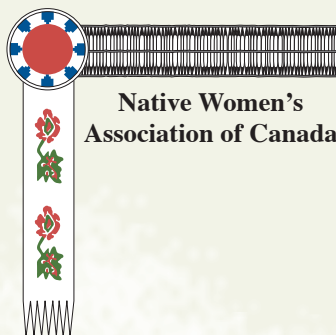


Finding Your Voice:

**Environmental Toolkit
for Aboriginal Women**

Facilitators Guide



**Native Women's
Association of Canada**



Acknowledgements

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- The Native Women's Association of Canada
- Nuclear Waste Management Organization

Disclaimer

This Guide is intended to assist a facilitator in planning, delivering, and assessing community sessions on environmental issues. The Guide, in conjunction with the Toolkit, provides useful information on how to obtain more information on an issue if it is lacking, and to direct individuals and communities to additional information sources on environmental issues. The information presented here is not intended to influence decision making in anyway, nor does it reflect the opinions or recommendations of the authors regarding specific environmental issues. The Guide and Toolkit are meant to provide Aboriginal women with ways to educate themselves and their communities so that informed decision making can take place. The authors emphasize that these documents are meant to be used in their entirety, and not be broken into separate sections.

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◆ **What this guide will teach you about facilitating sessions on environmental issues**

This guide will assist you in planning, delivering, and assessing community sessions on environmental issues in general. Please feel free to adapt this guide to your community's specific needs.

◆ **What is facilitation?**

A facilitated session is a highly structured meeting in which the facilitator guides the participants through a series of steps to arrive at a result that is created, understood, and accepted by all of the participants.

A facilitated session creates the right environment, atmosphere, and opportunity for people to contribute in a constructive and positive way.

Facilitation serves the needs of any group who are meeting with a common purpose, whether it be making a decision, solving a problem, or simply exchanging ideas and information.

You can achieve more effective results when solutions are created, understood, and accepted by the people impacted.

◆ **What is a facilitator?**

- A facilitator is someone who is acceptable to a group, remains neutral, is credible, and has no decision making authority.
- A facilitator assists the group to identify and solve problems and work together as a group to achieve consensus.



Finding Your Voice:

- A facilitator is someone who helps a group of people understand their common objectives and helps the group achieve those objectives without taking a particular position in the discussion.
- The facilitator must be knowledgeable about the subject matter that they are facilitating.

◆ **What do you look for in a facilitator?**

- Someone who has a proven track record.
- Someone who is able to fulfill the role as described in the next section.
- Someone who can work and think under stress.
- Someone who is an active listener and can paraphrase.
- Someone who is a confident public speaker.
- Someone who can empower, motivate, and mediate.

◆ **What are your roles as a facilitator?**

Bridge builder – create a safe and open environment for sharing ideas and find similarities in the ideas to build consensus.

Clairvoyant – watch carefully for strain, weariness, lack of engagement.

Guide – know the steps of the process from beginning to end and guide the group through them.

Motivator – start a conversation, establish momentum, and keep the pace going.

Peacemaker – in the event of conflict you must step in, get things back in order, and direct the group towards resolution.

Praiser – praise for effort, progress, and results. Praise well, often, and specifically. Praise the idea not the person.

Probe – ask for more details on vague input provided.

Questioner – analyze and compare comments and ask questions to manage the discussion.

Task maker – keep the session on track by keeping discussion relevant, prevent detours, and maintain consistent levels of detail from start to finish.

Above all – facilitators care about people, want to help, and put their egos aside.

◆ Principles and values are you committed to

Confidentiality – what you hear is confidential to the group as well as to you.

Inclusion and encouragement – find ways to make sure that everyone is heard and participates.

Listening – listen to what is being said and make sure you repeat what is said. Listen to stories and know when you allow the speaker to continue. Be prepared to hear about the past before you can continue to talk about the present or the future.

Respect – that everyone has a voice and a right to their opinion.

Trust and safety – create an atmosphere of trust and safety among the group to identify and solve problems and work together to achieve consensus.



Finding Your Voice:

Value personal experience – all input is valuable, especially what you hear in stories. Storytelling and oral transmission of traditional knowledge is part of our culture.

