Moderator Training

TIPS FOR THE MODERATOR

- Your job essentially is to move the discussion along, being mindful of TIME and the key sections of the deliberation that must be covered for a complete and successful outcome.
- Your demeanor is one of neutrality, intervening only to clarify, foster equal participation, and advance the discussion through each critical juncture.
- First invite participants into the discussion, offer a brief orientation to the topic, and state the goal of the discussion.
- Establish Ground rules.
- Encourage participants to become comfortable with the topic by sharing some experience that they or someone they know has had with the central issue of the deliberation. No need to hear from everyone, just enough to establish the issue as one of personal interest and value to a number of people. Ask if there might be additional voices not represented here.
- Familiarize yourself with the three perspectives (choices) in advance; construct in your own mind or on paper, two/three sentences to introduce each one. Ask participants to first suggest the positive aspects of the first perspective... and then those things that would not recommend it. Continue this procedure through each perspective or choice.
- Within the discussion of perspectives or when all three have been covered, be sure that participants identify the tensions or trade-offs that are inevitable with any choice.
- Encourage discussants to sum up the discussion by trying to focus on those things that people seem to have in common, not on those areas of disagreement.
- Ask participants to reflect on actions they/others might take based on the common ground which has been established.