Facilitation Techniques
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GROUP CONTRACT

To get the most benefit out of an Adventure Education experience, it is extremely helpful for the group to have developed a contract and to set individual and group goals. Both goal setting and the group contract go hand-in-hand in setting the foundation for a successful adventure experience. These activities provide the participants and the facilitator with a clear understanding of the expectations, strengths, and needs of the group.

The group contract provides a foundation to ensure an environment of safety and support. The contract can consist of commitments such as working together as a team, building trust, and giving and receiving feedback. In order for the contract to work, everyone needs to agree to speak up whenever one of the commitments is not being followed. Group members must also agree to accept feedback from the group in case a commitment is not being followed. The degree to which the group follows the commitments will determine how physically and emotionally safe and satisfying the experience will be (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988).

There are many different ways to develop the group contract. One method that works extremely well is to have the group create their own commitments to the contract. The facilitator starts off with a group discussion on what expectations group members have for each other, in order to have the best possible group experience. The discussion then leads to the group coming up with a list of commitments they agree to support throughout the experience.

GOAL SETTING

Goal setting lets participants know that the adventure activity has a purpose and focus. The purpose of goal setting is to identify areas for development or growth. Goals encourage participants to focus on personal strengths and other aspects about themselves that can be further developed. Goal setting provides a means for peers to support each other since the goals are shared with the group. Goals are also a helpful way to measure individual and group progress during an experience (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988). To get the most value, goals need to be focused on what the participant can work on during the experience that can be transferred back to their everyday lives. Goals can either be focused on the activity (e.g., “I want to push myself in order to get along with my peers.”) or have a more holistic focus (e.g., “I want to learn to push myself and not give up so I can learn not to give up on my math homework.”)

CHALLENGE BY CHOICE

Challenge by Choice allows participants the opportunity to take a risk in an atmosphere of support. This philosophy gives participants decision-making power by emphasizing that they do not have to take a risk they are not ready to take. When a participant is forced or coerced into taking a risk, this is counter-productive to the atmosphere that is being developed within the
group. Challenge by Choice provides the chance for group members to "step back" and re-evaluate things when anxiety or feelings of self-doubt begin to build. This results in the belief that the most important concern is the respect for individual values and choices (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988).

The facilitator supports the philosophy of Challenge by Choice by constantly searching for ways to challenge the group. These techniques need to be acceptable to the group, yet still allow the group the freedom to make choices. In order to challenge the group, the facilitator must refrain from making decisions for the group, which can easily result in taking power away from the participants. It is helpful to consider the following items when challenging a group. To begin with, use goal setting whenever there is a need. In addition, everyone does not need to do every activity. It is very important to respect a person's choice to not do something. Finally, sequence the more challenging types of activities for a time when the group is comfortable and able to work with each other. Participants need to have demonstrated support and trust for each other. A supportive atmosphere helps people to be more likely to respond to positive peer pressure (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988).

**GROUP FACILITATION**

The briefing of an activity includes setting goals, giving instructions and safety precautions to the group, clarifying, and framing. Framing is the time for the group to focus on the parameters of the activity. The key elements of framing are the description and expectations of the activity. The group is focused on the here and now and prepared for a new start with the upcoming activity. The framing phase of an activity answers three questions: 1. What is going to happen? 2. How is it going to happen? 3. What is expected? (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988).

The sequence of the activities is extremely important. Proper sequencing involves paying close attention to the order of activities so that the sequence is appropriate to the needs and goals of the group.

**When selecting and sequencing activities, keep the following things in mind:**

1. How cooperative or resistant are the group members?
2. Does the group have common goals, needs, feelings and concerns?
3. How comfortable are people with being in close, physical contact with each other? Is it appropriate for members of the group to be in contact with each other, such as sexually reactive youth?
4. Is the group starting to bond?
5. Do people appear self-conscious? Are they comfortable with what the group is doing?
6. Are people having fun? Can they function without putting on a front or acting cool?

7. What is the energy level of the group? Are they physically ready to move on to another activity? Do they need to do an activity that is less physically demanding?

8. Does the group have any leaders? Are they positive or negative?

9. How well are people listening to each other? Are they listening to the facilitator?

10. How well is the group supporting its contract? Are group members speaking up when commitments are not being met (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988)?

