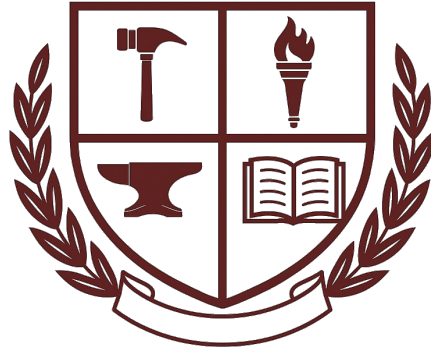


FORGE



FORGE FACILITATOR GUIDE

Phase 2: Development

Build Others

Weeks 13–24

Dooly State Prison

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Mentor Skills

Week 13: The Mentor Identity

Week 13 Overview

Purpose: This is the first week of Phase 2. Everything shifts now. For 12 weeks, participants have been doing their own work — identifying thinking errors, building emotional regulation, learning conflict resolution, developing empathy. That work was necessary. But it was preparation. Starting this week, the question changes from "How do I grow?" to "How do I help someone else grow?" Week 13 establishes the mentor identity: what a mentor is, what a mentor isn't, and why ongoing self-work is non-negotiable for anyone who wants to serve others.

Sessions This Week: - Session 37 (Tuesday): What Makes a Good Mentor - Session 38 (Wednesday): Mentor Boundaries - Session 39 (Thursday): The Parallel Process

Materials Needed: - Journals/notebooks (participants should have these from Phase 1) - Pens/pencils (1 per participant) - Talking piece for circle process - Handout: "Elements of Effective Mentoring" summary (1 per participant — can be handwritten on paper if no copier) - Handout: "Mentor Boundaries Quick Reference" (1 per participant) - Handout: "Mentor Wellness Plan" template (1 per participant) - Easel paper or whiteboard (if available)

SESSION 37: What Makes a Good Mentor

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Explain what makes mentoring effective based on research (MENTOR's Elements of Effective Practice) 2. Describe the credible messenger model and why lived experience is an asset 3. Distinguish between the roles of mentor, friend, and authority figure 4. Articulate the paradox of mentoring: you give in order to grow 5. Identify qualities of effective mentors they have experienced or observed

Session Plan

Opening Circle (15 minutes)

Purpose: Mark the transition from Phase 1 to Phase 2. This is a significant moment — name it.

Facilitator:

"Welcome to Phase 2. I want you to sit with what that means for a minute. You spent 12 weeks doing the hardest kind of work there is — looking at yourself honestly. You identified your thinking errors. You learned to name your emotions instead of being controlled by them. You practiced conflict resolution, active listening, accountability. You passed your assessment. You earned the right to be sitting here.

But here's the shift: Phase 1 was about you. Phase 2 is about everyone else.

Starting today, you're not just learning for yourself anymore. You're learning to help other men do what you just did. That's a different kind of responsibility. And honestly? It's harder. Because when you're doing your own work, you only have to manage yourself. When you're mentoring someone else, you have to manage yourself AND hold space for another person's struggle.

*So — opening round. Talking piece. Two questions: **How are you feeling about starting Phase 2? And what's one thing from Phase 1 that changed you?**"*

Send the talking piece around. Facilitator goes first to model.

What the Research Says: Elements of Effective Mentoring (20 minutes)

Purpose: Ground the mentor identity in evidence, not just good intentions. Participants need to know that mentoring has been studied and that there are specific practices that make it work.

Facilitator:

"Before we get into what makes a good mentor, let me ask you a question: Have you ever had a mentor? Someone — inside or outside — who made a real difference in your life? Not a friend. Not a family member doing their job. Someone who chose to invest in you when they didn't have to."

Allow 3-4 responses. Don't rush this. If someone says they never had one, acknowledge it:

"That's real. A lot of men in this room never had anyone play that role. That's part of why you're here — so someone else doesn't have to say that."

Facilitator:

"There's an organization called MENTOR — the National Mentoring Partnership. They've studied what makes mentoring actually work versus what makes it a waste of time. They identified what they call the 'Elements of Effective Practice.' Here's what the research shows:

One: The relationship is the program. *It doesn't matter how good the curriculum is or how smart the mentor is. If the mentee doesn't trust you, nothing happens. Trust is built through consistency, reliability, and genuine care — not through techniques.*

Two: Mentoring requires structure AND flexibility. *Good mentors have a plan. They show up prepared. But they also know when to throw the plan out because the person in front of them needs something different today. If your mentee just got bad news from home, you don't barrel through a lesson on thinking errors. You sit with him.*

Three: Training and ongoing support matter. *The research is clear — untrained mentors can actually do harm. Good intentions are not enough. That's why FORGE doesn't just hand you a certificate and say 'go mentor.' You're going through 12 more weeks of training, then supervised practice.*

Four: The mentee's needs come first — not the mentor's. *This is harder than it sounds. A lot of people become mentors because it makes them feel good about themselves. There's nothing wrong with that — but the moment your need to feel helpful overrides the mentee's actual needs, you've stopped mentoring and started performing.*

Five: Screening and boundaries protect everyone. *Not everyone should be a mentor. Not every match works. And clear boundaries protect both the mentor and the mentee. We'll dig deep into boundaries on Wednesday."*

Pause. Check for questions.

The Credible Messenger Model (20 minutes)

Purpose: Help participants understand that their lived experience — including incarceration, mistakes, and struggle — is not a liability. It's their greatest asset as mentors.

Facilitator:

"Now I want to talk about something that makes FORGE different from most mentoring programs. Most programs bring in outside volunteers — good people with good hearts who have never lived a day inside a prison. They have education. They have resources. They mean well.

But here's the problem: when a man who's been in a dorm for two years is struggling — when he's angry, when he's thinking about doing something stupid, when he's ready to give up — and a volunteer from the outside says, 'I understand how you feel,' what does that man think?"

Allow responses. The room will likely say something like "No you don't" or "You have no idea."

"Exactly. You can't hear someone who hasn't walked your road. That's not a knock on volunteers. It's just the truth.

Now imagine the same man is struggling — and a mentor who's served time, who's made the same mistakes, who's lived in the same conditions says, 'I know what you're going through. I've been there. And I found a way through it.'

That's the credible messenger model. Your experience — all of it, including the parts you're ashamed of — makes you credible. It makes you believable. It gives you access that no outside professional will ever have.

Programs across the country are proving this works. In California, the ARC program puts men with lived experience into 33 prisons as mentors. In New York City, credible messenger mentors work with young people in the community — men who've been where those young men are heading, who can say with authority, 'That road leads nowhere. I know, because I walked it.'

Your past is not a disqualification. It's a credential. But — and this is critical — only if you've done the work to transform it. A man who hasn't dealt with his own issues has no business trying to help someone else deal with theirs. That's why Phase 1 came first."

Exercise: The Mentor I Needed (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Get out your journals. I want you to write for 7 minutes on this prompt:

Think of a moment in your life — before or during incarceration — when you needed a mentor and didn't have one. What was happening? What did you need? What would the ideal mentor have done or said in that moment?

If you did have a mentor at some point, write about what made that person effective. What did they do that actually reached you?

Be specific. Not 'they were a good person.' What did they DO?"

7 minutes of writing. Room is silent. Facilitator writes too.

Share out (8 min):

"Who's willing to share? Not the whole entry — just the key thing. What did you need, or what did that mentor do that worked?"

Allow 4-5 responses. Listen for common themes: listened without judging, didn't give up on me, was honest, held me accountable but didn't shame me, showed up consistently, shared their own struggles.

Facilitator:

"Listen to what you're describing. Nobody said 'they had all the answers.' Nobody said 'they lectured me until I got it.' What you're describing is someone who was present, honest, consistent, and real. That's what a mentor is. And that's what you're training to become."

Mentor vs. Friend vs. Authority Figure (15 minutes)

Purpose: Clarify role distinctions. This is where a lot of new mentors get confused.

Facilitator:

"One of the biggest mistakes new mentors make is confusing roles. Let me break down three different relationships, because they look similar on the surface but they're fundamentally different."

Write these three columns on the board or easel paper (or present verbally):

A Friend: - Mutual — you both give and receive equally - No formal role or responsibility - You can vent to each other - Loyalty is personal — 'I've got your back no matter what' - No obligation to hold each other accountable - You take sides

An Authority Figure: - One-directional — power flows downward - Enforces rules - Tells you what to do - Relationship is defined by the role, not the person - Compliance-based — you do it because you have to - Consequences for disobedience

A Mentor: - Purposeful — the relationship exists to serve the mentee's growth - You care, but you're not their friend - You hold them accountable, but you're not their boss - You share your experience, but you don't make their decisions - You have boundaries — you can't be available 24/7 and you can't carry their burdens - You earn trust, but you don't chase approval - When they mess up, you don't take sides — you help them see clearly

Facilitator:

"Here's where it gets tricky in this environment. You live with your mentees. You're in the same dorm, eating the same food, dealing with the same COs. There's no office door to close at the end of the day. The guy you're mentoring might be your bunkmate.

So the lines get blurred. Your mentee wants to be your friend. He wants to hang out, talk about sports, play cards. And some of that is fine — you're human. But there has to be a part of the relationship where you're his mentor, not his buddy. Where you can say the hard thing. Where you can hold him to a standard. Where you don't co-sign his excuses because you don't want to damage the friendship.

If you become his friend first and his mentor second, you'll lose the ability to help him when it matters most. If you become an authority figure, he'll comply when you're watching and do whatever he wants when you're not. The mentor role lives in between — close enough to be trusted, far enough to be honest."

Quick discussion (5 min):

"Where do you think the hardest line will be for you? Being too much of a friend, or being too much of an authority? Be honest."

Allow 3-4 responses.

The Paradox of Mentoring (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"I want to close with something that might not make sense until you experience it.

