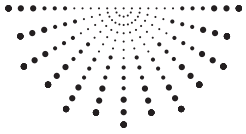
NOBODY WANTS THIS CHAIR

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HOW TO LEAD GROUPS WHEN THE STAKES ARE HIGH



DR. RICK NOVAK



Nobody Wants This Chair: How to Lead Groups When the Stakes Are High

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The examples in this book are invented for teaching. Any resemblance to actual people or events is coincidental.

This guide supports the judgment of trained facilitators. It does not replace professional training, supervision, clinical judgment, or the requirements of any program, agency, or court.

To the Men and Women Facilitators Serve

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Rick Novak has spent nearly forty years in rooms with people on the day their old way of living stopped working: courtrooms, recovery rooms, and now family violence and substance-use groups. This guide is what those rooms taught him about the difference between a lesson someone can repeat and one they can carry home.

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OPENING: WHO THIS IS FOR

Picture a session that seems to be going well.

Ten participants sit in a circle. Tonight's topic is the difference between what happened and what a person decided it meant. You explain it with an example. A man's partner said she would be home by six. She walks in at seven, and he decides she has been lying to him. The fact is that she arrived an hour after the time she gave. The conclusion is his. You ask the group to separate the two, and they do. Hands go up. One participant says it better than you did. Another nods and says he used to do exactly that. Nobody is looking at a phone. The room feels awake.

You leave thinking it was a good night. You may be right.

Now change one thing. Before the session ends, you give the group a different situation. A man's brother borrowed his drill and said he would return it by Saturday. It is now Tuesday. You ask the participant who spoke so clearly earlier to tell you which part is the fact and which part is the conclusion. He pauses. Then he says his brother is disrespecting him. You ask what he knows for certain. He says he knows his brother.

He has just done the very thing he explained twenty minutes ago, and nothing in his answer shows he notices.

His earlier answer showed recognition. He found the idea when it came wrapped in your example. When the details changed, his answer did not yet show that he could apply the distinction independently.

That gap is what this book is about.

This guide grew out of three kinds of groups: relationship-harm programs, substance-use programs that follow an arrest, and recovery groups. Some of those rooms are required. Some are not. This book is for anyone who runs a group where people are asked to look honestly at their own choices.

What a good night tells you

A lively discussion tells you something real. It may mean people were listening and thinking. What it cannot tell you is whether anyone can use the idea when it matters: at home, late at night, with the body already moving toward the old choice.

The feel of a room is not the same as learning. A facilitator who judges a session by how it felt will be wrong in both directions. Some quiet nights do more good than they seem to. Some lively ones do less.

The standard this guide holds to is easy to say and hard to meet. The lesson has to survive outside your voice. If a participant can use a skill only while you are in front of them, prompting, the skill is not theirs yet. Your job is to teach it, check it, and teach it again until it can travel.

Different rooms, the same work

This work happens in different kinds of rooms. Some people are there because a court or a program requires it. Some came on their own because something in their life stopped working, and some of them value the group a great deal. Many sit somewhere in between. Nobody ordered them to come, but a spouse, an employer, or a scare made staying away harder than showing up. Even people who chose the room can arrive uncomfortable, unsure, or under pressure.

What these rooms share is the work itself. In each of them, people are asked to look honestly at their own choices, and your job is to make that looking useful. Listening well, choosing the next question, keeping the group on task, and checking whether a skill can travel all carry from one room to the next.

What changes is the frame around the work. Where attendance is required, your authority is real. You record attendance, apply rules with consequences, and may write reports other people rely on. Pretending otherwise does not make the room friendlier. It makes it confusing. Where attendance is voluntary, you cannot require anyone to come back. That does not lighten your responsibility to hold the group's boundaries or to respond to safety concerns. And a person who chose to come can stop coming the moment the room stops being useful.

Other things change too. Confidentiality, reporting duties, and attendance expectations can differ from one setting to the next. How accountability is expressed and documented differs too. One setting may require formal reports; another may ask members to examine their choices openly with the group. The underlying responsibility stays the same. Know the rules of the room you are in before you need them.

In every kind of room, willingness varies, and it changes. The person who fights the work in the first session may be doing honest work by the fifth. The one who agrees with everything may still be holding the material at arm's length at the end. You cannot tell which is which from those signs alone. You have to keep checking.

None of that changes what you owe each person in the room: teaching they can use. Whether they were sent or came on their own, their time matters, and unclear instruction wastes it.

The people who are not in the room

There is a second obligation, and it starts here, on the first page. The people most affected by this work are often somewhere else. A partner may be at home. Children may be at school. When someone

describes impaired driving, the people affected may include everyone who shared the road that night. In recovery, it is often the family that has lived with the use for years. Any of them may be living with the results of choices you will hear described in a few sentences and then moved past.

You will hear one account. You will come to care about the person giving it. That is part of doing this work well. But your care cannot stop at the door. Progress in group does not tell you how safe a home feels. A thoughtful answer in class does not tell you what happens on an ordinary Tuesday night. This guide will ask you, again and again, to keep those other people in view without pretending to speak for them.

What this guide is, and what it is not

This book is not a curriculum. Some groups follow an approved curriculum. Others are built around discussion, mutual support, or a format the members have agreed on. Either way, something already tells you what the group is for and how it runs. This guide is about how to lead it in a room where the stakes are high. It does not add lessons, change required content, or override the group's purpose and agreements.

The methods in this guide assume a facilitator who leads the teaching: you explain an idea, give the group work to do, and check what each person can use. Many groups run that way, whether attendance is required or chosen. Some voluntary groups work differently. Members may share responsibility for the agenda, take turns leading, or follow a format they agreed on together. In those rooms, you hold less authority over the task and more responsibility for protecting the format the group chose. The underlying habits still apply: listen for the choice inside an account, check meaning instead of supplying it, keep the people outside the room in view, and notice when the conversation needs a limit or a safety response. What changes is how you invite the work. Chapter 8 shows one example.

Every instruction in these pages operates within your program's

rules, reporting duties, confidentiality limits, and supervision arrangements. Use the examples within those requirements and your group's agreements. If an agreement or instruction appears to conflict with a safety or reporting duty, seek guidance before deciding how to proceed. The guide supports your judgment within that framework.

It is not a substitute for supervision. Some moments in a group are bigger than any teaching technique: a disclosure of ongoing harm, a threat, a person in real distress. Your setting has procedures for those moments and people whose job is to help you follow them. Learn them before you need them. This guide will tell you when a situation calls for those procedures. It will not invent a universal policy, because there isn't one.

And it is not a book of scripts. You will find questions you can use word for word and short examples of what to say. They are there to support your judgment, not replace it. The same words can open a conversation with one participant and close it with another. The point is to understand why a question works, so you can find the next one when the room goes somewhere this book did not predict.

The guide begins in practice. The Further Reading points to research and professional guidance relevant to its methods. Those sources help you examine the teaching; they do not certify this guide as an evaluated program or guarantee what participants will do afterward.

How the book is built

The guide moves in four parts.

Part One covers what has to be in place before teaching can happen: authority used responsibly, clear expectations, real access to the material, and careful observation.

Part Two is the work itself: the people outside the room, the difference between explaining a choice and owning it, finding words for what happened, and running a group instead of a row of separate conversations.

Part Three is about making it stick: teaching application on

purpose, judging only what the evidence supports, correcting yourself when you get it wrong, and living with what you will never know.

Part Four turns all of it into practice. It shows you how to prepare a session, rehearse these skills with colleagues, get feedback tied to your exact words, and try again.

Each chapter follows the same pattern. It states one idea and shows it in a short invented exchange. It separates what you notice from what you assume. It explains what to do and why, and gives you questions to ask next. Then it asks you to practice and check, because reading about a skill is not the same as having it. That is as true for you as it is for the people you teach.

The examples are invented for teaching. Some return across chapters, so you can see how the next question changes as new information emerges. None of them is a disguised story about a real person. Relationship harm can occur in different kinds of couples. Read each account for the conduct, the power being exercised, and the choices left to the person affected. When you adapt an example, examine those circumstances and the curriculum's purpose as carefully as the names and pronouns.

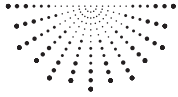
Back to the circle

Go back to the participant who explained the idea perfectly and then missed it twenty minutes later. He is not a failure, and neither was the session. He is showing you exactly where the teaching needs to go next.

A facilitator who notices that moment, and knows what to do with it, is doing the real work.

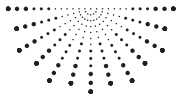
That is who this book is for.

PART I
BEFORE YOU SPEAK



1

YOU ARE NOT THE EXPERT ON THEIR LIFE



The idea

Experience helps you ask better questions. It does not give you the life of the person who just arrived.

You will hear familiar answers in this work. Someone says the referral was unfair. Someone explains that another person started it. Someone says there was nothing they could do. After enough sessions, you may recognize the sentence before the speaker has finished it.

That recognition can help. It gives you somewhere to begin. The difficulty comes when it supplies the rest of the account before the participant does.

A familiar explanation may leave out responsibility. It may also describe a real limit. You need to find out which part you are hearing. Otherwise, you can ask a question that requires the participant to defend against your interpretation before either of you has examined the choice.

What it looks like in the room

Consider this invented teaching example from a relationship-harm group. The discussion concerns responsibility after harmful conduct. Daniel says, "I haven't talked to her. What's the point? She doesn't want to hear it."

You have heard people use a partner's unwillingness to talk as a reason to stop examining themselves. You begin preparing a response about responsibility continuing after a relationship ends. It is a relevant principle. You do not yet know whether it addresses Daniel's answer.

You could say, "You still have work to do, whether she wants to hear it or not."

Instead, you ask, "When you say you haven't talked to her, what happened?"

"She told me not to call or come over. I haven't."

"And what does that leave you thinking you can do?"

"I'm doing the work here. I wrote down what I did. I wanted to send it, but she said no contact. So I kept it."

Your first interpretation was incomplete. His opening sentence sounded like dismissal. His next answer describes an effort to respect a stated boundary. You have his account, not independent confirmation, but the distinction changes the teaching task.

"Keeping it instead of sending it respects what she asked," you say. "What have you done with what you wrote?"

"Read it again. Changed some of it. I asked my sister to tell her I'm taking this seriously."

Now there is another decision to examine. Not calling directly does not settle whether he has continued seeking contact through someone else.

"What did you ask your sister to pass on?"

"Just that I'm trying. That isn't the same as bothering her."

The conversation remains difficult. Daniel has described restraint in one action and a possible intrusion in another. Your next question needs to address the message through his sister. Neither your initial

suspicion nor your later acknowledgment is a complete account of what he is doing.

What you notice

Before you interpret an answer, separate three things: what you observed, what the participant reported, and what you inferred.

You observed Daniel saying he had not talked to his former partner and asking what the point would be. He reported that she requested no contact, that he kept a written account to himself, and that he asked his sister to carry a message. You initially inferred that he was avoiding responsibility because his partner would not listen.

The inference was worth checking. It was not ready to be treated as fact.

This distinction matters even when your interpretation later proves useful. If Daniel had said, "There is no reason to work on myself if she won't take me back," you would have grounds to examine that condition. You would be responding to something he actually said.

Notice your own response as well. Did the phrase "What's the point?" irritate you? Did you want to correct it quickly because you had already explained this principle? Were you relieved when he described respecting the boundary, and then reluctant to examine the message through his sister?

Any of those reactions can influence what you hear next. You do not need to eliminate them before speaking. You need to notice them soon enough to keep them from deciding the conversation.

What you do and why

Begin with a question that brings the general sentence down to an event. "What happened?" is useful when it invites a specific account. If it produces another broad explanation, narrow it: "What did you do after she said that?"

Ask one question and allow an answer. Stacking several questions

can make it harder to know which one the participant is answering. Listen for information that would require you to change direction.

In Daniel's case, the report of a no-contact request changes your starting point. Start with the boundary he reports. You examine what responsibility can look like while leaving the other person alone. Keeping the written account gives you something to work with inside the group.

When he mentions his sister, stay with that new information. An acknowledgment of one responsible choice does not oblige you to approve everything that follows. Ask about the message, whether his sister delivered it, and what he expected it to accomplish. Keep any actual contact restrictions in view and follow your setting's procedures when the information requires consultation.

If Daniel continues to say that sending a message through someone else cannot be intrusive, you can be direct: "She asked for no contact. Asking someone else to carry your message still brings your request to her." Then ask what action he can take that leaves her free of that pressure.

He may disagree. You do not have to obtain agreement before holding the boundary. Nor do you have to invent a motive to explain his disagreement. The task is to examine the action and its consequences.

The same habit matters in other rooms. In a recovery group, "I haven't gone back" might refer to meetings, a place where the person used, or a relationship. Before praising or challenging the statement, find out what it means. The practical response depends on information the sentence has not yet supplied.

Experience should help you identify these missing details. It can also help you remain steady while a participant challenges your understanding. You can know the purpose of the lesson and still need clarification about the example. You can hold a limit and remain open to a fact you missed.

Sometimes the participant does not clarify. They repeat the same sentence or say they do not want to discuss it. Name the limit of the available information. You can return to an invented example, offer an

opportunity to revisit the question, and follow the expectations of your setting. Leave the gap open and state what you still need to understand.

What to ask next

"What did you mean by that?" gives the participant a chance to correct your understanding. If the answer stays broad, ask for one recent event. If it introduces a different concern, decide whether that concern changes the task or needs a separate follow-up.

"What did you actually do next?" helps distinguish an intention from an action. "I gave her space" needs a description. Leaving, waiting outside, sending messages, and asking someone else to speak are different actions to examine.

"What were you hoping would happen?" invites the participant's own account of the purpose. Daniel might hope to respect the boundary, regain contact, or both. Use the answer to examine what he expected from the other person. Let him name the purpose, then examine what he did to pursue it.

"What remains yours to do if the other person does not respond?" checks whether the proposed action depends on cooperation. If Daniel can only describe persuading her, help him identify work he can undertake without involving her. If he names such work, ask how he will carry it out.

Practice and check

Give participants a changed situation within the lesson you are delivering. In this example, the former partner has asked for no contact, and a relative offers to deliver an explanation. Ask what the participant would do and why. Then remove the relative's offer and add the disappointment of receiving no acknowledgment of progress. Check whether the proposed action still respects the boundary.

That response can show how the participant reasons through the example. It cannot establish what they will do later. If the answer

reveals a gap, teach the particular distinction and try another situation.

For your own rehearsal, use the three-role method described in Chapter 14. The skill here is revising a first interpretation. Have a colleague begin with Daniel's first sentence. Before responding, privately name your interpretation and one fact that could change it, then ask a clarifying question. The colleague answers in a way that complicates your first reading. Then try a second version, in which Daniel says the work is useless unless the relationship resumes, and address that stated condition.

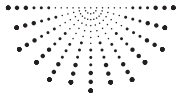
After the room

Which interpretation did you form before you had enough information? What answer changed it, or should have changed it? Where did impatience, fatigue, or the wish to be right affect your next question?

For the next session, choose one familiar phrase that tends to make you stop listening. Prepare a question that could reveal a different meaning. Ask it, allow the answer, and let what you learn change what you do.

2

NOBODY WANTS THIS CHAIR



Few people want to need this room. Some are relieved to find it. Some value the people in it and make room in their week to return. Others are counting the sessions until they can leave. A participant can feel more than one of those things at once.

You need to begin with the actual conditions of attendance. A court requirement, a family ultimatum, and a freely chosen meeting give you different responsibilities and different authority. They do not tell you how useful the next hour can become.

Your task is to hold the requirements and agreements clearly while giving participants a workable way into the discussion. They do not have to be pleased about being there before you can teach them something worth using.

The objection and the practical question

Consider this invented teaching example from a required group. In this fictional setting, the facilitator records absences and a program coordinator reviews requests about missed sessions. Those arrangements belong to the example. Use the actual arrangements of your own setting.

Omar has just heard the attendance requirements. "This whole thing is unfair," he says. "I shouldn't be here. Can I miss if my boss changes my shift?"

There are two matters in that answer. He disputes the referral, and he needs information about a possible work conflict. You could respond to the objection and leave the practical question unanswered. You could also answer the question in a tone that treats asking it as evidence against him.

Instead, you say, "If you miss, I record the absence. A work conflict needs to go through the coordinator's review process. Telling me in advance does not by itself make the absence excused, and I cannot authorize that. Has your shift already changed, or are you trying to plan for that possibility?"

"It changed yesterday. If I refuse, I could lose hours. So I'm supposed to lose my job for this?"

That answer gives you a real problem to address. It does not give you authority to solve it by changing the requirement.

"Losing work matters. Let's review the request process after the opening so you know what information is needed. I can't promise the decision."

"You're just going to report me anyway."

"I record what happens, including whether you attend. The coordinator handles the request. I will explain what gets reported and to whom under this program's requirements. I don't want you having to guess about that."

He shakes his head. "Then don't tell me I have a choice."

"You did not freely choose this requirement. I understand that. While you're here, we can work on an example without asking you to settle your objection to the referral."

"An example won't fix my shift."

"It won't. We still need to address that separately. Tonight's task is to look at a difficult decision and identify the options before acting. You can begin by examining the example."

Omar remains angry. The exchange has not converted him into an enthusiastic participant. It has given him accurate information, a

route for the practical concern, and a specific way to begin the lesson. You still need to follow through on the promised conversation.

What the answer establishes

Omar's question tells you there may be a conflict between work and attendance. It does not establish how committed he is, whether he accepts responsibility for his conduct, or what he will learn. You need more information for those judgments.

His objection also deserves an accurate description. He says the referral is unfair. You do not have to endorse that claim or decide it in front of the group. You can acknowledge that it is his position and explain the limits of your role. If there is an established way to raise a concern about the referral, name it and be clear about who can decide.

A useful response keeps the practical problem visible. "You need to take this seriously" does not tell Omar what to do about his shift. "I'm sure we can work something out" may sound considerate while promising more than you know. The fair response names the requirement, the person responsible for reviewing the issue, and the next step actually available.

If Omar repeats the objection through the opening, you can limit that repetition. "I've heard your concern, and we have a time to address the work conflict. We need to begin the activity now." That limit concerns what is happening in the group. It need not become a judgment about his attitude.

Your tone matters because everyone hears the exchange. If you sound pleased to impose a consequence, the room has learned something about how you use authority. If you make an exception you cannot authorize, it has learned that a sufficiently difficult conversation may change the requirements. Neither helps participants understand how the room actually works.

You can be considerate and exact. Recording an absence accurately does not prevent you from taking the circumstances seriously. Taking the circumstances seriously does not permit you to change the record.

The decisions still available

"You chose to come" can be a careless response in a required room. The participant may have arrived to avoid consequences that would substantially affect their life. Calling that unrestricted freedom does not make it so.

Describe the available decisions more precisely. A participant may be able to ask a question, examine an invented situation, attempt an exercise, or identify a point they do not understand. Which options are available depends on the program's requirements. Offer a real route into the task within those requirements.

Someone who disputes the account behind a referral may still examine what makes a proposed action harmful. You do not need to begin by extracting a confession. You do need to deliver the required content and examine the reasoning the participant offers. An invented example provides a starting point; it does not remove whatever personal application the actual curriculum requires later.

Suppose Omar says, "I can talk about the example, but I'm not saying any of this applies to me." You might answer, "Start by showing how you understand the decision in the example. We'll work through the lesson from there." You have made the next task clear without promising that the whole program will remain impersonal.

If he then gives a careful answer, acknowledge the reasoning he gave. He may still object to it. His reasoning gives you something specific to teach from.

When attendance is voluntary

Now consider a second invented teaching example, this time in a voluntary recovery group. Maya says, "I don't think I'm coming back. We talk about the same things every week, and then I get home and nothing is different."

You cannot respond as though another week is required. You also should not assume her complaint proves unwillingness to change. She has named a possible problem with the group's usefulness.

"What were you hoping would be different when you got home?"

"That I'd know what to do. Everybody says to reach out. I called someone last week. They didn't answer. Then I used."

"Before we look at the plan, how are you doing now, since that night?"

"I haven't used again. I'm not under the influence now. I'm upset about it, but I'm safe today."

"The suggestion gave you a first step, but it left you without a next step when nobody answered."

"Exactly. And now you're going to tell me I should have called somebody else."

It would be easy to supply another instruction. Stay with the limitation she has identified.

"Before we add another suggestion, I'd like us to look at what options were actually available that night. Would you be willing to examine that here?"

"Maybe. But I don't want everyone telling me what I should have done."

