

INFORMATION ABOUT THE COMMUNITY FACILITATORS' NETWORK

'Meetings are where we do the important work of society. If we don't transform the way we work in meetings we won't transform our society.'

What is the Community Facilitators' Network (CFN)?

In its pilot stage CFN will consist of approximately 15 practitioners drawn from different sectors and areas of Glasgow who will meet once a month. The aim of the Network is to strengthen members' facilitation practice which will enable them to create more effective meetings which significantly contribute to building and strengthening the communities with which they work.

What does that mean in practice?

Session(s)	Purpose	Dates and Times
1	Getting to know each other	23rd October, 2008 10:00am-1:30pm
2-6	Facilitation skills training programme	6 & 7 th November, 2008 4 & 5 th December, 2008 8 th January, 2009 9:30am-5:00pm
7-10	Development of practice	5 th February, 2009 5 th March, 2009 2 nd April, 2009 7 th May, 2009 10:00am-1:30pm
11	Evaluation of Network and exploring future possibilities	11 th June, 2009 10:00am-4:00pm

¹ Quoted from a talk given by Sandra Janoff, co-founder of *Future Search* at the European International Association of Facilitators Conference in Edinburgh, October 7th, 2007

Getting to know each other

This session will be devoted to forming a learning community where members get to know each other and learn more about the Network.

Facilitation skills training programme

Over the five days, members will be introduced to facilitation fundamentals and a number of tools which they can use to further develop their own facilitation practice. On the final day there is also a chance to facilitate a live session and receive feedback on their practice.

Development of practice

Throughout all the meetings of the Network, there will be opportunities for members to reflect on their practice and share with each other the challenges that they face. Depending on the members' needs, there is also the possibility of 'process clinics' and a wealth of resources (books, facilitation materials *etc.*) for members to use. These meetings could also be used by members to explore opportunities for collaboration or to practise elements of facilitation and receive feedback from fellow members.

Evaluation of Network and exploring future possibilities

The last session of the pilot network will focus on assessing the effects that the Network has had and exploring possibilities for its future.

Am I eligible?

We are looking for people who:

- are regularly (on average at least once a week) working with groups/communities in Glasgow;
- have past experience of working with groups;
- work in either a professional or a voluntary capacity;
- have specific learning aims in mind;
- are emotionally robust;
- have a passion for working with groups and in releasing a group's potential for the benefit of a whole community;
- are open to learn and have an inquiring mind.

What will be expected of me?

Interested individuals need to complete an application form. Selected applicants will be invited for an interview in late-August and will be selected for the Network based on how well they fit the criteria outlined above (in the '*Am I eligible?*' section) as well as their ability to commit to:

- attend 80% of Network meetings;
- attend at least four out of the five training days (between November 2008 and January 2009);
- regularly make entries into journals provided about how the Network is impacting their facilitation practice and the groups with whom they work;

All places are heavily subsidised. However, we feel it is important to ask for some financial contribution as an indication of commitment. We are therefore asking for the following contribution to be paid in September 2008:

- those working for statutory organisations - £200
- those working for not for profit organisations - £125

(Should the level of financial commitment be an obstacle to your participation, please contact us.)

When is the deadline for applications?

All applications must be received by the Kinharvie Institute by Friday, 8th August, 2008.

How can I justify this use of my time to my manager and colleagues?

The overall aim is to create a Network which supports community practitioners to strengthen their facilitation practice. By applying these skills internally in an organisation and externally with service users, practitioners should be better able to create meetings which:

Internally

- increase understanding of the roles of staff within an organisation;
- make greater use of the wisdom within an organisation;
- make it more likely that the outcomes will be acceptable to all, and that the decisions reached will be implemented;
- lead to increased morale which makes it more likely the organisation will retain skilled and experienced staff;

Externally

- increase understanding of the needs of service users;
- make it more possible to efficiently allocate resources as the needs of service users are better understood ;
- empower service users to recognise the value of their unique contribution;
- improve relationships between organisation staff and service users.

How is the Network different to a training course in facilitation skills?

We have decided to establish the Network instead of solely offering training in facilitation skills as we recognise a practitioner's facilitation practice develops slowly and needs support over a sustained period. Members of the Network therefore will receive five days of training, but will also be part of a Network which enables them to put what they learn into practice.