

INTERVENING

Introduction

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Introduction

Intervention is helping the team or individual team member become aware of:

- ✓ how they work, communicate, resolve conflict
- ✓ key issues facing the team
- ✓ where the team and team members are at, eg. if the team is stuck in the resistance phase, the facilitator can offer alternative pathways, mindsets, ways of thinking, behaving and doing.

Intervention allows the team to move ahead in performing tasks and developing effective group dynamics.

There are different styles and ways of intervening:

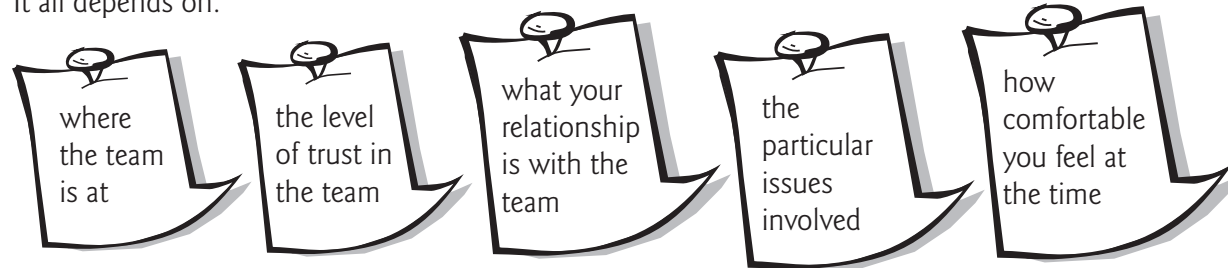
facilitator driven where the team is challenged or reflects on the facilitator's view

team driven where the team challenges and reflects on its own views, guided by the facilitator.

The sections that follow look in more detail at the styles, tools and pitfalls of intervention.

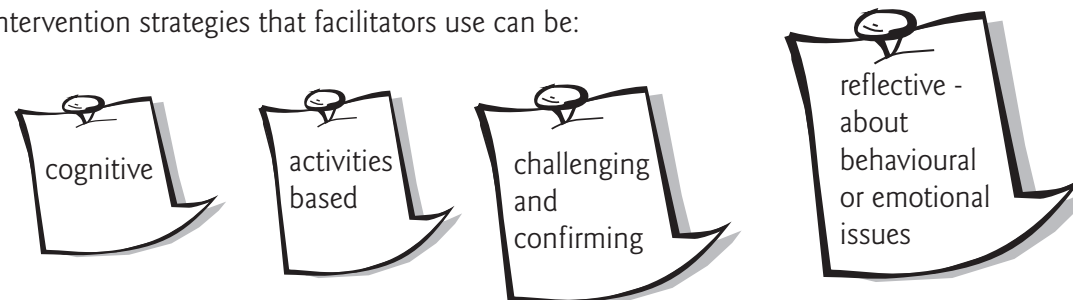
9.1 How do you do it?

There are no right or wrong ways to intervene. Some interventions are more effective than others. It all depends on:



How you intervene depends on the facilitation style you feel is appropriate, taking into account the variables listed above. Facilitators move between piloting (directing) and navigating (guiding) styles. (see R. Schwartz “The Skilled Facilitator”)

The intervention strategies that facilitators use can be:



Obviously some strategies pose a greater risk to the facilitator, and others require a greater commitment from the team.

9.2 Styles, ways and tools

Strategies

Directing (pilot)

"The team seems unclear about its role."

"I am going to position you around the table in a way that reflects how I see your commitment to the team."

"I see this part of the team being more involved in decision making."

"I feel there is a lot of anger not being expressed in the team."

"I can see three competing "princes" in the team and this is affecting its performance."

Facilitation Styles

Cognitive

Activities Based

Reflection on Behaviours

Reflection on Emotional Issues

Challenging and Confronting

Guiding (navigator)

"What is the team unclear about."

"Make a group sculpture that reflects people's commitment to the team."

"How does your team make decisions?"

