

Effective facilitators choose different tools depending on the task the group wants to accomplish. There is no “right” tool for a particular situation. A skilled facilitator has many tools at their disposal and knows when to use a particular tool, how to evaluate its effectiveness in a given situation and when and how to let go of that tool and try another.

Tool	Summary	Guidelines
<b>Brainstorming</b>	Produces a long list of ideas; good tool when group want to consider all possibilities, come up with new ideas, and expand current thinking	Everyone is encouraged to produce as many ideas as possible; quantity is the goal, so do not judge others’ ideas; record ideas so that everyone can see them
<b>Multi-voting</b>	Multi-voting is a quick tool that helps a group sort a list or reduce the number of items on a list. Can be used to work with information generated during a brainstorming session. Helps group get a general sense of priority.	Each member given same number of votes; the number of votes for each group member is equal to a third to a half of total number of items on the list
<b>Affinity Diagram</b>	Helps groups quickly organize a large list of ideas. Especially useful for organizing lists of thirty or more items.	Begin with brainstorm. Then have participants sort items by grouping like ones together. The same item can be placed in more than one group if necessary.
<b>Bin</b>	The “bin” is a list of items that will be dealt with at a later time. It is used to record items that would divert the group from its current task but that need to be considered later	“Bin” acknowledges that the issue raised is important, but will be dealt with later; specify a time to return to “bin” items; “bin” should not be used to shut down opposing points of view about the current topic
<b>Debrief</b>	Debriefing helps groups learn about how its members are working together and what they can do to improve	Suggested questions for debrief: what was your experience working on this task? What went well? What did not go well? How can we do things differently next time?