Mentoring looks like giving. You're giving your time, your energy, your attention, your experience. You're investing in someone else's growth. On the surface, you're the one doing the work and the mentee is the one benefiting.

*But here's what every experienced mentor will tell you: **you will grow more from mentoring than your mentee will.** Not because you're selfish about it. Because the act of teaching something forces you to understand it at a deeper level. Because when you tell a mentee to manage his emotions, you can't afford to lose your own. Because watching someone else struggle with the same things you struggled with gives you perspective on your own journey.*

This is the paradox: you give in order to grow. Service isn't sacrifice — it's the mechanism of transformation. Think about that this week. Journal on it tonight."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Closing round. One sentence: **What kind of mentor do you want to be? Not what you want to do — who do you want to be as a mentor?**"*

Talking piece goes around.

Facilitator (closing):

"Hold onto what you just said. We're going to come back to it at the end of Phase 2.

*Homework: 1. Journal entry — at least half a page on this prompt: **Think about a time someone tried to help you but made it worse. What did they do wrong? What would a good mentor have done differently?** 2. Read the 'Mentor Boundaries' section in your handbook if one exists. If not, just come ready to think about where your limits are.*

Tomorrow we talk about boundaries — what mentors do and don't do. That session is going to save you from the mistakes that burn out most new mentors. See you Wednesday."

Session 37 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
- Opening circle completed — Phase 2 transition acknowledged
- Elements of Effective Mentoring presented (MENTOR research)
- Credible messenger model explained
- Journaling exercise: "The mentor I needed" completed
- Share-out discussion held (4-5 participants)
- Mentor vs. friend vs. authority figure distinctions clarified
- The paradox of mentoring discussed
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (journal on failed helping + handbook reading)

SESSION 38: Mentor Boundaries

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Describe what mentors do and don't do within the FORGE model 2. Define emotional boundaries and explain "caring without carrying" 3. Explain confidentiality and its limits in the mentoring relationship 4. Identify situations that require referral (safety concerns, mental health, medical) 5. Practice applying boundary decisions in realistic scenarios

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in round. How are you today — really? And what came up for you when you did last night's journal entry about someone who tried to help but made it worse?"

Send the talking piece. Listen for themes — controlling helpers, people who made it about themselves, people who couldn't hold boundaries. You'll reference these later.

Review and Bridge (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Yesterday we talked about what makes a good mentor. Today we talk about what keeps a good mentor from becoming a burned-out, resentful, ineffective one. The answer is one word: boundaries.

Boundaries are not walls. Walls keep people out. Boundaries keep you healthy so you can keep showing up. Every mentor who ever flamed out — who got overwhelmed, who lost themselves trying to save someone else, who crossed a line and made things worse — it started with a boundary failure.

Today is about making sure that doesn't happen to you."

What Mentors Do and Don't Do (20 minutes)

Purpose: Create a clear reference for the mentor role. This is not about limiting participants — it's about protecting them and the people they serve.

Facilitator:

"Let's build two lists together. I'll start with some, and I want you to add to them."

Write on board/easel or present verbally:

What Mentors DO: - Listen without judgment - Share their own experience when it's helpful (not to show off, not to take over the conversation) - Ask questions that help the mentee think, not questions that lead to the answer you want - Hold mentees accountable to their own goals and commitments - Model the behavior they're teaching - Show up consistently — be someone the mentee can count on - Maintain confidentiality within appropriate limits - Celebrate growth — even small progress - Refer when the situation is beyond their scope - Take care of themselves so they can keep doing this work

What Mentors DON'T Do: - Give advice on legal matters (you're not a lawyer) - Diagnose mental health conditions (you're not a therapist) - Provide medical advice (you're not a doctor) - Hold onto a mentee's property, contraband, or secrets that involve safety - Intervene in gang dynamics (this is above your scope — always) - Take sides in a mentee's conflicts - Try to "fix" people — you facilitate growth, you don't engineer it - Share a mentee's private information with others (outside of safety exceptions) - Make promises you can't keep ("I'll make sure you get moved" or "I'll talk to the warden") - Put yourself in physical danger to prove a point - Carry a mentee's emotional weight as your own

Facilitator:

"What would you add to either list? What have you seen go wrong when someone tried to help but didn't know their lane?"

Allow 4-5 additions from the group. Add them to the lists.

Emotional Boundaries: Caring Without Carrying (20 minutes)

Purpose: This is the most important boundary for peer mentors. In a correctional environment, emotional boundaries are constantly tested.

Facilitator:

"Here's where most new mentors get in trouble. You're going to work with men who are in pain. Real pain. Men who are grieving, who are angry, who are scared, who are hopeless. And because you've been through your own version of that pain, you're going to feel it when they share it.

That's empathy. And it's essential. But there's a line between empathy and absorption. Between caring about someone and carrying their burden as if it's yours.

Let me give you a picture."

"Imagine a man is drowning. You're on the shore. There are three things you can do:

Option one: *Jump in after him. Now you're both drowning. That's what happens when you carry someone's problems. You go down with them.*

Option two: *Stand on the shore and yell instructions. 'Swim harder! Kick your legs!' That's lecturing. It doesn't help.*

Option three: *Stay on solid ground, extend a rope, and pull. You're connected to him. You're helping him. But you are not in the water. You are on solid ground.*

Caring without carrying means staying on solid ground. You feel for the person. You're present with them. But you don't take their pain home with you. You don't lie awake replaying their story. You don't start feeling responsible for their choices.

This is not cold. This is sustainable. A mentor who drowns in his mentee's pain can't mentor anyone."

Pause. Let it sink in.

Facilitator:

"How does this play out in real life here? Let me give you some examples.

Your mentee tells you his mother is dying and he can't get a compassionate transfer. He's devastated. You sit with him. You listen. You validate his pain. But when you walk away from that conversation, you put it down. You feel for him, but you don't carry his grief into your own night.

Your mentee gets a DR he doesn't deserve. He's furious. You hear him out. You help him process. But you don't adopt his anger. You don't storm over to the CO and get in it yourself.

A guy in your dorm is self-destructing — picking fights, isolating, making bad choices. You offer support. You show up. But if he keeps choosing destruction, you don't let his failure become your failure. You did your part. You can't want someone's growth more than they want it."

*"The phrase I want you to remember is this: **I can care about you without being responsible for you.** Say that back to me."*

Group repeats it.

"Again."

Group repeats.

"Write it in the front of your journal. You're going to need it."

Confidentiality and Its Limits (15 minutes)

Purpose: Be crystal clear about what stays private and what doesn't.

Facilitator:

"Confidentiality is the foundation of trust in a mentoring relationship. If your mentee doesn't believe you'll keep his business private, he won't tell you anything real. And if he doesn't tell you anything real, you can't help him.

*So here's the commitment: **What your mentee shares with you stays between you and him.** Period. It doesn't become conversation in the chow hall. It doesn't get shared with his enemies. It doesn't get brought up in group unless he brings it up himself. His story is his, and he trusted you with it. Honor that.*

Now — here are the exceptions. And there are no exceptions to the exceptions."

You MUST break confidentiality when:

- 1. **Someone has a weapon or is planning to acquire one.** This is a zero-tolerance red line. Weapons endanger everyone. You report this to staff or program leadership. There's no gray area.*
- 2. **Someone expresses intent to harm themselves.** If a mentee says he's thinking about killing himself or hurting himself, this is beyond your scope. You don't handle this alone. You stay with him and you get help. We'll practice this in simulations.*
- 3. **Someone expresses intent to harm someone else.** If a mentee tells you he's planning to hurt another person, you have an obligation to prevent that harm. This doesn't mean you go tell the target — it means you engage the person, try to de-escalate, and involve staff or program leadership.*
- 4. **A child or vulnerable person is being harmed.** If you learn about abuse of a child or vulnerable person, this gets reported. Period.*

Facilitator:

"I know what some of you are thinking. 'If I report something, I'm a snitch.' Let me address that head-on. There is a difference between snitching and saving a life. Snitching is giving up information to get yourself an advantage — a deal, a favor, a lighter sentence. That's self-serving.

Reporting a safety concern is the exact opposite. You're not gaining anything. You're risking something — your reputation, your comfort, your relationship with the mentee. You're doing it because someone's life or safety is at stake. That's not snitching. That's service. That's exactly what a stakeholder does.

Is this conversation uncomfortable? Yes. Will this be the hardest part of being a mentor? Maybe. But I'd rather you struggle with this now than freeze when it matters."

Open for questions (5 min):

"Questions? Pushback? This is the time to wrestle with it — not when someone's in crisis."

Address questions honestly. Common ones: - "What if I'm not sure it's serious?" → When in doubt, err on the side of safety. Talk to program leadership. - "What if the person gets in trouble because I reported?" → You're not responsible for the consequences of their actions. You're responsible for doing the right thing. - "What if it

damages my credibility?" → It might, short-term. But the men who matter — the ones doing the work — will respect it. And you'll be able to look at yourself in the mirror.

Exercise: 10 Boundary Scenarios (25 minutes)

Purpose: Practice making boundary decisions in realistic situations before they happen in real life.

Facilitator:

*"Pair up. I'm going to read 10 scenarios. For each one, discuss with your partner: **Is this within my role as a mentor? If yes, what do I do? If no, what do I do instead?** You have about 90 seconds per scenario."*

Read each scenario. Give pairs time to discuss. Then get 1-2 responses before moving to the next.

Scenario 1: Your mentee asks you to read his legal appeal and tell him if it's good.

Answer: Outside your role. You're not a lawyer. You can help him find someone who can review it — a law clerk, legal aid, or fellow inmate with legal knowledge. But you don't give legal opinions.

Scenario 2: A mentee tells you he's been having thoughts of hurting himself but says "Don't tell anyone, I just needed to say it out loud."

