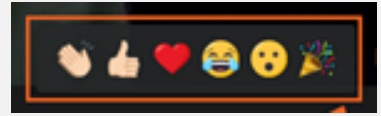
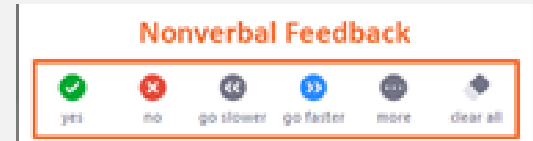
Enter every meeting confident. Leave every meeting feeling accomplished. It all starts with a plan!

- 01 Know the platform**
Be sure to check for updates, but no software guru is here you will need to address. Prepare any invitation materials to share with participants in advance. Have someone else ready.
- 02 Get the Support Team**
Assign the agenda and determine what type of support you will need. Virtual meetings often require more behind-the-scenes support than a face-to-face meeting. If you are using breakout rooms, who will facilitate those?
- 03 Tune the agenda**
Virtual meetings are often held across time zones and activities. Be present & focus and review your agenda carefully. Build in time for coming going to breakout rooms, polling, discussion, build in time for debriefing at the end. Plan for water cooler moments that will keep you sane.
- 04 Have a Plan B**
No one else thinks a system crashed, the power goes out, or the connection is shaky. But these events are just a part of virtual meetings. The best facilitators anticipate and plan ahead for the unexpected.
- 05 Actively Facilitate**
To be a strong facilitator in a virtual setting you will have to get very good at active facilitation. You need to reflect the level of energy you expect from your participants. Use facial expressions, hand gestures, chat features and avatars to bring the group's energy level up or down.

Building Your Virtual Facilitation Skills - 2021

Discussion Forums: Peer to Peer learning and reflection

Give multiple options for interaction



Ask for feedback with reaction icons

Frequently check in with participants

Ask questions that require chat box response

Thought Question

If 80% of communication is non-verbal how does a facilitator measure engagement in a virtual setting...?

Hybrid setting?

Ideas for increasing engagement?

Would love to hear your ideas - what's worked? what hasn't? what are you planning to try?

Use breakout rooms for small groups or pairs

Working agreement to keep cameras on

Synchronous Session structure/format:

- Content chunked in small segments followed by discussion, processing, application, or practice
- Varied activities and formats to meet needs of diverse participants
- Content integrated into demonstration of tools and processes
- Breaks incorporated into every session
- Participants are invited “behind the curtain” of our process

Facilitation Practice



- In sessions 2 – 5, participants have the opportunity to sign up to facilitate small group breakout sessions.
- Scenarios and small group structures incorporate content as well as processes reviewed in the training.
- Volunteer facilitators are offered 1-1 technical support to plan and practice for their small group
- Facilitation feedback allows facilitator to receive structured feedback in a safe environment

Evaluation Data – Participant Feedback

Survey responses:

All topic/skill areas reported increased knowledge AND increased confidence

This training worked well in virtual environment: 33 yes, 1 no, 1 undecided

Would you recommend this course to others: 35 yes (100%)

What did you like?

Hands on opportunities/Practice

Variety of digital tools/tips/activities

Materials/recordings were easily accessible

Group dynamic (it felt like a safe environment)

Transparency from facilitators

Wide variety of topics covered

Quality of the material presented

Evaluation Data – Participant Feedback

In their own words:

“It was a great educational experience. I worked harder, learned more, and enjoyed it more than I thought I would. Your presentations were seamless-what a great team! And you built a learning community that brought so much of the knowledge and skill in the room to our discussions and breakouts.”

“This course was amazing!! I honestly wished we had more time in the course.”

They want more:

- Sessions
- Practice
- Offerings throughout the year
- Topics to keep building skills (e.g. hybrid meetings)

Most Disruptive Behaviors

1. Think of an ineffective virtual meeting you joined. What made it so hard? Write 1 behavior that hindered the group (+10 words in RED). 2. Then "like" posts related to the idea you posted and/or comment to identify the theme. 3. Then choose 1 behavior and write a possible way to address it or prevent it (+20 words in GREEN). 4. Then drag your idea close to the behavior it is addressing and "connect" your idea to the behavior.

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PARTICIPANTS NOT SHARING TIME

- Someone talked too long on a limited-time meeting
- monologuing
- People talking too much
- Derailing/monopolizing time on a tangent
- Person dominating the conversation
- there was monopolizing and the person repeated their point over and over
- Facilitator talking too much

Might be worth pre-conversation with people you anticipate being deriders

- Have time limits for shares and a time keeper
- Control the time and reduce the time for people commenting
- Interrupt the conversation hog and ask a question to another participant
- Encouraging others to participate and assuring they can respond.
- directly address a monopolizer during a break, expressing that you hear their point and also hope they can offer space for other people to engage

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TECH ISSUES

- Participants looking away from camera
- background noise
- Not turning your mic off when not talking.
- Not silencing cell phone
- Host not being familiar with platform and spending meeting time figuring it out.

- Participants looking away from camera isn't a sign of engagement or lack thereof in my opinion
- Understanding that sometimes people have two screens. This is difficult- not looking would have to have other signs of distraction before I assume they are lost.
- universal mute button is your friend as a host
- Create a climate where folks can be honest about distractions or perceived lack of focus.

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LACK OF PARTICIPATION

- Disengaged - Silence and cameras turned off

- Create breakout rooms to encourage conversation

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PARTICIPANTS INTERRUPTING

- Everyone interrupting eachother!
- Person interrupting

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NON-CONSTRUCTIVE CRITICISM

- criticism with nothing constructive
- Calling people out for their errors
- trying to predict the future without any direction...gossip

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LACK OF ORGANIZATION, PREPARATION

- spending too much time looking up files during a meeting that could be done on own time
- lack of organization

- Ask them to follow up with the info after the meeting so you can continue the main discussion.
- emphasize preparation explicitly beforehand, follow up

Use Working Agreements

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GOING OFF TRACK

- Side conversations that aren't for the good of the group.
- Participants going off-topic

- Use of parking lots that can be used to discuss other topics.

What does the ideal meeting involve for you? What 1 thing do you care most about?

Respect

productivity

the meeting
outcomes are
action items

Honoring
time
limits

equal
engagement

no
accusations

Every
participant
has the
chance to
engage when
they want to

Collective
Understanding

Engagement-paying
attention and
sharing

Engaged
idea
sharing

accomplishing
the agreed
upon goal

Prepared
participants

Harmony
amongst
others

productive

Equal time to
express
themselves

Active
Listening

Engaged
idea
sharing

accomplishing
the agreed
upon goal

Prepared
participants

Everyone
feels their
time was
well spent

Equity,
everyone has
an
opportunity to
contribute

Clarity

Participant
attendance for
full meeting

Effective
use of
time

meaningful
discussion

Respond at PollEv.com/suecagle920

Text **SUECAGLE920** to **37607** once to join, then text your message

One word that comes to mind when you consider the role of a facilitator?



Upcoming Trainings

Train the Trainer and Core Series: Concurrent

March 22 – April 19:

Core Series: Noon to 2pm

Train the Trainer: Noon to 3pm

Questions???

Thank you!

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