

# The Power of Facilitation

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## Process Consultant

- Consultant
- Community Member
- Co-Author
  - Cooperative Culture Handbook
- CohoUS former staff
- Imago Relationships Facilitator
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# Agenda

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- What is a facilitator? (role)
- What do facilitators do? (tasks)
- What skills does a facilitator need?
- Outcomes of skilled facilitation
- Q&A

# What is a facilitator?

The role of the facilitator can include many aspects or very few.

- Traffic director
  - Holder of group voice
  - Meeting planner
  - Presentation coach
  - Conflict mediator
  - Process guide
  - Artist
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# Role: Traffic Director

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- Call the meeting to order
- Announce each topic / activity
- Call on participants
- Keep the time
- Close the meeting

(Role may be shared between multiple people.)

Example: Time keeper)

# Role: Holder of group voice

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- Summarizes viewpoints
- Gathers areas of agreement and disagreement
- Calls for consensus / consent round
- Suggests next steps (delegation, table to \_\_\_\_, etc)

# Role: Meeting planner

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- Allots time for each topic / activity
- Determines discussion style or activity best for each topic
  - Popcorn, rounds, small group, spectrum, presentation, etc.
- Chooses an order based on energy, tone, individual needs, etc.
- Plans check in, breaks, and closing activities
- Coordinates meeting participants
- Publishes agenda

# Role: Presentation coach

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Meet with presenter or champion of each topic

- Build trust
- Determine the goal for the topic
  - What do you hope will be different after the meeting than before?
  - Example: Information sharing, input gathering, decision, announcement, change behavior
- Adjust expectations
- Educate about community norms or process
- Plan an approach

# Role: Conflict mediator

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- Track the energy in the room
- Validate various viewpoints
- Guide participants to understanding of opposing viewpoints
- Adjust meeting plan if needed
- De-escalate if needed

# Role: Process guide

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Facilitates a topic over weeks or months

- Meets with interested parties
- Plans a series of meetings or activities
- Facilitates meetings or portions of meeting about that topic
- May support proposal drafting
- Holds group norms
- Guides topic champions (and opposition) in navigating community process

# Role: Artist

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Facilitation is both art and science.

- Find the beauty in the process
- Approach disagreement with creativity
- Access the emotional wisdom of the group
- Hold the vision of what facilitation can do

# What do facilitators do?

## Chronological task list

- Receive an agenda
    - Topics, presenters, outcomes
  - Meet with presenters
    - Determine desired outcomes
  - Plan a meeting
    - Variety of formats, ordered for energy, including breaks
  - Lead the meeting
  - Follow up as needed
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# What skills do facilitators need?

Facilitation skills build through practice. Every facilitator is a work in progress.

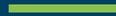
- Trust
  - Organization
  - Knowledge of community norms and needs
  - Flexibility
  - Curiosity & Humility
  - Toolbox of meeting activities
    - Available in The Cooperative Culture Handbook
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# Outcomes of skilled facilitation

The impact of good (or bad) facilitation is cumulative.  
Things build over time.

- Trust
  - Efficiency
  - Clear decisions
  - Community buy-in
  - Stronger relationships
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# Questions & Comments



# Upcoming Cohousing Institute Course

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Sign up here:

<https://cohousinginstitute.org/product/facilitator-training/>

## FACILITATOR TRAINING

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Make the most of your time together, strengthen relationships, and move your community forward with this 6-week training.



with Karen Gimnig

**FEBRUARY 13 -  
MARCH 20TH**

**THURSDAYS,  
3PM-5PM MT**



# More content like this:

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- Book
  - The Cooperative Culture Handbook by Yana Ludwig and Karen Gimnig
  - [www.ic.org/handbook](http://www.ic.org/handbook)
- Podcast
  - Employing Differences with Karen Gimnig and Paul Tevis
  - [www.employingdifferences.com](http://www.employingdifferences.com)
- Training : Facilitation with Cohousing Institute
  - 6 week session begins Feb 13, 2025
  - <https://cohousinginstitute.org/product/facilitator-training/>
- Training: Communication and Relationship Building in Community
  - 6 week session begins Feb 6, 2025
  - <https://www.ic.org/communication-and-relationship-building-in-community/>
- Training : watch ic.org for more course offerings
- Cohousing Association Blog
  - [www.cohousing.org/blog](http://www.cohousing.org/blog)

# Connect with Karen

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- Platform / Mailing list - Connect Collaborate Grow
  - [https://connect-collaborate-grow.mn.co/share/sS5MiNeSQGfu4LvT?utm\\_source=manual](https://connect-collaborate-grow.mn.co/share/sS5MiNeSQGfu4LvT?utm_source=manual)