GRABBS Modality Check List
(Goals, Readiness, Affect, Behavior, Body, Stage)

The following is a checklist that was developed by Project Adventure (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988) to determine group readiness:

**Goals**
How does this activity help participants work towards individual and group goals? Will the activity help individuals or the group to grow, or will the participants be doing an activity just to be doing something?

**Readiness**
Are people conducting themselves in a safe and responsible manner? Does the group have the necessary skills to do the activity? Are there things the facilitator can do to meet the level of the participants?

**Affect**
Do group members share common feelings? Are participants demonstrating care and concern for each other? How supportive is the group towards each other?

**Behavior**
How cooperative are the participants? Are people agreeable, resistant, disruptive, self-centered or group centered? Are there any positive or negative relationships within the group?

**Body**
What is the level of physical fitness of the participants? Are there any health concerns or disabilities that need to be taken into consideration? Is it late in the day or early in the morning? Has the group been affected by the weather?

**Stage**
At what stage of development is the group? Is the group forming, storming, norming or performing?
PROCESSING ADVENTURE EDUCATION EXPERIENCES

Processing is a means to help people reflect and communicate what they have experienced during an activity. It is an integral aspect of any effective learning experience because it attempts to assist participants in transferring what was learned in an activity to their everyday lives. The focus of processing is to assist people in analyzing what they have experienced on a cognitive, behavioral, and affective level. It is through processing that people explore thoughts, feelings, and behavior that occurred during the experience and attempt to make connections to similar circumstances in other settings (Nadler & Luckner, 1992).

The facilitator of an Adventure Education experience is responsible for observing behaviors and interaction that people may or may not be aware of. The task for the facilitator is to help participants become aware of their actions and behavior and how they can transfer what they have learned to other situations in their lives. By talking problems out with the group, participants have the opportunity to gain strength and become an agent in the change process (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988).

In order for the group to get the most out of processing, some expectations need to be established. The following are guidelines from Schoel, Prouty, and Radcliffe (1988) and Nadler and Luckner (1992) that will assist the group in gaining the most benefit from processing the experience.

1. The group’s contract is still in use.

2. Everyone in the group should be in a circle. Everyone should be able to see the face of every member of the group. It is helpful to have everyone on the same level, either standing or sitting. Keep in mind that lying down can take energy from the group.

3. Physical and emotional safety and trust issues are the first priority. The environment needs to be safe to explore feelings and to discuss what has been learned. Physical violence in the group will not be tolerated.

4. Everyone is expected to participate to the degree they are able. People are responsible for their own behavior, choices, and actions. People should not be forced or coerced into participating in the activities. At times, it is beneficial and appropriate to support someone to try something new. However, people should always have the right to pass or say no. These choices need to be respected.

5. What is said in the group needs to remain in the group. The only exception to this is if people have permission to share someone else’s feelings or situation with people outside of the group.

6. The focus of the session should be on people listening and focusing on what is being said. In order to help people hear, it is important for people to speak one at a time.
7. The group focuses on issues that participants have the skills to handle.

8. The facilitator provides the structure, but the group is responsible for working through problems and turning them into opportunities for growth. In addition, the group tries to work towards positive, helpful solutions for problems.

9. People's feelings and emotions are "true" to them. People may disagree with someone's opinion or actions in response to a situation, but not their feelings.

10. During group processes, emphasis is placed on staying in the here and now.

11. Processing can take place before, during, and after each activity or whenever the need arises.

12. People are responsible for bringing about change in their lives. It is the individual that needs to take the initiative and be responsible for their personal behavior.

**DIFFERENT METHODS OF PROCESSING**

The following are some examples of different ways to process group experiences. These examples are from the work of Schoel, Prouty, and Radcliffe (1988) and Nadler and Luckner (1992).

1. **Open Forum:** Group circles up and shares thoughts and feelings after a general opening statement.

2. **Questioning:** Use questions that focus on the objectives of the activity. Sequence questions from general to specific. By starting off with a very simple question such as, "What happened here?" Then move into more specific questions such as, "How will respecting each other help you back at school?"

3. **Rounds:** Every member of the group is asked to respond to a question or to complete a sentence.
   
   a. Specific number or word round –
      
      - "What is one word for how you feel right now?"
      - "On a scale of 1 to 10, how would you rate the level of trust within this group?"
      - "Were you a leader or a follower during this activity?".
   
   b. Word or phrase round – The Whip
      
      "I am glad that __________." Everyone in the group has a turn to fill in the blank.
c. Comment Round—“Let’s do a go around and have each of you state what you need to personally work on to be a more effective communicator.”

