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IAF CORE COMPETENCIES

BACKGROUND

The International Association of Facilitators (IAF) is the worldwide professional body established to promote, support and advance the art and practice of professional facilitation through methods exchange, professional growth, practical research and collegial networking.

The IAF Core Competencies framework was developed over several years by the IAF with the support of its members and facilitators from all over the world. The competencies form the basic set of skills, knowledge, and behaviours that facilitators must have in order to be successful facilitating in a wide variety of environments.

In response to the needs of members and their clients, IAF also established the IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator (CPF) designation. The CPF provides successful candidates with the professional credential IAF Certified™ Professional Facilitator. This credential is the leading indicator that a facilitator is competent in each of the IAF Core Competencies.

THE CORE COMPETENCIES

A. CREATE COLLABORATIVE CLIENT RELATIONSHIPS

A1) Develop working partnerships

- Clarify mutual commitment
- Develop consensus on tasks, deliverables, roles & responsibilities
- Demonstrate collaborative values and processes such as in co-facilitation

A2) Design and customise applications to meet client needs

- Analyse organisational environment
- Diagnose client need
- Create appropriate designs to achieve intended outcomes
- Predefine a quality product & outcomes with client

A3) Manage multi-session events effectively

- Contract with client for scope and deliverables
- Develop event plan
- Deliver event successfully
- Assess / evaluate client satisfaction at all stages of the event or project



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B. PLAN APPROPRIATE GROUP PROCESSES

B1) Select clear methods and processes that:

- Foster open participation with respect for client culture, norms and participant diversity
- Engage the participation of those with varied learning or thinking styles
- Achieve a high quality product or outcome that meets the client needs

B2) Prepare time and space to support group process

- Arrange physical space to support the purpose of the meeting
- Plan effective use of time
- Provide effective atmosphere and drama for sessions

C. CREATE AND SUSTAIN A PARTICIPATORY ENVIRONMENT

C1) Demonstrate effective participatory and interpersonal communication skills

- Apply a variety of participatory processes
- Demonstrate effective verbal communication skills
- Develop rapport with participants
- Practice active listening
- Demonstrate ability to observe and provide feedback to participants

C2) Honour and recognise diversity, ensuring inclusiveness

- Encourage positive regard for the experience and perception of all participants
- Create a climate of safety and trust
- Create opportunities for participants to benefit from the diversity of the group
- Cultivate cultural awareness and sensitivity

C3) Manage group conflict

- Help individuals identify and review underlying assumptions
- Recognise conflict and its role within group learning / maturity
- Provide a safe environment for conflict to surface
- Manage disruptive group behaviour
- Support the group through resolution of conflict



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C4) Evoke group creativity

- Draw out participants of all learning/thinking styles
- Encourage creative thinking
- Accept all ideas
- Use approaches that best fit needs and abilities of the group
- Stimulate and tap group energy

D. GUIDE GROUP TO APPROPRIATE AND USEFUL OUTCOMES

D1) Guide the group with clear methods and processes

- Establish clear context for the session
- Actively listen, question and summarise to elicit the sense of the group
- Recognise tangents and redirect to the task
- Manage small and large group process

D2) Facilitate group self-awareness about its task

- Vary the pace of activities according to needs of group
- Identify information the group needs, and draw out data and insight from the group
- Help the group synthesise patterns, trends, root causes, frameworks for action
- Assist the group in reflection on its experience

D3) Guide the group to consensus and desired outcomes

- Use a variety of approaches to achieve group consensus
- Use a variety of approaches to meet group objectives
- Adapt processes to changing situations and needs of the group
- Assess and communicate group progress
- Foster task completion

E. BUILD AND MAINTAIN PROFESSIONAL KNOWLEDGE

E1) Maintain a base of knowledge

- Be knowledgeable in management, organisational systems and development, group development, psychology, and conflict resolution
- Understand dynamics of change
- Understand learning/ thinking theory



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E2) Know a range of facilitation methods

- Understand problem solving and decision-making models
- Understand a variety of group methods and techniques
- Know consequences of misuse of group methods
- Distinguish process from task and content
- Learn new processes, methods, & models in support of client's changing/emerging needs

E3) Maintain professional standing

- Engage in ongoing study / learning related to our field
- Continuously gain awareness of new information in our profession
- Practice reflection and learning
- Build personal industry knowledge and networks
- Maintain certification

F. MODEL POSITIVE PROFESSIONAL ATTITUDE

F1) Practice self-assessment and self-awareness

- Reflect on behaviour and results
- Maintain congruence between actions and personal and professional values
- Modify personal behaviour / style to reflect the needs of the group
- Cultivate understanding of one's own values and their potential impact on work with clients

F2) Act with integrity

- Demonstrate a belief in the group and its possibilities
- Approach situations with authenticity and a positive attitude
- Describe situations as facilitator sees them and inquire into different views
- Model professional boundaries and ethics (as described in the IAF's **Statement of Values and Code of Ethics**)

F3) Trust group potential and model neutrality

- Honour the wisdom of the group
- Encourage trust in the capacity and experience of others
- Vigilant to minimise influence on group outcomes
- Maintain an objective, non-defensive, non-judgmental stance