"We can ask what was available and examine the options with you. We won't turn it into a round of judgments about you."

A member begins, "Well, if you really wanted to stop…"

You interrupt. "Let's leave out guesses about how much Maya wanted it. She has described a point where the plan did not give her a usable next step."

Maya then says, "I might still leave. I don't want this becoming another thing I fail at."

"You can decide whether to return. We can use tonight to work on the gap you identified. I cannot promise that one conversation will settle it."

Her continued attendance remains uncertain. So does the result of the discussion. Your immediate responsibility is to make the proposed work useful, uphold the group's agreements, and address any current safety concern through the procedures of that setting.

You do not keep Maya by asking less of her. A voluntary group can still ask members to examine their choices, respect others, and partic-

ipate within its format. You make room for her objection without allowing the discussion to become harmful advice or an accusation about her motives.

If she stops coming, the absence alone will not tell you why. Where follow-up is permitted and useful, ask without making her responsible for reassuring you. Her answer might reveal a scheduling barrier, an experience in the group, a different source of support, or a reluctance to continue. Use what you learn to address the barrier or improve the teaching. Leave the rest unknown.

Making the room predictable

Participants should know what you are asking them to do before they have to decide whether to do it. That begins with the opening.

State the purpose of the session in language that describes the work. "Tonight we will examine where a plan becomes difficult to use and identify what can happen next" gives participants more direction than "Tonight we're discussing choices." Explain the activity, the way responses will be shared, and the relevant group agreements. Follow the curriculum or agreed format rather than creating a different lesson to secure participation.

Explain attendance and reporting requirements plainly when they apply. Say what your role includes, what you record, and what must be handled elsewhere. Privacy and confidentiality need the same accuracy. Do not promise that everything said stays in the room if that promise exceeds your setting's rules or what you can ensure. If you do not know an answer, identify how you will obtain it and follow through.

Transitions deserve attention too. A participant who has just raised a work problem needs to know whether you are postponing it or ignoring it. "We will address your request after this activity" is usable only if the promised conversation happens. If a concern needs privacy, arrange a private follow-up instead of asking for personal details before the whole group.

When moving into paired work, explain the task and the expected

response. Tell participants how to proceed if they disagree or do not understand. When returning to the group, ask about the reasoning the task was meant to reveal. Completing an activity is not enough to show that its purpose was understood.

Close with a specific opportunity to apply the lesson and clarify the next step. In Omar's case, the attendance issue also needs the follow-up you promised. In Maya's case, the proposed plan needs examination of what happens when help is unavailable. Complete the promised practical follow-up as well as the closing.

The process should be dependable even when you are tired, pleased with the discussion, or frustrated by an objection. A participant should not need to predict your mood to understand the requirements. If you change an activity within your authority, explain the change. Predictability allows adaptation; it asks you to make that adaptation understandable.

Questions that give you somewhere to go

"What do you need to know about how this works?" invites a practical question without making it evidence of poor commitment. If the answer concerns a requirement, answer it accurately. If it reveals confusion about your role, explain the distinction before asking the person to begin.

"What could make this time useful to you?" can reveal a concrete concern, an expectation the group cannot meet, or a wish simply to finish. Be honest about what is possible. Someone who wants only to complete the requirement still needs to know what the learning task involves.

"Which part of this are you objecting to?" helps separate a disputed referral, a scheduling problem, an unclear activity, and discomfort with the subject. Those answers require different responses. Offer only choices you can actually provide.

"What would you need in order to try this task?" can reveal an unclear instruction or an access need. It can also produce a condition you cannot accept, such as a demand that nobody question the partic-

ipant's reasoning. Clarify the task or arrange support where needed; explain the limit where the condition would defeat the work.

"What happened when you tried what we discussed?" gives a complaint about usefulness somewhere concrete to go. If the person has not tried it, examine what prevented the attempt. If they tried and the plan failed, locate the gap before offering more advice.

Practice the limit and the invitation

Ask participants to work through a changed situation from the actual lesson, with a response specific enough to examine. If Omar agrees to discuss an example, he has begun the task; his answer will show more about his understanding. Maya's account can identify where a plan needs development. Neither demonstration requires enthusiasm, gratitude, or a promise to return in order to be useful evidence.

For facilitator practice, use the three-role method from Chapter 14. The skill here is stating a limit while offering a way in. Rehearse Omar's attendance question using your setting's actual requirements, then have the colleague press you with the possibility of losing work. Try a second version in which the participant believed advance notice automatically excused an absence, and a third in which Maya says the voluntary group is repetitive and she may leave.

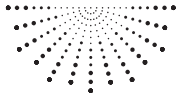
After the room

Did you answer the practical question before interpreting the participant's attitude? Did you imply a freedom, exception, or outcome you could not offer? What part of a complaint deserved a change in your delivery?

Before the next session, identify one requirement or group agreement participants could still be misunderstanding. Prepare a plain explanation, check the actual procedure, and decide how you will confirm that the explanation reached them. Then give them a clear task worth using their time on.

3

ACCESS BEFORE ACCOUNTABILITY



You cannot fairly judge understanding until the participant has a workable way to receive and respond to the lesson.

That responsibility begins before you ask the question. If the example is only spoken, someone who needs another route may miss it. If the instructions require quick reading, the response may tell you more about reading speed than reasoning. If interpretation is still underway when another participant answers, the discussion can move on before everyone has received the question.

Being in the room does not establish access to the work. Nor does the presence of an accommodation establish understanding. You need to find out whether the person can receive the idea, work with it, and show you what they understand.

Three versions of a silence

Consider an invented teaching example. The group is separating an event from a conclusion about another person's intent. A friend canceled plans with Taylor an hour beforehand. Taylor decides the friend never wanted to come. You ask, "What interpretation is driving Taylor's reaction?"

One participant does not answer. Others begin volunteering responses. That silence could lead you to repeat the question more firmly or move past the participant. Before choosing, consider three versions of the exchange.

In the first, Lee is receiving the discussion through a sign-language interpreter. You finish speaking, turn toward someone with a raised hand, and begin another exchange while the interpretation of your question is still underway.

Lee has not had the same opportunity to answer. Waiting only until your own voice stops is insufficient.

You pause the discussion. "Let's finish the question before we take answers." You allow the interpretation to finish and give Lee time to respond. You address Lee directly rather than asking the interpreter what Lee thinks.

Lee's answer, conveyed through the interpreter, is, "Taylor thinks the friend never wanted to come."

Now you have reasoning to examine. "What in the example tells us what the friend wanted?" You again allow time for the question and response to be interpreted. Lee identifies the cancellation but recognizes that it does not establish the friend's reason.

The change in pace has made participation possible. The answer gives you evidence of understanding in this example. You still need to check the distinction in another situation.

In the second version, Rosa has heard the question but is unsure what "interpretation" means here. She says nothing. You ask whether she understands, and she nods. You are about to continue.

Instead, you restate the task for everyone: "What does Taylor know happened? Start with that."

Rosa says, "A friend canceled an hour before."

"What did Taylor decide that meant?"

"That the friend never wanted to come."

You have made the distinction available without requiring the original vocabulary. But Rosa continues, "If they wanted to see Taylor, they wouldn't cancel."

Clearer wording has not resolved the whole lesson. She can iden-

tify the conclusion and still treat it as certain. Your next question concerns what the cancellation can establish. You do not need to return to the difficult word to teach that point.

In the third version, Evan says, "I understand the question. You want the difference between the cancellation and deciding the friend never wanted to come. I don't want to do this exercise."

You ask, "Is something about the task making it difficult to take part?"

"No. I'm not answering."

That is a stated decision about this task. It is different from the interpretation still being delivered or the word Rosa did not understand. You respond within the participation expectations of the actual group. Explain the requirement or agreement, identify a workable way to begin, and follow the setting's procedures if the refusal continues.

You do not need to diagnose Evan's motive. You also should not keep simplifying the question as though he has demonstrated a language difficulty. His explanation shows some understanding of the distinction; it does not show independent application. That remains untested.

These versions are possibilities, not a complete list of reasons for silence. An unanswered question still needs inquiry. The point is to make your next move fit the information you have.

Prepare the route before the task

Before a session, examine how participants will receive the example and how you will ask them to respond. Consider hearing, language, reading, and visual needs. Where needs are already known, arrange the needed support rather than waiting for a public difficulty to reveal them again.

Ask the participant about what makes communication workable. Coordinate with the interpreter or relevant support person about the process within their role. Check sight lines, materials, and how turns will be taken. An interpreter cannot make several simultaneous

conversations into one orderly group discussion; you remain responsible for managing the room.

Use sentences that carry one question at a time. Explain unfamiliar terms through the example. Provide a visible version where useful, but remember that visual material also needs to be accessible. Reading dense text, watching an interpreter, and following your gesture may compete for attention. Sequence the task so the participant can receive each part.

A worksheet may ask for an answer in writing when the learning purpose is to examine a choice. Where the curriculum and setting permit, a spoken or signed explanation, pointing to options, or arranging a sequence can provide another route. Keep the reasoning task intact. Ask why the participant selected the option rather than counting selection alone as understanding.

Judge the reasoning through the task. Handwriting, vocabulary, speed, and fluent speech may affect how an answer reaches you. Ask the participant to show the distinction through a response method they can use.

When the group works across languages

A participant may follow an everyday conversation in a second language and still need help with the distinctions in your lesson. Ask which language and response method make the work clearest. In a Spanish-language group, prepare the examples, instructions, and checks in Spanish rather than making members translate an English task as they go. Use translated materials through the program's review process; check whether key terms and examples carry the intended meaning. Work with a qualified interpreter when one is needed instead of assigning another participant that responsibility. Invite an explanation in the person's own words and return to the particular action. If the answer exposes a translation problem, repair the question before judging the reasoning.

Some questions belong in private

You can offer clear instructions and response options to the whole group without identifying anyone as the reason. More personal questions about support needs may require a private conversation.

If a participant repeatedly leaves written work blank, ask about the difficulty without first announcing a reading problem to the room. "What would help you work through the written part?" leaves room for an answer you have not anticipated. They might describe unfamiliar words, difficulty seeing the page, uncertainty about what is being asked, or reluctance to put personal information in writing. Those are different concerns.

Find out what support is available and how it can be arranged before offering an alternative. If the need exceeds what you can resolve in the group, seek assistance or supervision. Repeating the same inaccessible task with more encouragement does not create access.

When a participant does not want to explain the difficulty, respect the limits of what you know. Offer available options and follow up through the setting's process. Make help available through a route that preserves the participant's privacy.

Questions that check the work

"What are you being asked to do here?" checks the instruction before the answer. If the participant describes a different task, clarify your wording and let them try again.

"Which part of the example are you using?" lets you see whether relevant information reached them. If a detail was missed, revisit it through an accessible route before interpreting the error as a failure of reasoning.

"Can you show me why you chose that?" asks for the thinking behind a selection. Accept an accessible response method. If the person identifies an option but cannot yet connect it to the example, teach that connection.

"What would make this easier to receive or respond to?" can reveal a practical barrier. An answer such as "Say it again" may require you to find out whether repetition, different words, or a different format would help. Ask privately when the discussion could expose someone unnecessarily.

Check it again with changed details

After Rosa separates the cancellation from the conclusion, change the situation. A colleague has not greeted Taylor on arrival. Ask what Taylor knows and what remains uncertain. Let Rosa explain without supplying the answer. If she again assumes deliberate rejection, you have identified a distinction to teach further. Accessible wording made the attempt fairer; it did not guarantee success.

For facilitator rehearsal, the skill is improving access without answering for the participant. Begin with the original question about Taylor's "interpretation." Have the colleague ask what that word means, and restate the question without supplying the answer. Then try a participant who understands the instruction but declines to engage, so you practice responding to the difference.

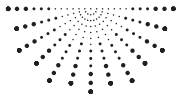
After the room

Which difficulty did you interpret before checking access? What did the participant demonstrate once the task became workable? Where did you confuse receiving support with understanding the lesson?

Before the next session, revise one question or response task that asks participants to overcome an unnecessary barrier. Arrange any support you need. Then check the learning through a response the participant can give, and examine what that response actually shows.

4

READING THE ROOM WITHOUT READING MINDS



Participation gives you clues. It does not tell you with certainty what is happening inside someone.

You need to notice who speaks, who interrupts, who gives a polished answer, and who has not yet contributed. Those observations help you decide where to put your attention. The trouble begins when a description of participation becomes a settled explanation of the person.

A participant who agrees quickly may understand the point. They may also be repeating it without knowing where it belongs. A challenge may expose a weakness in your explanation or keep the conversation away from personal application. You cannot settle those possibilities by deciding which style looks more sincere.

Your next question should give you information you do not already have.

The fluent answer and the quiet one

Consider this invented teaching example from a relationship-harm group. The lesson concerns a partner's privacy. A man sees a message

arrive on his partner's phone and demands to read the conversation because he suspects she is hiding something.

Adrian responds immediately. "Being jealous doesn't give you permission to read her messages."

Beth has said little during the discussion. When you invite her to examine the next choice, she says, "He can ask about the concern. He still has to leave her private messages alone."

Both answers address the principle. Adrian's fluency does not make his answer empty. Beth's brevity does not make hers profound. Each has given you something to check.

You change the situation. The partner hands over her phone so he can check directions. While holding it, he opens her messages. You ask Adrian whether being handed the phone gives him permission to do that.

"It's different," he says. "She gave him the phone. He didn't take it."

The way he gained access has changed. The question is what she agreed to let him do. Adrian has not yet carried that distinction into this example.

You ask Beth what she notices.

"She gave it to him for directions. He decided to read something else."

You return to Adrian. "What did she agree to when she handed it over?"

Adrian says, "But what if there really is something she's hiding?"

Hear the concern and keep the action visible. "He suspects there is. How does that give him permission to read the messages?" You can examine what he knows, what he assumes, and how he could raise a concern without taking access for himself. Suspicion and permission are different things.

The exchange has revealed a gap in Adrian's application and a useful distinction in Beth's answer. It has not revealed their entire motives or predicted what either will do later.

Now imagine another version. Adrian says, "She agreed to directions, not reading her messages. He can hand it back and ask about what concerned him." Beth gives the same reasoning in fewer words.

Both have applied the principle. If you had already decided the fluent speaker was performing and the quiet speaker was doing deeper work, this version should change your understanding.

Six patterns to keep inquiry open

These names are memory aids for recurring patterns of participation. A participant may show several patterns, shift between them, or fit none. Use the name to remember what to notice and what to ask next. Keep your understanding open to what the participant actually demonstrates.

The Performer

This name helps you notice polished answers, ready agreement, and language that closely matches the lesson. It does not establish that the participant is pretending.

They may understand the material and express it easily. They may be anxious to meet expectations, accustomed to this kind of discussion, or avoiding examination of a particular choice. Several explanations can fit the same answer.

Check application. "Where would this become difficult to use?" can expose a condition that the accurate definition has left untouched. Follow the answer with a changed situation. If the participant reasons through it, let that evidence revise your impression. Let successful application count and choose the next task for its teaching purpose.

When an answer sounds like yours, ask what the principle means in a particular action. Avoid demanding more emotion as proof of sincerity. A participant does not need to sound troubled to understand.

The Challenger

This pattern includes disputing a claim, questioning a requirement, or openly disagreeing with your explanation. The question may be accu-

rate and relevant. The participant may also misunderstand the claim, dislike its implications, or repeatedly use disputes to prevent the task from continuing.

Begin by identifying the point being challenged. "Which part do you think is wrong?" gives the objection a shape you can examine. If the participant identifies an error, correct it. If you need to verify a fact, say so and arrange to check it. Your authority does not settle the accuracy of the claim.

If the participant repeats the same objection after it has been addressed, describe that conduct and redirect. "We've identified the disagreement. We need to examine the example now." A legitimate question does not give someone unlimited possession of the session.

Look at what the participant does with the answer and whether others retain an opportunity to work.

The Silent Participant

This name describes limited contribution to the discussion. It does not tell you whether the person is thinking, confused, uncomfortable, disengaged, or unable to access the discussion. More than one condition may be present.

Check the access issues from Chapter 3. Then provide an opportunity to respond without turning the invitation into a public test of courage. A brief individual task or paired exchange, where the format permits, may give you something to examine that a large-group question has not.

Allow time. If the participant asks for clarification, give it. If they decline, address that response within the group's expectations. Avoid praising silence as deep reflection or describing it as refusal before you have checked.

"Which part would you like us to go over?" may reveal uncertainty. "What do you notice about the proposed action?" may invite a specific contribution. If neither produces an answer, you still have a limit of knowledge. Persistent difficulty may require a private conversation and support.

The Humor Participant

You notice a joke after a difficult question, a shift into a funny story, or laughter that redirects attention. Humor may help someone participate. It may express discomfort, serve an ordinary social habit, or move the group away from an uncomfortable subject. The timing and effect need examination.

You do not have to determine why a joke was made before responding to its effect. If it ridicules another member or interrupts their account, stop that conduct. If it briefly lightens the room without harming anyone or displacing the work, return to the question without making the humor itself a problem.

"Let's come back to the choice in the example" may be enough. If joking repeatedly replaces an answer, be more specific: "Each time I ask what happened next, we move into a joke. I'd like us to stay with the action." Then allow a response.

The participant may say they were simply trying to make people comfortable. You can hear that account and still require space for the discussion to continue. Intention does not settle the effect on the room.

The Intellectualizer

This pattern draws your attention to abstract explanations, theories, or technical language with little connection to the event being examined. The participant may enjoy ideas, use familiar professional vocabulary, or be uncertain how to describe a concrete experience. Abstraction may also keep a difficult action out of view.

Ask for the connection before assuming avoidance. "What would that look like in the example?" lets the participant use their knowledge. If the answer becomes specific, work with it. You need not reject sophisticated language because another person would use simpler words.

If the response remains general, narrow the task: "What did the person do after the refusal?" A correct account of emotional regula-

tion can coexist with an incomplete account of blocking a doorway. The behavior still needs to be named.

When a participant offers a theory about someone else's motives, ask what information supports it and what remains unknown. Your own response should meet the same standard.

The Finisher

This name helps you notice an emphasis on requirements, completion, and getting the task done efficiently. The participant may need to plan around work or caregiving, prefer clear instructions, or genuinely understand the task. They may also complete it without examining how the answer would work.

Answer logistical questions accurately. Asking how long an activity will take is not evidence that the person does not care. Then check the proposed response at the point of use.

In a recovery example, a participant writes, "Ask for help," and says the plan is finished. Ask, "What happens if the first person is unavailable?" If they can identify a workable next step, the short answer may have represented more reasoning than it showed on paper. If they cannot, you have a gap to teach.

Make the check relevant to the intended learning, including for someone who finishes quickly. Completion tells you the task was completed; its quality and application still need examination.

What a pause can and cannot tell you

Give participants time to receive the question and prepare a response. A pause can be part of thinking. It can also reflect confusion, interpretation time, uncertainty about speaking, or a decision not to answer.

If the task is clear and accessible, avoid immediately filling the space with your own answer. If the participant looks puzzled or asks what you mean, clarify. Waiting longer does not repair an unclear instruction.

In rehearsal, ten seconds can help you notice how quickly you tend

to intervene. It is a possible practice prompt, not a rule for every person or every question. In the actual room, watch what is happening and respond to the need. Check the reasoning when the answer arrives.

Keep observations usable

Carry information forward in a form that can be revised. "Adrian gave an accurate definition but struggled when the setting changed" identifies the next teaching task. "Adrian is a Performer" can make the next session a search for confirmation.

Keep these pattern names in facilitator guidance and training exercises. In participant records, describe the observed conduct, the task, and what the response demonstrated. Distinguish classroom demonstration from the participant's report of using a skill elsewhere. Neither should be enlarged into a conclusion about unseen outcomes.

Seek information that could contradict your first impression. If a quiet participant is always assumed to understand, offer an independent task. If a fluent participant is always suspected of rehearsing, let accurate application count. If a challenger identifies a genuine mistake, learn from it rather than treating the correction as another challenge to control.

Also notice whose style you find comfortable. Familiar language, confidence, or visible emotion may make one account easier for you to believe. Ask what evidence supports the judgment. A person should not have to resemble your preferred learner to receive fair teaching.

Four questions that change the next move

"Can you apply that to this different situation?" checks whether the reasoning travels. A difficulty may identify a specific distinction to reteach. A successful answer should change an impression based on style alone.

"What part are you disagreeing with?" separates a disputed fact

from a disputed principle or an unclear instruction. Address the actual concern before deciding whether redirection is needed.