Rounds are good to use at the beginning of a discussion to help get people focused. They give people time to think about what they are going to say, and they provide an opportunity to hear from every member of the group. Rounds also allow the facilitator to survey the group in regards to how they are feeling and thinking.

4. Journals: This activity promotes exploration of personal and emotional experiences. Journals encourage reflection, awareness, and hopefully clarification of feelings, emotions, and thoughts. A personal or group journal can be used for this activity. Participants can write, draw pictures, use poetry, etc., to describe their thoughts and feelings.

5. Mini Solo: Participants are given time to sit and think about how the experience has affected them. Sometimes it is helpful to use specific questions for people to think about.

6. Drawing: Give group members time to draw a picture and then share it with the group. Ask the participants to draw a picture that shows:

- How the group is working together and what role you played in the group.
- Your greatest personal or group accomplishment during the program, session, etc.
- How you want to feel at the end of a program.
- What you would like to gain from this experience.

**SEQUENCING THE PROCESSING SESSION**

A processing session is comprised of three parts: the debrief (the what), the process (so what), and the transfer or application of the experience (the now what). The what starts the discussion off with the facts. What questions help to raise a participant’s awareness levels about attitudes and behaviors that are in need of being changed and those that need to be maintained. Examples of activities to use include:

1. **Memory Game:** The game begins by one person explaining in detail all of the events that led up to the group finishing the activity. If someone believes a detail was skipped, that person says “hold it” and explains what was left out and continues on with the details.

2. **Gestalt:** The communication focuses on the here and now. This activity is good with journal writing since it allows participants to come close to reliving the experience. For example, “I’m climbing up the wall. My left hand is on the blue hold and my right leg will not stop shaking.”
3. **The Go Around:** Go around the circle and have everyone in the group use a descriptive sentence or word to describe a particular aspect of an activity. “Give me one word to describe how you felt when the group completed the activity” (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988).

So *what* concentrates on the meaning, differences, and consequences behind the experience for the participant. *So what* gives people an opportunity to do something with what they hear. Some examples of activities to use are:

1. **Evaluating Goals:** Review how the group has been honoring and respecting the contract. How well are people working towards their individual and group goals?

2. **The Whip:** Every member of the group completes the sentence, “I’m glad that ________.” This activity focuses on positive emotions and helps to loosen people up and focus their attention.

3. **Journals:** Have participants keep either personal or group journals. Journals help participants to reflect on the experience and to comment on how they are doing in achieving their goals. It is very beneficial to allow time for people to share with the group from their journals (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988).

*Now what* provides the hope and chance for better things by applying the information that was just learned. *Now what* focuses on transferring skills learned from one experience to other real-life situations such as home, school, work, etc. The major emphasis is on the transfer of learning in which lessons learned in one activity are applied to another or similar situation (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988). An example of a *now what* question to use with a group is, “What was the most important thing you learned today, and how are you going to apply what you have learned back at the cottage (school, home, etc.)?”

**Use of Metaphors**

A metaphor is a link between two different things. It can be a symbol, story, or image that enhances the transfer of the activity by taking the experience in one arena and applying it to another (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988). It is extremely important for facilitators to condition themselves to listen for the participant’s personal metaphors and to use them (Nadler and Luckner, 1992). Two good sources for additional information on metaphors are *The Conscious Use of Metaphor in Outward Bound* by Stephen Bacon and *The Book of Metaphors, Volume II* by Michael Gass.

**FACILITATOR STYLES**

According to Gass (1995) there are six styles of group facilitation used during adventure experiences. These facilitation styles are as follows:
1. **Letting the experience speak for itself**: This approach is frequently referred to as “The mountain speaks for itself.” This method allows participants to sort out their own personal understanding from the experience. This approach is appropriate for programs in which intrapersonal and interpersonal goals are not of importance.

2. **Speaking for the experience**: An expert or consultant tells the participants what they have experienced. This facilitation style is extremely disempowering for participants since they are told what they have learned and how they should apply what they have learned. Speaking for the group also interferes with growth for the group and distances the facilitator from the group.

3. **Debriefing the experience**: The facilitator uses specifically designed questions for participants to reflect on their experiences and discuss learning that has taken place.

