



Ontario Independent Facilitation Network Questions to Ask Your Facilitator

We expect that before beginning work with an independent facilitator you would want to take some time to learn about who they are and decide if you think that they will be compatible with your family. It is important to determine if they have the experience, values and qualities that you are looking for. To assist with this, we have provided a number of questions you may consider asking in order to ascertain if a particular facilitator meets your needs before beginning the relationship and getting started on the work.

For the most part, facilitators work within non-profit independent facilitation organizations. These organizations look after the hiring, ongoing supervision, mentoring, evaluation, training and development of the facilitator. Your relationship is with not only the facilitator but also the organization.

You may find, however, that in some parts of the province there are facilitators offering their support on a fee for service basis and who are not working within or who are not connected in any way, to an independent facilitation organization. In these instances, it requires added vigilance on your part to carefully screen and interview in order to choose the right person and to ensure that they are carrying out their work separate and apart from direct service delivery. The following definitions may help in this regard.

Definitions

Independent Facilitator: refers to a facilitator who provides independent facilitation and person-directed planning, supports separate, and apart from direct service delivery, assessment, eligibility, and funding/resource determinations.

Independent Facilitation Organization: any organization that offers independent facilitation and planning supports separate and apart from direct service delivery, assessment, eligibility, and funding/resource determinations.

Before thinking about the questions that you might want to ask of an independent facilitator, we suggest that you take some time to reflect on what your family is looking for in the person:

- What is it about an independent facilitator that is most important to your son/daughter and to yourselves as family members or significant others?
- What are the key traits and capacities you are looking for in a facilitator?

You may also find it helpful to review the **[Guide to Ethical Conduct](#)** so that you can have a better understanding of what constitutes ethical conduct on the part of an independent facilitator.



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Sample Questions

- Why is this work important to you?
- Describe a “highpoint” experience in facilitation and planning with someone. What difference did it make to the person and to you?
- How do you see the difference between facilitation and planning? What makes each of them challenging at times?
- Where and how will you begin to get to know our family?
- What do you believe matters most to people and their families and/or significant others?
- How do you go about helping a person speak up and have a meaningful role in shaping the key decisions in his or her life?
- What role do you feel you play in supporting our family to broaden our social networks? How would you go about that aspect of the role?
- Have you ever had experience in helping a person set up a “support circle”? If so, what can you say about how it emerged and how it has remained viable?
- When we are in disagreement, how do you envisage working through the disagreement to a mutually acceptable conclusion?
- Describe an ethical dilemma you encountered in the work and how you worked it through?
- Please share your personal experience of doing the work and describe what you have learned through it that has made you a better person.
- What kind of training have you had and what training has been most beneficial to you and why?
- What kind of mentoring have you had and what have you gained through your mentoring experience?
- What experience have you had as an independent facilitator that stretched you the most?
- Do you belong to a community of practice? If so, how has it shaped your practice? Why do you choose to belong?
- What do you think are the gifts and talents that you bring to the work?
- How is your commitment to on-going, lifelong learning demonstrated?
- How does this work compare to the work you have done before?
- Do you see yourself staying with the work of independent facilitation over the long run? Why? What keeps you at the work?
- Share a story of what it took to help someone find their voice and begin thinking differently about their lives, their hopes and dreams?
- What outcome(s) can we expect from engaging in this process?
- As a facilitator, who are you accountable to?
How often will we be invited to give feedback (evaluate) about our family's experience with facilitation?



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Requesting References

We suggest that you speak to families who the independent facilitator has worked with before, to ask them questions that are of relevance to your family.

- We are interested in talking with people and family members you have assisted as an independent facilitator. Please provide us with the names of family members I can call for a reference.
- How do you think they would describe your style as an independent facilitator?

After selecting a facilitator and beginning the work you may wish to reflect on how the work is proceeding and whether a beneficial relationship with the facilitator has begun.

Questions for Evaluating the Process

- Do we all feel listened to and heard?
- Are we getting the information we need to make good decisions and think differently?
- Are our choices expanding?
- Are there more people in our lives now than before we started?
- Does the facilitator take time to ask us if we understand what is being discussed?
- Are things changing in positive ways for our family and is our loved one fully engaged in the process?