"What would that look like as an action?" brings an abstract or completed answer closer to use. If the participant gives a concrete sequence, examine it. If they repeat the general phrase, work on the missing step.

"What do you notice that we have not examined?" makes space for another contribution. Allow a quieter participant time to answer, but do not require them to rescue the discussion or publicly prove your belief that they know more.

Practice observation without accusation

Use a changed example from the lesson with everyone. Give each participant an opportunity to apply the idea. Ask each person to show the reasoning through an accessible response method. In the phone example, examine what access was agreed to, then change how the person gains access. Check what the answer establishes and what still needs teaching.

For facilitator rehearsal, the skill is revising an impression. Have a colleague give the same accurate sentence twice, once fluently and once with hesitation, and notice whether your questions change because of the content or the delivery. Then choose another pattern, name two possible explanations for it, and rehearse a question that could distinguish them. Let the answer change your next move.

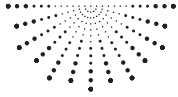
After the room

Which participation style did you mistake for understanding or sincerity? What evidence contradicted your first impression? Did your response preserve room for others while leaving the participant a way back into the task?

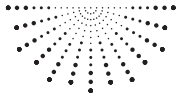
For the next session, choose one judgment you have begun to treat as settled. Prepare an accessible task or question that could challenge

it. Use what the participant demonstrates to decide where the teaching goes next.

PART II
THE WORK IN THE ROOM



5
THE PEOPLE OUTSIDE THE ROOM



The person speaking is not the only person affected. Your attention has to extend beyond the account you can hear.

You will come to know participants in ways you do not know their partners, children, relatives, or neighbors. You will hear about their work, their disappointments, and the effort it took to get to group. You may watch someone struggle toward an honest answer. That contact matters. It can also make the person in front of you seem more real than the people described in passing.

Those other people have lives beyond the participant's account. They may still be dealing with consequences the discussion has already moved past. You cannot tell their story for them. You can keep their freedom, safety, and boundaries part of the questions you ask.

When the group calls it caring

Consider this invented teaching example from a relationship-harm group. Marcus says Elena has asked him not to contact her. He has written an apology and wants her aunt to deliver it.

"I'm not asking her to come back," he says. "I just want her to know I understand now."

One participant says, "At least you're trying." Another says involving the aunt would give Elena space because Marcus would not be there himself.

The room is approving the plan before examining what it asks of Elena. You interrupt that approval without turning Marcus into the group's defendant.

"Let's look at the request Elena made before we decide whether this respects it. Marcus, what did she ask you to stop doing?"

"Contacting her. She said she didn't want calls or messages."

"Has she said she wants a message through her aunt?"

"No. But her aunt thinks she ought to hear me out."

The aunt's agreement is information about the aunt. It does not establish Elena's permission. You make that distinction plain.

Chapter 1 showed a version of this with Daniel and his sister. Here the group's approval adds weight, and a real obligation is about to complicate it.

"Her aunt is willing to carry it. Elena has asked for no contact. Sending your apology through someone else still brings it to her."

Marcus says, "So I'm supposed to act like I don't care?"

You do not need to settle whether he cares. You need to examine how he proposes to act on that care.

"What could you do that respects her request even if she never hears this apology?"

He looks down at the letter. "Keep it, I guess."

That is a possible next action. Then he adds, "But I also owe her my share of a bill. If I don't send anything, she'll say I'm avoiding that too."

The exchange has acquired a practical obligation. A response that simply repeats "leave her alone" would leave it unexamined. A response that approves the letter because money is owed would turn the obligation into an opening for the apology.

"What arrangements are already in place for handling that bill?"

"None. I was going to put a check in with the letter."

You now need information about actual contact restrictions and any permitted process for the payment. You cannot invent an excep-

tion in class. Help Marcus identify who can explain the permitted payment route. Keep the payment and the desired personal message distinct.

"The bill still needs attention. We need to establish how you can address it within the restrictions that apply. Owing money doesn't establish permission to send an apology."

Marcus says, "She'll still think I'm a bad person."

That concern remains. A responsible action cannot depend on Elena revising her opinion of him. The work may end tonight with a next step about the payment and an unsent letter, while Marcus is still unhappy about both.

What you know about the boundary

You heard Marcus describe a request for no contact and propose an indirect message. You heard members approve the proposal. You have not heard Elena's account. Even the wording of her request comes to you through Marcus.

Keep those sources clear. Ask enough to understand the reported boundary and check contact restrictions through the process your setting uses. Work from the boundary being described while keeping the source of the account clear.

You also do not know that Marcus invented the bill as an excuse. It may be a genuine obligation. That possibility changes the practical question, without giving permission to send the apology. If an approved arrangement already exists, the next step may be to use it. If none exists, guidance is needed. Neither answer requires you to decide what is secretly in his heart.

The group may sincerely want to recognize effort. Give that effort somewhere responsible to go. Ask members what keeping the letter would allow Elena to decide for herself. Return to Marcus for the action he is willing to take. Keep the group's task on Marcus's next action and Elena's freedom to choose.

Look at what the conduct required of others

Accounts of harmful behavior often arrive with the speaker's feelings already explained. "I was hurt." "I panicked." "I needed an answer." Those statements may help you understand the moment. You still need to find out what happened outside the speaker's body.

Ask what the participant did next. Where were they standing? What did they say? When the other person tried to leave, what happened? Did the participant follow, block the route, continue calling, or accept the refusal? Ask one question at a time and follow the answer. A description of the conduct gives you something to examine that a general account of distress does not.

Suppose a participant says, "I never raised my voice. I just stood in the doorway until she answered." Calm delivery does not settle whether the other person could leave. Ask, "Could she get past you?" If the answer is no, address that restriction directly. You do not need a claim about her exact feelings to examine his decision to obstruct her movement.

Fear and control can disappear from the discussion when the only question is whether someone managed their anger. Keep asking what choices remained available to the other person. A quieter demand may still be a demand. An absence of visible injury does not establish safe conduct.

When several actions make a pattern

Most of the examples in this guide examine one episode. Control often works through several actions that connect over time. Consider an invented account from a relationship-harm group. Derek says the trouble started when his partner, Lena, began spending time with coworkers after her shifts.

"I'd check her phone sometimes. Everybody does that. And I asked who she was with. That's normal. Last weekend she went out after I

told her I didn't want her to, so I took the car keys when she got home. She needed to learn there are consequences."

Told one at a time, each action can sound small. Ask about each before you connect them.

"How often do you check her phone?"

"Most days."

"What happens when you ask who she was with and you don't like the answer?"

"We argue. Sometimes she just stays home so we don't."

Then put the pieces side by side. "You check her messages most days. You question her about who she sees. She sometimes stays home to avoid an argument. When she went out anyway, you took the keys. What choices does Lena have left about where she goes and who she sees?"

"She can go wherever she wants. I just want to know where she is."

"When she went where she wanted, she lost the car. That's the part we need to look at."

Derek may dispute your summary. Ask him to correct any part that is inaccurate. You are not assigning him a label or describing Lena's inner life. You are examining the conduct he described and the choices it leaves her.

The pattern changes the work. A plan for one evening will not reach it. Ask which action he could stop first and what he expects to happen when he does. If he says, "I'll stop checking her phone," ask what he will do the next time she is late from work. Keep the other actions in the discussion so that stopping one does not simply move the control somewhere else. If his account suggests a threat or immediate danger, the teaching task gives way to your setting's procedures.

Give children the same attention. A gift sent through a child asks the child to carry something between adults. Ask what the child was told to do and what would happen if they declined. Keep the child's experience open while examining the task the adult imposed. Examine the role the adult assigned them and whether that role continues the unwanted contact.

The people affected differ by setting

In a required substance-use group, Victor describes driving home after a party. This is another invented teaching example.

"I got arrested, but I didn't hit anyone. Mostly I hurt myself. Now I have to deal with all this."

The arrest has consequences for Victor. His account also includes a decision to drive on a road other people used. Ask who was in the car and what he remembers about the drive. When he says he drove alone, bring the people outside the vehicle into the account.

"Who else was using the road while you were driving?"

"I don't know. Other cars. I wasn't keeping track."

"What does not hitting anyone tell us, and what does it leave unanswered?"

He says, "It tells you nothing happened."

You clarify the distinction. His report establishes that he knows of no collision. It does not establish that no one was exposed to risk. You can examine that exposure without inventing a near miss or asking him to admit an event he does not remember. Specific decisions about the evening belong in the work that follows. Here you are widening the account to include the people his first description left out.

In a voluntary recovery group, a participant may describe a family's continued caution after their return to use. "My daughter still won't leave the children with me," they say. "What else do I have to prove?"

First establish what happened and whether there is a current safety concern requiring attention. Then examine the reported request. What has the daughter said? What arrangement is the participant asking to change? Their wish to be trusted is understandable. Their participation in recovery does not decide when the daughter must entrust children to them.

These examples require different work. Follow the conduct and circumstances being described; examine control when the account includes it. In each setting, progress can matter without creating a claim on someone else's reassurance or cooperation.

When exploration has to stop

An account may reveal a threat, ongoing harm, or a concern about immediate safety. At that point, another application question may be the wrong next move.

If Marcus says he plans to wait outside Elena's workplace until she speaks to him, address that plan directly and follow your setting's required procedures and consultation requirements. Do not continue peer discussion as though the only issue is whether the group can produce a better answer. Obtain the information needed for your role and the required response; do not invite unnecessary details into a public exercise.

Know the limits of confidentiality and your reporting duties before such a moment occurs. Explain what you need to do accurately. This guide cannot determine the required response for every program or circumstance. You need a usable route to the people and procedures responsible in your setting.

Questions that keep others in view

"What did the other person ask you to stop doing?" brings the reported boundary into the account. If the request is specific, examine the proposed action against it. If the participant is unsure, clarify what they actually heard and check relevant restrictions. Stay with what the participant heard and what the boundary requires.

"Who would have to do something for this plan to work?" reveals whether the plan depends on an aunt delivering a message, a child carrying a gift, or a partner supplying reassurance. Examine whether those people have agreed and whether their involvement respects the boundary. A willing messenger does not supply permission from the intended recipient.

"What choices did your action leave the other person?" shifts attention to effects without assigning an inner experience. If the participant answers only with their intention, return to what the other person could actually do in that situation.

"What can you do responsibly if they never answer?" checks whether the next action can stand without a response. "Keep trying until they understand" exposes a condition that needs work. A concrete action that respects the refusal gives you something to practice, while leaving its later use unverified.

Practice without a promised return

Change Marcus's situation for the application check. In an invented scenario, a former partner declines further contact. The participant proposes sending a gift through their child, saying, "The child wants to help." Ask each participant to identify whose permission is established, what the child is being asked to do, and a responsible next action.

Then add an obstacle: the gift has already been bought, and the child is disappointed. Does the participant still respect the refusal? Listen for an action that does not make the child negotiate it. A correct answer shows reasoning in this exercise. It does not establish what anyone will do at home.

For facilitator rehearsal, the skill is interrupting the group's approval while keeping the speaker in the work. Have one colleague propose the apology through the aunt while another voices the group's approval. Interrupt the approval, ask about the boundary, and make a direct statement where needed. Then try the unpaid bill, so you recognize an obligation without authorizing unwanted contact.

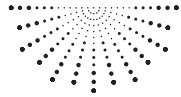
After the room

Whose experience disappeared while you listened to the participant? Where did you describe an absent person's feelings as though you knew them? Did the action you encouraged require reassurance, forgiveness, or cooperation that had not been offered?

Before the next session, revisit one proposed plan. Identify everyone it asks to act, the boundary it must respect, and the question you need to ask before approving it.

6

THE EXPLANATION COMES FIRST



An explanation can contain important context while placing the decisive choice somewhere else. Listen for both: what the participant was dealing with and what they did.

You may hear the circumstances before you hear the action. The partner would not answer. The friend changed the plan. The evening went badly. By the time the participant reaches their own conduct, it can sound like the only possible ending to the story.

Your task is to make the choices visible again. That requires listening carefully enough to understand the conditions, then asking specifically enough that the participant remains present in the action. "I take responsibility" begins an inquiry. It does not complete one.

An admission with a condition inside it

Return to Marcus and Elena at an earlier point in the continuing invented teaching example, before the request for no contact examined in Chapter 5. In this scene, Elena has not answered Marcus's message. He describes sending several more.

"I take responsibility for how I handled it," he says. "But she knew I was waiting. If she'd just answered, none of it would have happened."

You could challenge the "but" immediately. That might produce a corrected sentence without changing his account of the choice. Begin by finding out what "how I handled it" contains.

"What did you do after the first message went unanswered?"

"Sent another one."

"What did it say?"

"I asked why she was ignoring me."

"What told you she was ignoring you?"

"She hadn't answered. What else would it mean?"

You have reached the distinction hidden in his opening explanation. The unanswered message is the event he reports. Deliberate ignoring is the meaning he assigned to it. Keep Elena's reason open and examine the meaning Marcus supplied.

"We know you hadn't received an answer. We haven't established why. What made you certain it was deliberate?"

"She'd done it before."

Ask what he means. A previous unanswered message and a previous statement that she chose not to respond are different information. Even evidence about an earlier occasion does not settle the reason for this one.

Marcus says Elena once told him she did not answer because she wanted time alone.

"Suppose she wanted time alone this time too. What would that change about the message you chose to send?"

"She could have told me."

That answer has not addressed his action. It puts the next decision back with Elena. You return to the words he used.

"You asked why she was ignoring you. What were you asking her to do?"

"Answer me. Explain herself."

Now the account contains a demand the participant can examine. You can acknowledge his wish for information while remaining direct about the choice.

"You wanted an answer. You sent a message that treated your explanation as established and required her to respond to it."

Marcus says, "It was a question."

Do not argue about whether the sentence has a question mark. Ask him to read it and identify what Elena would have to accept in order to answer on its terms. "Why are you ignoring me?" already supplies an accusation. He may dispute that reading. Stay with the wording and let him explain what he intended the message to accomplish.

Slow the account until the action appears

You do not need to recite a formula at Marcus. Use the sequence to guide your listening: situation, belief, feeling, urge, action, and impact. Take each part far enough to understand what he is describing, without supplying it for him.

The situation is the message without an answer. His belief is that Elena is deliberately ignoring him. When you ask what he felt, he says, "Angry. Like I didn't matter." You can explore those words further, but do not announce that fear or shame must be underneath them. Chapter 7 develops that work. Here you need enough precision to understand the next choice.

"What did you want to do when you felt that?"

"Make her answer."

That is the urge. Ask what he actually did with it. He reports sending four more messages, each insisting on a response. Wanting to make someone answer and repeatedly sending demands are related, but they are different parts of the sequence. Distinguishing them leaves room to examine where he could have acted differently.

Then ask about impact. What did the messages require of Elena? What response did he receive, if any? Keep what she reportedly said separate from what he assumes she felt. Even if he received no answer, the decision to keep demanding one remains available for examination.

Notice your own temptation to complete the story. You may hear an accusation and assume punishment was his purpose. Ask what he wanted the message to accomplish. If he says he wanted to upset her, work with that answer directly. If he says he wanted information,

examine whether the action sought information while allowing her a choice. Keep his stated purpose and the effect of his conduct in view. Ask before assigning a purpose of your own.

When the facts change the question changes

Now change the scene. Elena has explicitly told Marcus not to contact her. He says, "She isn't answering because she wants to hurt me."

You still do not know her private motive. You do know that the invented scene supplies a refusal. Continuing to ask whether she might be occupied would avoid the information you now have.

"She has asked for no contact. What are you responsible for doing with that request?"

"I understand. I can leave her alone if she tells me why."

The skill has acquired a condition. He will respect the boundary after Elena supplies something he wants. Name that condition plainly.

"You've made stopping depend on her explaining. Her request doesn't depend on your being satisfied with the reason."

Check contact restrictions and procedures rather than inventing permission to negotiate contact. If the proposed conduct raises a safety concern, follow the response your setting requires. Where the teaching can continue, ask for an action that remains available without Elena's cooperation.

"What will you stop doing even if she gives you no explanation?"

Marcus says he will stop sending messages. Then he adds, "I'll keep checking whether she replies."

Acknowledge the decision to stop messaging. Then examine what could pull him back into it. What happens when he checks again and finds nothing? Keep examining the rest of the plan. Chapter 9 will work through that application in detail. Here, identify the condition still pulling his attention back toward another demand.

Listen for similar conditions elsewhere: "I'll step away if they stop talking," or "I can calm down once they admit I was right." The other person's conduct may matter to the situation. The participant's next

responsible action needs to remain possible when that conduct does not change.

Victor felt fine

Consider a second developed invented exchange, this time in a required substance-use group. Victor is describing the evening that ended in his arrest after driving home from a party. Chapter 5 examined the people left out of his account. Here the question is where his own decisions entered it.

"I know I shouldn't have driven," he says. "But I felt fine. I wasn't falling over. I thought I was okay."

"When did you decide you would drive home?"

"When I left."

"What had you planned before you went to the party?"

"My friend was supposed to take me home."

This matters. Victor did not arrive without any plan. If you respond as though he did, he has to correct your account before examining his own.

"What happened to that arrangement?"

"He started drinking too. Then he went to sleep. I couldn't use him."

Victor has recognized that the original ride was no longer usable. The next question concerns what he did when that happened.

"What options did you consider then?"

"A ride service, but my phone was dead. And I couldn't afford it anyway. I had work early. My car was right there."

Those barriers complicate the exchange. A lecture about having a plan would miss that he had one. "Just order a ride" would miss the barriers he has described. You need to hear the difficulty without allowing it to become proof that driving was unavoidable.

"How did feeling fine enter the decision?"

"It made it seem like the easiest option."

"How did you check whether driving was a safe option?"

"I didn't check. I went by how I felt. But you're asking like I had all these choices. I didn't."

He has identified a gap in his reasoning and is still defending the action. Both belong in your working understanding. Acknowledge that distinction and continue examining the action he is defending.

"The ride had fallen through. You chose to drive. We need to examine both. When did you first notice your ride home was in doubt?"

Victor says he saw his friend start drinking well before the party ended. He hoped the friend would stop. Ask what he did when he noticed the arrangement changing. He says he did nothing because he did not want to make a fuss.

That is an earlier decision point. It does not mean that arranging transport would have been easy. It means there was information to act on before the late-night departure and the dead phone.

"What could you have done at that point that didn't require your friend to stop drinking?"

"Asked the host whether I could stay. Or used a phone before everyone went to bed."

"Who could you have called?"

"I don't know. I wouldn't call my sister. We'd had a fight."

The proposed alternative is incomplete. Ask whom he could actually contact before treating "use a phone" as a workable step. Work with the remaining possibility, including whether staying was actually available. If it was not, return to an earlier point, perhaps before leaving home, when he could consider transport and what to do if it failed.

Planning may require help beyond this exchange. Identify that need within the group's purpose. Build the alternative from resources he could actually use. Victor can own choosing to drive while still needing help to build a workable alternative. A responsible plan must address the barriers rather than relying on them disappearing.

Work with disputed facts accurately

Suppose Victor adds, "The report says I crossed the center line. I don't remember that. I don't agree that I did."

Keep the sources separate: what the report states, what he remembers, and what he disputes. Keep the dispute visible rather than trying to settle it through this exercise. Follow your role and program requirements without asking him to claim a memory he does not have.

You can still examine decisions he has reported: taking the car, relying on the friend, noticing the changed arrangement, and choosing to drive. "What do you remember about deciding to leave?" may give you a usable starting point. If memory is limited, mark the limit. A hypothetical exercise can support learning, but it should be labeled as hypothetical rather than treated as his admission.

Also examine uneven certainty. A participant may say they cannot remember an exchange but insist the other person provoked it deliberately. Ask what supports the claim about intent. Keep the memory gap open while checking the claim about intent. The inconsistency gives you a question, not a diagnosis of dishonesty.

Context can change your response. If you learn that an option was unavailable, stop offering it as though it was there. If a description reveals a threat or immediate danger, move to required procedures. Holding responsibility does not require holding your first version of the facts.

Questions that bring the participant back into the action

"What did you do next?" turns a broad admission into conduct you can examine. If the answer remains "lost control" or "handled it badly," ask for the particular action rather than accepting another summary.

"What did you know, and what did you decide it meant?" locates the distinction between an event and an interpretation. Evidence may

support part of the interpretation. Examine that evidence without treating certainty itself as proof.

"What were you hoping your action would accomplish?" makes the proposed result visible. If the answer is to force agreement, reassurance, or a response, examine the demand. If it is to solve a practical problem, check whether the action could do so responsibly.

