IAF™
INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF FACILITATORS

Statement of Values and Code of Ethics

This is the Statement of Values and Code of Ethics of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF). The development of this Code has involved extensive dialogue and a wide diversity of views from IAF members from around the world. A consensus has been achieved across regional and cultural boundaries.

The Statement of Values and Code of Ethics (the Code) was adopted by the IAF Association Coordinating Team (ACT), June 2004 The Ethics and Values Think Tank (EVTT) will continue to provide a forum for discussion of pertinent issues and potential revisions of this Code.

Preamble

Facilitators are called upon to fill an impartial role in helping groups become more effective. We act as process guides to create a balance between participation and results.

We, the members of the International Association of Facilitators (IAF), believe that our profession gives us a unique opportunity to make a positive contribution to individuals, organizations, and society. Our effectiveness is based on our personal integrity and the trust developed between ourselves and those with whom we work. Therefore, we recognise the importance of defining and making known the values and ethical principles that guide our actions.

This Statement of Values and Code of Ethics recognizes the complexity of our roles, including the full spectrum of personal, professional and cultural diversity in the IAF membership and in the field of facilitation. Members of the International Association of Facilitators are committed to using these values and ethics to guide their professional practice. These principles are expressed in broad statements to guide ethical practice; they provide a framework and are not intended to dictate conduct for particular situations. Questions or advice about the application of these values and ethics may be addressed to the International Association of Facilitators.

Statement of Values

As group facilitators, we believe in the inherent value of the individual and the collective wisdom of the group. We strive to help the group make the best use of the contributions of each of its members. We set aside our personal opinions and support the group's right to make its own choices. We believe that collaborative and cooperative interaction builds consensus and produces meaningful outcomes. We value professional collaboration to improve our profession.

Please find the code of ethics on the subsequent pages.

1. Client Service

We are in service to our clients, using our group facilitation competencies to add value to their work.

- Our clients include the groups we facilitate and those who contract with us on their behalf.
- We work closely with our clients to understand their expectations so that we provide the appropriate service, and that the group produces the desired outcomes.
- It is our responsibility to ensure that we are competent to handle the intervention.
- If the group decides it needs to go in a direction other than that originally intended by either the group or its representatives, our role is to help the group move forward, reconciling the original intent with the emergent direction.

2. Conflict of Interest

We openly acknowledge any potential conflict of interest

- Prior to agreeing to work with our clients, we discuss openly and honestly any possible conflict of interest, personal bias, prior knowledge of the organisation or any other matter which may be perceived as preventing us from working effectively with the interests of all group members.
- We do this so that, together, we may make an informed decision about proceeding and to prevent misunderstanding that could detract from the success or credibility of the clients or ourselves.
- We refrain from using our position to secure unfair or inappropriate privilege, gain, or benefit.

3. Group Autonomy

We respect the culture, rights, and autonomy of the group.

- We seek the group's conscious agreement to the process and their commitment to participate.
- We do not impose anything that risks the welfare and dignity of the participants, the freedom of choice of the group, or the credibility of its work.

4. Processes, Methods, and Tools

We use processes, methods and tools responsibly.

- In dialogue with the group or its representatives we design processes that will achieve the group's goals, and select and adapt the most appropriate methods and tools.
- We avoid using processes, methods or tools with which we are insufficiently skilled, or which are poorly matched to the needs of the group.

5. Respect, Safety, Equity, and Trust

We strive to engender an environment of respect and safety where all participants trust that they can speak freely and where individual boundaries are honoured. We use our skills, knowledge, tools, and wisdom to elicit and honour the perspectives of all.

- We seek to have all relevant stakeholders represented and involved.
- We promote equitable relationships among the participants and facilitator and ensure that all participants have an opportunity to examine and share their thoughts and feelings.

- We use a variety of methods to enable the group to access the natural gifts, talents and life experiences of each member.
- We work in ways that honour the wholeness and self-expression of others, designing sessions that respect different styles of interaction.
- We understand that any action we take is an intervention that may affect the process.

6. Stewardship of Process

We practice stewardship of process and impartiality toward content.

- While participants bring knowledge and expertise concerning the substance of their situation, we bring knowledge and expertise concerning the group interaction process.
- We are vigilant to minimize our influence on group outcomes.
- When we have content knowledge not otherwise available to the group, and that the group must have to be effective, we offer it after explaining our change in role.

7. Confidentiality

We maintain confidentiality of information.

- We observe confidentiality of all client information. Therefore, we do not share information about a client within or outside of the client's organisation, nor do we report on group content, or the individual opinions or behaviour of members of the group without consent.

8. Professional Development

We are responsible for continuous improvement of our facilitation skills and knowledge.

- We continuously learn and grow.
- We seek opportunities to improve our knowledge and facilitation skills to better assist groups in their work.
- We remain current in the field of facilitation through our practical group experiences and ongoing personal development.
- We offer our skills within a spirit of collaboration to develop our professional work practices.