Answer: You cannot keep this confidential. You stay with him, you thank him for trusting you, and you tell him honestly: "I hear you, and I'm glad you told me. But I care about your safety too much to keep this between us. I'm going to help you talk to someone who can help." Then you follow the referral process.

Scenario 3: Your mentee's bunkmate asks you what your mentee talks about in your sessions.

Answer: Confidential. "That's between me and him. If you want to talk about something yourself, I'm here."

Scenario 4: A mentee says he's been feeling depressed for weeks — can't sleep, can't eat, doesn't care about anything.

Answer: You can listen and support, but this sounds like clinical depression. Encourage him to request a mental health referral. You're not qualified to treat this, but you can walk him to sick call or help him put in a request. Don't diagnose — just facilitate access to help.

Scenario 5: A mentee asks if he can come talk to you anytime, day or night.

Answer: Set reasonable boundaries. "I'm here for you, and I mean that. But I can't be available 24/7 and stay healthy enough to do this well. Let's set up regular check-in times, and if something urgent comes up, I'll make time. But I need my downtime too, and that's not me not caring — that's me making sure I can keep showing up for you."

Scenario 6: A mentee tells you he has a weapon because he's been threatened by someone in another dorm.

Answer: Red line. You empathize with the fear — "I understand you're scared, and that's real." But the weapon has to go. This gets reported to program leadership or staff. No exceptions. You can advocate for his safety through proper channels, but you cannot keep the weapon secret.

Scenario 7: Your mentee is making great progress but asks you to tell the parole board how well he's doing.

Answer: Discuss with program leadership. You may be able to provide input through proper channels, but you don't make promises about influencing parole decisions. Be honest: "I can share your progress with the program lead, and they may be able to include it in official records. But I can't guarantee anything with the parole board, and I don't want to set you up for disappointment."

Scenario 8: A mentee tells you in confidence that another FORGE participant is bullying someone in the dorm.

Answer: This involves FORGE community safety. You can keep the mentee's name confidential, but the behavior needs to be addressed. Talk to program leadership. A FORGE participant bullying someone is a Code of Conduct issue.

Scenario 9: A mentee breaks down crying during a one-on-one session. He's talking about his children and how he's failed them.

Answer: This is within your role. You don't fix it. You don't rush to make him feel better. You sit with him. You let him feel it. You might say: "That pain is real. And the fact that you feel it means you care. That's not weakness — that's the foundation of change." You don't carry it home. You hold space, and then you let it go.

Scenario 10: After a session, your mentee hugs you and says, "You're like a brother to me."

Answer: This is warm, but be careful. You can acknowledge the connection: "I appreciate that. This relationship matters to me too." But internally, check yourself: Am I becoming his friend more than his mentor? Can I still have the hard conversations? If the friendship is overtaking the mentoring, you need to recalibrate — not by being cold, but by staying purposeful.

Debrief (5 min):

Facilitator:

"Which scenario was hardest for you? Which one made you unsure?"

Allow 3-4 responses.

"Good. The fact that some of these are hard means you're thinking about them honestly. The men who think every scenario is easy are the ones who'll freeze when it happens for real. Uncertainty is where learning lives."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Closing round: What's one boundary you think will be hardest for you to hold as a mentor? Be honest."

Talking piece goes around.

Facilitator (closing):

"I heard a lot of honesty in that round. Good. Knowing your vulnerabilities before you're in the field is what separates a prepared mentor from a well-meaning one.

*Homework: 1. Journal entry — at least half a page: **What does 'caring without carrying' mean to you? Where in your life have you struggled with this?** 2. Think about this: Who is YOUR support system? When mentoring gets heavy — and it will — who do you go to? Have at least 2 names ready for tomorrow's session. Tomorrow we talk about the parallel process — why you can't give what you don't have, and how to take care of yourself while serving others. See you Thursday."*

Session 38 Checklist

- Room in circle formation
- Opening circle completed
- "What Mentors Do / Don't Do" lists created
- Emotional boundaries taught — "caring without carrying"
- Drowning/rope metaphor delivered
- "I can care about you without being responsible for you" practiced
- Confidentiality and its 4 exceptions clearly explained
- "Snitching vs. safety" addressed directly
- 10 boundary scenarios discussed in pairs
- Debrief on hardest scenarios
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (journal on caring without carrying + identify 2 support people)

SESSION 39: The Parallel Process

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Explain the parallel process principle: you can't give what you don't have 2. Articulate why ongoing self-work is required for mentors, not optional 3. Identify signs of secondary stress and compassion fatigue 4. Describe at least 3 self-care practices they can realistically use in their environment 5. Create a personal mentor wellness plan that includes a support system

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in round. How are you today? And who are the 2 people you identified as your support system?"

Send the talking piece. Note who has identified support people and who hasn't. If someone says "nobody" or "I don't need one," don't correct them now — the session will address it.

You Can't Give What You Don't Have (20 minutes)

Purpose: Establish the non-negotiable connection between personal wellness and effective mentoring.

Facilitator:

"There's a concept in mentoring called the parallel process. It comes from counseling — therapists have known about it for decades. Here's the idea:

Whatever is happening inside the mentor shows up in the mentoring.

If you're angry and unresolved, you'll bring that into your sessions. If you haven't dealt with your own trauma, your mentee's trauma will either overwhelm you or shut you down. If you're not practicing emotional regulation yourself, you can't teach it with any credibility. If you've stopped doing your own work, you've got nothing left to offer.

Think of it like this: you're a well. Your mentees come to you for water. If you never refill the well — if you never do your own work, process your own emotions, take care of your own mind — the well runs dry. And a dry well is useless to everyone, including you."

Facilitator:

"I want to be blunt about something. Phase 1 is over. You passed your assessment. Congratulations. But that doesn't mean the work of Phase 1 is done. You don't graduate from self-awareness. You don't finish emotional regulation. You don't 'complete' accountability.

The thinking errors you identified in Week 2? They're still in there. They'll come back under stress. The emotional triggers you mapped in Week 3? They don't disappear because you named them. The conflict patterns you recognized in Week 6? They'll show up again.

Ongoing self-work is not optional for a FORGE mentor. It's required. Not because we're checking on you — because if you stop doing your own work, you will eventually harm someone you're trying to help."

Let that sit. Don't soften it.

"Let me give you a real example. A mentor in another program — a good man, committed, respected — stopped doing his own work after certification. He was putting all his energy into his mentees and nothing into himself. Six months in, a mentee shared a trauma story that was almost identical to the mentor's own experience. The mentor wasn't just triggered — he was shattered. He lost his composure in front of the mentee, the mentee felt guilty for sharing, and both of them went backward.

That's the parallel process. What's unresolved in you will surface in the mentoring relationship. The only prevention is to keep doing your own work."

Secondary Stress and Compassion Fatigue (20 minutes)

Purpose: Name the real emotional cost of mentoring so participants can recognize it before it takes them down.

Facilitator:

"There's a term in helping professions called 'secondary traumatic stress.' Therapists, social workers, emergency responders — they all deal with it. It's the stress that comes not from your own trauma, but from repeatedly absorbing other people's pain.

You are going to experience this. I'm not saying you might. I'm saying you will. When you sit with a man who's lost his family. When you mentor a young guy who reminds you of yourself at his worst. When someone you've invested in makes a terrible decision and throws it all away. When you spend weeks building trust with a mentee and he gets transferred without warning. When the same dorm drama plays out for the hundredth time and you wonder if any of this matters.

This is the cost of caring. And if you don't manage it, here's what happens:"

Signs of secondary stress and compassion fatigue:

- *You start feeling numb — you stop caring and you can't figure out why*
- *You get irritable — small things set you off that never used to*
- *You withdraw — you start avoiding your mentees, your cohort, the work*
- *You start feeling cynical — "Nobody's going to change. This is pointless."*
- *Your sleep gets worse*
- *You lose motivation for things you used to care about*
- *You start resenting the people you're supposed to be helping*
- *You stop doing your own journaling, your own self-work*
- *You break small boundaries — and then bigger ones*

Facilitator:

"Does any of this sound familiar? Not from mentoring — from life? Some of you have felt these things just from living in this environment. Now imagine layering the weight of other people's problems on top of that. This is not weakness. This is the natural consequence of doing hard emotional work without refueling. The strongest mentors are not the ones who never feel it — they're the ones who recognize it early and do something about it."

Self-Care in a Correctional Environment (15 minutes)

Purpose: Be realistic. Self-care advice often sounds like it's written for people with yoga studios and beach access. This needs to work inside a prison.

Facilitator:

"I know what 'self-care' sounds like to a lot of you. Bubble baths and meditation apps. Let me be clear — I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about survival strategies that keep you functional, healthy, and effective in an environment designed to wear you down.

Here's what's actually available to you:"

Physical self-care: - Exercise — it's the most effective stress management tool you have. Use it. Consistently. - Sleep hygiene — as much as your environment allows, protect your sleep. No heavy conversations right before lights out. Have a shutdown routine. - Nutrition — eat as well as you can with what's available. Your body fuels your mind.

Mental self-care: - Journaling — you've been doing this for 12 weeks. Don't stop. This is your processing tool. - Reading — feed your mind something other than stress. - Thinking reports on yourself — when you feel off, run a thinking report. You know how. Use the tool.

Emotional self-care: - Talk to someone — not as a mentor. As a human. Your support system exists for this. - Allow yourself to feel without judgment — sadness, frustration, doubt. They're not signs of failure. - Set emotional boundaries on your day — you don't have to respond to every crisis around you. Some things are not yours to carry.

Social self-care: - Your FORGE cohort — these men know what you're going through because they're going through it too. Use each other. - Check in with your support people regularly, not just when you're in crisis. - Protect relationships that recharge you. Limit time with people who drain you when you can.