"When did you first have information that your plan was changing?" searches for an earlier usable decision point. Use the answer to locate an actual opportunity. If the option you imagined was unavailable, change the question.

"What remains available if the other person does not cooperate?" tests the condition inside the alternative. If the plan depends on someone else changing, help identify an action the participant can actually take within the relevant boundaries.

Practice an account that keeps the choice visible

Give participants a changed invented situation. A colleague has not completed an agreed task. The person waiting sends repeated accusations, saying, "They left me no choice." Ask participants to identify the reported event, the interpretation, the action, and an alternative that does not require the colleague to agree. Then supply new information: the colleague had explicitly said they would no longer do the task before it was due. Ask which question changes. Uncertainty about a delay and a known refusal require different work.

For substance-use application, change Victor's obstacle: the arranged driver cancels before he leaves home. Ask him to work through the decision without supplying the alternative.

"My ride's gone," Victor says. "I need to find out if there's another one before I go."

"What if you can't arrange one, and your car is right outside?"

"Then I stay home. Tell the host I can't make it."

"You were looking forward to the party. What happens to that disappointment?"

"I can be disappointed at home. Taking the car puts me back in the same spot later."

Here the reasoning has traveled. Victor identifies the changed arrangement, makes the decision earlier, and keeps it separate from whether he likes the result. Acknowledge the specific work: "You caught the problem before leaving and chose an action you can take yourself." He has given a usable answer in a new situation. Build on it when you check application again.

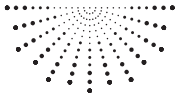
Rehearse with a colleague. The skill is asking about conduct before correcting the sentence. Begin with "I take responsibility, but they made it impossible." Have the colleague introduce a genuine barrier, then dispute one fact, and let each change your next question.

After the room

Where did you accept a broad admission without examining the action? Which real barrier did you overlook? Did the alternative you encouraged still depend on someone else's cooperation?

Choose one account to revisit next session. Prepare a question about the earliest usable decision point, and be ready to change it when the answer changes what you know.

7
FINDING WORDS FOR IT



Useful language helps a participant recognize an experience and a choice. It does not need to sound like yours.

A participant says they were angry. You ask what else they felt. They say they were very angry. You ask again, and they look at you as though the answer they gave was wrong.

Before pressing further, consider what you are asking them to do. You may want a more precise account of the moment. They may hear a request for the emotional word that will satisfy you. If you already believe you know what lies underneath, the conversation can become a search for agreement with your interpretation.

Give the participant somewhere concrete to begin. Ask about the particular moment, let them try a word, and find out what it means to them. The purpose is to help them recognize where their next choice begins.

The word that sounds right

Consider this invented teaching example from a relationship-harm group. Theo describes an evening with his partner, Julian, and two friends. While he was telling a story, Julian corrected the date of the

event. Later, at home, Theo told Julian never to correct him in front of other people again. Theo and Julian are a same-sex couple; the work concerns the rule Theo imposes and the freedom Julian retains.

"I was vulnerable," he says. "That's what we've been talking about. I need to handle my vulnerability better."

The word belongs to the discussion. You still need to find out whether it belongs to this experience.

"What does vulnerable mean in that moment?"

"You know. Not feeling good about myself."

"What did you think would happen when he corrected the date?"

"Everyone would think I didn't know what I was talking about."

That gives you something more specific. You can ask what he noticed in himself and what he did next. Instead, imagine you respond too quickly with a familiar explanation.

"So you felt ashamed."

Theo says, "No. I was angry. He made me look stupid."

His rejection is useful information. Treat it as a correction to your suggested word. You offered a word, and he said it did not fit. Return to what he has described.

"Then let's leave ashamed aside. You thought the others would think you didn't know what you were talking about, and you were angry. What happened in you when he spoke?"

"My face got hot. I stopped telling the story. I kept thinking he did it to show me up."

Now you have his description of a bodily response, a stopped action, and an interpretation. Keep them distinct. You can examine what supports the claim that Julian intended to show him up without deciding which emotional label he ought to use.

"Did either friend say you sounded stupid?"

"No. One of them asked me to finish."

He has supplied information that complicates his expectation. Ask what it changes about the account.

"Maybe they weren't thinking that," he says. "But he still shouldn't have done it."

Finding a more accurate description has brought you closer to the

next problem. It has not resolved it. You now need to examine what he demanded afterward.

A FEELING AND A RULE FOR SOMEONE ELSE

"What did you tell Julian when you got home?"

"Don't correct me in front of people. It's disrespectful."

"Were you asking to talk about how the interruption affected you, or telling him he wasn't allowed to correct you?"

"I was telling him. He can do it later."

Theo's discomfort needs room in the conversation. His rule for Julian needs examination. Treating both as emotional expression would lose the difference.

"You can tell him you were uncomfortable. He still gets to disagree with you. Your discomfort doesn't give you authority over when he's allowed to speak."

Theo says, "So he can embarrass me whenever he wants?"

That question may tempt you to defend Julian or settle whether Julian's interruption was reasonable. You have only his account. Keep the task on the choice he described.

"We can examine the interruption. Right now we're looking at the rule you imposed afterward. What could you say about your experience without making that rule?"

"I didn't like being interrupted. I'd like to finish what I'm saying."

That is a more specific request. Ask what happens if Julian disagrees with his account or does not agree to his request. If he returns to "Then he shouldn't be surprised when I get angry," the condition still needs work. A better sentence is useful only if Theo can respect Julian's response to it.

You may need to be direct here. "Anger leaves you responsible for what you do next." Say it plainly, then return to the particular action. Keep the demand visible while exploring the feeling.

Ask for meaning before adding vocabulary

Words such as angry, hurt, small, or exposed can describe different experiences for different people. "I felt small" might mean the participant expected ridicule. It might mean they believed their opinion carried no weight. Ask what the word refers to in this event.

You are listening for a description the participant could recognize again. Theo's "My face got hot, and I thought everyone would think I was stupid" gives him more to notice than "I need to manage my vulnerability." He can connect the experience to the urge to silence Julian. That connection gives the teaching somewhere to go.

Keep the emotional word separate from the claim about another person. "I felt ignored" may describe distress, while "They ignored me on purpose" adds a conclusion about intent. Ask what happened, what the participant believed, and how they experienced it. Help them sort the account through the example, using words they can work with.

An ordinary word may be enough. If a participant says, "I was angry because I wanted to win," work with that. Begin with the experience they describe. Anger can remain the word they choose while you examine the belief and action attached to it.

When a suggestion is useful

Sometimes a participant has a concrete account but cannot find a word that helps them describe it. You can offer a possibility without making it the answer.

"Would worried fit, or was it something different?" leaves room for correction. Ask one possibility at a time, give the participant time to consider it, and return to their meaning. A list of six feelings can make choosing a word easier while making understanding harder to see.

If they accept your suggestion, ask what in the situation makes it fit. If they reject it, let the rejection change your response. "What word comes closer?" may be useful. So may asking for an ordinary description without a label.

When someone says, "I don't know yet," keep the uncertainty workable. Ask what they noticed, what they expected, or what they wanted to do. They may be able to name one part before another. They may need to return to it later. Give a considered description room to develop.

Access still matters. Allow time for interpretation, use an accessible response method, and address the participant directly. Someone can have a precise account in their own language without an immediate equivalent for the word you have chosen. Check meaning through the situation. Ask how the person uses a word, including whether it describes a feeling, a judgment, or a way of speaking in their family. Their answer belongs to this person; it is not a rule about everyone who shares the language or background.

In an invented recovery exchange, a Portuguese-speaking participant uses saudade when describing an evening away from family. You offer "sad," and they say, "That isn't quite it. I missed being with them. I wanted the evening we used to have." Let that explanation replace your shorthand. "What did you want to do when that feeling came?" can bring the account toward a choice. The participant may need several words in English, or an interpreted description, to convey what one familiar word helps them recognize. Keep that description available when you return to the plan.

Bring shorthand back to conduct

Clinical language can help a participant organize an experience. It can also leave you unsure what happened. When someone says, "I became dysregulated," ask, "What did you do at that point?"

Suppose the answer is, "I slammed the cupboard and shouted at my brother." Now the conduct is visible. You can examine what the participant noticed before acting, what the brother was exposed to, and where a different choice might begin. You do not need to ban the original word. Require the account to include the action.

In a voluntary recovery group, a participant might say, "I was triggered when I got home." Ask what they encountered and what the

word means to them. They may describe seeing something connected to their use, feeling alone, or thinking they could not bear another evening. Follow the answer rather than assuming the term describes the same experience for everyone.

Then ask what they did. If the account includes renewed use, attend to what happened and any current safety concern before turning to the teaching task. Work within the group's purpose and procedures. A report of use needs more attention than a vocabulary correction.

The practical question is how recognizing the experience could help the participant choose an action. "I was lonely" can begin that work. "Someone must come over so I don't use" makes the plan depend on another person. Help identify support they can seek and a next step they can take if that support is unavailable. Naming a feeling should widen the choices, not assign someone else the job of removing it.

Keep ownership separate from a verdict on the person

Theo may abandon the discussion of vulnerability and say, "Fine. I'm a terrible partner."

Bring the exchange back to the conduct he can examine. You can keep him in the work without reassuring him that the conduct was harmless.

"We're examining what you said to Julian. Tell me which part you need to change."

If he answers, "Everything," ask for one action. If he says, "Telling him he couldn't correct me," you have a beginning. Examine what he can do differently when the same discomfort returns.

Self-condemnation may be an expression of real distress. It may also pull the conversation away from the choice. You do not have to decide which explanation applies before returning to specific conduct. If the distress needs support beyond the teaching task, follow the route to further support.

Hold enough space for the participant to say, "I did that," and remain able to work. Ownership needs an action to examine and a next choice to practice. A verdict on an entire life gives you neither.

Questions that make the words useful

"What does that word mean in this particular moment?" checks whether the label connects to an experience. If the answer repeats the label, return to the scene. Ask what the participant expected or noticed.

"What were you worried would happen?" can make a vague account more specific. Use it when worry is part of what the participant has described, or offer it tentatively. If they say they were not worried, change the question rather than searching for the answer you wanted.

"What did you want the other person to do?" brings a demand into view. Wanting reassurance or agreement gives you something to examine. Ask what the participant did when it was not offered.

"How would recognizing that state change your next action?" connects the word to a usable decision. An answer such as "I'd manage my emotions" needs a concrete first step. Ask what they would actually do and what boundary that action must respect.

Check the meaning in a new situation

Change the details for the application check. In an invented workplace example, a supervisor corrects a participant's description of a task in front of a colleague. Ask the participant to describe the reaction in their own words, identify the urge, and choose a response.

Theo says, "I'd think the colleague thought I was stupid again. I'd want to prove I was right."

"What could you do once you noticed that?"

"Ask which part needs correcting. I can dislike how it happened and still listen to the answer."

He has connected a recognizable thought to an urge and a

different action. Acknowledge that specific connection. Then add a complication: the supervisor's correction is mistaken. Ask whether he can question the fact without turning the exchange into a contest over his worth. The aim is accurate participation, not automatic agreement with authority.

For facilitator rehearsal, the skill is following the participant's meaning. Begin with "I felt vulnerable," offer one tentative word if needed, and have the colleague reject it. Continue from their answer. Then try "I'm just a bad person," and return to conduct without offering reassurance or agreeing with the verdict.

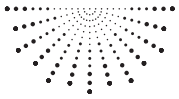
After the room

Which word did you accept without checking its meaning? Where did your suggested feeling become an answer the participant had to defend against? Did the language help identify a next choice?

Before the next session, replace one request for a better emotional word with a question about a particular moment. Listen for a description the participant can use again.

8

RUNNING THE GROUP RATHER THAN A ROW OF CONVERSATIONS



Every exchange changes the room. Use the group's thinking while remaining responsible for its limits.

You can spend a whole session having useful conversations and still leave most participants waiting for their turn. One person answers, you ask a follow-up, and the exchange continues until you move to the next person. Everyone has been present. The group has had little work of its own to do.

The alternative is to give participants something specific to examine together. Ask them to follow a peer's reasoning, test an idea, or explain why an action fits the situation. Then listen to what that shared work produces. You still need to interrupt harmful advice, protect participation, and keep the lesson visible. Peer discussion adds thinking to the room; it does not transfer your responsibility to it.

When agreement makes the problem larger

Consider this invented teaching example from a relationship-harm group. Rafaela describes repeatedly calling her husband after he stopped answering messages during an argument.

"I wanted to sort it out," she says. "You can't communicate with someone who won't communicate."

Two participants nod. One says, "You have to keep trying." Another adds, "Otherwise they learn they can just shut you out."

You now have more than Rafaela's account to address. The group is supplying a reason to continue the pressure. If you let that agreement pass and ask only how Rafaela felt, the endorsed advice remains in the room.

"Let's stop at 'keep trying.' What are we advising her to keep doing?"

"Calling," one participant says. "Until they talk."

"Calling until someone gives in puts pressure on their choice. We need to examine that before we call it communication."

Make the concern plain. Then give the group a question it can work on.

"What is the difference between offering a conversation and requiring an answer?"

One member says you can leave a message and wait. Another says the husband should at least say when he will talk. Nia, who has contributed little, begins, "But if he's already stopped answering…"

The first speaker interrupts. "Here we go. I suppose you never get angry."

You need to hold the turn before you can examine the contribution.

"Let Nia finish. Then address her reasoning."

Nia says, "She knows he isn't answering right now. More calls are trying to change that."

Return to Rafaela without asking Nia to conduct the rest of the inquiry.

"How does that fit what you were trying to do?"

"I was trying to get an answer. But what if there's something urgent?"

That complication deserves a question. Urgency may refer to an actual practical concern or to the discomfort of waiting. Ask what was urgent in this event.

"I couldn't sleep with it hanging over me."

You can understand the unfinished feeling and still examine the demand.

"You wanted relief from waiting. The plan was to keep calling until he provided it. What could you do with the unfinished feeling without requiring him to answer?"

Rafaela says, "I don't know. I still think he should have talked."

The room has not arrived at agreement. It has identified the proposed conduct and the condition attached to it. You can work from there. If she had described an actual urgent concern, your next questions would need to address that concern within the boundaries that apply. Find out what the claimed urgency refers to before choosing the response.

Make the idea available to everyone

You heard members approve repeated calls. You heard an interruption aimed at a contributor rather than her reasoning. You also heard Nia identify the pressure. Those observations tell you where attention is needed. They do not tell you why each person spoke as they did.

Avoid dividing the room into people who understand and people who are defending Rafaela. Ask everyone to examine the proposed action. A nod might mean agreement with the calls, recognition of the frustration, or something else. "Which part are you agreeing with?" makes the response usable.

Move between the individual and the group with a purpose. Ask Rafaela for enough detail to identify the choice. Invite the group to examine that choice. Return to Rafaela to check what she makes of their reasoning. Keep the contributions focused on the proposed action and give her a turn to examine them.

Sometimes the discussion is better served by moving to an invented situation. "Let's test that claim with an example" gives everyone a common task and reduces the demand for further personal details. Explain the relevant facts, ask a question, and bring the reasoning back to the lesson.

You do not need to make a participant's disclosure the price of group learning. Keep shared information tied to the task and the group's agreements. If an account requires private follow-up or the setting's safety procedures, take that route instead of enlarging the audience.

When the group sets the agenda

Some groups do not run on a lesson plan. Consider an invented voluntary recovery group in which members choose each meeting's topic, and the agreed format allows one round of responses before open discussion. Tonight the members have chosen getting through weekends.

Kenji says he made it through Saturday by staying busy. "Sunday I went to my brother's. He drinks. I didn't, but I thought about it the whole time."

In a teaching group, you might turn that into a planned exercise. Here the format comes first. You keep the round moving and remember what he said.

In open discussion, one member tells Kenji, "Just don't go to your brother's. Simple." Another says, "You can't avoid family forever."

You can invite examination without taking the agenda back. "The format lets us respond to what Kenji raised. Before we advise him, can we hear what he wants from the group tonight?"

Kenji says, "I don't want rules. I want to know how other people handle family who drink."

That answer gives the group its task. Members describe what has worked for them. When one says, "I just tell them to put it away or I leave," you ask, "What happened the first time you did that?" The question keeps the account concrete without turning the exchange into your lesson.

Near the end, Kenji says he might leave earlier next Sunday and call someone before driving home. In this member-led format, ask whether Kenji wants help examining the plan tonight or would like to revisit it next week.

The skills are the same ones the book teaches elsewhere: listening for the choice inside an account, keeping advice from hardening into a rule, and asking a question that brings an answer down to an event. What changes is who sets the task. In a member-led group, you protect the format and the members' choice of topic, and you step in directly when harmful advice, a limit, or a safety concern requires it.

A peer task needs instructions

Pairs and small groups can help participants work through an idea before speaking to the whole room. They need a defined task. "Talk about what you think" leaves them to decide whether the purpose is agreement, advice, storytelling, or examination.

In the Rafaela example, you might give pairs an invented scene involving repeated requests after someone has declined a conversation. Ask them to bring back one proposed action and a reason it respects the refusal. Use this method within the approved lesson or agreed group format; peer work is a way of delivering the task, not permission to replace required content.

State the instructions plainly. "Each of you proposes an action. Then examine both. Bring back one action and explain how it respects the refusal." Allow enough time for the work, including interpretation or other access needs. Tell participants when you will return to the full group. Check that they know what they are being asked to produce.

If the task uses personal information, explain what will be shared afterward before they begin. An invented example may serve the task better when the reasoning can be practiced without disclosure. Explain the actual privacy limits before the task begins.

Move through the room and listen. Check whether people are doing the assigned work and whether everyone has a route into it. A pair that finishes quickly may have reasoned carefully, or one person may have supplied an answer the other accepted. Ask for the reasoning rather than interpreting the speed.

If one person is doing all the talking, interrupt the process without

judging their motive. "I want each of you to propose an action before you choose one." If the task is inaccessible or unclear, correct the instruction. Peer work still needs your attention.

Debrief what they thought

When the pairs return, asking whether everyone finished gives you very little. Ask one pair for its action and reason, then give the rest of the group something to examine in that answer.

Suppose the pair proposes stepping away until the other person is ready to talk. Ask how the person would respond if the other person never agreed to continue. The answer will show whether waiting respects the refusal or remains a way of demanding a conversation later.

Invite another pair to identify a strength or a weak point in the reasoning. Keep feedback specific: "Which part respects the choice?" or "Where does the action still depend on an answer?" Courtesy alone will not reveal the problem. Neither will "That's a terrible plan."

Then hear from the person whose action was examined. "What would you keep or change?" They may accept a revision, explain why the feedback missed a detail, or remain unsure. Let the answer shape the next question.

Collecting every pair's finished sentence can consume the remaining time without deepening the work. Choose contributions that let the group compare reasoning or examine a difficulty. Make room for a different answer, especially when the first one sounds complete. Close the debrief by naming the distinction the exercise brought into view and checking it individually.

Hold a limit and leave a route back

Repeated interruptions, side conversations, ridicule, and domination can prevent others from receiving the lesson. Describe the conduct and state the next expectation. "One person at a time. Finish that conversation after the task." Then continue.

Give a participant who has taken several turns a way to remain involved without taking the next one. “Hold that thought. I want to hear another answer before we return to it.” If the conduct continues, follow the group’s actual rules and procedures. State the limit, restore the turn, and continue the task.

Inviting quieter voices also needs care. Give time to think, offer an accessible response method, and ask for a specific contribution. “Which part of this action would you change?” is easier to enter than “You haven’t said anything tonight.” Use the participation expectations of your setting while avoiding unnecessary public exposure.

Harmful advice requires a more direct response. In an invented required substance-use group, a participant suggests taking back roads to avoid police after drinking. Several members laugh and begin adding routes.

“Stop there. That advice is about avoiding detection. Our task is getting home without driving after drinking.”

Return to that task and examine a responsible option. You do not need to debate every suggested route. The interruption teaches the whole group what you will allow the discussion to authorize.

When the complaint concerns your teaching

Not every challenge is a distraction. During paired work, someone says, “You keep asking for a plan, but you only told us to discuss the situation.”

Check the instruction you gave. If it was unclear, say so and restate the task. “I left out what you needed to bring back. Choose one action and explain your reason. I’ll give you time to finish.” The complaint has identified something you can fix.

If the concern is legitimate but cannot be resolved during the activity, identify a follow-up and return to the lesson. When discussion drifts into a dispute about an unrelated rule, answer any necessary practical question accurately, then make the transition explicit. You can hear the concern while still leading the session.