4. **Directly front-loading the experience**: Front loading occurs before the activity. Prior to the activity, participants are focused on specific objectives determined by the facilitator. Instead of a reactive discussion, debriefing becomes a re-emphasis of learning. Some examples of questions to ask are:
   
   a. “What did you learn from the first activity that you can apply to this activity?”
   b. “What behaviors will keep you from your goals?” “What behaviors will help you to reach your goals?”

5. **Framing the experience**: During the initial instructions, the facilitator uses isomorphism. An isomorphism is used to help the group make more relevant metaphorical connections to the activity. When the connections are relevant to the group and motivating, the transfer of learning will be enhanced. For example: for a drug and alcohol treatment group, a section of cable used in a group initiative represents going one week without relapsing. The key to this type of facilitator intervention is for the metaphor to be as relevant and tangible to the group as possible.

6. **Indirectly front-loading the experience**: This style is helpful when an individual or the group is continuing to struggle with a problem. For example, the harder the group tries to eliminate the behavior, the more frequently it occurs or the more the group tries to obtain a result, the more difficult the result becomes. Indirectly front-loading tries to change old habits while concentrating on new learning. Often these interventions become paradoxical in their approach and effectively create double binds or a win-win situation for a participant or the whole group.
FACILITATOR INTERVENTIONS

Nadler and Luckner (1992) developed the following facilitator interventions. These interventions are extremely helpful in assisting the group to work towards its goals and to get the most out of the experience.

1. Content focus provides specific information to the group such as expectations, safety guidelines, addressing concerns, and clarifying instructions.

2. Process focus concentrates on interactions occurring within the group. Emphasis is placed on the here and now. Examples of questions to use are:
   a. “How well is the group working together?”
   b. “I’m curious why some people in the group are not speaking up.” “What is keeping people from speaking up?”

3. Diagnostic intervention is used when a group is having problems getting started on a task or working together. By analyzing the causes and solutions to problems, this intervention helps people better understand group process.

4. Direct feedback is given not only from the facilitator but also from group members. Once the group starts to bond, members will give feedback without prompting from the facilitator.

5. Eliciting feelings concentrates on how group members feel and are affected by other people’s behavior. When these behaviors are negative, they prevent the group from bonding. For example, “How did you feel when you were being pushed around during elbow tag?”

6. Group functions are performed by the facilitator to assist the group in being as effective as possible. For example, has the group reflected upon and analyzed what they have done, e.g., “What is working?” “How can this group be more effective?”

7. Cognitive orientation involves educating groups in regards to certain aspects of group process such as expressing feelings, problem solving strategies, leadership styles, and group decision-making skills.

8. Protective intervention involves the facilitator being responsible for insuring the emotional safety of the group. At times, people may want to disclose extremely personal matters with the group such as assault or abuse. Based on the type of group and the clientele that make up the group, for the participants to deal with these issues may or may not be appropriate. Issues of this nature can easily exceed the boundaries and the goals of the group. Facilitators need to have specialized training in dealing with these sensitive topics. At times it may be best to speak with the person privately and to refer him or her to professional help.
Another protective intervention occurs when the facilitator notices that a member is or members of the group are being overly criticized in a cruel manner. It is important for facilitators to keep in mind that they are responsible for the physical and emotional safety of all participants.

COMMUNICATION SKILLS

One of the most important skills for a facilitator to have is the ability to effectively communicate with the members of his or her group. Communication skills include attending skills and active listening.

Active listening indicates the listener is mentally and physically present and listening. Active listening consists of three parts: listening to and understanding verbal messages; listening to and understanding non-verbal behavior; and listening to and understanding the person (Egan, 1986). The key to good listening includes observing gestures, understanding the content of the message, changes in voice and expression, and trying to have an idea of the underlying idea that is being verbalized. The following are some examples of barriers to active listening:

1. The facilitator not actually listening to the speaker.

2. The facilitator thinking about what they want to say instead of paying attention to the person speaking.

3. The facilitator is more focused on how he or she is being viewed by other people (Nadler & Luckner, 1992).

The facilitator can develop active-listening skills by focusing on these techniques:

1. Facilitator blocks out external distractions.

2. Facilitator pays close attention to verbal and non-verbal messages that are being communicated by the participants.

3. Facilitator determines the difference between the emotional and cognitive content of the message.

4. Facilitator identifies with the speaker’s feelings. When the participant is communicating, the facilitator tries to determine what the speaker is feeling. The facilitator will try to determine if the verbal and non-verbal messages fit with each other.
5. The facilitator performs a personal inventory in order to become aware of any feelings, prejudices, and expectations about the speaker. Some questions for facilitators to ask themselves are:

   a. How do I feel about the topic being discussed?
   b. How do I feel about the person speaking?
   c. Do I want to hear what the person is saying? Am I ready to hear what the person is saying?
   d. Do I want to help solve this problem?
   e. Am I ready to accept attitudes, feelings, and values if they are different from my own (Nadler & Luckner, 1992)?

