Post-Test Support Services (PTSS)
Facilitating Group Sessions
Information Sharing & Support Groups
APPENDIX A

PRE-SESSION / MEETING CHECKLIST
(Adapted from Facilitating Meetings: A Guide for Community Planning Groups)

To make your role as a facilitator easier, take care of the following before the session or meeting.

**Agenda preparation:** Does the group’s agenda have:
- Clear objectives for the meeting, including,
  - What you want to accomplish
  - Why you are meeting
- Enough time for each agenda item
- Enough session or meeting breaks scheduled
- Guest speakers or presentations scheduled at times other than immediately after meals, if possible
- An agreement on who will record decisions and take minutes (*if applicable* - e.g. support groups and community meetings).

**Member preparation:** Have all members received” (*e.g. for community meetings*)
- Notification of the meeting time, location, agenda, and objectives
- Directions to meeting place (especially important for new members)
- Public notification of the meeting
- The materials they need to review with adequate time for reading (*if applicable*)

**Rules / operating procedures:** Has your group established:
- Guidelines that explain clearly the role and responsibilities of chairpersons, members, and committees (*e.g. support groups & community meetings*)
- Ground rules and other operating procedures
- Methods of decision making, such as,
  - Group consensus
  - Voting (simple majority)
- Policies regarding conflict of interest
- A method for taking and distributing minutes (*if applicable*)

**Facilitator preparation:** Has the facilitator:
- Spent adequate time preparing for the session or meeting
- Reviewed all of the information that will be presented
• Identified someone to assist with facilitation, if need be, in order to
  o Record comments on the flip chart
  o Track when people raise their hands so that people are called on in order
• Anticipated the responses and questions that members may raise on the agenda items
• Developed and discussed the agenda with key staff members (i.e. Team Leader or Project Coordinator)
• Arranged for a member with facilitation experience to act as an observer to offer feedback after the meeting (e.g. Team Leader or Project Coordinator)

Meeting logistics: Has the facilitator arranged for:
• A comfortable meeting area
• Refreshments
• Enough chairs, pens, notepaper, flip charts, markers, overhead projectors, and copies of handouts
• Access to bathrooms
• Other language interpretation as necessary (e.g. if guest speaker doesn’t speak the same language as the members)
People, Process, and Product

One way to approach facilitation is to think of it in terms of people, process, and product.

- **People**: How do members feel about their involvement? How do they relate to one another? In a well-facilitated meeting, members trust and respect the facilitator and, more importantly, each other. All feel their expertise and opinions are valued.
- **Process**: How are decisions made? How are group sessions or meetings run? In a well-facilitated session, members understand how the group decides and how the facilitator runs the meetings. The decision-making methods encourage members to participate, yet respect the limited time members have together.
- **Product**: What are the key deliverables or results from the meeting? In a well-facilitated group session or meeting, members produce quality products in a timely manner.

The following chart places facilitation skills in this framework. Certain skills, of course, may be used in more than one area.

### The 3Ps

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>PEOPLE</th>
<th>SKILLS</th>
<th>TOOLS</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Make everyone feel comfortable &amp; valued</td>
<td>Use body language</td>
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<td>Thank participants</td>
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<td>Encourage participation</td>
<td>Encourage silent members</td>
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<td>Use open-ended questions</td>
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<td>Encourage silent members</td>
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<td>Divide into small groups</td>
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<td>Consult the group</td>
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<td>Use visual aids</td>
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<td>Prevent and manage conflict</td>
<td>Use team-building activities</td>
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<td>Set ground rules</td>
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<td>Search for agreement</td>
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<td>Use conflict to improve decisions</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Agree to disagree</td>
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<tr>
<td>PROCESS SKILLS</td>
<td>TOOLS</td>
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| **Listen and observe** | | - Listen actively  
- Scan the room  |
| **Guide the group** | - Delegate a timekeeper  
- Refer group to objectives and agenda  
- Stray from the agenda if necessary  
- Use a parking lot |

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<th>PRODUCT SKILLS</th>
<th>TOOLS</th>
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| **Ensure quality decisions** | | - Remind the group of deadlines  
- Review criteria and supporting data  
- Review decision-making process  
- Poll group before major decisions  
- Review the decision |
| **Ensure outcome-based meetings** | | - Review objectives for agenda items  
- Record decisions  
- Develop an action plan |

**Source:** Facilitating Meetings: A Guide for Community Planning Groups. Academy for Educational Development (AED). Center for Community-Based Health Strategies; July 2001
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Appendix C
Structure of Open Support Groups

The guidelines are developed to assist Project Accept staff with steps to consider when forming open support groups. A group may form for clients who have just tested either negative or positive from the mobile. In open groups, guests (family member or caregiver) can join in with permission from group members to learn how best they can support to the client. Open groups are counsellor initiated, formed specifically to offer clients continuous support after they have tested. Members can on their own initiate a support group to give each other support. The group mainly accommodates both males and females; however, some can be gender specific, age specific but remain open to those matching the group’s description.

Open groups are mainly the opposite of closed groups or information sessions. In an open group, members are more in control of what happens in the group. The facilitator is there to monitor and supervise the process not as a leader who decides what should happen. Topics for discussion are mainly member initiated and based on what one or more members are going through member is going through at that particular moment.

Characteristics of Open Groups.

Unlike a closed group, in open groups members need not have gone through individual counselling. It is in this group where members with common issues can be identified to be put in a close group. Group can be initiated as soon as there is enough people who are interested in attending. Membership is unlimited, can be from 5-20 members depending on attendance. A new member can join in the middle and old member drops out at anytime of the group life. Some of the group members are be trained by the facilitator to facilitate sessions in the presence or absence of the facilitator. There are no sessions planned. Group meets once a week for an hour to two hours. During the life of a group when new members join, the facilitator might go back to some of the issues discussed to update new members. However, members are binded by confidentiality clause. Main purpose is to help each other, get a platform to share experiences and build new friendships.