Keep required content and the group's purpose in view. A discussion that absorbs the whole evening is not automatically more useful because it is spontaneous. Decide what the next exchange needs to accomplish.

Questions that give the group work

"Which part of that answer are you agreeing with?" separates recognition of a feeling from endorsement of an action. Use the response to identify what the group needs to examine.

"What does this plan require the other person to do?" brings dependence or pressure into view. If members answer with the speaker's intention, return to the actual requests and actions.

"What is one strength and one weak point in this reasoning?" gives peer feedback a defined purpose. Ask participants to point to a specific detail rather than vote on whether they like the speaker.

"What would you keep or change after hearing that?" returns responsibility to the participant whose answer was discussed. If they reject the feedback, ask why. A different detail may change the group's assessment.

Practice with a different claim

For the application check, give the group an invented scene in which a roommate says no to a friend staying over this weekend. The participant plans to bring the friend anyway and explain at the door. Have participants identify the pressure and propose an action that respects the refusal. Ask for individual reasoning after the shared discussion, so one confident answer cannot stand for everyone.

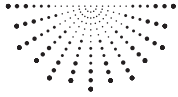
For facilitator rehearsal, the skill is distributing the group's work. Lead a short peer task and debrief. Have one colleague offer an answer, another endorse it without explanation, and a third interrupt a quieter contribution. Ask the observer to track who had an opportunity to contribute. Then try a complaint that reveals your instructions were unclear.

After the room

Which contribution changed the group's thinking? Where did shared agreement give harmful advice more weight? Who had a workable opportunity to respond, and who was still waiting?

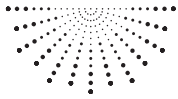
Prepare one task for the next session that gives participants something specific to examine together. Decide what they will bring back and which question will reveal their reasoning.

PART III
MAKING IT STICK



9

KNOWING THE ANSWER IS NOT USING IT



Recognizing a rule, explaining it, and applying it under pressure are different demonstrations of learning. Teach the application as deliberately as you teach the idea.

You ask what a participant could do differently. They give the phrase you hoped to hear: take a time out, challenge the thought, use the plan. You acknowledge the answer and move on.

The missing work is inside that phrase. What will the person notice? What will they stop doing? What happens first? What will they do when the action becomes inconvenient or fails to produce relief?

A correct phrase gives you a place to begin teaching. Make the reasoning visible, work through a choice together, and then ask the participant to use it without your next question supplying the next step. The lesson needs to become available when you are absent.

First show the work

Return to the continuing invented example of Marcus and Elena. Use the earlier scene in which an unanswered message becomes an assumption about deliberate disrespect. Chapter 6 examined Marcus's

account. Here you are teaching how to interrupt that process before the next demand is sent.

For this exercise, the scene contains no immediate safety concern or restriction prohibiting the initial contact. Those conditions matter. In a real situation, begin with the contact restrictions and arrangements. An exercise about choosing a response never supplies permission to contact someone.

Start by modeling the reasoning. Do more than announce the correct action. Let the group hear how you decide what needs attention.

"Marcus has sent a message and has no answer yet. He starts writing, 'You could at least show me some respect.' He is treating the unanswered message as proof of disrespect. Before choosing the next action, he needs to notice that added meaning."

Name the distinction, then make its use concrete.

"He can say to himself, 'I haven't received an answer. I'm adding a reason I don't know.' He can close the draft without sending it. That interrupts the demand before it reaches Elena. He still has to decide what to do while he wants to reopen it."

You have shown a thought to recognize and an action to stop, and left a defined part of the reasoning for participants to work through.

When someone asks why Marcus cannot simply send a nicer message, examine what the message would be doing. If it still demands an immediate response, changing the tone leaves the pressure in place. Keep the action and its purpose visible throughout the exercise.

Then work through the missing decision together

Ask Marcus what he would do after closing the draft.

"Take a time out," he says.

"What would you do during it?"

"Put the phone down. Give her a chance to answer."

That answer contains a useful action and an expectation that could

pull him back toward the phone. Ask the group to identify what has not yet been planned.

One participant says he should take a walk. Another says he needs a time limit. You return to the central gap.

"What happens if he finishes the walk and there is still no answer?"

Marcus says, "By then she ought to have answered."

His first phrase was correct. The follow-up has exposed where the plan still depends on Elena. Reduce the task instead of asking him to solve the whole evening at once.

"What is the time out meant to interrupt?"

"The argument."

"Which action of yours needs to stop right now?"

"Sending the message."

"Does stopping that action require her to answer?"

"No. I can leave it unsent."

Stay there long enough for the distinction to become his. Ask him to explain it in his own words.

"I'm stopping myself from demanding. I can't use the break as a deadline for her."

Now build the next part. He proposes putting the phone on a shelf and doing a household task. Ask what he will do when he wants to retrieve it. He says he will write down the assumption he is making before touching the phone. That step gives him something specific to practice. It needs checking against his actual circumstances, including any necessary communication arrangements.

The smaller questions helped him identify the purpose of the break. You supplied considerable support. Your next exercise needs to show whether he can find that purpose without you walking him through it again.

Give the learner room without leaving them lost

When a participant hesitates, listen for the difficulty before offering

the answer. They may be finding words, missing a detail, or trying to remember the instruction. Those problems need different help.

Ask them to begin with the part they can identify. If they cannot distinguish the event from the assumption, return to that distinction. If they can identify it but offer only "calm down," work on the first action. If the action is clear but depends on cooperation, examine the condition. Teach the missing part rather than repeating the entire lesson.

Allow manageable effort. You can wait while someone reasons through a task they understand. You can restate an inaccessible question or model another example when they need more support. What you cannot do is supply each answer and then count the finished exchange as independent application.

Tell the participant what you are narrowing. "Let's work on the first action before we build the rest." A smaller task should feel like instruction, not a public demotion. Once they can do that part, put it back into the larger problem.

Let changed details test the reasoning

Give each participant an invented example with different surface details. Elena has enrolled in an evening course. Marcus decides she chose it to avoid spending time with him. He plans to tell her she needs to cancel. Ask participants to identify the relevant distinction and select the first action that would interrupt the demand.

Let them answer individually through an accessible method before the discussion resumes. The model is still available, but your prompts should not contain the answer.

One participant says, "He needs a time out." Ask them to show what that means here. Another says, "She enrolled. He doesn't know her reason. He can stop rehearsing the demand that she cancel." That answer has carried the reasoning into the changed scene.

Then add an obstacle: Marcus still dislikes the course schedule. Can the participant keep that concern separate from the claim that he can require cancellation? A workable response might identify a prac-

tical scheduling question he can raise while accepting that Elena can choose the course. Follow the actual facts and boundaries of the example. Keep the plan usable even if she keeps the schedule.

If the participant misses the distinction, use the error to choose the next teaching task. They may have remembered the phone action without recognizing the reasoning that made it useful. Teach the connection, then check it through another situation. Repeating the identical scene would mainly test whether the correction was remembered.

A plan can fail at the point of use

In a later invented exchange, Marcus reports trying the phone plan. He says he left the demand unsent but kept taking the phone off the shelf to look for a reply.

Ask for the sequence so you can locate what held and where the plan broke down. What happened after he put it down? What did he tell himself before retrieving it? Did he send anything? Address any safety concern or breach of a contact restriction through the required safety procedures.

He says he sent nothing. He also says, "I kept thinking one look would settle me."

The report contains a stopped action and a continuing loop. Ask where the written reminder was supposed to enter the sequence. He says he skipped it because checking seemed quicker.

That is the point to rehearse. Have him work through noticing "one look will settle me," stopping before retrieving the phone, and using his reminder. Ask him to choose what he will do next if the urge remains. The revised plan must work while discomfort is present. Relief cannot be the test of whether he follows it.

In relationship-harm work, examine the function of any time out. Leaving cannot become a threat, a demand to be pursued, or a way of making a partner supervise the person's restraint. Follow actual restrictions and agreed arrangements. A pause is useful when it interrupts harmful conduct and respects the other person's freedom.

The calmer return still needs examination if it resumes the same demand.

Victor's plan looks complete

Return to Victor in the continuing invented substance-use example. He has already practiced responding when a ride falls through. Now the transport is arranged and available.

Victor's plan is to leave his car at home, travel with a driver who will not drink, and return with that driver at an agreed time. On paper, the key decisions are covered.

Ask him to rehearse the point of use. It is time to leave the gathering. The driver is at the door. Victor's friends want him to stay for another round.

"I'd go," he says. "That's the plan."

"Your friend says you're leaving just when everyone is having a good time. What happens next?"

"I'd tell the driver to wait ten minutes."

"The driver has said they need to leave now."

Victor says, "Then I'd sort something out later."

The plan's weakness is no longer a canceled ride. It is his decision to abandon an available one under social pressure. Stay with that moment.

"Where does 'sort something out later' leave your plan?"

"I don't have one then."

"What do you need to do while you still want to stay?"

"Get my coat. Leave with the driver."

Have him rehearse the words he will use with his friends and the action that follows. "I'm heading home" is short enough to say. Then he gets his coat and goes to the door. He does not need everyone to endorse the decision before carrying it out.

Add a plausible difficulty: he has left his coat in another room and starts talking again while retrieving it. Ask where he could pause and return to the departure. The task is to practice carrying out the available plan while something competes with it. Avoid adding obstacles

merely to defeat him. Choose one that exposes a decision he can recognize and rehearse.

Peer review can help here. Ask a partner to identify the exact point where Victor abandoned the ride and what the revised action changes. Return to Victor for his response. Keep the review on the sequence, rather than on whether he seems committed enough.

When the purpose of the plan changes

Later in the invented story, Victor completes the required program. He misses several weeks before choosing to attend a voluntary recovery group. His sister has encouraged him, and he is unsure he wants to be there. Recovery is a choice he is considering, not the inevitable next chapter of his arrest.

He reports another night of drinking, this time at home. He followed his driving plan by keeping his car parked. Then he says, "My son had to cover things in the morning. I wasn't up when I'd said I would be."

Before reviewing the plan, ask about what happened and his condition now. "How are you doing since that night, and is there anything about your safety or someone else's that needs attention now?" Obtain the information needed within your role and follow the setting's procedures. His answers determine whether the teaching can continue or another response is needed first.

When that has been addressed, examine the plan against the purpose of the recovery group.

"What did keeping the car parked address?"

"Driving. I did that part."

"What do you want help with here?"

"Not losing the whole next day. And not making my son pick up after me. But I don't know about stopping completely."

You have a starting point that belongs to him. Work within the group's purpose and support arrangements. Use the concrete concern he named as the starting point.

"When did that evening start moving toward the choice you want to change?"

"After work. I thought I'd earned a night off."

"What would a night off need to include for you to be available the next morning?"

"Something besides drinking. I don't have much else."

The old plan covers transport. This task concerns his use, the evening leading to it, and the responsibilities left to someone else. Help him identify an action before the drinking begins and the support needed to carry it out. Clinical decisions or support needs beyond the group's role require qualified assistance; a facilitation exercise cannot settle them.

Victor proposes going to a recovery meeting after work on the evening he usually begins drinking. Ask him to make the first step practical: which meeting fits his circumstances, how he will get there, and what he will do between work and its start. Use actual available information rather than inventing a resource to complete the answer.

Then he says, "I might not go. Sometimes I don't want to hear any of it."

Include that obstacle in the plan. What could he do when he starts deciding to stay away? He might contact a willing support person before leaving work, identify another available support option, or revise the evening's structure. Check what is actually available and suitable for the plan. His son should not become the person responsible for making him follow the plan.

If Victor returns after missing the meeting or drinking again, begin with what happened and current safety concerns. Then locate the point where the plan ceased guiding his action. Returning gives the group work to do. Attendance alone cannot do that work for him.

Say what the exercise showed

Marcus explaining the purpose of a break with your help shows supported reasoning. A participant applying the distinction to the course example shows use in a changed classroom situation. Victor

rehearsing departure shows an action he can describe and practice. His account of a later evening is self-report. Keep those sources distinct.

Be specific when you acknowledge progress. "You kept the action available even when your friends wanted you to stay" tells Victor what to retain. "You caught the assumption before choosing the response" identifies the work in the changed Marcus example. Praise the demonstrated decision rather than promising a future outcome.

Verified information, obtained through authorized channels, may add to the account. Classroom practice remains evidence of learning in class. Safety outside the room requires more knowledge than the exercise provides. Chapter 10 develops how to describe that evidence and use it to plan the next session.

Questions that test the plan

"What happens first?" turns a general intention into an action. If the answer is another principle, narrow the task until the person can say what they will do.

"What is most likely to pull you away from that action?" identifies a pressure worth rehearsing. Use the participant's circumstances, not an obstacle selected to make the plan fail.

"What will you do if the first option is unavailable?" checks the alternative. In a plan that depends on support, establish who has agreed and what remains possible if they cannot help.

"Where did you stop following the plan?" makes a reported attempt useful. Examine that turn without discarding the parts that worked.

Practice the teaching decision

With a colleague, rehearse the teaching decision. Model one distinction, work through a second example together, then give a changed situation. Have the colleague offer the right phrase while missing its

application. Teach the missing part without completing every answer, then check again without the same prompts.

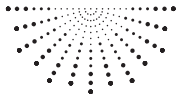
After the room

Which correct phrase did you leave unexamined? Where did your help become the participant's answer? What obstacle exposed a specific teaching need?

Prepare the next practice around that need. Choose what you will model, what you will work through together, and what the participant will have to do independently.

10

WHAT A GOOD SESSION ACTUALLY MEANS



A session gives you evidence to work with. Use it to decide what needs teaching next and to describe progress accurately.

You can leave pleased with a session and still have work to do. You can leave disappointed and find, on reviewing the answers, that several participants used a distinction they had missed the week before. Your judgment should follow what they demonstrated. The atmosphere belongs in your account of the evening, but it cannot carry the whole assessment.

Chapter 9 showed how to teach application. This chapter begins when you have the responses in front of you. The question now is what to make of them.

The session looked finished

Consider an invented teaching example. Eight participants are examining the difference between feeling upset and claiming that another person must remove the feeling. Everyone identifies that distinction correctly in the shared discussion. They finish the worksheet, and

several contribute examples. Your colleague says, "They got it tonight."

Before closing, you ask each participant to work independently with a changed situation. A supervisor changes a work assignment. The employee feels overlooked and wants to confront the supervisor. Participants must identify one action the employee can take responsibly while still upset.

Six finish before the session ends. Three write general intentions such as "stay calm" or "handle it better." Two make their action conditional: they will discuss the assignment respectfully once the supervisor admits the change was unfair. One writes, "Ask how the assignment was decided. If I dislike the answer, finish the conversation without insulting them and use the available process to raise the concern."

Your colleague has seen something real. The group identified the distinction during discussion. But the independent responses show different places to continue teaching. Three participants need to turn an intention into an action. Two need to keep the action available when the other person disagrees. One has described a sequence that allows disagreement without requiring surrender.

The two unfinished responses require another opportunity. You gave the task near the end and allowed little time. Find out whether the instruction, the available response method, or the time affected their attempt. Leave the question open until you have an answer.

Now your colleague asks, "So are we saying it wasn't a good session?"

"We taught the distinction, and we found where using it gets difficult. That gives us the next task."

You can value the evening without calling the work complete.

Name the demonstration

Attendance means the person was present according to the setting's requirements. Participation describes what they contributed or attempted. Recognition means they identified an idea when it was

presented. Explanation means they could give an account of why it matters or how it works. Application means they used it in a task. Reported use means they told you about trying it outside the room.

These descriptions help you ask for the evidence each claim needs. A participant who correctly selects a principle has shown recognition. To describe independent application, you need an attempt in which the participant found and used the relevant idea without your questions supplying the reasoning. Record important support you provided. "Identified a first action after two narrowing questions" gives a clearer account than "understands the skill."

Look at each person as well as the group. The eight participants in the example do not share one level of understanding merely because they shared a discussion. Nor should the six completed answers erase the two you have not yet received.

Reported use deserves attention. Ask about the event, the person's action, and what happened afterward. Keep the report attributed. "Reported ending the conversation without insults" tells the reader where the information came from. If other information is available through authorized channels, identify its source and consider it alongside the report. Examine discrepancies and seek guidance where needed.

In relationship-harm work, a strong classroom answer cannot certify an unseen home. In substance-use work, a rehearsed plan cannot tell you what happened on the road. Keep the people affected visible in the questions you ask and in the limits of what you claim.

Choose the next task from the error

After the invented session, write down the difficulty in the participants' actual answers. Avoid a broad conclusion such as "needs more accountability." It gives you little help in deciding what to do next.

For the three general intentions, the teaching need is a first action. For the two conditional responses, it is an action that remains possible without agreement. Those are related tasks, but they need different questions.

Plan a brief return to the distinction within your curriculum or agreed format. Have participants turn a general intention into something the employee could actually do. Then ask what happens when the supervisor gives an answer the employee dislikes. Allow enough time for everyone to attempt the task. Prepare an accessible response method for anyone who needs it.

The final check needs fresh details. For example, the supervisor explains that the assignment followed a rotation the employee had forgotten. Can participants revise their account and choose a response that fits the new information? A person who continues demanding an admission of unfairness has shown you a different difficulty from someone who accepts the new information but still offers only "be respectful."

Check the one stronger response too. Give that participant room to explain the reasoning and work with the new information. Let demonstrated understanding reduce unnecessary prompting. You owe instruction that fits improvement as well as difficulty.

This review should end with a teaching decision. Choose the task, the support, and the check. You do not need a second account of the whole evening.

Keep factual records factual

Learning records and attendance records answer different questions. Keep each accurate. Where attendance has formal consequences, apply the actual rules and document the relevant facts. A compelling explanation for an absence deserves a humane response and any authorized consideration. Record what occurred and who made any attendance decision.

In voluntary groups, a missed session may invite a permitted follow-up or a conversation on return. Ask what happened. The attendance pattern helps you notice a question; the person's answer helps you decide what to do with it.

Required forms can limit how much you write. Precision still fits

in a short entry. For the invented session, a useful summary might read:

"All eight participants identified the distinction during shared discussion. Six completed an independent application task. Three gave general intentions, two made respectful action conditional on the supervisor's agreement, and one described a specific action that allowed disagreement. Two application checks remain incomplete. Next practice will address first actions and conditional plans, with more time for individual responses."

That account gives the next facilitator something to use. It also preserves the difference between work completed and learning demonstrated. Adapt the detail to the record's purpose and your setting's privacy requirements.

When someone asks for a broader judgment

A supervisor, agency, or court may ask whether a participant has changed. Respond with the information you have and identify its source. Specific progress is worth reporting. Describe the earlier difficulty, the later demonstration, and the conditions under which it occurred.

"Previously gave only a general intention; now identifies a first action in a new classroom example without prompting" is a meaningful improvement. You can say it plainly. If the participant reports using the action at home, include that as reported use. Keep any required assessment tied to its actual basis and seek supervision when the requested conclusion exceeds your information or authority.

Acknowledgment in the room should be equally specific. "You changed your response when the new information came in" tells someone what they did well. They can practice that again. A general declaration that they are a changed person gives them less to carry forward.

Questions that improve the next session

"What did the participant do without my help?" identifies the independent demonstration. If your prompts carried the response, plan a check with less support.

"Where did the reasoning first break down?" locates the teaching need. Choose a task that addresses that point rather than repeating everything.

"Who have I not checked yet?" prevents a strong group discussion from hiding missing individual evidence. Arrange another opportunity.

"What would show improvement next time?" turns your concern into something observable. Decide this while preparing, so the next session can answer it.

Practice a precise account

With a colleague and an observer, use the six completed answers from the invented example. Describe what each answer supports and choose the next teaching task. Have your colleague press for a simpler verdict: "Did they learn it or not?" Practice answering clearly without flattening the differences.

Then try a participant who reports using the skill outside the room. Describe the improvement and identify its source in the same sentence.

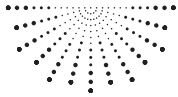
After the room

Which conclusion ran ahead of the evidence? Whose understanding remains unchecked? What specific difficulty will shape your next session?

Before you put the materials away, write one sentence naming the next learning task and one naming how you will check it. Give the next session a question it can answer.

11

WHEN YOU GET IT WRONG



Your authority does not exempt you from correction. Name the actual mistake, address its effect, and change the practice that produced it.

Experience helps you recognize a familiar problem. It can also make your first explanation feel finished before the participant has had a chance to answer. When new information changes that explanation, let it change your response.

