Participation in peer learning and support groups is a key ingredient of many fatherhood programs. When done effectively, group sessions can be the “glue” that keeps men involved in a wider program and leads to powerful life changes for them and their families.

Effective group facilitators build a foundation of trust that encourages self-reflection, personal sharing, peer support, and ongoing growth.

Facilitators play four basic roles: 1
1. Engaging—establish trust and rapport; create a welcoming, safe environment.
2. Informing—provide meaningful and useful knowledge and information.
3. Involving—ensure all group members participate and benefit from activities.
4. Applying—encourage the use of new awareness, knowledge, and skills.

WHAT YOU CAN DO

- **Be authentic** – you will be more successful in creating group buy-in if your actions and words are from the heart.
- **Get to know your participants** – this will help you better meet their needs and connect on deeper levels.
- **Establish some basic ground rules** – e.g., be on time, maintain confidentiality, share the time, be respectful.
- **Be prepared** – know your curriculum, review objectives and goals, set the room up for group discussion, have copies of handouts and any other materials ready to share.
- **Recognize you are not the only expert in the room** – your job is to facilitate sharing and discussion among group members.
- **Observe other facilitators in action** and make note of techniques that work for them.

- **Make time** at the beginning and end of each group session for participants to reflect on lessons learned and share how they are using new knowledge and skills.
- **Keep it interactive and fun** – people only remember 20% of what they hear, but 80% of what they see, hear, and experience!
- **Invite colleagues to observe** your group facilitation and provide feedback.
- **Allow time** for joint planning and debriefing if you work with a co-facilitator.

**MORE INFORMATION**

**NRFC Resources**
- Responsible Fatherhood Toolkit: Group Work [https://www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit/work/group-work](https://www.fatherhood.gov/toolkit/work/group-work)
- DadTalk Blog Post: Create a Winning Team through Group Facilitation [https://www.fatherhood.gov/dadtalk-blog/create-winning-team-through-group-facilitation](https://www.fatherhood.gov/dadtalk-blog/create-winning-team-through-group-facilitation)
- Webinar: Working with Fathers in Groups: Tips to Enhance Your Facilitation Skills [https://www.fatherhood.gov/content/working-fathers-groups-tips-enhance-your-facilitation-skills](https://www.fatherhood.gov/content/working-fathers-groups-tips-enhance-your-facilitation-skills)

**Other Resources**

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