



From Knowing to Doing - A Facilitation Skills Tip Sheet

Training builds the rider — the rational, willing part of a facilitator that knows what a good meeting looks like. But the elephant (habit, identity, discomfort) and the path (time, tools, norms) determine the extent to which people actually use the skills they have learned. This tip sheet is intended to be used for a few weeks after the workshop, when the real work of behavior change begins.

For L&D Professionals

Reinforcing the skills after the workshop ends.

- Sit in on 2–3 real meetings per facilitator within the first month. Give feedback against a short, specific checklist focusing on the skills each facilitator most wants to practice
- Replace more learning content with live coaching. Behavior change needs feedback loops instead of more content.
- Build a simple observation checklist. Example: talk-time balance, naming the dysfunction out loud, closing with clear actions.
- Create structural templates that make the desired behavior the path of least resistance, rather than relying on willpower in the moment.
- Pair facilitators to observe each other's meetings. Peer feedback carries less power-distance discomfort than a manager watching.
- Run a short pulse survey with attendees after a few meetings, asking questions such as “Did you feel heard?” “Was that real agreement or just moving on?” to see whether new skills are being consistently used.

For Managers

Supporting the behavior day to day in meetings you attend.

- Speak last in discussions, especially if you're the most senior person in the room. This can change what people feel safe saying.
- Protect the time facilitation actually needs. Don't compress a 45-minute conversation into 20 minutes and expect engagement to survive.
- Notice and name it when someone facilitates well in the moment. Example: “I noticed you asked Priya directly before we moved on. That seemed to make it easier for her to contribute.”
- Follow up on action items to start the next meeting. Otherwise, the fact that you ended with clear actions to end the last meeting feels performative.
- Don't rescue silence. When a facilitator pauses to let the group think, resist the urge to jump in and fill it.

Structural Defaults Worth Building In

New behaviors and habits are easier to sustain when they're built into the meeting design, not left to individual discipline in the moment.

- Standing agenda line: “Reactions round — leader speaks last.”
- Reserve the last five minutes of every meeting to state decisions made, open issues, and an owner + date for each action.
- Send a pre-meeting nudge such as: “We need everyone to weigh in on this proposal.” Or, “Let’s make sure we’re really agreeing, instead of avoiding necessary friction?”
- Keep a visible parking lot for tangents and reset it at the start of each meeting.

A Quick Diagnostic: Skill, Will, or Path?

Not every stalled behavior has the same root cause. Make sure you know what you're looking at before designing a fix.

What you're seeing	Likely cause	What may help
Uses new skills right away, but that fades within two weeks	Path problem	Fix the environment (time, templates, leadership norms) before scheduling more training.
Says they know what to do, but avoids doing it in the room	Will / Elephant problem	Needs coaching and safe practice reps rather than more content.
Genuinely unsure what “real consensus” looks like in the moment	Rider / skill gap	A short refresher or job aid may help here.

One Small Experiment to Try This Month

- Pick 2–3 facilitators.
- Give each one behavior to try, rather than a long list. E.g., “leader speaks last” or “ask: are we aligned, or just moving on?”
- Send a 2-question pulse to attendees right after each meeting.
- Compare against a baseline meeting from before the change.
- If the facilitator applied the skills but nothing moved, the barrier is probably the path, not the rider or the elephant. It may be time to redesign the environment, not the curriculum.

Bottom line: *If a skill isn't sticking, don't assume it needs to be taught again. Ask whether it needs to be practiced, reinforced, or made easier and design accordingly.*