The participant needs a correction they can understand and a usable next step. They should not have to reassure you before receiving either.

The question you thought was clear

Consider an invented teaching example in a recovery group. Priya has described arguing with a relative about a missed commitment. You ask, "What feeling was underneath your reaction, what belief could you challenge, and how would you put that into an accountability statement?"

Priya looks at the page and says nothing. You wait, then say, "You're avoiding taking responsibility."

Another participant asks, "Which part are we answering first?"

Priya says, "That's what I was trying to work out."

You gave several tasks at once. You then treated the unanswered question as evidence of a motive. Her silence was observable. Avoidance was your interpretation, and you stated it as a fact in front of the group.

Chapter 3 showed how to check access before interpreting a silence. Here that check was skipped.

Correct that plainly.

"I called your silence avoidance before checking whether my question was clear. I gave you several tasks at once, and I'll separate them."

Let the correction stand, then return to the work: "Start with the action. What did you do during the argument?"

Priya says, "So if I answer now, that proves I wasn't avoiding?"

The correction has not erased the effect of the accusation. She is asking whether you have made the exercise into a test of your judgment. Answer that concern before pressing for the action.

"You don't need to prove my comment wrong. I've withdrawn it. We can work through one question at a time, or pause and discuss how to continue."

"One at a time," she says. "But you said it in front of everyone."

"Yes. The correction belongs here too. I had not established why you were silent."

Let that stand. The group has heard you revise the claim where you made it. You have offered a route back into the task without asking Priya to accept your apology or announce that everything is fine.

When she continues, she says she accused the relative of wanting her to fail. You can now examine that action and the conclusion behind it. Your mistake needs correction. Her account still needs careful work. Neither responsibility cancels the other.

Repair the part you got wrong

Different errors need different repairs. If you misstated a fact, give the correct fact and identify what changes because of it. If the mistake concerned an attendance entry or other record, use the setting's process to correct the record and any affected communication. A spoken apology leaves an inaccurate entry inaccurate.

If you supplied an unsupported interpretation, withdraw it. Ask the question you skipped. In Priya's case, that question concerned the instruction. You need not replace avoidance with an equally certain claim about confusion. Her answer tells you what to address now.

If the problem was timing, return to what needed attention first. Perhaps you began examining a plan before checking a disclosed safety concern. Pause the exercise, obtain the information needed within your role, and follow the required procedures. A better question later cannot recover an opportunity you are still overlooking now.

If your tone closed the conversation, identify the language or conduct that did it. "I cut you off while you were explaining the difficulty" gives the participant something recognizable. "I'm sorry if you felt dismissed" leaves them carrying the problem you need to examine.

When instruction was inaccessible, restore access. Separate the questions, arrange the needed support, or change the response method within the program's requirements. Then check the learning through the revised task. An apology by itself has not made the material available.

Keep the correction proportionate. A wrong name usually needs a brief correction. A public accusation may require a public withdrawal, private follow-up, and attention to any record that repeats it. Seek supervision when the consequences exceed what you can repair alone.

When the participant remains angry

Priya may continue to distrust your questions. She may decline the exercise that night. Follow the actual participation agreements and offer available options without making forgiveness a condition of participation.

You can hold the room's limits while acknowledging what you did. If she begins interrupting other participants, describe the interruption and give a route back. Keep that response separate from whether she accepts your correction. Your error has not removed the group's need for usable boundaries.

Resist pursuing a quick ending for your own relief. "Are we okay?" can ask the participant to settle your discomfort before they have decided what the correction means to them. Give them room to answer the learning task, raise a concern through the agreed process, or leave the repair unresolved for now.

The next session matters. Ask one question at a time. Allow the answer to shape the next question. A participant who heard your promise should be able to see the change without another announcement about it.

Check whose answer you believe

Some errors begin with the style you find convincing. You may readily accept an account from someone who uses your vocabulary and speaks in a familiar cadence. Another participant may give a blunt, untidy answer that contains the fact you need.

After a disputed exchange, compare the evidence behind your judgments. Did you check the fluent answer as carefully as the rough one? Did visible emotion make one account seem more honest? Did a flat tone make another seem less serious? Return to the words and actions you can examine.

This review needs a practical consequence. In the next comparable exchange, ask both participants to explain the connection between

their answer and the situation. Give each a fair opportunity to clarify. You are checking the reasoning, including your own.

Fatigue can enter the same sequence. Notice when you begin finishing participants' sentences, repeating a question more sharply, or accepting the quickest answer so you can move on. Review your workload and preparation with your supervisor. If the pattern keeps affecting the room, it needs more than a promise to be patient next time.

Bring the exact exchange to supervision

"I handled it badly" expresses concern but leaves your supervisor little to examine. Bring the question, the answer, your next statement, and what followed. Include what you corrected and what remains unresolved.

For the invented example, name the two decisions: you combined several tasks, then assigned a motive when the answer did not arrive. Ask your supervisor to help you examine why you moved from silence to accusation and rehearse a different next move. Keep the discussion within the setting's privacy requirements.

If the same error recurs, widen the review. Look at preparation, access arrangements, co-facilitator roles, workload, and the judgments you repeatedly make too quickly. Supervision should help change what happens in the room. General reassurance that everyone makes mistakes is insufficient when the same participant keeps paying for yours.

Questions that make the repair specific

"What exactly did I get wrong?" separates a mistaken fact from an interpretation, instruction, or response that needs changing. Name the part before choosing the repair.

"Who heard it, and where was it recorded?" identifies the reach of the error. Correct it through the channels where the error reached

others rather than assuming the person you spoke to was the only one affected.

"What needs to happen before we return to the task?" checks access, safety, and the participant's opportunity to respond. Address the immediate need first.

"What will be different in my next question?" turns the correction into practice. If you cannot name a change, examine whether you have repaired anything beyond the wording of your apology.

Practice without asking for reassurance

With a colleague and an observer, rehearse Priya's exchange. Make the unsupported comment, hear the clarification, and correct it in two plain sentences. Have your colleague remain upset. Respond to the concern and offer a workable next step without asking them to comfort you.

Then try a changed situation in which the instruction is clear and the participant declines to answer, so you practice responding to what actually happened rather than replacing one automatic interpretation with another.

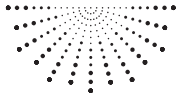
After the room

What information did you pass over before making the judgment? Who still needs the correction? What change would a participant be able to observe next time?

Revise the question or process that contributed to the error. Rehearse the revised response before you use it. Let the repair change your work.

12

WHAT YOU WILL NEVER KNOW



Most participants leave your view. Work responsibly within that limit, without making later praise or silence the verdict on your work.

You may remember someone long after their last session. You may wonder whether the plan held, whether the home became less frightening, or whether the person found support they could keep using. Caring can continue after your part ends. It does not give you ownership of the next part of their life.

The work needs your attention while it is yours to do. It also needs you to recognize when another person's life has moved beyond your view.

A MESSAGE AND AN EMPTY CHAIR

Consider two invented teaching examples. Aaron completed a relationship-harm program. Months later, he sends a brief message: "I still remember you asking what I was actually doing. It changed how I look at an argument. Thank you."

You are pleased. Receive the thanks. "I'm glad that question has stayed useful. You are the one who has to keep putting it to work."

You need not turn his gratitude into an interrogation or a speech about the limits of facilitation. He has told you something worth hearing. Keep the meaning close to what he said: a question remained useful to him. His partner's experience remains hers to describe. His message creates no obligation for her to confirm it.

In a voluntary recovery group, Sam attended regularly for several weeks, then stopped. There has been no further contact. Another member says, "Sam must be using again." Your colleague says perhaps Sam no longer needs the group.

Both are possible accounts. Neither came from Sam.

Say, "We haven't heard why Sam stopped coming. Let's keep that open." Protect Sam's privacy and return the group to its work. If the members are worried about someone they know, help them distinguish their actual information from speculation and respond within the group's purpose and procedures.

Afterward, consider whether a follow-up is permitted and likely to be useful. Use the agreed contact route and respect privacy. A brief message can leave the door open: "We haven't seen you recently. If you'd like to return or discuss what would make the group useful, here's how to reach us." Adapt that contact to your role and setting. A known safety concern calls for your setting's safety procedures.

Suppose the permitted follow-up receives no answer. You still have no account of the departure. Complete any required action and leave the outcome unknown. Repeated contact to satisfy your curiosity adds no useful teaching.

Receive the contact without completing the story

Aaron's message may tempt you to feel that the work succeeded. Sam's absence may leave you feeling that it failed. Notice those reactions before they become conclusions about either person.

Thanks can matter without settling a whole life. Silence can remain uncomfortable without requiring an explanation. You can

acknowledge your contribution and still recognize the participant's work, other support, and circumstances you never saw.

Keep what you learn from later contact specific. If someone tells you an exercise helped them pause before acting, that may inform your teaching. If a returning member says the group was difficult to follow, examine the delivery. You can use feedback without asking it to prove your value.

Chapter 10 addressed accurate accounts of progress. Here the responsibility is to tolerate the point beyond which you have no account. Resist writing the ending yourself.

When you learn someone has died

Sometimes later news brings a harder limit. You learn that a participant has died. There may be facts you can confirm and questions you will never answer. You may feel grief, shock, or a wish to reconstruct every session for something you missed.

Confirm the information through your setting's channels before saying anything to the group. Seek guidance about what can be shared, by whom, and how. Keep the account to confirmed information and leave unanswered questions open.

Share only what privacy rules allow. Give members room to respond without requiring anyone to speak. If someone offers a theory about what happened, distinguish the confirmed information from speculation. Keep attention on what members need now.

Watch for anyone whose response raises concern about increased risk, including a disclosure about their own safety. Follow your setting's procedures and arrange the support the response calls for. The group conversation may need to pause.

Take your own reaction to supervision or consultation. Bring the questions you are carrying, including any concern about your decisions. Review what needs review without making the death prove that every effort failed. Get support before carrying the reaction into the next session alone.

End your part with a usable next step

When a cohort ends, give the final session a practical purpose. Acknowledge something each participant actually worked on. Ask what still needs practice and what support they intend to use. Make space for questions about the next step and answer what you can.

"I'll keep working on it" needs clarification before the person leaves. Ask where the next attempt is likely to happen and what they will do first. Check whether the proposed support is available and whether anyone it depends on has agreed. Complete the required closing arrangements accurately.

Some participants will feel proud. Others may be relieved that the requirement is over. You can close respectfully with either. Acknowledge the work specifically and leave each person room for their own response.

In an ongoing voluntary group, departures may happen without a final session. Make the way to return clear during ordinary meetings. Explain how members can raise a concern about the group or find other support. That information should be available before someone is ready to leave.

Sustain attention where you can act

Bring the strain of unknown outcomes to supervision or consultation. Be specific about how it is affecting your work. Are you looking for reassurance from participants? Carrying one former member's story into your judgment of someone new? Avoiding difficult questions because you want people to leave liking you?

Choose a change within your control. Review the contact boundaries, ask a colleague to observe an exchange, or adjust preparation so you arrive able to listen. Concern for a former participant should not consume the attention owed to the people sitting in front of you now.

The strain can accumulate over years. You may begin dreading a particular group, feel little when a disclosure once would have held your attention, or cut people off sooner because their accounts sound

familiar. You may carry exchanges home and find yourself rehearsing the same reply long after the session. Notice changes in your own pattern. These signs give you something to examine, not a diagnosis to apply to yourself. Bring specific examples to supervision: the question you skipped, the disclosure you hurried past, the participant whose answer you stopped hearing. Review workload, preparation, breaks, and support with the people who can help change those conditions. Then identify what needs repair in the room and what you will do before leading again.

Questions for an unfinished account

"What have I actually heard?" anchors the account in the contact you received. Keep the participant's words separate from the ending you hope they imply.

"Is there a responsible action left within my role?" identifies any permitted follow-up, required procedure, or teaching change. Carry it out.

"What am I trying to settle for myself?" helps you notice when another person's response has become reassurance you are seeking. Take that need to supervision.

Practice receiving what arrives

With a colleague and an observer, respond to Aaron's thanks. Then discuss Sam's absence with a colleague who insists it proves the group failed. Name what you know and choose a responsible next action.

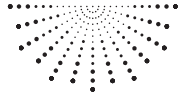
Repeat with a changed response: Sam returns and says the group had not been useful. Ask for specific feedback without defending the room or assuming the entire effort was wasted. The observer checks whether you listened and chose a responsible next action, rather than inventing a favorable or unfavorable outcome.

After the room

Whose story have you been completing without information? What responsibility still needs action? Where has the wish to know the outcome affected your attention?

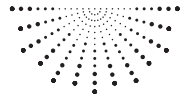
Complete one responsible next step, if there is one. Then prepare for the people whose work you can help with now.

PART IV
GROUP FACILITATION TRAINING



13

PREPARING AND LEADING A SESSION



A session needs a learning purpose, a workable sequence, and a way to check what participants can do. Prepare all three before you enter the room.

Part Four turns the earlier chapters into facilitator practice. You can use it with a supervisor, a colleague, or a staff training group. Begin with a small portion of the work, rehearse it, and revise it before supervised application. A written plan prepares you to lead. Your delivery and the participants' responses show what needs further work.

The plan that ends with discussion

Consider an invented training example. Nora is preparing to lead an assigned lesson about explaining a choice and taking responsibility for it. Her plan follows the required material. She has selected clear passages, prepared examples, and written questions for discussion.

Her supervisor asks, "What will participants do with the distinction?"

"We'll talk about their examples."

"And how will you find out whether each person can use it?"

"I'll ask if it makes sense."

Nora has prepared to explain the lesson. The next step is to prepare the participants' work. Her supervisor asks her to name one task that would show the intended learning.

"They could describe a choice without making the other person responsible for it."

That is a usable purpose. Now the plan needs a route to that demonstration. Nora will explain the distinction, model it in an invented example, have participants examine another example together, and ask each person for an independent response before closing. She keeps the required content and gives the discussion a task.

Then her supervisor asks her to lead the activity instructions aloud. Nora says, "In pairs, use the example to discuss accountability and come back with your thoughts."

One colleague asks whether they should identify the problem, rewrite the sentence, or talk about their own lives. Another begins telling a personal story.

The rehearsal has found an instruction Nora's written plan concealed. She knows what she wants. The people beginning the activity do not yet have that direction.

Write what you need to see

Start with the approved lesson or the group's purpose and agreed format. Identify what participants should explain, demonstrate, or apply. Keep the task small enough to teach and check during the available session.

For Nora, the task is a behavioral account of a choice that preserves relevant context without assigning responsibility to someone else. "Discuss accountability" is too broad to guide the activity or the final check. "Name the person's action and distinguish it from what happened beforehand" tells her what to listen for.

Choose the final check while planning. If participants will only repeat the example you explained, you may learn whether they

remember it. Prepare changed details that require them to find the distinction again. Decide how each participant can respond through an accessible method.

The check should follow what you taught. Keep the task within what participants have practiced and make the intended learning visible throughout the session.

Give each activity a job

Nora rebuilds the sequence around that task. Her opening names the purpose and connects it to the group's work. She presents the required material, then models how to examine an account. Shared practice gives participants support before the independent check. The closing identifies what to carry forward and any required next step.

She revises the pair instructions: "Read the invented exchange together. Identify the action the speaker took. Write one sentence that names that action and keeps the relevant context. Be ready to explain how your sentence places responsibility."

The example concerns someone who shouted at a cousin after the cousin criticized a meal. Nora supplies the facts needed for the task. Participants can examine the account without disclosing their own experiences.

She checks the instruction by asking a colleague to describe what the pair will bring back. The colleague says, "A sentence, and why we wrote it that way." Now the product is clear. Nora also states how long the pairs have and how she will bring the room back together.

In the debrief, she will ask for the reasoning behind the sentence. A smooth rewrite can hide a missed distinction. Removing the word "because" is not the whole task; the criticism may remain important context. Nora needs to hear whether the pair can keep that fact in view while naming the speaker's choice.

Allocate time for this examination and for individual responses. Discussion can use everything you give it. Mark the point when you need to move on, and prepare a transition that tells participants what happens next.

"We've heard two ways of describing the choice. Now each of you will try a new example."

That transition protects the check from becoming whatever fits into the final minute.

Prepare a shorter route

Next, the supervisor shortens Nora's available teaching time. Nora proposes dropping the independent task and asking the room one closing question.

"Then whose understanding will you have checked?"

"Whoever answers."

She revises again. She can shorten her own explanation, use fewer shared examples, and ask pairs to return only the part needed for the debrief. She preserves the individual attempt. The shorter route still has a purpose, practice, and a check.

Required content remains required. If the available time cannot accommodate it, follow the program's process for resolving that problem. Seek guidance before substituting or omitting required work. A shorter route is an adaptation of delivery within your authority.

Prepare for a difficulty as well. Suppose the pairs finish but several sentences still make shouting inevitable. Nora may need to teach that point again. She should know which optional discussion she can shorten and which required elements need another authorized arrangement. A plan helps her make that decision while listening.

Check the room before the lesson

Review the materials participants will receive and the routes available for responding. Arrange known interpretation or other access support. Check sight lines, print size, room arrangement, and whether the proposed activity can actually be completed with the resources available.

Review the group agreements, privacy limits, and reporting duties. Prepare to explain them accurately when relevant. For peer work,

clarify what participants are being asked to share and keep the exercise within those agreements. Give participants a way to complete the activity using the invented example.

Know where to find the procedures and support needed if a concern exceeds the teaching task. Preparation includes knowing how to pause the lesson and obtain help. Chapter 15 develops the decisions during difficult moments; here you are making sure the route exists before you need it.

When the room is a screen

A virtual group needs the same preparation for learning, with additional decisions about access, privacy, and contact. Before leading, review the platform, the rules for cameras and chat, and what happens if someone disconnects. Explain the limits on recording and sharing. Check how members can raise a concern privately without promising a channel is private until you know how it works. A person attending from home may have others within hearing. Ask about privacy through the agreed check rather than inviting them to describe those people to the group. Headphones may help with listening; they cannot stop someone nearby from hearing the participant speak.

Consider an invented rehearsal. Jo uses American Sign Language, and an interpreter has joined the call. Nora asks a question while sharing her screen, and Jo does not answer. She is about to say, "You need to stay engaged." Instead, she remembers that her shared screen may be covering the interpreter's video. She stops sharing, turns to Jo, and asks, "Jo, can you see the interpreter now?" She waits for the interpretation to finish. Jo pins the interpreter's video on their own screen and signs that it is visible, and that the earlier question never reached them. Nora repeats the question to Jo directly and allows the interpretation to finish before anyone answers. Everyone had the same connection; Jo did not have the same access to the lesson.

Then change the scene. Jo signs that someone has entered the room at home. Pause the personal account and use the agreed privacy arrangements to decide whether participation can continue. A blank

tile, delayed answer, or silence can have several causes. Check the connection and the task, then address the camera requirement separately. Enforce the actual rule while finding out what made it difficult to follow.

Plan turns and peer work for the screen. Keep the interpreter visible, allow the interpretation to finish, and test how shared material appears on a phone. Explain whether chat is part of the task and who monitors it. Side chats that ridicule a speaker need the same limit as spoken ridicule. Before breakout work, state what participants will bring back and how they can ask for help.

Prepare the remote safety response before the first session. Know how the program confirms a participant's current location, obtains a callback number securely, reaches help where the person is, and responds to disconnection during a concern. Keep those details out of public chat. Agree who manages the group if the other facilitator must respond. A disclosure of immediate danger changes the task even when the camera is off. Use the established response and consultation route rather than trying to settle safety through what the screen shows. The HHS resources in Further Reading offer planning guidance for telebehavioral services; apply them to the service you actually lead.

Agree on how you will work together

If you have a co-facilitator, decide who will open, explain, observe, lead the debrief, and close. Agree on transitions and how either person can signal an access or safety concern. Avoid making participants watch you negotiate roles during the activity.

Observation should have a purpose. Nora might ask her colleague to note which instructions need repeating and whose independent response remains unchecked. Choose information that will help you adjust the session rather than asking the colleague to watch everything.

Prepare a response to predictable interruptions within the group's rules. Decide how you will return from a logistical question to the

task and how you will keep one exchange from using everyone else's practice time. Leave room to hear information that genuinely changes the plan.

A plan you can use while leading

Keep the working plan brief enough to consult. Name the required lesson, intended task, materials and access arrangements, activity sequence, and final check. Include the shorter route, co-facilitator responsibilities, and where to seek support.