Purpose-based self-care: - Reconnect with WHY you're doing this. Read your commitment statement from Week 1. - Remember a mentee who grew because of your investment. Let that fuel you. - Service itself can be self-care — but only when it comes from fullness, not depletion.

Exercise: Mentor Wellness Plan (25 minutes)

Purpose: Each participant creates a concrete, personal plan for maintaining their own health while mentoring.

Facilitator:

"Get out your journals. We're going to build your mentor wellness plan. This isn't an exercise you complete and forget — this is a document you live by. When you start mentoring in Phase 3, this plan is what keeps you on solid ground.

Write down each category and fill it in with specifics — not 'I'll take care of myself.' Specific actions."

Write the template on the board or read it aloud:

My Mentor Wellness Plan

- 1. My ongoing self-work commitment:** (What will you do to keep working on yourself? How often? Example: "I will complete at least 2 thinking reports per week and journal every night.")
- 2. My physical health practices:** (What will you do consistently? Example: "I will exercise at least 4 times per week. I will maintain a sleep routine.")
- 3. My emotional regulation tools:** (What techniques will you use when stress builds? Example: "4-4-4 breathing. Grounding exercises. Walking the yard to decompress before reacting.")
- 4. My support system:** (Name at least 2 people. What role does each play? Example: "[Name] — I can be honest with him about how I'm really doing. [Name] — he'll call me out if he sees me slipping.")
- 5. My warning signs:** (What are the early signals that you're burning out? Be specific to you. Example: "I stop journaling. I start snapping at people over small things. I stop wanting to go to sessions.")
- 6. My reset plan:** (When you notice the warning signs, what will you do? Example: "Talk to my support person within 24 hours. Take one day to step back from mentoring if possible. Do a full thinking report on what's going on. Talk to the facilitator.")

15 minutes of writing. Facilitator circulates, asks questions, pushes for specificity.

"If your support system section is blank or you wrote 'nobody,' we need to talk about that right now. A mentor without a support system is a mentor heading for a wall. If you genuinely don't have someone you trust enough, then building that is your first priority. Start with this cohort — the men in this room have been through 12 weeks of hard work together. That's a foundation."

Share out (10 min):

"I want 3-4 volunteers to share one part of their plan — whichever section you want. Not because it has to be perfect, but because saying it out loud makes it real."

Allow sharing. Affirm specificity. Push vagueness:

"When you say 'I'll take care of myself,' what does that actually look like at 9 PM on a Tuesday when your mentee just told you something heavy and you can't sleep? Get specific."

Building the Support System (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Before we close, I want to address the support system piece directly. In here, asking for support can feel like weakness. You've survived by being self-sufficient. You've handled your problems alone because trusting people got you burned.

But mentoring changes the equation. You're asking other people to be vulnerable with you. You're asking mentees to trust you with their pain. If you won't let anyone do the same for you, you're being a hypocrite. Not a harsh one — a well-meaning one. But still.

A support system for a FORGE mentor looks like this:

Person 1: *A peer — someone in the program who understands the work. You can process a hard session with them. You can say 'I'm struggling' without it becoming gossip.*

Person 2: *Someone who will be honest with you. Not someone who tells you what you want to hear. Someone who'll say, 'You're slipping and here's what I see.' You need that more than you think.*

Person 3 (if possible): *The facilitator or program lead. This is what supervision is for. In Phase 3, you'll have weekly supervision sessions for exactly this reason. Use them.*

Right now — turn to someone in this room who you trust. Not your best friend. Someone you respect. And say this: 'Will you be one of my support people? Here's what I need from you.' Have a 2-minute conversation."

Allow pairs to connect (2-3 min). Some people will do this easily. Others will struggle. That's fine — the act of trying matters.

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Final round for Week 13. Complete this sentence: 'The biggest thing I'm taking from this week is...'"

Talking piece goes around.

Facilitator (closing):

"This week we laid the foundation of your mentor identity. You learned what effective mentoring looks like. You learned where the boundaries are. And you confronted the truth that you can't pour from an empty cup.

*Homework for next Tuesday: 1. Finalize your mentor wellness plan. Make it specific enough that you could hand it to someone and they'd know exactly what you committed to. 2. Journal entry: '**What scares me most about being a mentor — and what gives me the most hope?**' At least half a page. 3. Read ahead in the handbook on facilitation and teaching if material is available.*

Next week, we shift gears. Week 14 is about teaching and facilitation — how to actually run a session, design a lesson, and manage a room full of people. You're going to practice, and by the end of Week 15, every one of you will have delivered a 30-minute lesson.

Service Over Self. See you Tuesday."

Session 39 Checklist

- Room in circle formation
- Opening circle completed — support system question asked
- Parallel process principle explained with concrete example
- Ongoing self-work requirement stated clearly
- Secondary stress and compassion fatigue signs taught
- Self-care practices presented — realistic for correctional environment
- Mentor wellness plan exercise completed (all 6 sections)
- Share-out of wellness plan elements
- Support system building exercise completed
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (finalize wellness plan + journal on fears and hopes + reading)

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 13

What to Watch For

The "I'm ready" overconfidence: Some participants will come into Phase 2 feeling like they've graduated. They passed the Phase 1 assessment, they've done the work, they know the material. Watch for men who are too confident too early. Mentoring is humbling — and the overconfident ones are usually the first to struggle when a real situation tests them. Don't crush the confidence. Just keep pushing them to go deeper.

The "I'm not ready" doubt: Other participants will feel imposter syndrome. "Who am I to mentor anyone? I'm still in here. I still mess up." This is actually healthy doubt — but it needs to be managed so it doesn't become paralysis. Remind them: readiness is not perfection. It's willingness to keep growing while serving others.

Boundary resistance: The confidentiality limits — especially the obligation to report safety concerns — will cause friction. Some men will push back hard on this. Let them push. This conversation needs to happen in a classroom before it happens in a crisis. Don't shortcut the wrestling.

Emotional reactions to the credible messenger content: Telling participants that their worst experiences are now assets can be powerful — and painful. Some men will get emotional when they realize their suffering has purpose. Others will resist: "Don't tell me my pain was 'for a reason.'" Both responses are valid. Give space.

Isolation: Watch for participants who don't have anyone to put on their support system list. These men need extra attention — not just for the exercise, but as a genuine concern. A man without support people is carrying everything alone, and that won't survive the weight of mentoring.

Common Week 13 Challenges

"I don't need self-care — I've survived this long without it." Response: "You've survived. The question is whether you've been living or just enduring. And the question for mentoring is whether survival mode is enough to help someone else grow. It's not. Surviving is about you. Thriving is what lets you serve."

"What if my mentee doesn't trust me because I'm an inmate too?" Response: "That's actually your advantage — but only if you've earned credibility through your actions, not just your sentence. Trust in here is built the same way it is everywhere: consistency, honesty, and showing up when it's hard."

"The confidentiality thing feels wrong." Response: "I understand that. This goes against the code most of us were raised on. But think about it this way — if your little brother told you he had a weapon and was planning to use it, would you keep that secret? Or would you do whatever it took to keep him alive? Being a mentor means extending that same protective instinct to the men you serve. It's not easy. It shouldn't be."

"What if I burn out and want to quit?" Response: "Then you talk to your support people and you talk to me. Burning out isn't failing — ignoring it is. Every mentor hits walls. The ones who last are the ones who ask for help before the wall falls on them."

Preparation for Week 14

- Review adult learning principles (Knowles) — be ready to teach them simply and concretely
- Prepare examples of good facilitation questions vs. lecture-style delivery
- Have a list of Phase 1 topics ready for participants to choose from for their practicum lessons
- Create or print the observation rubric for teaching practica (from Part IV of Program Design)
- Prepare the 4-part lesson plan template (Hook → Content → Practice → Debrief)
- If possible, identify 2-3 short examples of different learning styles in action that are relevant to the prison context

Week 14: Teaching and Facilitation Skills

Week 14 Overview

Purpose: Week 13 established the mentor identity — who you are as a mentor. Week 14 builds the practical skills — how you actually teach and lead a session. By the end of this week, every participant will understand how adults learn, know the difference between facilitating and lecturing, and have written a complete lesson plan that they'll deliver next week. This is where the shift from "I know this material" to "I can help someone else learn it" becomes real.

Sessions This Week: - Session 40 (Tuesday): How Adults Learn - Session 41 (Wednesday): Facilitation vs. Lecturing - Session 42 (Thursday): Lesson Planning

Materials Needed: - Journals/notebooks - Pens/pencils (1 per participant) - Talking piece for circle process - Easel paper or whiteboard (if available) - Handout: "4 Adult Learning Principles" summary (1 per participant) - Handout: "Lesson Plan Template" — Hook / Content / Practice / Debrief (1 per participant) - Handout: "Observation Rubric" for teaching practicum (1 per participant — will be used in Week 15) - List of Phase 1 topics available for practicum lessons (1 per participant) - Timer or watch for timed exercises

SESSION 40: How Adults Learn

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Explain Knowles' 4 principles of adult learning in their own words 2. Identify 4 learning styles and describe how each one takes in information 3. Design a simple activity that addresses at least 2 different learning styles 4. Explain why understanding your audience matters more than knowing your content

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in round. How are you doing today? And: think back to Phase 1 — what was the most effective session? Not your favorite topic. The session where you actually learned the most. What made it work?"

Send the talking piece. Listen carefully — their answers will foreshadow the principles you're about to teach. Reference them later.

Bridge from Week 13 (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Last week we focused on who you are as a mentor. This week is about what you do as a mentor — specifically, how you teach and how you run a session.

Here's what I've seen happen in every mentoring program that doesn't train this: a man who's done incredible personal work, who genuinely understands the material, stands in front of a group and lectures for an hour straight. Eyes glaze over. People check out. The mentor walks away frustrated: 'They just don't care.'