◆ **How to ask questions**

- Put participants in the scenario of issue being discussed and get them ready to visualize answers.
- How?
- Use words in your questioning such as “think about... imagine that...consider this...” Use “could” verb to maximize the number of ideas “if you could....”
- Examples:
 - Think about everything you could do if....
 - Consider that you could change the outcome if you did....
 - If you could have what you wanted, what might that be....
- Listen actively to what people are saying by summarizing what they have just said.
- Note their comments down by summarizing points on flip chart paper.

◆ **Personalities and how to manage them**

Adversary – Plays devil’s advocate.

What do you do? Acknowledge the person and let them know that all input is valid. Make sure repetitive, irrelevant, and diversionary comments are limited. This may require having a private word with the person. Remind the adversary that everyone’s input is valued

and important for having a well-rounded discussion. Remember, you are not the issue.

Disruptive Participant – Are opinionated, intolerant, and disrespectful.

What do you do? Remind the person that all ideas are welcomed and you are trying to reach a consensus. Remind that the intent is not to have everyone agree with each other, but to hear each other, and come to a common ground. If they continue to be disruptive, you will need to remove them from the group situation. Take a break, take them aside privately, tell them the discussion is over and their participation is no longer needed. Thank them. If they still do not leave, you will need to have discussed this beforehand with the client and know what the community protocol is for security. And remember, you are not the issue.

Experts – Can influence opinions or participants refer to them.

What do you do in this situation? You can ask the expert to assess input at specific stages or remind them that the views of everyone are being sought.

Harmonizer – Smooths over situations and wants to keep harmony in the group.

What do you do in this situation? Remind everyone that all views are valid and important.

Joker – Provides entertainment.

What do you do in this situation? Keep the joker busy and involved with helping you or the group so that the jokes do not disrupt the conversation flow.

Leader – There are natural spokespeople in a group.



Finding Your Voice:

There are also those who dominate the group.

What do you do in this situation? The facilitator should be aware of the leader and their style.

If the leader works with and represents the group, then that is okay. Let them play that role.

But, if the leader dominates the group, they could influence the group's decision-making process. You might use anonymous voting techniques to allow for safety and privacy.

Quiet and Shy – Those in group that say little and speak softly.

What do you do in this situation? Make sure everyone knows that their contributions are wanted and appreciated. Call on the person by name. Use round-robin discussion tools to ensure everyone has a say without being centred out.

Storytellers – It is understood that people will recount stories to make a point. It is customary to allow those who have a relevant story to share with group to take the opportunity to do so.

What do you do in this situation? You know who the community members are. You know who is likely to participate in this manner. You respect this mode of communication. Actively listen, write down a summary of what is heard. Repeat what you have heard for purposes of clarification. If needed, you should have discussed with the client how they want to handle this situation and you may have to think about planning another session. Be flexible. It might be useful to take notes about story. In what context was the story told, where were you in the agenda? Keep active notes. It

will be useful in bringing the session back to where you were.

Appropriate interaction with an Elder is to never interrupt when they are speaking. When someone tells a story listen closely to find your answers in the stories and the wisdom of the speaker.

Uninvited – Know why you want people to attend and who they should be? Is it an open meeting or by invitation only?

What do you do in this situation? If it is an open meeting, then everyone is invited. If it is by invitation only, then you can remind the participants that you have prepared specifically for this one group and you might want to offer another session for another group. This could be flagged in the pre-planning stage of preparation.

◆ **Challenges and how to deal with them**

Energy levels too low – Energy levels drop.

What do you do in this situation? Change the activity or take a break. Play an icebreaker game (see tools).

Energy levels too high – Too much energy in the group.

What do you do in this situation? Give participants a highly active task to complete such as presentations, split up into various groups, ask for a recorder and a presenter to focus the group on the activity.



Finding Your Voice:

Facing a workshop situation different from what you had expected – You expect participants to have seen documents beforehand or have completed preliminary tasks, there are unexpected participants, participants were expecting something different, timing may not have been understood, information may have been covered in another forum.

What do you do in this situation? Briefly recap, welcome participants and ask questions to determine how they may be able to contribute to the discussion and what they know, clarify expectations and adjust accordingly; and only as a last resort, revise or cancel workshop.