The following are some examples of non-verbal skills for the facilitator to be aware of when they are listening to the speaker:

1. Eye Contact: Keep your eyes on the speaker without staring. Remember some people will be uncomfortable, therefore, re-adjust your focus when necessary.

2. Facial Expressions: Let your face tell the speaker that you empathize with what is being said.

3. Body posture: Help speaker relax by keeping your body relaxed. A high level of interest and involvement is communicated when the listener leans forward or touches the speaker.

4. Physical Space: The distance between the speaker and the listener is important. 18” - intimate space, 18” - 4’ - social distance. Cultural differences can greatly affect these distances (Schoel, Prouty, & Radcliffe, 1988; Nadler & Luckner, 1992).

Some other non-verbal cues to be aware of are:

1. The skillful use of silence gives people an opportunity to stop and reflect on what has been said. New facilitators are frequently uncomfortable with silence and feel they must say something. Allow the group to experience the silence. A helpful hint for facilitators is to wait until they cannot stand the silence anymore, and then count to 10 before they speak (Gillis, 1995).

2. A brief verbal acknowledgement such as, “I see; uh-huh; oh I understand...” focuses on expressing interest or concern without interrupting or interjecting personal comments (Nadler & Luckner, 1992).

3. Paraphrasing summarizes what the speaker has said in a sentence or two. This technique validates what the speaker has communicated. Paraphrasing sends the message to the speaker that you want to understand what he/she is trying to communicate and that you care enough about him/her to listen carefully. This
technique frequently encourages additional communication (Nadler & Luckner, 1992).

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Whenever conflict arises, it is very helpful to have group members communicate their feelings using an “I” message. It is of utmost importance that all group members and the facilitator learn to identify and acknowledge feelings. In addition, people need to honor and accept their feelings; and to deliver, experience, or communicate the feelings to themselves, or to the source of their conflict (Nadler & Luckner, 1992).

It is important for all members of the group to keep in mind that feelings are true to the person. People should not be put in the position that they have to defend their feelings or be told by others that their feelings are wrong. For example, if one participant feels afraid during an activity, while someone else feels calm, these are their true feelings. (e.g., “That’s not right, you shouldn’t feel that way.” Or, “Don’t feel sad...etc.”). The facilitator needs to ensure that people do not get attacked because of their feelings, such as being told they are a “scaredy cat, insensitive, a sissy,”... etc. In addition, the facilitator needs to encourage group members to take responsibility for their feelings.

“I” MESSAGES VERSUS “YOU” MESSAGES

“I” messages focus on an individual’s willingness to cooperate whereas “You” messages can result in a hurtful feeling such as anger, embarrassment, put-down, or worthlessness. “You” messages interfere with resolving conflicts for three reasons:

1. People may begin to believe the negative messages they are hearing.

2. When people blame their feelings on others, they are not able to accept responsibility for their actions.

3. Criticizing others for negative behaviors can easily reinforce the behavior (Nadler & Luckner, 1992).

“I” messages avoid the hurtful impact of “You” messages by assisting the person to be more considerate, helpful, and cooperative instead of angry and resentful. “I” messages separate the deed from the doer, the person from the behavior. These messages encourage people to take responsibility for their feelings and leave people’s behavior up to them. “I” messages bring about a positive resolution to conflict by: encouraging people to facilitate an effective resolution by supporting a willingness to change; have little negative evaluation of the person; and do not attempt to hurt the personal relationship between the two people trying to work through their conflict.
The three parts to an “I” message are:

1. Describe the behavior without blaming – “When people start pushing and shoving...”

2. State your feelings – “I feel concerned.”

3. State what your consequences are or might be – “That someone could get hurt” (Nadler & Luckner, 1992).
(Keep in mind that the parts of the “I” message do not have to be delivered in this order.)

**EMPATHETIC RESPONSES**

In order to establish a relationship based on trust and understanding, empathy must be developed. Empathy allows people to place themselves in a situation to see how they would feel. Some examples of empathetic questions are:

1. “Did you feel disrespected because someone laughed at your ideas?”

