

# Hints, techniques and tips

## Be prepared

To guide a group through this process, you will need to have some understanding of what it is trying to achieve. By **planning sessions ahead of time** you can ensure they are as productive and robust as possible. Make sure you have everything you need, and let the group know well in advance if they have any pre-work to do. As a part of your preparation (see above!) **it's important to understand who you have in a group**. This way you can manage different dynamics and tailor activities to ensure that every voice is heard.

## Be flexible

Whilst being prepared is one key to success, the other is flexibility. However much we prepare, **facilitators must remember that things don't always go to plan**. Being able to adapt what you have planned is just as important as the preparation. You might have to move content round to give extra breaks, or change the agenda.

## Tips for facilitators, from facilitators

*"Be relaxed - a relaxed facilitator creates a relaxed environment, but don't be afraid to show leadership. With groups like these, people respond to action and energy."*

*"Help your group understand your role and why you were appointed, to avoid any confusion about decision-making. Be clear that you are here to help them make decisions and not dictate them."*

*"Find the value in each member of your team - each person brings a particular gift and skill to the group, and it's part of your job to draw that out and assign tasks that suit those"*

*"Talk less. Your job is to facilitate the discussions within the group, find ways forward from those discussions and make plans to action them."*

*"Affirm each person when they speak, especially early in the group's life."*

*"Allow your team to build upon mistakes and learn from one another. Freedom in facilitating is important because a good facilitator will focus on a process so everyone else can get on with the task at hand."*