



## Facilitation Best Practices

While there are no specific professional skills required to be a PFLAG support group facilitator—such as being a trained counselor or psychologist—it is important to understand your roles and responsibilities. As a PFLAG facilitator the goal is not to be a content expert or a lecturer in a support group. Support group facilitators send a welcoming message to new attendees, provide structure so everyone is heard, and create a climate of trust. Facilitators help set the pace, the atmosphere of the group, and help keep the group on course. Facilitators make sure that the conversation keeps moving and everyone has the opportunity to share. Facilitators are responsible for helping to bring the conversation to a close. They should also:

- Set a specific time to create needed structure and keep members coming back.
- Allow people to pass. No one is required to share, and this should be clear to attendees when you start.
- Conduct support group as a peer-led support group. If one of your facilitators is also a therapist (or any kind of professional counselor), clearly communicate to attendees that the support group is not a place to seek and receive professional counseling.
- If the group is large, consider breaking into smaller groups. This will help give everyone more time to share.
- Set a time limit to the support group. An hour is plenty of time for sharing stories in a meeting.
- Compile a resource directory of organizations. Include LGBTQ+/human rights/allied organizations, crisis hotlines, HIV/AIDS service organizations, youth service providers, multilingual service organizations, religious organizations, healthcare services, therapists, LGBTQ+-friendly restaurants and clubs, and anything else you can think to provide for people who want information on services that aren't provided by PFLAG.
- Respond without judgment. Especially when questions or comments indicate a difference of opinions.
- Recognize expressions of self-harm or suicide. Immediately direct people to the appropriate resources.
- Help participants interact with each other, gain new information, and build upon their experience.
- Encourage everyone to participate, but remember that individuals participate in different ways.
- Manage or mediate conflict with an approach that's friendly, but firm.
- Listen more than you talk.
- Be ready with information on local counselors, a crisis hotline, or professional therapists for those who need more comprehensive help.



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