

# Facilitating The Cabin Dynamic

Tips and Tricks from the Challenge Course for Success in the Camper Cabin

## Fundamental Attributes of a Facilitator Counselor

**Awareness:** The ability to maintain and monitor attitudes, relationships, needs, goals, desires, weaknesses, strengths, opportunities, and threats of individual campers and spaces.

**Intentionality:** The ability to plan, initiate, and maintain activities and spaces that are aware of individual campers and have meaningful connections to overarching goals.

**Vision:** The ability to maintain, in mind and behavior, a collection of overarching goals and values for the summer at all times while considering past, present, or future activities and spaces.

### THE FACILITATOR'S METHODOLOGY™



The Effective Facilitator (n.d.). Retrieved from [https://leadstrat-9f3a.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2017/09/TheEffectiveFacilitator\\_CD\\_Condensed\\_LeadStrat\\_Q32017.pdf](https://leadstrat-9f3a.s3.amazonaws.com/uploads/2017/09/TheEffectiveFacilitator_CD_Condensed_LeadStrat_Q32017.pdf)

**1. Preparing for Success:** Before the start of anything (summer, session, day, activity) what can I do to prepare my bunk for success

**2. Getting the Session Started:** How best do I initiate and frame what we are about to start?

**3. Focusing the Group:** Towards what do I want to focus my group towards, what are they focused on now, and how can I make this transition *intrinsically*<sup>1</sup> rewarding?

**4. The Power of the Pen:** In moments where behavior is not aligned with Vision, *ask questions* of the individuals concerned, *not commands*.

**5. Information Gathering:** What information is valuable to the goals of the present? Ask questions to gather it.

**6. Managing Dysfunction:** What dysfunction exists in the group? Between who? For what reason? How do I guide this towards the goals of the activity, space, and summer?

**7. Consensus Building:** Where is there already consensus? What divides those who disagree? How does this disagreement relate to the goals and vision?

**8. Keeping the Energy High:** What is right energy for the space? group? How do I

What energy currently exists in the close the gap?<sup>2</sup>

**9. Closing the Session:** What are the this activity, space, session or we reflect on and remember for This is the debrief, the sharing, the "brings it all home". Leave this out, just had becomes forgotten in time.

**Responsibilities Towards Vision**

**Responsibilities Towards Awareness**

**Responsibilities Towards Intentionality**

take-aways from summer? What can future moments. compiling, that and the experience

<sup>1</sup> Intrinsic motivation is increased when the individual has greater autonomy, relatedness, and competence in their activities (Ryan & Deci, 2000)

<sup>2</sup> Role Modelling is the most important here, but when it doesn't suffice, consider how to focus and direct awareness of the individuals: pointing, gesturing, maintaining silence with acknowledgement, etc.

10. **Agenda Setting:** Overall, how do we set parameters and boundaries for each summer, session, space, or activity to ensure success of the other 9 tools above?

*Turn this page over for a couple specific techniques found to be most helpful in facilitating bunk dynamics.*

#### Technique 1: Trust the Process

Above all else, learn to have faith and hope that what “should” happen, what you may have experienced as a camper, will indeed happen for your campers as well. It is far more the system than the individual that provides the overall plan and strategy, but the individual makes the difference. **Trust the process.**

Tuckman’s Model of Group Dynamics: Groups proceed in a sequence of the following (question goals):

- Forming (Framing the Vision): initiation should begin with a communication of the Vision.
- Storming (Awareness): In moments of dysfunction and conflict, bring campers to pay attention to themselves, those around them, and how they make each other feel.
- Norming (Curiosity): In times where things are cohesive, ask about Wonder. Inspire.
- Performing (Affirmation): In times where the group is succeeding together.
- Transforming (Framing the Process): When reflecting on experiences, ask questions that direct attention to *how* the group arrived at where they are now.

#### Technique 2: How to Ask Questions, Without Asking Commands

Often, as counselors and facilitators, we forget the affect that tone and body language can have, but we also forget that the actual language we use matters, and implicitly educates those around us. Consider the following types of questions, and how they might be used in each of the 10 processes above:

Gauging: a sense of where someone / thing is at

Curiosity: gathering information without an agenda

Clarifying: making clear understanding, "just to rephrase"

Probing: pinpointing specific part of sentiment expressed and digging deeper

Reflection: Something they can walk away with

Challenging: grants legitimacy to the point being challenged + reflection

Leading: I know the answer, and I want you to say it: “*Are we supposed to throw food at our friends...?*” etc.

- **Avoid at all costs, at all times.**

#### Technique 3: Being an Ally, Supporting Friendships

A facilitator is most successful when they are able to participate empathetically, without participating emotionally. While this is a seeming contradiction, sitting in the middle of this challenge is key.

In other words, a facilitator ought to be able to participate emotionally in the group, without leading, framing, and emotionally manipulating the group.

The best way to do this is to remind oneself to breathe before breaking, think before acting, and reflect before reacting. Say these like mantras throughout the summer until they sink in.

#### Technique 4: Learn More

The more curious you are about the things you do, the more likely it is that they will become easier over time. Google-able Learning: Process Communication Model; Leading Out of Drama; Appreciative Inquiry; Non-Violent Communication

**Above all else, Awareness.** If you are going to do anything about anything, Awareness comes first. Consider what you are not paying attention to. Imagine what may be going on under your nose. Pay Attention next time. With Intention. With Vision. With Awareness.