The problem isn't the audience. The problem is the delivery. Knowing something and being able to teach it are two completely different skills. This week, you learn the second one."

Knowles' 4 Principles of Adult Learning (30 minutes)

Purpose: Give participants a framework for understanding how the men they'll mentor actually learn. This isn't academic — it's practical.

Facilitator:

"In the 1970s, a researcher named Malcolm Knowles studied how adults learn differently from children. He found four key principles. I'm going to give you each one, and then we're going to connect it to your own experience."

Principle 1: Adults need to know WHY they're learning something.

"Children will learn something just because the teacher says so. Adults won't. If a grown man doesn't understand why this matters — why learning emotional regulation or conflict resolution is going to help him — he checks out. He might sit in the chair, but his mind is gone.

What this means for you as a facilitator: before you teach anything, answer the question "Why should I care?" If you can't answer that in one sentence, you're not ready to teach it."

Facilitator:

"Think about Phase 1. Week 2 — thinking errors. Did that lesson start with 'Here are the 8 thinking errors, memorize them'? No. It started with 'How thinking controls behavior.' It gave you the WHY before the WHAT. How many of you would have cared about a list of 8 thinking errors without understanding why they matter?"

Allow 2-3 responses.

Principle 2: Adults learn best from experience, not lectures.

"Adults don't learn by sitting and listening. They learn by doing. Think about every skill you've actually retained from Phase 1 — was it because I told you about it, or because you practiced it? The paired listening exercises. The role-play de-escalations. The thinking reports you wrote about YOUR situations.

What this means for you: every session you facilitate needs to include practice. Not 'talk about it.' DO it. If you're teaching conflict resolution, don't just explain the steps — put people in a scenario and let them try. If you're teaching emotional regulation, don't just describe breathing techniques — have them practice in the moment. Experience is the teacher. You're just the guide."

Principle 3: Adults approach learning as problem-solving.

"Adults aren't interested in theory for its own sake. They want to solve a problem they're facing RIGHT NOW. If you're teaching communication skills, don't start with 'The four communication styles are...' Start with 'Have you ever tried to tell someone something important and it went completely wrong? That's what we're going to fix today.'

What this means for you: frame every lesson around a problem your audience actually has. Not a textbook problem. A dorm problem. A life problem. A relationship problem. The content is the solution — but the problem has to come first."

Principle 4: Adults learn best when the topic has immediate application.

"If someone thinks 'I'll need this someday,' they'll forget it by tomorrow. If they think 'I can use this tonight,' they'll remember it. That's why homework in FORGE isn't busy work — it's application. 'Use an I-statement in a conversation this week.' 'Practice the STOP technique twice.' 'Complete 3 acts of service.'

What this means for you: at the end of every session, give people something to DO with what they just learned. Not 'think about it.' DO it. Today. This week. Immediate application cements learning. Everything else evaporates."

Quick review:

"Let me hear them back. Four principles. Who can give me one?"

Call on 4 different participants to repeat each principle in their own words. Correct gently if needed, affirm when they nail it.

Learning Styles (20 minutes)

Purpose: Not everyone takes in information the same way. A good facilitator reaches the whole room.

Facilitator:

"Now that you know how adults learn in general, let's talk about how individuals differ. There are four main learning styles. Most people have a dominant one, but everyone uses a mix."

Visual learners — They learn by seeing. Diagrams, charts, written lists, demonstrations. When you put something on the board, these are the guys who get it immediately. When you only talk, they struggle.

"In here, what does this look like? The visual learner is the guy who asks 'Can you write that down?' or who draws out the conflict resolution steps so he can see them. If you're facilitating and you only talk, you're losing this guy."

Auditory learners — They learn by hearing. Discussion, verbal explanation, stories. They process information by talking it through. They remember what you said better than what you wrote.

"This is the guy who gets it during the group discussion but can't remember what was on the handout. When you tell a story or share an example, he lights up. He learns by hearing AND by talking — so discussion is his best tool."

Kinesthetic learners — They learn by doing. Role-play, hands-on activities, movement. They can't sit still for a lecture — not because they're disrespectful, but because their brain needs their body to be involved.

"In here? This is the guy who was bored during the lecture but came alive during the role-play. The guy who learns conflict resolution by doing it, not by hearing about it. If your session is all talk, you've lost him."

Reading/writing learners — They learn by reading and writing. Handouts, journal exercises, written reflections. They process information by putting it on paper.

"This is the guy who takes notes during every session. The guy whose journal is full. He learns by writing things down and reading them back. The journaling practice in FORGE was designed for this learner."

Facilitator:

*"Here's the point: **when you facilitate a session, you will have all four types in the room.** If you only lecture, you reach the auditory learners and lose everyone else. If you only do role-plays, you reach the kinesthetic learners and overwhelm the reading/writing learners."*

A good facilitator uses variety. Every session should include something to see, something to hear, something to do, and something to write. You don't have to be perfect at this — you just have to be intentional."

Quick self-assessment:

"What's YOUR dominant learning style? Think about it. When did you learn best in Phase 1? When you were listening? When you were doing role-plays? When you were writing in your journal? When something was drawn out on the board?"

Go-around (brief — just a word or two from each person). This builds self-awareness and also shows the diversity of learning styles in the room.

Exercise: Teach One Concept Three Ways (20 minutes)

Purpose: Apply adult learning principles and learning styles immediately.

Facilitator:

"Pair up. Each pair picks ONE FORGE concept from Phase 1 — any concept. Thinking errors. The escalation curve. Active listening. I-statements. The conflict resolution steps. Whatever you want.

Your task: design a 10-minute mini-lesson on that concept. But here's the requirement — your lesson has to use at least 3 different approaches to reach different learners. Maybe you explain it verbally (auditory), draw a diagram (visual), and have them practice it (kinesthetic). Maybe you tell a story, hand out a written summary, and do a role-play.

You have 10 minutes to plan. Then 2 pairs will demonstrate their approach."

Pairs work for 10 minutes. Facilitator circulates, asks questions, pushes for creativity:

"How are you reaching the kinesthetic learner? What's the visual element? Where does the practice come in?"

2 pairs demonstrate (3-4 min each). After each demonstration:

"What learning styles did they hit? What would you add to reach the ones they missed?"

Debrief (3 min):

Facilitator:

"Notice what just happened. When I asked you to teach a concept three ways, you had to understand it at a deeper level than when you just knew it for yourself. That's the paradox we talked about last week — teaching forces deeper learning. You're going to experience this again and again."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Closing round: What's one thing about how YOU learn that you wish your teachers had known when you were younger?"

Talking piece goes around. This question often surfaces powerful stories about educational failure and missed potential.

Facilitator (closing):

"What I'm hearing is that most of you were failed by people who didn't know how to teach you — not because you couldn't learn. You can be the person who doesn't make that mistake for someone else.

*Homework: 1. Journal entry: **Pick a Phase 1 concept you want to teach. Write down how you'd explain it to three different types of learners.** This is pre-work for your lesson plan on Thursday. 2. Start thinking about which Phase 1 topic you want to use for your teaching practicum next week. You'll deliver a 30-minute lesson. Pick something you know well and care about.*

Tomorrow we talk about the difference between facilitating and lecturing — and how to manage a room when things get complicated. See you Wednesday."

Session 40 Checklist

- Room in circle formation
- Opening circle completed
- Bridge from Week 13 delivered
- Knowles' 4 adult learning principles taught with examples
- Participants repeated principles in own words
- 4 learning styles explained with prison-relevant examples
- Quick self-assessment on personal learning style completed
- "Teach One Concept Three Ways" exercise completed in pairs
- 2 pairs demonstrated their mini-lessons
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (journal on multi-style teaching + choose practicum topic)

SESSION 41: Facilitation vs. Lecturing

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Explain the difference between a facilitator and a lecturer 2. Formulate open-ended, powerful questions that draw out group thinking 3. Identify and respond to 4 common group dynamic challenges (the quiet one, the dominator, the disruptor, the skeptic) 4. Conduct a brief debrief that draws learning out of an exercise 5. Facilitate a 5-minute group discussion with feedback

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in round. What Phase 1 topic did you choose for your practicum lesson next week? And on a scale of 1-10, how confident are you about teaching it?"

Talking piece. Note topics and confidence levels. If duplicates arise, that's fine — different facilitators will teach the same topic differently.

The Facilitator's Role: Guide, Not Expert (15 minutes)

Purpose: Shift participants' mental model of what leading a session looks like.

Facilitator:

"Here's the biggest mistake new facilitators make: they think their job is to be the smartest person in the room. They think they need to have every answer, fill every silence, and deliver a perfect performance.

That's a lecturer. And lecturers are usually the only person in the room who thinks the session went well.

A facilitator is different. The word 'facilitate' comes from a Latin word that means 'to make easy.' Your job is not to pour knowledge into people's heads. Your job is to create conditions where people discover knowledge for themselves.

Think about the best sessions in Phase 1. Were they the ones where I talked for two hours straight? Or were they the ones where you practiced, discussed, argued, and figured things out together? The facilitator's skill is in the setup, the questions, and the debrief — not in the lecture.

Here's how I think about it:"

A lecturer says: "Here's what you need to know." A facilitator says: "What do you already know about this? Where are the gaps? Let's explore."

A lecturer fills silence with more talking. A facilitator uses silence as a tool — letting people think, process, and find their own words.

A lecturer gets uncomfortable when someone disagrees. A facilitator gets curious: "Tell me more about that. What makes you see it that way?"

A lecturer measures success by how much content was covered. A facilitator measures success by how much the group learned and applied.

Facilitator:

"I want to be honest with you — this is hard. When you know the material, the temptation to just tell people the answer is almost overwhelming. You'll watch someone struggle and every instinct will say 'Just explain it!' But if you explain it, they hear your answer. If you guide them to find it themselves, they own it. And ownership is what creates change."