"What feelings are not being expressed in the team?"

"How would you describe and name the roles being played by different team members, that are affecting its performance."

9.2 *continued* Styles, ways and tools

Tools you could consider:



Questioning

- reflective “Why do you do it this way?”
- strategic “What’s the best/easiest way to do this?”



Silence

- planned or unplanned



Reflecting back

- on either the facilitator’s or team’s observations



Group activities:

- sociometry : “Physically arrange the group in a way that reflects each person’s role in the team”
- case studies “Review how the team handled this customer complaint”

- simulations “As a group, build paper aeroplane models for a customer demonstrating your team approach”
- insight tools “How about we use either Belpin’s team role analysis tool to determine the role gaps in your team?”



Direct challenging and or confronting (see pitfalls)

*Remember the more you use
humour and fun the more
the team will relax and
learn.*

9.3 Facilitator's checklist

ACTIVITY

My Behaviour

- Have I accepted that my prime responsibility is to help the group achieve its objectives rather than lead it?
- Have I realised that my interactions with team members constitute a model for them?
- Have I accepted that the group may have different methods of achieving its objectives to those which I might choose?
- Have I resisted the urge to interfere prematurely in group conflicts but encouraged the team to deal with conflicts among members in its own way?
- Have I allowed the group to come to its own solutions when it has problems, realising that imposing my solution on it may be detrimental to the long term effectiveness of the group?
- Have I offered advice in the form of suggestions to be considered by the group when I see ways that I believe can improve the way the team works?
- Have I displayed tolerance for the group's disagreement with me?
- When I sharply disagree with opinions voiced in the group, have I been careful to give the contributors enough time and attention to ensure that I really do understand points they are making?

9.3 *continued* Facilitator's checklist

- Have I realised that if I do have to disagree, I must surrender my role as facilitator and become a group member?
- Have I realised that my personal reactions to situations interfere with my role as a facilitator?
- Have I been conscious that my facial expressions, body language, and gestures can communicate negative messages to the group?
- Have I realised that one of the best rewards I can hand to the group is to praise its progress and achievements to higher management?











9.3 *continued* Facilitator's checklist

Group Behaviour

- Have I assisted the group to learn by allowing them a certain freedom to make mistakes?
- Have I emphasised positive behaviours rather than frequently criticising the team's mistakes? (emphasising positive behaviours has a greater team-building impact)
- Have I encouraged group processing of what the team members do? This is a greater learning experience for them than what I might say about the process?
- Have I helped the group members by periodically communicating their progress and achievements to them?
- Have I motivated the team members by pointing out and praising effective performance in the group?
- Have I encouraged and assisted other team members to bring forward their leadership/facilitation?

9.4 Hot tips and pitfalls

HOT TIPS

-  Step back - listening and observation are powerful monitoring tools.
-  Be up front, visible and honest about your role, your expectations and your processes.
-  Report back frequently - check your assessment and your assumptions with the group.
-  Maintain open, balanced and clear communication.
-  If you feel uneasy about intervening at some point - don't do it - explore what you're feeling at that moment.
-  When others in the group take up an intervention role, the facilitator then needs to keep the team process on track.
-  Use silence, either planned or unplanned. Allow the team/team members time to reflect.
-  Use other's needs to intervene in a positive way that ensures that the team continues to work towards the stated outcomes.
-  Air both positive and negative feedback to enable the team to reflect on their progress/performance.
-  Be prepared to admit that you don't know what's happening and/or where to go next. When in doubt ask for directions from the group.

9.4 *continued* Hot tips and pitfalls

PITFALLS

- When the facilitator directly challenges and/or confronts the team there is a high risk of the team losing trust, exhibiting resistance and becoming stuck. On the other hand resistance offers the opportunity for breakthrough. The team may be forced to move out of their comfort zone and explore unconscious areas/group think.
- Be clear whether your intervention is based on your own needs (frustrated, bored, annoyed) or the team's needs (eg stuck, off track, confused)