



## A Facilitator **IS**

- ✓ A leader of discussions
- ✓ A developer of the topic, agenda, and questions for discussion
- ✓ A holder of process—the format and ground rules
- ✓ An inviter of multiple perspectives
- ✓ A good listener who helps participants listen better as well
- ✓ A manager of challenging topics and participants so all can participate
- ✓ A promoter of identifying common ground and next steps
- ✓ A coordinator of the logistics needed for a quality conversation



## A Facilitator **IS NOT**

- ✗ An expert on the topic. While it may be helpful to know some background on the topic to be discussed, being an expert can be a drawback. Facilitators should focus on the participants' experiences with the topic and their desires for action, over focusing on facts and figures which can stall dialogue.
- ✗ A controller of the content of the discussion. While a facilitator develops the topic and questions, what comes out of the conversation will come from the participants.
- ✗ Someone with an agenda for the outcome of the conversation. A facilitator sets agenda to help guide the conversation, but does not start the conversation with preconceived outcome. The participants are in control of the outcome.
- ✗ A silencer of participants. While facilitators manage challenging personalities and at times conflict, they should not be looking to exclude voices from the conversation.
- ✗ Someone who forces actions or common ground. While at times this may be the goal, these outcomes cannot be forced upon participants. The facilitator empowers the group to determine their own outcome.