Hijack – Someone wants to change the workshop.

What do you do in this situation? Stick to the planned structure and reassure participants that everyone will have their say. If the hijacker wants new topics, briefly discuss with group and have a vote (public or secret) on adding the topics.

Opposition to the session being held – There may be people who do not want the session to be held, people may feel they have something to lose, participants are in conflict with each other.

What do you do in this situation? It would be useful to know beforehand if these are situations that you should be prepared for. You have to work with your local representatives in order to prepare.

If you know that this is a situation you could be facing ask for ground rules to be set right at the beginning of the meeting. Interact with those who do not want the session held so that they see you are interested in what they have to say and are open to working on their issues.

Allow people to assign their own seats. Pay attention to reactions. Move issues to a stand still to come back to later on if necessary, or plan another session to deal with those particular issues. Move agenda on and hold informal session during breaks to recap what your understanding is of the issues. Plan a follow-up and communicate this openly. Know what your client will support to resolve this. Lastly remember that you are not the issue.

Running over time – Time is running out.

What do you do in this situation? Stop the activity. Remind the group that they are running over time. Promise to return to issue later or negotiate to curtail another section and an agreeable amount of time to go over.

◆ **Tools and techniques in facilitation**

- Ask to discuss side topics after meeting – move to the ‘parking lot’.
- Focus on the solution, not the problem.
- Look for positives.
- Never try to ‘one up’ a participant. Remain neutral.
- Play games to break the ice, change energy levels, build comfort level and cohesion amongst those in group.
- Recognize people by listening attentively, repeat what you think you have heard, summarize what you have heard.
- Acknowledge dissent and verbalize that all participation is valid.
- Remain neutral and non-judgemental.



Finding Your Voice:

- Remind participants of time.
- Respect participants' refusal to participate.
- Set calm and respectful tone.
- Solicit solutions from parties.
- Gain consensus through majority rule, brainstorming, prioritizing, etc.
- Use a suggestion box and go to it from time to time.
- Remember, you may not have the whole picture.
- Remember that you are not the issue.

◆ **Designing the facilitation process**

- **Purpose** – Why is this session being held?
- **Product** – What is the product that you want at the end and how will you know you have it?
- **Participants** – Who needs to be involved and what are their perspectives?
- **Probable issues** – What are the concerns that will likely arise?
- **Process** – What steps need to be taken to achieve the purpose, get the product, given the participants and the probable issues that may arise?

◆ **Questions you need to ask the client before facilitation takes place**

- Who are your participants?
- Is there a good reason for each participant to attend?

- Do you know what you expect each participant to contribute?
- Do you know what the perspectives of participants may be?
- Do you know what you want the participants to go away with?
- Is there a protocol for inviting participants?
- In First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities consider whether you need to go through the local leadership. How do you notify the leadership? How do you notify participants? Invitation, community or local newsletter, door to door canvassing, posters, word of mouth, incentives, reminders.
- Is there a need for translation services?
- Are you having an opening ceremony/prayer – what is the protocol for this?
- Are there dynamics at play in the community that you need to be aware of? Examples: Family disagreements, recent elections, perceptions of fear, intimidation, repercussions for voicing opinions, etc.
- If so, how do they recommend you deal with those dynamics?
- Do you know what will happen with the information from the workshop?
- Will there be any decisions that need to be made and how will they be made?
- Do you know what the expected outcomes are? (Examples: Workplans, decisions, solutions, strategies, next steps, etc.)



Finding Your Voice:

- Do you understand the subject under discussion? If not, what do you need to know?
- Are the participants well-informed about the subject under discussion? If not, what do you need to do?
- Do you have the right equipment?
- Do you know how to handle actions coming out of the discussions?
- Is there a written report or input provided in sessions expected?
- Will the facilitator need to present findings in the workshop?
- Are evaluations on sessions being provided? If so, ask to see a copy.