Asking Powerful Questions (20 minutes)

Purpose: The facilitator's most important tool is the question, not the answer.

Facilitator:

"The single most important skill you'll develop as a facilitator is asking good questions. Not any question — the right question at the right time. Let me show you the difference."

Closed questions (avoid these most of the time): - "Does that make sense?" (Everyone nods, nobody learned anything.) - "Do you agree?" (Gets a yes/no. Conversation stops.) - "Did you do the homework?" (Yes or no. No depth.)

Open questions (use these): - "What stood out to you about that?" - "How does this connect to something you've experienced?" - "What would you do differently if you could replay that situation?" - "What's the hardest part of what we just discussed?" - "Who sees it differently? Why?"

Powerful questions (these change the room): - "What are you afraid would happen if you actually did this?" - "What's the cost of NOT changing this pattern?" - "If your mentee were watching you right now, what would he learn?" - "What would it take for you to believe this is possible?" - "What are you not saying that needs to be said?"

Facilitator:

"Notice the pattern. Closed questions get information. Open questions get thinking. Powerful questions get transformation.

Your goal as a facilitator is to spend most of your time in the open and powerful zones. You ask the question, then you shut up and let the room work."

Practice:

"I'm going to give you a statement. Your job is to turn it into a powerful question. Don't explain the concept — ask a question that would make someone discover it themselves."

Read each statement. Give pairs 30 seconds to formulate a question. Then hear 2-3 responses.

Statement: "Anger is usually a secondary emotion covering something else." **Good questions:** "Think about the last time you were really angry. What was underneath it?" / "Why do you think anger feels safer than sadness or fear?"

Statement: "Thinking errors lead to bad decisions." **Good questions:** "Can anyone share a time when what you were telling yourself turned out to be completely wrong — and it cost you something?" / "What story were you believing in that moment?"

Statement: "Active listening means reflecting back what you heard." **Good questions:** "What's it like when someone actually listens to you — really listens? How do you know they heard you?" / "What happens in a conversation when the other person is planning their response instead of listening?"

Facilitator:

"See what happened? The statement gives information. The question creates experience. When someone answers a powerful question, they're not just learning your concept — they're connecting it to their life. That's where change happens."

Managing Group Dynamics (25 minutes)

Purpose: Every group has challenging dynamics. A skilled facilitator manages them without losing the room.

Facilitator:

"Let's talk about the four people you'll meet in every group you ever facilitate. I guarantee you'll recognize them from this cohort — and if you're being honest, you'll recognize yourself."

The Quiet One

"He's in every group. He sits, he listens, he never volunteers. Some facilitators ignore him. Others put him on the spot. Both are wrong."

The quiet one might be quiet because he's processing internally. He might be quiet because he doesn't trust the group yet. He might be quiet because he's been taught that speaking up is dangerous.

What to do: - Don't force him to talk. That builds resentment, not engagement. - Create safe entry points: pair work, written exercises, small group before large group. It's easier to talk to one person than twelve. - Check in privately after the session: 'I noticed you were quiet today. I want to make sure you're getting what you need. Is there anything I can do differently?' - Use the go-around format when you want everyone's voice. It gives the quiet one a structured moment to speak without having to interrupt. - Affirm when he does speak: 'Thank you for that — that's an important point.'"

The Dominator

"He has something to say about everything. He answers first, talks longest, and doesn't realize he's sucking the oxygen out of the room. He might be enthusiastic. He might be insecure. He might just love the sound of his own voice."

What to do: - Set group expectations early: 'I want to hear from people who haven't spoken yet.' - Redirect with respect: 'I appreciate your input — let's hear from someone else on this.' - Use structured formats: 'Everyone gets 60 seconds. That's it.' - Talk to him privately: 'I can tell you're engaged, and that's great. I need your help drawing others in. Can you hold back sometimes and let others find their voice first?' - Channel his energy: give him a role — timekeeper, note-taker, observer who reports back."

The Disruptor

"Side conversations, jokes at the wrong moment, eye-rolling, checking out, going to the bathroom every 20 minutes. The disruptor might be bored. He might be uncomfortable with the material. He might be testing you."

What to do: - Address the behavior, not the character: 'I need everyone's attention here — this is important' not 'You're being disrespectful.' - Use proximity: move closer to the disruptor. Physical presence often settles behavior without a word. - If it's a side conversation: pause, look at them, wait. Silence is loud. The group will self-correct. - If it continues, address it privately at break: 'What's going on? You seem checked out today. Is something up?' - If it's persistent and affecting the group: this becomes an accountability conversation using the SBI model from Phase 1."

The Skeptic

"Arms crossed. 'This doesn't work.' 'This is stupid.' 'You don't know what you're talking about.' The skeptic is the one most facilitators fear — and the one who, handled well, can actually make your session better."

What to do: - Don't fight skepticism. Welcome it: 'That's a fair challenge. Tell me more about why you see it that way.' - Ask the group: 'Who agrees? Who disagrees? Let's talk about it.' - Use the skeptic's resistance as

a teaching moment: 'Resistance to change is natural. What are you protecting by holding onto that belief?' - Be honest when the skeptic has a point. If something you said was off, own it: 'You're right — that didn't land the way I intended. Let me try again.' - Never make a skeptic the enemy. The moment you argue with a skeptic in front of the group, you've lost the room. Stay curious, stay calm, stay open."

The Art of the Debrief (15 minutes)

Purpose: The debrief is where learning is cemented. An exercise without a debrief is just an activity — it becomes a lesson when you process it.

Facilitator:

"Every exercise you run as a facilitator needs to end with a debrief. The exercise is the experience. The debrief is where the learning happens. Without a debrief, people had an experience but they didn't extract the lesson from it.

Here's a simple debrief structure — three questions, in order:"

1. What happened? (Get the facts and observations on the table.) - "What did you notice during that exercise?" - "What stood out to you?" - "What was surprising?"

2. So what? (Draw out the meaning.) - "Why does that matter?" - "How does this connect to what we're learning?" - "What did this teach you about yourself?"

3. Now what? (Connect to action.) - "How will you use this?" - "What will you do differently based on what you just experienced?" - "What's your takeaway?"

Facilitator:

"Three questions: What happened? So what? Now what? You can debrief any exercise, any simulation, any discussion with these three questions. Memorize them. They'll become second nature."

Quick practice:

"Think back to any exercise we've done in FORGE. In 2 sentences, give me a 'What happened, So what, Now what' debrief of that exercise."

Call on 3 participants. Coach their debrief responses:

"Good 'what happened.' Push the 'so what' deeper — why does that matter to them, not just in general? The 'now what' needs to be specific — what exactly will they do?"

Exercise: 5-Minute Facilitation (20 minutes)

Purpose: Every participant facilitates a short discussion RIGHT NOW. This is the first real practice.

Facilitator:

"Time to do it. Each of you is going to facilitate a 5-minute group discussion on any topic you choose. It can be a FORGE topic, a life question, a debatable issue — anything appropriate.

Here are the rules: 1. You have to start with an open or powerful question — no lecture 2. You have to get at least 3 people to participate 3. You have to close with a brief debrief — What happened? So what? Now what? 4. You have 5 minutes. I'll time you.

We'll do 4 people today. The rest of you are observers. After each facilitator, we give 2 minutes of feedback: one thing that worked well, one thing to improve."

4 volunteers or assigned participants facilitate. After each:

Feedback round (2 min each): - Facilitator gives one specific strength and one specific area for improvement
- 1-2 peers give feedback

Common feedback to offer: - "You talked too much — let the group do more work" - "Great opening question — it got people talking immediately" - "You answered your own question. Next time, hold the silence" - "Good eye contact — you were connected to the room" - "Your debrief was surface-level. Push deeper: 'Why does that matter?'"

Facilitator (after all 4):

"How did that feel? For those who facilitated — what surprised you? For those observing — what did you learn from watching?"

Allow 3-4 responses.

"The gap between knowing how to facilitate and actually facilitating is enormous. You just crossed it for the first time. Tomorrow we put it all together with lesson planning. Thursday you'll build the lesson you'll deliver next week."

Closing Circle (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Quick closing round: **One word** — how do you feel about facilitating right now?"*

Talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Whatever you feel — nervous, excited, terrified, ready — is exactly right. The only wrong answer would be 'indifferent.'"

*Homework: 1. Journal entry: **Write 5 powerful questions you could use to facilitate a discussion on your practicum topic.** Don't use closed questions. Make them open or powerful. 2. Observe a conversation or interaction tomorrow — not as a participant, but as a facilitator would. Notice the dynamics. Who talks? Who's quiet? Who dominates? Who disrupts? Write down what you see.*

Tomorrow you build your lesson plan. Come ready to work. See you Thursday."

Session 41 Checklist

- Room in circle formation
- Opening circle completed — practicum topics and confidence levels noted
- Facilitator vs. lecturer distinction taught
- Powerful questions framework taught (closed → open → powerful)
- Question practice completed with 3 statements
- 4 group dynamics archetypes taught (quiet one, dominator, disruptor, skeptic)
- Strategies for each archetype discussed
- Debrief structure taught (What happened? So what? Now what?)
- 5-minute facilitation exercise completed (4 participants)
- Feedback given after each facilitation
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (5 powerful questions + observation journal)

SESSION 42: Lesson Planning

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Describe the 4-part lesson structure: Hook, Content, Practice, Debrief 2. Write clear learning objectives using the format "By the end of this session, participants will be able to..." 3. Create a complete 30-minute lesson plan for their practicum topic 4. Identify strategies for adapting a lesson when the plan isn't working

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in round. What did you notice when you observed a conversation or interaction through a facilitator's lens yesterday? What dynamics did you see?"

Talking piece. Affirm good observations. Connect them to the group dynamics content from Session 41.

