

QUESTIONS TO FACILITATE DISCUSSION

Questions designed to open up discussion:

- What do you think about this situation?
- What has been your experience in dealing with this issue?
- Would anyone care to offer suggestions or facts that would help us better understand this issue?

Questions designed to broaden discussion:

- Now that we have heard from a number of our participants, would others who have not spoken like to share any of their ideas?
- How do the ideas presented so far sound to those of you who have been thinking about them?
- What other aspects of this issue should we explore?

Questions designed to limit participation:

- You have made several good statements, and I am wondering if someone else might like to comment or share?
- Since all the group participants have not yet had the opportunity to speak, I wonder if you would hold your comments till a little later?
- We appreciate your contributions. However, it might be useful to hear from some of the others. Would some of you who have not spoken care to add any ideas to those already expressed?

Questions designed to focus discussion:

- Where are we now in relation to the topic of discussion?
- Would you like me to review my understanding of the things we have said and the ideas we have come up with in this discussion?
- Your comment is interesting. However, I wonder if it really centers on the main issue which we are now discussing?

Questions designed to help the group move along:

- I wonder if we have spent enough time on this aspect of the issue. Should we move to another aspect of it?
- Have we explored this part of the issue far enough so that we might now shift our attention and consider another area?
- Given the time, should we look at another person's concern?

Questions to help the group evaluate itself:

- I wonder if any of you have the feeling that we are stuck on this particular question. Why are we tending to slow down?
- Originally we were discussing _____. Where are we in relation to that issue?
- Now that we are nearing the conclusion of our meeting, would anyone like to offer suggestions on how we might proceed at our next meeting?

Questions to help the group reach a decision:

- Am I right in sensing agreement on these points? (Facilitator then gives a brief summary.)
- What have we clarified in our discussion up to this point?

Questions designed to lend continuity to the discussion:

- Since we talked about this issue briefly at the last meeting, would someone care to summarize what we said then?
- Has your situation changed or has anything new happened since you shared with us last time? More information needed?

NOTE: Sometimes the best thing to say is nothing. Silence can be powerful and healthy.