2. It sounds like you felt __________ because ________________.” “Am I right?”

It is important for the facilitator to not sound as if they are telling people how they are feeling. The facilitator is trying to understand the participant’s feelings. When people feel understood, they will open up more and take more risks (Nadler and Luckner, 1992).

**DEALING WITH CHALLENGING PARTICIPANTS**

People are reluctant to get involved in a group for a number of reasons. Some of the more common reasons are: a lack of trust in the group or the facilitator; lack of commitment to the group; a peer or the facilitator dominates the group; or the person is afraid of what other group members will think of him or her. The facilitator can try to bring a quiet person into a group discussion by looking at the individual and using their eyes to encourage him or her to speak. If the person does not speak, the facilitator can then look in another direction. In addition, the facilitator can invite the person to speak by using a tentative voice without focusing the attention of the group to the person. “Wilbur, I noticed you haven’t shared during this discussion.” “We would like to hear from you if you have anything to say.” At this time, it is important for the facilitator to scan with his or her eyes instead of staring at Wilbur. If Wilbur does not start to talk, the facilitator will open the discussion back up to the group. “Who else would like to share what they felt when the last person landed on the other side of the acid river?” (Nadler & Luckner, 1992).
At times, one person that wants to monopolize group discussions can dominate the group. Some subtle non-verbal techniques to use in this situation are avoiding eye contact while the person is speaking or giving a slight hand signal which will let the speaker know you would like to wrap the discussion up. In addition, the following statements can help to move the flow of conversation away from a dominant person and back to the group:

1. “William, you are making some interesting points.” “I’d like to give the others a chance to speak also.”

2. “Alfred, how about giving the others a chance to speak.”

3. “Alice, let me stop you in order to say a few things.” “First...”

4. “Louis, I’d like for you to hold off on your comments until we have heard from the rest of the group.”


Elbe (1985) and the Voyager Outward Bound Instructor Handbook (1988) list the following guidelines for facilitators working with groups:

1. Try not to judge or assume a person’s motives.

2. Make sure the group knows what to expect from the start of the program (i.e., talk about Challenge by Choice and the group contract). Many times pre-conceived expectations build barriers and resistance to learning.

3. Everyone in the group needs to understand the role of the facilitator. The facilitator’s role is to promote safety, instruct, observe, raise questions, and clarify. Facilitation is not about forcing people to do activities or to change, judge others, or force values on others. Remember the difference between exposing people to values and imposing values on people.

4. The facilitator needs to establish what a group can have input on and make choices and what is not negotiable about the program such as safety practices.

5. To effectively time and pace activities, the facilitator needs to frequently re-assess individual and group goals.

6. Try to help people to turn negative feelings into positive learning experiences.

7. “You can only take people as far as you have gone.” The more in touch facilitators are with their own feelings, patterns of communication, and methods of conflict resolution, the better they will be at facilitating a group setting.
8. Facilitators need to be as honest as possible with the group. Facilitators need to ask good questions and to not pretend to have answers they do not have. Encourage participants to use each other as resources. There is no way a facilitator can relate to and understand all of the needs the participants bring to the program.

9. Respect people for who they are. Some people will choose to share and disclose on a more deep level while others may appear more quiet and reserved. Remember what is risky to one person may not be a big risk to others. Also keep in mind cultural and ethnic differences.

10. The more the facilitator talks, the less the participants will talk.

11. If the facilitator develops a practice of 1:1 communication with a participant, this can greatly impair group interaction.

12. If an activity or method is not working, move on to something else. Remember it is the process, not the product, which is the most important.

13. Be realistic about the problems that a group can solve.

14. If someone starts to open up to the group, try to open the group up to each other.

15. Look for common issues in the group and ways of connecting them to each other.

16. When conflict begins to arise, ask people in the group to identify their immediate needs. Once a person’s needs are made known, have them ask each other directly for support. For example, “Bart, can you take things more seriously when I feel scared?”

17. When someone is speaking, observe how others are behaving and reacting.

18. At times the group may not be ready to deal with an issue the first time it is brought up. If the issues are important, they will come up again and the group will be better prepared to deal with it.

19. A group will frequently reflect the problems or dynamics of its leader.

20. The topics facilitators hesitate to address are many times the most accurate and are the issues that need to be addressed. Facilitators need to learn to trust themselves and their intuition.