◆ **Worksheet – Pre-planning**

- Objective of session
- Participants
- Opening ceremony/prayer – who and how do you invite, what are the requirements?
- How do you invite participants? (Examples: Advertise in community newsletter or on community radio/ TV, posters, flyers in mailboxes, door to door, text messages, etc.)
- Is there internet access in the community? (Examples: High speed, dial-up, satellite)
- Do you need translation services and for whom?
- Challenges expected? (Examples: understanding issues might come up and from whom)

- What is the room layout? (Examples: theatre, round tables, information displays, etc.)
- How is the agenda organized? (Examples: lecture, discussion groups, breakout sessions, etc.)
- What tools do you need?
 - Flip chart
 - Laptop computer
 - Name tags
 - Fact Sheets
 - Other
- How will you start the meeting? (Examples include: introductions, opening ceremony/prayer, ground rules, etc.)
- How will you get participation? (Examples: volunteer, round table etc.)
- How will you stay on track?
- How will you gain consensus?
- How will you keep the meeting moving?
- Will you use games – what are they? (Examples: Ice breakers, energy boosters, etc.)
- How will you close the meeting? (Examples: wrap up, next steps, closing ceremony/prayer)
- How will you evaluate? (Examples: exit surveys, etc.)
- Will you provide additional opportunities for input? (Examples: website, fax, or letter)
- How do you share the materials? (Examples: paper copies, CD's, flash drives)



Finding Your Voice:

◆ Checklist for Planning Session

Work Plan Item:	Comments:	✓
Location		
Participants (know who and invite, addresses, emails, phone numbers)		
Does any participant require transportation?		
Reminder notices three days before session – text message, door to door, flyers in mailboxes.		
Is there a local radio or TV station or community newspaper – Advertise meeting		
Meeting with client		
Ask protocol for inviting Elder (invite) – protocol for offering		
Ask client if you need translation services		

Work Plan Item:	Comments:	✓
Ask client what the dress is – should be respectful and appropriate		
Check equipment beforehand		
Pens		
Paper		
Flipchart with extra paper (and stand)		
Whiteboard with special markers and eraser		
Tape		
Markers		
Sticky notes		
Overhead projector		
Computer (cables, cords)		
Screen		



Finding Your Voice:

Work Plan Item:	Comments:	✓
Laser pointer		
Water glass, water		
Extension Cords		
Name cards or badges		
Watch or clock		
Room set-up - tables, chairs. Know where emergency exits are.		
Small break out areas		
Arrange for messages to be brought to your attention		
Food and drink set-up		
Clean up room afterward		

◆ **Checklist for Session Day**

Items:	Comments:	✓
Text message reminders if possible		
Ensure requirements for opening ceremony/ prayer are in place		
Test projector		
Test computer and PowerPoint presentations		
Check screen		
Set up equipment for easy reach and use		
Lay out handouts, pens, tape, etc.		
Have translation services in place		
Be ready 30 minutes before people arrive		
Have evaluations ready		



◆ **Basic rules**

- People need to know what is coming next.
- People's needs (Example: washroom break) could interfere with individual concentration levels.
- Try to change up the activity every 15 minutes, that way some individuals may concentrate on the discussion at hand and participate better.
- Start with the simple and move to more complex.
- Start with the simple and break it down into parts.
- Start with the safe and move to the risky.
- Use anonymous voting techniques to protect people.

◆ **How to organize your day**

- Welcome and introduction.
- Start with Opening Ceremony/Prayer.
- Welcome everyone. Introduce yourself and tell people where you are from. Explain who you are facilitating this session for. Briefly explain your role. Ask if anyone needs translation services. Set up if needed.
- Ask if everyone can hear you.
- Explain the workshop purpose.
- Describe structure and timing, where breaks are, and where to get coffee and lunch.
- Tell people where the bathrooms are.
- Explain fire/safety procedures.
- State purpose of the meeting, results expected.

- Explain style of workshop and help group set ground rules.
 - Ground rules include:
 - Agree to listen, understand, respect, be truthful.
 - Agree how you will reach decisions.
 - No cell phones.
 - No wandering in and out of room.
 - No children (if necessary, arrange child care).
 - Be clear that there may be different views on a matter. There may be things that you hear and do not agree with. Respect other opinion and views, listen, and then share your view.
 - If participants do not have access to correct information, it will be provided as soon as possible.
- Explain how you will answer questions.
- Explain who will record.
- Get participants to introduce themselves.
- Provide a visual agenda.
- Ask participants to accept agenda.
- Set up a “parking lot” to keep track of digressions – these could include inappropriate, conflict inducing, or disruptive input, items not on the agenda but you do not want to lose sight of them
- Conduct a warm up activity (Example: icebreaker activity or opener).
 - Ask each participant to write three things about themselves that others do not know and see if you can guess who wrote what.