The 4-Part Lesson Structure (25 minutes)

Purpose: Give participants a simple, repeatable framework for building any session.

Facilitator:

"Every effective lesson — whether it's 30 minutes or 2 hours — follows the same basic structure. Four parts. Learn these and you can build a session on any topic.

Think of it like a meal. You need each course or the experience is incomplete."

Part 1: The HOOK (10-15% of your time)

"The hook is the first 3-5 minutes. Its job is to grab attention and answer the question 'Why should I care?' before anyone has a chance to check out.

A good hook connects the topic to the learner's life. It creates curiosity or urgency. It makes people lean in.

Examples of hooks: - **A question:** 'How many of you have been in a conversation where you could tell the other person wasn't listening? What did that feel like?' (for an active listening lesson) - **A scenario:** 'Imagine you're in the dorm and two men are arguing about a missing item. It's getting loud. Other guys are circling. What do you do?' (for a conflict resolution lesson) - **A statistic:** '75 to 90 percent of incarcerated men have experienced significant trauma. That's nearly everyone in this room.' (for a trauma awareness lesson) - **A personal story:** 'Let me tell you about the time I completely lost my composure and what it cost me.' (for an emotional regulation lesson)

What does NOT work as a hook: - 'Today we're going to learn about...' (That's a syllabus, not a hook.) - Reading from a page - Starting with definitions

Your hook should make someone think, 'I need to hear this.'"

Part 2: The CONTENT (25-30% of your time)

"This is where you teach the concept. But remember — you're a facilitator, not a lecturer. Content delivery should be interactive. You present the idea, but you involve the group as you go.

Rules for content delivery: - Break it into chunks. Don't dump everything at once. Teach one piece, check understanding, move to the next. - Use examples from real life — not textbook examples. Examples from the dorm, from the yard, from relationships. - Ask questions as you go: 'Has anyone experienced this?' 'What do you think happens next?' - Use visuals if possible — write key points on the board, draw a diagram, use a list. - Watch the room. If eyes are glazing, you've been talking too long. Shift to interaction."

Part 3: The PRACTICE (35-40% of your time)

"This is the most important part. This is where learning actually happens. Practice means the participants DO something with the content you just taught.

Types of practice: - **Paired exercise:** Partners practice a skill with each other (active listening, I-statements, conflict resolution steps) - **Role-play:** Act out a scenario using the skills taught - **Written exercise:** Journal prompt, thinking report, reflection - **Group discussion:** Structured conversation with a specific question - **Case study:** 'Here's a situation — what would you do and why?'

The practice portion is where you as a facilitator do the least talking. Set up the exercise clearly, then step back. Walk the room. Listen. Coach quietly. But don't take over.

Remember: adults learn from experience. The practice IS the lesson. Everything else is setup."

Part 4: The DEBRIEF (15-20% of your time)

"You learned this yesterday. The debrief is where you help the group extract meaning from the practice. Without it, they had an experience. With it, they have a lesson.

The three debrief questions: 1. What happened? (observations) 2. So what? (meaning) 3. Now what? (application)

End with a clear takeaway and an action step. 'Here's the one thing I want you to walk out of here with today.' Then give them something to DO before the next session."

Put the full structure on the board:

HOOK (10-15%) → Grab attention, answer "Why should I care?"

CONTENT (25-30%) → Teach the concept interactively

PRACTICE (35-40%) → Participants DO something with it

DEBRIEF (15-20%) → What happened? So what? Now what? + Action step

Facilitator:

"For your 30-minute practicum lesson next week, that breaks down roughly like this: - Hook: 3-4 minutes - Content: 8-10 minutes - Practice: 10-12 minutes - Debrief: 5-6 minutes

Most new facilitators spend too much time on content and not enough on practice. Fight that instinct. If you have to cut something, cut content, never practice."

Writing Learning Objectives (10 minutes)

Purpose: Teach participants to start with the end in mind.

Facilitator:

*"Before you build your lesson, you need to answer one question: **What will participants be able to do after this session that they couldn't do before?**"*

That's a learning objective. And it starts with these words every time: 'By the end of this session, participants will be able to...'

The key word is 'DO.' Not 'understand.' Not 'know about.' Not 'be aware of.' Those are invisible. You can't observe whether someone 'understands.' You CAN observe whether they can DO something."

Weak objectives: - *"Participants will understand conflict resolution." (How do you know? You can't see 'understanding.')* - *"Participants will learn about thinking errors." (What does 'learn about' look like?)*

Strong objectives: - *"Participants will be able to identify at least 3 thinking errors in a written scenario." - "Participants will be able to demonstrate the 5-step conflict resolution model in a role-play." - "Participants will be able to use an I-statement instead of a You-statement in a practice conversation."*

Facilitator:

"Use action words: identify, describe, demonstrate, practice, explain, apply, create, compare, role-play. These are observable. You can actually see whether someone did them."

Quick practice:

"Turn to the person next to you. In 2 minutes, write one strong learning objective for your practicum topic. Use the format: 'By the end of this session, participants will be able to...' with an action word."

2 minutes. Then hear 4-5 objectives. Coach each one:

"Is that observable? Can you see whether they did it? If so, good. If not, tighten it up."

Preparing Materials with Limited Resources (10 minutes)

Purpose: Be realistic about the environment. Participants won't have PowerPoint, printers, or supplies.

Facilitator:

"Let's be real about resources. You're going to facilitate in an environment where you might not have a whiteboard, you probably don't have a printer, and handouts are a luxury. So how do you prepare materials?"

Use what you have: - Write key points on paper and hold them up, or tape them to the wall - Use your voice and body — demonstrate, act out, tell stories - Leverage the participants themselves — 'I need 3 volunteers to role-play this scenario' - Use everyday objects as props — a book can represent a talking piece, chairs can be rearranged for a fishbowl exercise, standing up and moving creates energy

Prepare what you can: - Write out your lesson plan in your journal — know your flow cold - Write key questions in advance — don't wing the questions - If you can get paper, write the learning objectives and key concepts so participants can see them - Prepare your scenarios, case studies, or role-play setups in writing so you don't forget details under pressure

The most important material is YOU: - Your energy, your preparation, your presence — that's what makes or breaks a session - A well-prepared facilitator with no materials beats an unprepared facilitator with a full supply closet every time"

Exercise: Build Your Lesson Plan (35 minutes)

Purpose: This is the main work of the session. Participants create the lesson plan they'll deliver next week.

Facilitator:

"This is it. You've got 25 minutes to build your 30-minute lesson plan. Use the template. Fill in every section. Be specific — don't write 'do an exercise.' Write exactly what the exercise is, how you'll set it up, what instructions you'll give, and how you'll debrief it."

Distribute or display the template:

LESSON PLAN TEMPLATE

Topic: *Duration:* 30 minutes

Learning Objectives: (1-2 objectives — "By the end of this session, participants will be able to...")

HOOK (3-4 min): - What question, scenario, story, or activity will you use to grab attention? - Write out exactly what you'll say or do.

CONTENT (8-10 min): - What are the key points you'll teach? - How will you make this interactive (not a lecture)? - What questions will you ask along the way? - What visual aids will you use (if any)?

PRACTICE (10-12 min): - What will participants DO? - Write the exact instructions you'll give. - What learning styles does this activity reach? - What will you do while they practice? (circulate, observe, coach)

DEBRIEF (5-6 min): - What are your debrief questions? (What happened? So what? Now what?) - What's the key takeaway? - What action step or homework will you give?

BACKUP PLAN: - If your exercise falls flat, what will you do instead? - If you run out of time, what can you cut? - If you have extra time, what can you add?

25 minutes of working time. Facilitator circulates actively:

- Check that hooks are engaging, not just introductions
- Check that content sections are interactive, not lecture scripts
- Check that practice sections are specific and detailed
- Push on debrief questions: "Are these open questions? Will they draw out real learning?"
- Make sure backup plans exist

Pair review (10 min):

Facilitator:

"Find a partner — preferably someone teaching a different topic. Exchange lesson plans. Read it and give feedback on 3 things: 1. Is the hook engaging? Would it grab your attention? 2. Is the practice section clear enough that you could follow the instructions? 3. Is there a backup plan?"

Be honest. This is a service — helping someone improve their plan before they deliver it."

5 minutes of reading and 5 minutes of verbal feedback between partners.

Adapting on the Fly (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Last thing. No plan survives first contact with a real group. You'll prepare a beautiful lesson, and then someone asks a question that takes the conversation somewhere completely different. Or an exercise bombs. Or the group is energized and you want to ride the wave instead of cutting it short.

Here's how you adapt:

Read the room constantly. *Are people engaged? Bored? Confused? Emotional? Let what you see guide your decisions.*

Hold loosely. *Your plan is a guide, not a script. If the group needs something different, adjust.*

Protect the practice. *If you need to cut something, cut content. Never cut the practice or the debrief. The practice is where learning happens. The debrief is where learning sticks.*

Name what's happening. *If you're going off-plan, say so: 'This conversation is too important to cut short. I'm going to adjust our plan because what you're saying matters.' That's transparency, and it builds trust.*

Don't panic. *You'll lose your place. You'll forget something. You'll ask a question and get silence. That's normal. Take a breath, check your notes, and keep going. No one expects perfection. They expect presence."*

Closing Circle (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Closing round: **In one sentence** — what's the strongest part of your lesson plan, and what still needs work?"*

Talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

*"Homework: 1. **Finalize your lesson plan.** It needs to be complete and ready to deliver by Tuesday. Don't wing it. 2. **Practice your lesson at least twice before Tuesday.** Out loud. Not in your head — out loud. Time yourself. If it runs over 30 minutes, cut. If it's under 25, add. 3. Review the observation rubric — that's what your peers and I will use to give you feedback next week.*

Next week is your teaching practicum. Half of you deliver Tuesday, the other half Wednesday. Thursday we deal with what happens when things go wrong — group dynamics and difficult moments.