Beside each activity, write its purpose. If you cannot explain why it belongs, reconsider it. A familiar exercise can consume time without helping participants do the intended work.

After leading, annotate the plan with what happened: an unclear instruction, a discussion that needed less time, a check that revealed a missing step. Use those notes to revise the next delivery. The plan should become more useful through practice.

Questions before you lead

"What will participants be able to do?" gives the session a learning task. Replace a topic alone with a demonstration you can observe.

"What will they bring back from this activity?" checks the instructions. Rehearse them if the product is unclear.

"What will I preserve if time gets short?" identifies the essential work within actual requirements. Resolve conflicts before silently dropping an element.

"How will each person show me the learning?" tests whether your closing depends on a few volunteers. Prepare an individual opportunity and a response method each participant can use.

Rehearse the plan

Submit your plan to a supervisor or a colleague assigned to support your preparation. Explain the purpose of each activity and how the

final task will reveal the intended learning. Lead the opening and instructions while colleagues begin the task.

Have an observer record what they understood and where clarification was needed. Revise and repeat. Then shorten the available time and lead the transition into your essential practice. Check whether the plan remains usable when the first version becomes impractical.

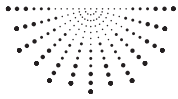
After the room

Which instruction cost participants time? What did your sequence help them demonstrate? Where did you lose the opportunity to check an individual response?

Revise one part of the plan using that evidence. Rehearse it before the next session.

14

PRACTICING THE SKILLS OF FACILITATION



Practice the words you will actually use, receive feedback tied to the exchange, and try again. Then change the participant's answer and find out whether you can adapt.

You can read a good question and understand why it works. Saying it at the right moment is another task. You have to hear the answer, leave room for it, and choose a next move that fits. Rehearsal gives you a place to work on that sequence before a real participant bears the cost of your first attempt.

Choose one skill for an initial practice. Asking one open question, reflecting an account accurately, or stating a limit plainly is enough. Put the skill inside an exchange with a purpose. A string of good questions can still lead nowhere if you are not listening to the answers.

The first attempt

Consider an invented training exercise. Three colleagues rotate facilitator, participant, and observer roles. Ben takes the facilitator role. Luis plays a participant in a required substance-use group. The task is to help Luis examine his account of a decision without demanding a preferred phrase.

Luis begins, "I know what you want me to say."

Ben answers, "I'm not judging you. You know the right thing to say, so why don't you just say it? What's stopping you from taking responsibility?"

Luis says, "Fine. It was my choice. No excuses."

Ben starts to move on. The observer pauses the rehearsal.

Before offering feedback, the observer asks Ben what he noticed. Ben says he asked about responsibility and got an admission. Luis says he gave the answer to end the pressure. That is information about this rehearsal, not a rule about what every participant with that opening line means.

The observer reads back Ben's words. "You asked why he wouldn't say the right thing, then what was stopping him from taking responsibility. Those questions already contained your conclusion about his answer."

Ben has a specific change to practice. He will ask what Luis thinks he is being asked to say and let the answer determine the next question. The observer also identifies something worth retaining: Ben stayed with the learning task instead of beginning a dispute about the referral.

They return to the opening line.

"I know what you want me to say."

"What do you think I'm asking you to say?"

"That it was my choice. But then everything before it gets called an excuse."

Ben reflects, "You want the circumstances heard as part of the account."

"Yes. I was upset. That mattered."

"Tell me what happened before the decision."

Luis describes an argument earlier in the evening. Ben briefly summarizes what he has heard, then asks, "What did you decide to do after that?"

"Drive home."

"We can examine the argument and your decision to drive. The first doesn't make the second unavoidable."

The direct statement keeps the distinction clear. Ben has heard the context without handing it responsibility for the action. The exercise can now continue from an account rather than a required phrase.

Luis adds, "But if I tell you the argument mattered, you'll write that I'm blaming someone."

The revision has opened a concern about records. Ben needs to answer accurately within the invented setting's stated rules. He cannot promise that nothing will be recorded or reported. Ben returns to the reporting arrangements stated for the exercise and practices explaining them before returning to the task. The observer checks their accuracy. A listening skill has helped reveal a concern; it has not removed the need for a truthful answer.

Learn the function of the skill

An open question invites an account you have not already supplied. "What happened next?" gives the participant room to describe the sequence. "Why didn't you make the responsible choice?" contains a judgment about the event and asks them to defend against it. Choose your wording according to what you need to learn.

A reflection gives back what you understood. It allows the participant to confirm, correct, or develop the account. In the rehearsal, Ben reflects Luis's wish for context to be heard. He leaves Luis able to explain what he means. He does not reflect the argument as a justification for driving.

Keep reflections accurate and tentative where needed. "You felt cornered" may add an experience the participant never described. "You said you saw no good option" stays closer to the account. If the participant rejects your reflection, revise it. Accuracy matters more than preserving a well-phrased sentence.

A brief summary gathers the parts needed for the next decision. Include the participant's action alongside the circumstances. If you summarize only what other people did, you may strengthen the very account the lesson is asking them to examine. Ask whether you have understood, then use the summary to move the work forward.

Specific acknowledgment names effort or improvement you observed. "You corrected my summary and named your decision" tells someone what helped the work. Avoid praising agreement merely because it makes the exchange easier for you.

Practice each function separately, then combine them. Ask one question, hear the answer, reflect if useful, and choose the next move. You need not perform every skill in every exchange. Sometimes a clear statement supplies the limit or distinction the room needs more effectively than another question.

Change the answer

After Ben repeats the difficult moment, Luis changes his response. This time he asks, "When you say own the choice, does that mean leave out what happened beforehand?"

Ben begins with the question he practiced: "What do you think I'm asking you to say?"

Luis answers, "I just told you. I'm asking what the instruction means."

Ben has carried over the words but missed the new task. This is a sincere request for clarification. Answer it.

"Keep the relevant circumstances. Name your own action clearly, and examine where you had a decision to make."

Then Ben gives a brief example and asks Luis to try the distinction. The observer notes the adaptation. The useful response came from recognizing the question being asked, not from remembering the first successful line.

Keep changing one feature at a time. Let the participant disagree with a reflection, give an incomplete answer, or ask a practical question. Give the facilitator enough information to make a decision. An exercise in which the participant rejects every response teaches little about choosing between plausible next moves.

Practice finding the participant's reason

Another rehearsal can begin with a broad goal: "I want to do better." Ask what better would change in the person's ordinary life. Let the participant name the concern before you suggest one.

If the answer is "I want this requirement over," work from the actual situation. Ask what they could use from the session while completing it. If they name a relationship, a responsibility, or their own recovery, examine what action would serve that concern. Keep the lesson's expectations clear whichever reason they offer.

The observer watches for the point where the facilitator begins supplying an acceptable motive. "Don't you want to be there for your family?" may produce agreement while leaving the person's reason unexplored. Repeat with a question that allows a less pleasing answer. You are practicing listening to what can become a usable starting point.

Put the skills back into a group

A three-person exercise can make facilitation look like a private conversation. Add colleagues as group members and practice using an exchange to help the room think.

After one participant gives an answer, link it to another contribution: "Earlier, Andre named a decision before the argument. Where does this example have a comparable point?" Invite examination of the idea, and keep any personal information within the group's agreements. You do not need everyone to judge the original speaker.

Practice inviting a quieter member with a defined question and room to pass or respond according to the setting. Allow time. If another member answers for them, stop that transfer of the turn and return the opportunity. The observer records what you did to distribute participation, rather than whether you seemed welcoming.

Rehearse activity instructions and a short debrief too. Have colleagues begin the task from your actual words. Ask them to explain the reasoning behind what they produced. When an answer is incom-

plete, choose a follow-up that reveals the missing connection. These rehearsals test whether your listening remains useful while you are also responsible for the room.

When co-facilitators disagree

Rehearse disagreement as well as transitions. Agree beforehand how to signal a concern, pause for consultation, and distinguish a factual correction from a difference in teaching judgment. Either facilitator needs a way to raise an immediate safety concern. For a less urgent difference, keep the participant's task moving and examine the disagreement afterward.

Consider an invented exchange. Ben asks Luis for the next action in his account. His co-facilitator, Dana, interrupts: "We've heard the explanation. He needs to admit he was wrong." Luis says, "Which one of you am I supposed to answer?" The facilitators' disagreement has become the participant's problem.

Ben says, "We're asking this differently. The task is to name your action and examine the decision. Start with what you did next." Dana pauses, then says, "Before he does, Luis mentioned earlier that his ex-partner asked him not to call. The next action he describes needs to fit that." Ben had missed it. He had been about to ask Luis what he could say to her.

Ben accepts the correction in front of the group. "Dana's right. You told us she asked for no contact. Start with what you did after that request." Luis answers, and the exchange continues from a question that fits the facts. The disagreement has not disappeared. Dana's first interruption added a demand for an admission. Her second caught something Ben needed to hear. Participants should have one workable instruction before being asked to continue.

Afterward, examine the actual words. What was Dana trying to address with her first interruption, and did it add a demand for a preferred admission? What did her second remark catch that Ben's question had missed? They may discover a useful distinction, an error, or a disagreement that requires supervision. Choose what to change

and rehearse the same moment again. If their exchange confused or unfairly pressured Luis, correct that effect with him and with the group where needed.

Public agreement cannot take priority over an accurate correction or a safety response. When your colleague states a wrong fact, correct the fact briefly and give the room the usable information. Keep criticism of their competence for the later review. In rehearsal, practice both turns: holding the task when a colleague's interruption adds pressure, and accepting a colleague's correction when it changes your own decision.

Observe the exchange you can point to

The observer records an exact question or instruction, the participant's response, and the facilitator's next move. Include relevant conduct: an interruption, a pause for interpretation, a return to the task, or a direct statement of a limit.

Check whether the language was accurate, the limits respectful, and the task accessible. In a group exercise, examine whose participation remained available. Where an action affects someone outside the room, check whether the facilitator kept that person's freedom or safety visible. Match the observation to the skill being practiced; you do not need to critique everything at once.

Base feedback on those observations. A steady voice can deliver an inaccurate reflection. A hesitant trainee can ask a question that opens the needed inquiry. Record what happened and examine its effect in the exercise.

Feedback that leads to another attempt

Ask the trainee to assess the exchange first. What were they trying to do? What did they hear? Where would they change the response? Their account helps you see the decision behind the words.

Offer one specific strength and one change, each supported by the exchange. "You let the clarification change your response" identifies

something to retain. "You asked two questions before allowing an answer" identifies something to revise. General advice to be warmer or more confident gives the trainee little to rehearse.

Have the person playing the participant describe how they understood the language. Keep that account tied to this exercise. It can reveal an ambiguity without predicting how every real participant will react.

Repeat the difficult turn while the feedback is still usable. The trainee needs a chance to make the change, not merely agree that it would help. Then use a changed scenario to check adaptation. Rotate roles so each colleague practices leading, responding, and observing.

Carry practice into supervised work

Agree with the supervisor on a portion of a real session to lead and the observations needed. Follow the setting's expectations for supervision, privacy, and consent. Address any recording requirements before recording begins.

Afterward, review the actual delivery and what participants demonstrated. A successful rehearsal prepares you for that application. The program's agreed expectations and the supervisor's judgment guide decisions about further responsibility; a workshop checklist is not a credential.

Questions after an attempt

"What did my question invite?" checks whether you opened an account or supplied it.

"Which words came from the participant?" helps you identify an added feeling, motive, or conclusion. Revise the reflection where needed.

"What changed my next move?" checks whether you listened to the answer or followed a memorized sequence.

"What will I repeat differently?" turns feedback into a specific second attempt.

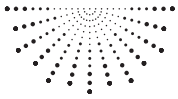
After the room

Which response did you use because it was familiar? Where did an answer require you to adapt? What exact language will you practice next?

Choose one difficult turn, rehearse it again, and arrange feedback on its use in the next supervised session.

15

HANDLING DIFFICULT MOMENTS IN THE GROUP



A difficult moment requires a proportionate response. Keep the learning possible while maintaining the limits of the room, and recognize when the teaching task must give way to the setting's safety procedures.

You may need to explore an answer, redirect a conversation, state a boundary, pause, or obtain support. Practice choosing among those moves. If every difficulty produces a warning, you will miss information the group needs. If every difficulty produces another question, you may leave a harmful claim or disruption unchallenged.

Begin with the conduct you can describe and the responsibility it creates now. Your response should fit that concern. Keep listening for information that changes the decision.

The interruption and the objection

Consider an invented training scene. Morgan is facilitating a group discussion. Rae, who has spoken little, begins explaining a choice. Nate interrupts: "We'll be here all night if everyone takes that long." Several members laugh. Rae stops.

Morgan says, "Let Rae finish. You'll have a turn afterward."

Nate replies, "You always single me out. Other people interrupt."

Morgan now has an interruption to address and a complaint about fairness to hear. Neither needs to become an argument about Nate's character.

"You interrupted Rae and commented on how long the answer was taking. I'm stopping that so Rae can finish. If I've missed other interruptions, I need to address those too."

The statement names what happened and what must change. It also leaves Morgan's own consistency open to examination. Morgan returns to Rae: "Would you like to continue your answer?"

Rae says, "I've lost what I was saying."

Returning the turn has not restored the thought. Morgan briefly recalls the point Rae had reached and asks whether that helps. Rae chooses to continue. Morgan listens without making Rae explain the effect of the joke to the group.

Nate interrupts again: "See? You give them all the time they want."

Morgan states the boundary more directly. "You need to stop interrupting. Listen to Rae's answer; then we'll return to the task. We can discuss your concern about how I'm managing turns through the group's usual process."

If the conduct continues, Morgan follows the actual procedures for repeated disruption. The facilitator's irritation should not determine the consequence. Nate has a clear route back: stop interrupting and rejoin the task when the turn comes.

Afterward, Morgan reviews the complaint. Were other interruptions allowed? Was Rae given a fair opportunity? An accurate boundary can coexist with an inconsistency that needs correction. Address both where the evidence calls for it.

Use the least response that does the work

A first side conversation may need a brief instruction: "One conversation at a time so everyone can hear." Repeated side conversations may require a direct boundary and the setting's next step. Practice the

difference without turning the second response into a threat you cannot carry out.

For domination, make the redistribution explicit. "You've given us a point to examine. I want to hear another response before we return to you." Then ask a defined question. Giving other members an opportunity is part of the action, not merely a request that the frequent speaker talk less.

Sarcasm may require you to identify what it did to the task. In Nate's exchange, the comment interrupted Rae and made their pace an object of ridicule. You can stop that conduct without claiming to know whether Nate intended embarrassment. Watch what happens after the limit and respond to the next act.

Silence needs a different inquiry. Use the access checks developed in Chapter 3 before interpreting an unanswered question. Allow time, clarify the task, and find out whether the person is declining. When a participant states that they will not engage, explain the relevant requirement or agreement and the available next step. Respond to the stated decision through the group's expectations.

Rehearse these moments with the same opening but different continuations. A person may stop after the first instruction, reveal a genuine misunderstanding, or continue disrupting. The trainee should change the response accordingly.

When agreement gives harmful advice weight

In another invented exercise, a participant says a partner spends too freely. A peer suggests withholding access to money "until they learn." Several members agree.

Interrupt the claim before the discussion treats it as an approved plan. "We need to examine what withholding access would do to the other person's choices. Agreement in this room doesn't make that action responsible."

Ask what the proposed restriction would prevent the partner from doing and whose decision it would become. Keep the distinction

between discussing shared finances and using access to money to compel behavior visible. Work with the facts supplied; do not invent the absent person's financial circumstances.

If someone says, "So we can't disagree about spending?" answer the actual question. Disagreement can be examined. The proposed way of enforcing agreement is the concern. Return the group to identifying an action that leaves the other person's choices available.

In substance-use or recovery work, harmful advice might involve hiding renewed use or treating other people as responsible for preventing it. Name the claim, examine its consequences, and return responsibility to the person's own action. Keep the example within that group's purpose. The facilitator remains responsible for what is allowed to gather authority through shared approval.

A challenge may improve the lesson

Practice a participant saying, "That isn't what the example said," or "I don't understand what you're asking." Check the fact or instruction before treating the challenge as disruption. If you are wrong, correct it. If the wording is unclear, revise it and allow another attempt.

A legitimate question can arrive with conduct that prevents others from learning. You can respond to both: "I'll check the detail you're questioning. Let me finish the instruction without interruption, and then we'll examine it." Follow through. A promised return that never happens teaches the room that questions are being dismissed.

When a participant is angry with you, listen for the concern you can address. Keep the limits clear if the anger includes insults, threats, or repeated interruption. You need not demand calm feelings before allowing a complaint. You do need conduct that permits the group to continue safely.

Distress changes the pace

A participant becomes visibly upset while describing an event. Pause and check what is needed within your role. They may want a

moment, a private follow-up, or help that exceeds the group. Let the person's immediate need determine whether the exercise continues.

Follow the group's agreements and procedures when arranging a pause. If you work with a co-facilitator, use the roles agreed during preparation so that the group and the distressed person both receive attention. Avoid letting the whole room become an unplanned inquiry into one person's life.

The information disclosed matters as well as the visible distress. A quiet statement about ongoing harm may require action even if the speaker appears composed. Attend to the concern described. The person's emotional presentation should not decide whether procedures apply.

When the task becomes safety

Change the first training scene. After Morgan sets a limit, Nate says he intends to hurt someone after the session. The concern is no longer how to distribute turns. A threat requires your setting's safety procedures and consultation.

Pause the teaching task. Follow your role in obtaining the information needed and involving the people your setting designates. Explain relevant limits of confidentiality accurately. Do not invite the group to debate whether Nate is serious or make peers responsible for persuading him to remain safe.

The exercise must use the trainee's actual setting and its procedures. Have the trainer identify whom to contact, what the facilitator is expected to do, and how the rest of the group will be managed. Rehearse those actions within the trainee's training and authority. This guide cannot supply one emergency script that fits every room.

Use the same approach for disclosures of ongoing harm or immediate danger. A classroom exploration of beliefs must not delay the response the circumstances require. Where you are uncertain about how a procedure applies, consult the person responsible for interpreting it. Afterward, review any further reporting, documentation, support, or group follow-up required by the setting.

Intoxication and a report of renewed use

In an invented substance-use training scene, a participant arrives with unsteady movement and difficulty following the opening instruction. Describe what you observe and check the concern through your setting's process. Keep the description specific and obtain the information needed to decide about safe participation.

If intoxication is identified or suspected, safe participation comes first. Follow the procedures for whether the person can remain, how a safe departure is arranged, what assistance is needed, and what follow-up is required. Address transport and immediate safety alongside the attendance decision. Coordinate those responsibilities through the authorized process.

A report of drinking or other use earlier in the week is a different situation. Begin with what happened and any current safety concern. Once the immediate needs are addressed, examine the decision and the next step in a way that fits the group.

In recovery, that report may be central to the work. In a required program, it may also carry reporting duties. Explain those accurately. Do not promise an exception, and do not make the report end the learning that is still possible. Clinical needs beyond the facilitator's role call for qualified assistance.

Rehearse the two versions separately. In the first, the trainee must decide how to handle safe participation now. In the second, the trainee must respond to the report, check current concerns, and locate useful work. Similar words about use can create different responsibilities because the present circumstances differ.

Review what your response taught the room

After a difficult exchange, describe what you did and what followed. Did the interrupted member regain an opportunity? Did the harmful advice get examined? Did a promised follow-up occur? Did you obtain support when the concern exceeded teaching?

Also examine what the group may have learned from your handling. If ridicule passed without response, revisit the limit. If you humiliated a participant while stopping an interruption, repair that conduct. A necessary boundary does not excuse an unnecessary injury.

Bring unresolved decisions to supervision with the actual words and circumstances. Identify any correction or follow-up, and prepare how to return to the learning task at the next opportunity. Some situations will remain unsettled. Complete the responsibilities you can identify without inventing a reassuring ending.

A sequence for supervised training

Prepare by reading the relevant chapter, naming one skill, and reviewing the actual requirements that affect the exercise. Observe a trainer's brief demonstration and identify the information that changed the next move.

Rehearse in facilitator, participant, and observer roles. Give the participant a plausible response that complicates the first attempt. Revise through feedback tied to the exchange, repeat the difficult turn, and then change the scenario. Use the observation method developed in Chapter 14.

Apply the skill during an agreed portion of a real session, with supervision or observation under the program's training arrangements. Address consent and privacy requirements before any recording. Review what participants demonstrated and what the facilitator needs to practice next.