Finding Your Voice:

- Ask each participant to recall the most memorable experience of their lives.
- Have an image on the screen when people are arriving. Switch to another screen and then ask people what the image was. See how many can guess.

◆ **Ground rules with client**

- Agree on what to do if there are abusive or disruptive participants. What will the community accept?
- Know beforehand if there are any people who do not want the session held.
- Are there people who might try to intimidate others from speaking?
- Are people afraid they have something to lose if they speak out?
- Are people in conflict with each other?
- Do you need security?

Develop a protocol for dealing with the above and be prepared.

- Set ground rules such as:
 - Looking for general information.
 - Set boundaries for discussion.
 - Information shared will be kept confidential.
 - Be prepared to interrupt if the boundary is crossed.

◆ **Staying on Track**

- Remind people of purpose and objective and of time constraints.
- Visibly write up decisions.
- Summarize before reading or evaluating.
- Ask for closure.

◆ **Closing the meeting**

- Review the activities performed, the objectives, issues, decisions, progress, and actions.
- Evaluate the value of the sessions and the results achieved. (Evaluation form in handouts – you will need to make copies).
- Make a list of plans/what was decided/who is responsible and when to follow-up.
- End by reminding everyone of next steps.
- Closing the meeting with a ceremony/prayer.
- Formally end the session.
- Debrief with sponsor to identify strengths and areas for improvement.

◆ **How to make the workshop meaningful**

- Identify and explain next steps for participants.
- Participants, sponsors, and other parties must get a copy of the workshop report.



Finding Your Voice:

- Report the following:
 - what was covered
 - structure of the discussion
 - how it went
 - timing
 - ideas generated
 - evaluations generated
 - diagrams created
 - voting results
 - decisions made
 - actions arising
 - issues arising
- Follow through on any promises made.

◆ **How the facilitator can bring a group together around an issue**

- The facilitator should understand what issues are important to this community.
- Understand that the group may have a history with this issue. What has been their experience with this issue?
- Examine where the group is now with the issue.
- Assess what each member of the group brings to the issue.
- What is the current situation for forming this group (favourable/not)?

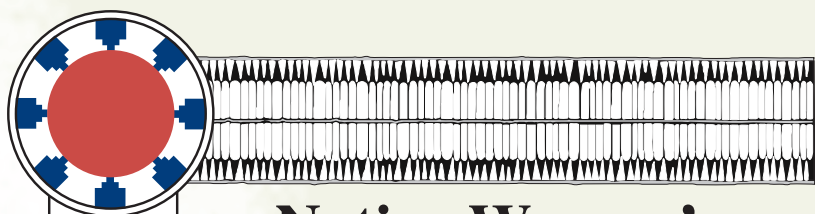
- What are the opportunities/obstacles/barriers that would help/hinder the process from reaching its full potential?
- Ask where the group is heading, what is their vision?
- What are their goals?
 - Goals are simple broad statements on what a group can achieve and are do-able, considering available resources (people, skills, time)
- What brought them all together?
 - Record answers
 - Look for common themes
- What are their objectives?
 - Objectives are statements about how to achieve a goal.

◆ **Other considerations**

- Consider checklists for numerous sessions.
- Be prepared in the event that you do not finish the agenda in one session.
- Have a number of games planned.
- Take copies of what an Environmental Impact Statement looks like.
- Research topic. Provide brief notes on materials.

NWAC Mandate

The Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC) is founded on the collective goal to enhance, promote, and foster the social, economic, cultural and political well-being of First Nations and Métis women within First Nation, Métis and Canadian societies. NWAC is an aggregate of thirteen Native women's organizations from across Canada and was incorporated as a non-profit organization in 1974. Much like a "Grandmother's Lodge", we as aunties, mothers, sisters, brothers and relatives collectively recognize, respect, promote, defend and enhance our Native ancestral laws, spiritual beliefs, language and traditions given to us by the Creator.



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