

# Facilitating a Care Committee



A Facilitator knows, "This is why we're here together." You work to keep authority in the hands of the Focus Person. Although it's not your job to make sure *everyone does it right*, you do play a role in inviting the Care Committee to act according to its intent: We are here to listen, and to help the Focus Person find his or her own way forward.

## A Facilitator holds space for the person at the center of the Care Committee

If the Focus Person ever seems distraught, or confused, or overlooked, the Facilitator may ask, "Do you need some silence to gather your thoughts?" or "We haven't heard from you for a while; what's on your heart right now?" It is always appropriate for the Facilitator to ask the Focus Person about what's truly helpful.

## A Facilitator invites the Care Committee to remain mindful of its intent

As Facilitator, pay attention to your group's "comfort zones." Some groups may get uncomfortable around emotions. A group might over-spiritualize a problem, or shy away from spiritual language altogether. Some groups might be so quick to offer reassurance that it becomes difficult to talk about accountability. Be mindful of your group's culture. As you are led, invite people toward those topics that seem uncomfortable.

Pay attention to group dynamics. A Facilitator might intervene when:

- The group has shifted into "problem solving mode."
- The focus person has become an object of conversation, rather than a participant.
- The group has become "chatty," rather than grounded in deep listening.
- Someone seems defensive or argumentative.
- Something undermines the feeling of safety in the group.
- When one person speaks often or at length.

Instead of announcing that there's a problem (which can bog us down in defensiveness or apologies), a skilled Facilitator simply redirects the conversation: "I don't want to stop this conversation prematurely, but our time is limited; shall we move on to the ways you've noticed God at work in this situation?" By presenting the group with an appealing vision of what we could be doing, a Facilitator can draw everyone back toward our deeper purpose.

## A Facilitator helps organize the time

A Facilitator helps move the Care Committee through its expected format. Please keep an eye on the clock, so there is adequate time for everything (especially silence). Finishing at the expected time honors the commitment of those involved.

- \* Begin the meeting with an invitation to silence. You may find it meaningful to end this silence with vocal prayer. A prayer allows you to express gratitude and name your hopes.
- \* Outline the expected format of the gathering.
- \* Invite the Focus Person to address the Committee. He or she has sole authority to set the focus of the conversation. It may be helpful to ask, "What would you like to get out of this time together?"
- \* Invite members of the Care Committee to ask clarifying questions.
- \* Invite Friends back into silence for a time of listening together.
- \* Invite the Focus Person to articulate his or her "take aways."
- \* Set the time and place of your next meeting. Is 90 minutes adequate? Should you plan to meet for 2 hours?



Interconnection, Ron Waddams