Use scenario cards, an observation sheet, a session plan, and a brief reflection form to support this sequence. The Quick Reference gathers these materials. Record descriptions and feedback rather than inventing a pass score. Decisions about further responsibility belong within the program's expectations and supervision.

Questions before the next move

"What is the observable concern?" keeps the response tied to conduct or disclosed information.

"What needs to happen now?" distinguishes an exploration, a redirection, a boundary, or a pause from a safety response.

"What would let the person rejoin the task?" checks whether your limit includes a usable route back when continued participation is safe and allowed.

"Which procedure or support takes priority?" identifies the point where you must act beyond the classroom exchange.

After the room

Was your response proportionate to the concern? Whose access to the group did it protect or reduce? What correction or follow-up remains?

Choose one difficult turn to rehearse before leading again. Use the actual requirements of your setting, and practice changing your response when the information changes.

CLOSING: WHAT YOU WANT THEM TO TAKE HOME

Return to the circle from the opening. Ten participants are working through the difference between an event and the meaning someone adds to it. One of them can explain the distinction clearly. Earlier, when the details changed, his answer gave you a reason to keep teaching.

Now imagine a later session. This is another invented teaching example, not a promised ending for that participant. You give him a new situation. A colleague corrects a number in his work during a meeting. He decides the colleague wants to make him look foolish. He wants to interrupt and list the colleague's mistakes in front of everyone.

You ask what he knows happened and what he has added.

"She corrected a number. I don't know why she did it in front of everybody. I'm deciding she wanted to embarrass me."

"What are you about to do with that conclusion?"

"Embarrass her back."

He has found the distinction and connected it to the action forming in his own account. Let him continue.

"I can check the number before I argue about it. If she's right, I can correct it. I can still dislike how it happened."

"Suppose you check and she is right. You still feel embarrassed."

"Then I fix the number while I'm embarrassed. I don't need her to be wrong first."

That answer gives you something to acknowledge. He has carried the reasoning into different details and kept an action available while the feeling remains. You can tell him exactly what he did: "You separated the correction from the motive you assigned, and you chose an action that didn't require her to change her answer."

Then he adds, "I'd probably bring it up again afterward. I don't like letting someone have the last word."

You have the next point to practice. What would he bring up, and for what purpose? A practical concern about how corrections are handled differs from an attempt to make the other person pay for an uncomfortable moment. Examine that difference with him. His useful answer remains useful, and the work continues.

Something they can do

What you want people to carry away is an action they can recognize and use in their own circumstances. They can notice when a conclusion has become more certain than the information allows. They can identify an urge before treating it as an instruction. They can describe what they did without making another person's conduct the author of their own.

The words may be ordinary. "I don't know that yet." "I was about to do something with that thought." "I kept going after they said no." Listen for the connection between the words and the choice. The participant does not have to sound like you to show the reasoning.

A plan earns its place at the decision point. It tells the person what to do first, what to stop, and where to turn when the expected option is unavailable. Practice it while the obstacle is present. Help the participant find the moment when the plan needs to become an action.

Keep the purpose of that action in view. In relationship-harm work, a calmer person may still be trying to control someone. Respect

for another person's refusal has to remain available without reassurance, agreement, or return. The other person should be able to choose, leave, and live without being made responsible for managing the participant's response.

In substance-use work, avoiding a charge is too narrow an account of responsibility. Keep the people on the road and in the home visible. In recovery, a plan may need to address the use itself, the responsibilities affected, and the support the person will actually seek. A setback gives you something to examine and may create safety or support needs requiring the setting's procedures. Find the next responsible step.

A reason that belongs to them

Before the session ends, ask the participant in the invented example what would make this worth continuing to practice.

"I want to keep my job," he says. "I'm tired of spending the next morning defending what I said the day before."

That is a reason you can work with. You do not need to replace it with a more moving one. Ask which action would serve it at the next difficult meeting. Help him make the connection between the concern he named and the skill he can practice.

His reason may change. He may later see consequences he has barely considered tonight. Keep those consequences available for examination without requiring him to perform the insight you hope he will reach. The next choice still needs to respect the people affected, whatever reason brings him to the work.

What you carry into the next room

Your part is to make the lesson clear, make participation workable, and keep checking what people can do. Hold the limits you are responsible for. Ask the question the answer calls for. Correct yourself when the information changes, and use support when the concern exceeds your role.

You will have evenings that feel unfinished because they are. Someone understood one part and missed another. A plan became specific enough to try, but you have not heard how the attempt went. A participant gave an answer that changed your next question. Carry those observations into preparation rather than asking the room to provide a satisfying ending.

Go back once more to the participant who found the distinction when the details changed. You can name the progress without completing his future. He has something to practice, and you know where the next question belongs.

When he leaves, your voice will no longer be there to supply it. The useful thing he takes with him is the reasoning he can begin for himself: what happened, what he added, what he is about to do, and which action remains his to choose.

QUICK REFERENCE

FINDING THE NEXT MOVE

Choose the entry that fits the difficulty in front of you. Return to the chapter for the reasoning behind the move. The training tools use the observation, rehearsal, and supervision methods developed in Part Four.

Before the session

Know the room's requirements. Chapters 2 and 13. Be ready to explain attendance, participation, confidentiality, and reporting accurately. Distinguish what you decide from what someone else decides. Answer the practical question before returning to the learning task.

Make participation workable. Chapter 3. Check how participants will receive the example and show their reasoning. Arrange known support needs. Allow interpretation to finish, address the participant directly, and manage one conversation at a time. Ask, "What are you being asked to do here?"

Prepare for the screen. Chapter 13. Check camera and chat agreements, privacy, interpreter visibility, and the disconnection plan.

Know how to obtain the location and callback details securely and reach help where the participant is.

Name the intended learning. Chapter 13. Write what participants will explain, demonstrate, or apply. Plan the activity and the individual check together. "Does that make sense?" needs a follow-up that shows you what each person can do.

Rehearse the instruction. Chapters 13 and 14. Say what the task is, how people will work, and what they will bring back. Have a colleague begin it. If they begin a different task, revise the instruction before the group has to discover the problem.

When an answer leaves you unsure

Separate observation, report, and inference. Chapter 1. Name what you heard or saw, what the participant told you, and what you added. Ask a question whose answer could change your understanding. Let the answer change the next move.

Check access before interpreting silence. Chapter 3. Clarify the instruction, provide an accessible response route, and allow time. Ask personal questions about support privately when needed. Once the task is understood, respond to a stated refusal through the group's actual expectations.

Use participation patterns as prompts. Chapter 4. Polished answers (the Performer), challenges (the Challenger), silence (the Silent Participant), humor (the Humor Participant), abstract language (the Intellectualizer), and questions about finishing (the Finisher) suggest different things to check. Consider another explanation. Keep shorthand names out of participant records; describe the conduct you observed.

Bring an explanation back to a choice. Chapter 6. Keep relevant context, then slow the account: situation, belief, feeling, urge, action,

impact. Ask, "What did you do next?" Find an earlier decision the participant could act on without another person's cooperation. Leave genuine disputes or memory gaps open.

Work across languages. Chapters 3 and 7. Check the translated task and invite an explanation in the participant's own words. Ask what a feeling word means in the particular event; allow a description rather than requiring an English label.

Find the participant's meaning. Chapter 7. Ask what a feeling word meant in that moment and what the person did with it. Offer language tentatively. If they reject your suggestion, listen. Distinguish feeling disregarded from claiming a right to another person's obedience.

Keep the affected people visible. Chapter 5. Ask about conduct and consequences beyond the speaker. Who could leave? Whose refusal was respected? Who was exposed to risk on the road or at home? Choose a responsible step that leaves other people free to decline contact, reassurance, or reconciliation.

See the pattern. Chapter 5. When several actions appear in one account, ask about each, then ask what choices they leave the other person together. Keep the other actions in view when one stops.

When the group needs direction

Interrupt shared blame or harmful advice. Chapters 5 and 8. State the concern plainly, then invite examination of the proposed action. Agreement gives a claim weight in the room; examine its reasoning before it becomes advice participants carry home.

Distribute the work. Chapter 8. Give pairs or small groups a defined task and a product to bring back. Ask how they reached the answer. Bring in quieter voices without making one person's disclo-

sure the group's spectacle. Link contributions to the learning purpose.

Work within a member-led format. Chapter 8. Keep the agreed format and the members' choice of topic. Ask what the person wants from the group before advice begins. Step in directly for harmful advice, a limit, or safety.

Choose a proportionate response. Chapter 15. Describe the interruption or other conduct, state the limit, and give a route back into participation. Hear a legitimate complaint about your delivery. Use the least response that does the work and follow through within your authority.

Recognize the change in task. Chapter 15. Threats, ongoing harm, immediate danger, and concerns about safe participation call for the setting's procedures and consultation. A report of renewed use calls for what happened, current safety concerns, and the next step. Keep it distinct from arriving unable to participate safely.

When a plan sounds complete

Find the first action. Chapter 9. Ask what the person will do first, what they will stop doing, and when the plan begins. Replace a broad intention with an action they could carry out at the decision point.

Put the obstacle into the practice. Chapter 9. Ask what happens when the expected option is unavailable or pressure makes it harder to choose. Check the alternative and the boundary it must respect. In recovery, examine the use itself rather than stopping at a plan for transportation.

Let the participant carry the reasoning. Chapter 9. Model, work together, then change the details and ask for an independent response. If the task breaks down, teach the smaller distinction that is

missing. Give enough help to resume the thinking, then check again without supplying the answer.

After the session

Describe the demonstration precisely. Chapter 10. Keep attendance, participation, recognition, explanation, application, and reported use distinct. Record the support provided. "Identified a first action after two narrowing questions" gives the next facilitator something useful to work from.

Choose the next teaching task. Chapter 10. Identify the particular gap, check unfinished responses for access or instruction problems, and plan a follow-up that can reveal improvement. Give participants who applied the idea a new challenge.

Resolve co-facilitator disagreement. Chapter 14. Give the participant one workable instruction. Use the agreed consultation signal when needed. Review the actual exchange afterward, repair its effect, and rehearse the revised response.

Correct your error. Chapter 11. Name the wrong fact, unsupported interpretation, inaccessible instruction, poor timing, or harmful tone. Address its effect and change the next action. Return to the task without asking the participant to reassure you.

Work within what you know. Chapter 12. Receive thanks, absence, or return as information to consider. Follow up only where permitted and useful. Take strain and difficult outcomes to supervision. Name changes in your listening, patience, or preparation and review the conditions affecting them. When you learn of a death, confirm through your setting's channels, respect privacy, and follow procedures for members who may need support.

A six-session training sequence

Supervisors can use this as a starting outline for staff training. Each session assumes about ninety minutes: a short review of the chapters, a demonstration, rehearsal in three roles, and feedback using the Observation Sheet. Adjust the order and pace to your program and its requirements.

Session 1. Observation and inference. Chapters 1 and 4. Rehearse Card 1. Practice naming an interpretation and the fact that could change it.

Session 2. The room's conditions and access. Chapters 2 and 3. Rehearse Cards 2 and 3.

Session 3. Explanations, words, and the people outside the room. Chapters 5, 6, and 7. Rehearse the Daniel, Marcus, Derek, and Theo exchanges.

Session 4. Group work. Chapter 8. Rehearse Card 4, lead a short peer task, and practice the member-led format with Kenji's exchange.

Session 5. Teaching application and describing evidence. Chapters 9 and 10. Build a session with the Session-Planning Sheet and rehearse its opening and instructions.

Session 6. Errors, endings, difficult moments, and virtual rooms. Chapters 11, 12, 13, and 15. Rehearse Cards 5, 6, and 7, and complete the After-the-Room Reflection.

Scenario Cards

Rehearsal material for Chapters 13 through 15

These invented prompts return to decisions taught earlier. In a group of three, rotate facilitator, participant, and observer. Choose one skill, review the relevant chapter and actual requirements, and rehearse a

brief exchange. The participant introduces the complication instead of giving an easy agreement. Assess, receive specific feedback, repeat the moment, then try the changed version.

Card 1: The familiar answer. Chapters 1 and 14.

Start: "I know what you want me to say."

Complication: The participant describes a previous exchange that made honest disagreement difficult.

Changed version: They sincerely ask what a term in your question means.

Practice: Ask one question, hear the answer, and choose the next move from it.

Card 2: The practical question. Chapter 2.

Start: "This referral is unfair, and my shift changed. What happens if I miss?"

Complication: The participant asks you to promise an exception you cannot authorize.

Changed version: A voluntary member says the group has stopped being useful.

Practice: Explain the actual limit or agreement and offer a usable next step.

Card 3: The inaccessible question. Chapters 3 and 11.

Start: The participant remains silent after a question containing unfamiliar language.

Complication: They nodded when asked whether they understood.

Changed version: They explain the task accurately and decline to do it.

Practice: Check access, preserve the reasoning task, and respond to the difference.

Card 4: The group's agreement. Chapter 8.

Start: Several members approve bringing an overnight guest after a roommate refused.

Complication: One says the roommate can explain the objection at the door.

Changed version: A quieter member identifies the pressure created by arriving together.

Practice: Interrupt the claim, examine reasoning, and distribute participation.

Card 5: The difficult interruption. Chapter 15.

Start: A joke interrupts a quieter participant, who loses their place.

Complication: The speaker says you ignore other people's interruptions.

Changed version: After you restore the turn, the speaker says he plans to wait outside his former partner's workplace tomorrow "until she finally listens."

Practice: Restore the turn, hear the complaint, and recognize when teaching must pause. Review the relevant procedures with the trainer before rehearsing the changed version.

Card 6: The dark screen. Chapters 3 and 13.

Start: In a virtual group, a participant who uses an interpreter stops responding after you share your screen.

Complication: Their camera goes off.

Changed version: They answer that someone has walked into the room at home.

Practice: Check access before interpreting the silence, restore the route to the interpretation, and use the agreed privacy arrangement.

Card 7: Two facilitators, two instructions. Chapter 14.

Start: Your co-facilitator interrupts your question to demand that the participant admit he was wrong.

Complication: The participant asks which of you he should answer.

Changed version: Your co-facilitator points out a contact restriction you overlooked.

Practice: Give the participant one workable instruction, then accept the correction that changes your decision.

Observation Sheet

Chapter 14; supervised application in Chapters 13 through 15

Date:

_____

Chapter or scenario:

_____

Facilitator:

_____

Observer:

_____

Focus for this observation (choose one): accuracy of language, respectful limits, access, shared participation, the learning task, or people outside the room:

_____

Relevant requirement or group agreement:

Record the exchange before judging it.

Facilitator's exact question, reflection, statement, or instruction:

Participant's response:

Facilitator's next move:

What did the exchange show about the focus you selected? Describe the effect you observed. Leave confidence, charm, and emotional intensity out of the judgment.

Trainee's assessment first. What helped? What would you change?

Observer's specific strength, supported by actual words or conduct:

One change to practice, supported by the exchange:

Repeated attempt and changed scenario. What changed? What needs more practice?

Use the supervisor's agreed expectations for real-session application. This sheet supports feedback; it supplies no credential or pass score.

Session-Planning Sheet: Chapter 13

Date and group:

Curriculum lesson or agreed group purpose:

Required content, agreements, and reporting or privacy limits:

Intended learning: What will each participant explain, demonstrate, or apply?

Access: Materials, response options, interpretation, and support to arrange:

For each part, name the task, its purpose, and the time available.

Opening and transition into the work:

Example or demonstration:

Individual, paired, or small-group work; exact instruction and product:

Debrief: How will you examine the reasoning?

Independent application check: What changed situation will you use?

Closing: What next step will participants take away?

Shorter route: What can you shorten while preserving required content and the check?

Co-facilitator roles, transitions, and signal for a concern:

Predictable interruption and route to supervision or local procedures:

Rehearse the opening and instruction with colleagues before using the plan.

After-the-Room Reflection

Chapters 10 through 15

Date:

Session or rehearsal:

What did participants demonstrate? Identify the task, response, and any prompting or support. Separate classroom application from reported use.

What remains uncertain? What needs checking before you interpret an unfinished response?

Which question or instruction helped people think? Record the actual words and response.

Where did your next move miss the answer, close participation, or overlook someone affected?

What correction or follow-up is needed? Who must you consult under your setting's arrangements?

What specific distinction or action will you teach or check next time?

What will you change in your own delivery? Name one action and how you will rehearse it.

When will you review that change, and with whom?

Carry one decision into the next session. Return to this sheet afterward and record what the revised approach helped you see.

FURTHER READING

METHODS BEHIND THE PRACTICE

These sources offer research or professional guidance relevant to the work in this guide. The learning studies concern educational tasks; the clinical guides concern their stated services and populations. Use them to examine a method and its limits. They are not evaluations of this manuscript or proof of safety outside the room.

Listening and reasons for change

Miller, W. R., and Rollnick, S. (2023). Motivational Interviewing: Helping People Change and Grow (4th ed.). Guilford Press.

A resource for collaborative conversations about change, including listening, reflections, and a person's own reasons for action. Read alongside Chapters 2, 6, and 14, retaining the boundaries and responsibilities of your program.

https://www.guilford.com/books/Motivational-Interviewing/Miller-Rollnick/9781462552795

Practice and retention

Roediger, H. L., III, and Karpicke, J. D. (2006). Test-enhanced learning: Taking memory tests improves long-term retention. Psychological Science, 17(3), 249-255.

The experiments examined recall of prose after testing or restudying. They provide a reason to have learners retrieve an idea rather than only hear it again. Chapters 9 and 10 go on to check application; recalling material and using a skill under pressure remain different tasks.

https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9280.2006.01693.x

Dunlosky, J., Rawson, K. A., Marsh, E. J., Nathan, M. J., and Willingham, D. T. (2013). Improving students' learning with effective learning techniques: Promising directions from cognitive and educational psychology. Psychological Science in the Public Interest, 14(1), 4-58.

A review of learning techniques, including practice testing and distributed practice. Useful when considering how to revisit a distinction across sessions, as in Chapters 9, 10, and 13.

https://doi.org/10.1177/1529100612453266

Feedback that directs another attempt

Hattie, J., and Timperley, H. (2007). The power of feedback. Review of Educational Research, 77(1), 81-112.

Examines how feedback's form and focus affect learning. Read alongside Chapter 14's observation of actual words, specific feedback, and repeated attempt. Feedback needs to tell the learner what to work on.

https://doi.org/10.3102/003465430298487

Relationship harm and control

Stark, E. (2007). Coercive Control: How Men Entrap Women in Personal Life. Oxford University Press.

Describes abusive control as a pattern of connected actions over time rather than a single incident. Read alongside Chapter 5's

account of several actions forming a pattern and the book's attention to the people outside the room. Its framework concerns relationship harm specifically; apply it within your program's purpose and curriculum.

Babcock, J. C., Gallagher, M. W., Richardson, A., Godfrey, D. A., Reeves, V. E., and D'Souza, J. (2024). Which battering interventions work? An updated meta-analytic review of intimate partner violence treatment outcome research. Clinical Psychology Review, 111, 102437.

An updated review of outcome research on intervention programs for people who have harmed partners, building on the lead author's 2004 review. It examines whether programs reduce later violence. Use it to support caution about claims of program effectiveness, including claims a facilitator may be tempted to make about one group. The limits of classroom evidence rest on this guide's own reasoning in Chapter 10.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cpr.2024.102437

Group work in substance-use treatment

Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration. (2005). Substance Abuse Treatment: Group Therapy. Treatment Improvement Protocol Series, No. 41.

Professional guidance on groups in substance-use treatment. Relevant to group process, preparation, and difficult moments in Chapters 8, 13, and 15. Its treatment guidance should be used within the reader's qualifications and actual service; this book also addresses groups with other purposes.

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/books/NBK64220/

Planning for virtual services

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2024, September 18). Group teletherapy. Telehealth.HHS.gov.

Guidance on technology, group agreements, confidentiality limits, and participation in telebehavioral groups. Read with Chapter 13's preparation for a room that is a screen.

https://telehealth.hhs.gov/providers/best-practice-guides/telehealth-for-behavioral-health/group-teletherapy

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. (2024, September 18). Creating an emergency plan for telebehavioral health. Telehealth.HHS.gov.

Addresses location, local contacts, and disconnection planning for remote behavioral-health services. Use it to review your service's remote response arrangements with supervision, alongside Chapters 13 and 15.

https://telehealth.hhs.gov/providers/best-practice-guides/telehealth-for-behavioral-health/preparing-patients-for-telebehavioral-health/creating-a-telehealth-emergency-plan