This is where it gets real. Prepare like it matters — because it does. See you Tuesday."

Session 42 Checklist

- Room in circle formation
- Opening circle completed — observation homework discussed
- 4-part lesson structure taught (Hook → Content → Practice → Debrief)
- Time breakdowns for 30-minute lesson explained
- Learning objectives format taught (action verbs, observable outcomes)
- Learning objectives practiced and coached
- Limited-resource preparation strategies discussed
- Lesson plan building exercise completed (25 min of working time)
- Pair review of lesson plans completed
- Adapting on the fly — key strategies taught
- Observation rubric distributed or reviewed
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (finalize plan + practice twice out loud + review rubric)

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 14

What to Watch For

Content experts who can't teach: Some participants will know Phase 1 material cold but have no idea how to teach it. They'll write lesson plans that are essentially scripts for them to read aloud. Push these participants toward more practice and less content. Ask them: "Where in your plan do participants actually DO something? That needs to be the biggest section."

Overplanners and underplanners: Some participants will write a 3-page lesson plan for a 30-minute session. Others will jot a few bullet points and think they're ready. Both need coaching. The overplanner needs to simplify: "You can't cover all of this in 30 minutes. Pick the 2 most important things and go deep." The underplanner needs to detail: "Walk me through your practice section step by step. What exactly will you say? What exactly will they do?"

Fear of facilitation: Several participants will be genuinely terrified of standing in front of the group. Normalize this. Every facilitator was nervous the first time. The 5-minute exercise in Session 41 was designed to break the ice, but some participants will still struggle. Privately encourage them: "You know this material. You've lived it. Trust yourself."

Peer dynamics during the 5-minute facilitation: Watch for how participants respond when a peer facilitates. Are they supportive? Dismissive? Do they engage or check out? This is a preview of the practicum dynamics next week. If you see disrespect or disengagement, address it directly: "When one of you is facilitating, the rest of you are his group. If you won't give him your respect and attention, what makes you think anyone will give it to you when it's your turn?"

Lesson plan topic overlap: If multiple participants choose the same topic, that's fine — different facilitators will handle the same material differently, which is actually a great learning opportunity. Point this out: "Watch how two people teach the same topic. Same content, different approach. That's the art of facilitation."

Common Week 14 Challenges

"I'm not a teacher." Response: "You're right — you're not a teacher. You're a facilitator. A teacher needs a degree. A facilitator needs experience, empathy, and preparation. You have the first two. This week gives you the third."

"What if nobody participates?" Response: "That's a question about your questions, not about your group. If you ask closed questions — 'Does this make sense?' — you'll get silence. If you ask real questions — 'Who's been in a situation like this?' — you'll get participation. People want to talk about their own experiences. Give them permission."

"What if I mess up?" Response: "You will. And that's fine. The lesson for your group when you mess up and recover gracefully is just as powerful as the lesson you planned. Nobody learns from a perfect facilitator. They learn from an honest one."

"I don't think I can plan a whole lesson." Response: "You just did. You wrote a lesson plan in 25 minutes. It might not be perfect yet, but it exists. Now refine it. Practice it. Get feedback. That's how every session you've ever attended was built — one revision at a time."

Preparation for Week 15

- Determine the practicum schedule: which participants present Tuesday (Session 43) and which present Wednesday (Session 44). Try to split evenly. If you have 12 participants, 6 per day.
- Print or prepare the observation rubric for every participant (they'll each fill one out for every peer who presents)
- Set up the room for presentations — chairs facing front, space for the facilitator to stand and move
- Prepare feedback forms or ensure participants know the feedback format: 1 strength, 1 area for improvement, 1 question
- Have a timer visible for presenters
- Prepare the difficult scenarios for Session 45 (group dynamics role-plays): someone shuts down, goes off track, gets emotional, challenges you, conflict erupts
- Write out the 5 role-play scenarios on separate papers for Session 45
- Review the simulation format: scenario → response → freeze → coach → replay

Week 15: Facilitation Practice

Week 15 Overview

Purpose: This is where talk becomes practice. In Weeks 13-14, participants learned what a mentor is, how adults learn, how to facilitate rather than lecture, and how to build a lesson plan. This week, they deliver. Every participant teaches a 30-minute lesson to their cohort, receives real feedback, and then practices handling the moments that derail sessions — when someone shuts down, goes off track, gets emotional, challenges you, or conflict breaks out in your group. By the end of this week, every participant will know what it feels like to stand in front of a room and lead. That experience cannot be taught. It has to be lived.

Sessions This Week: - Session 43 (Tuesday): Teaching Practicum 1 - Session 44 (Wednesday): Teaching Practicum 2 - Session 45 (Thursday): Group Dynamics and Difficult Moments

Materials Needed: - Journals/notebooks - Pens/pencils (1 per participant) - Talking piece for circle process - Observation rubrics (enough for every participant to complete one for each presenter) - Timer or watch (visible to presenters) - Any materials presenters have prepared for their lessons (paper, written handouts, etc.) - Easel paper or whiteboard (if available — presenters may use it) - 5 scenario cards for Session 45 role-plays (facilitator prepares in advance) - Chairs that can be rearranged quickly for different session setups

SESSION 43: Teaching Practicum 1

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Deliver a structured 30-minute lesson using the Hook-Content-Practice-Debrief format 2. Provide specific, constructive feedback using the observation rubric 3. Receive feedback without defensiveness and identify areas for growth 4. Identify facilitation strengths and challenges through observation

Session Plan

Opening (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Today is the day. Half of you are going to stand up in front of this group and facilitate a 30-minute lesson. The other half present tomorrow. For the presenters — I know some of you are nervous. That's normal. Every facilitator in the world was nervous their first time. Use it. Nervousness means you care.

For everyone else — your job today is just as important. You are the group. How you show up as a participant directly shapes how the presenter performs. If you check out, side-talk, or phone it in, you're making their job harder. If you engage, participate honestly, and take the feedback seriously, you're making them better.

Remember: in a few months, you'll be facilitating for real — in dorms, with men who didn't sign up for your program and might not want to be there. Your cohort members are the easiest audience you'll ever have. So treat this like training, not performance."

Distribute observation rubrics.

"Each of you gets a rubric for each presenter. Here's how it works."

Walk through the observation rubric:

Observation Rubric — Teaching Practicum

Presenter name: _____ **Topic:** _____ **Observer name:** _____

Criteria	1 (Needs Work)	2 (Developing)	3 (Competent)	4 (Exemplary)
Preparation	Unprepared, unclear plan	Partially prepared, some gaps	Well-prepared, clear structure	Exceptionally prepared, polished
Engagement	Lectured at the group	Some interaction attempted	Good participation from group	Dynamic, inclusive, everyone involved
Clarity	Confusing, hard to follow	Somewhat clear	Clear and logical	Crystal clear, memorable
Adaptability	Rigid, didn't adjust	Some flexibility shown	Adjusted to group needs	Seamless adaptation
Debrief Quality	No debrief or rushed	Surface-level debrief	Drew out key learning	Deep, lasting insight

One strength: (write one specific thing the presenter did well) **One area for improvement:** (write one specific, actionable suggestion) **One question:** (write one question for the presenter about their facilitation)

Facilitator:

"Rate honestly. A 2 is not an insult — it means 'developing.' That's exactly where you should be. This is your first time. Nobody gets all 4s their first time. The feedback is the learning. Take it seriously — both when you give it and when you receive it.

Be specific in your written comments. Not 'good job' — that tells nobody anything. Say what was good: 'Your opening question got everyone's attention immediately.' Say what could improve: 'You talked for 6 minutes straight during the content section — break it up with a question next time.' That's useful."

Teaching Practica — First Group (90 minutes)

Structure for each presenter: - Lesson delivery: 30 minutes (strict — facilitator signals at 25 minutes and cuts at 30) - Feedback round: 10-12 minutes

If you have 6 presenters today: This is tight. Consider 25-minute lessons with 8-minute feedback rounds. Adjust based on group size.

If you have 4-5 presenters: Standard timing works.

Before the first presenter:

Facilitator:

"First presenter — [name]. You've got 30 minutes. I'll signal you at 25 so you know to start wrapping up. If you hit 30 and you're not done, I'll stop you — not to be harsh, but because time management is part of facilitation. In a real session, you don't get extra minutes. The group has places to be.

Everyone else — rubrics out, pens ready. Participate fully in the lesson. Then observe fully for the feedback. Let's go."

Presenter delivers their lesson. Facilitator observes but does NOT intervene, coach, or rescue. The only exception is a safety concern. Let them succeed or struggle on their own — that's the learning.

Facilitator notes during each presentation (for feedback): - Did they use a hook or just start talking? - How much time did they spend talking vs. letting participants practice? - Did they ask questions? What kind — closed or open? - Did they handle the quiet person, the eager responder, the potential disruptor? - Did they debrief the practice or just move on? - Did they manage their time? - Were they reading from notes the whole time or connecting with the room? - Body language — open and confident? Stiff and locked behind a podium stance?

Feedback round after each presenter:**Facilitator:**

"Thank you, [name]. Take a seat. Let's give feedback.

I want to hear from 3 peers first. Same format: one thing that worked well, one thing to improve. Be specific."

3 peer feedback comments. Coach the feedback if it's too vague:

"You said 'it was good.' What specifically was good? What did they do that worked?"

Facilitator feedback:

Facilitator gives their own feedback — always starting with a genuine strength, then a specific growth area.

Example: "Your hook was strong — you asked a question that connected directly to dorm life and people were immediately engaged. Where you can grow is in the practice section. You set up the exercise well but then you jumped back in and started explaining again while they were supposed to be practicing. Trust them to do it. Step back."

Presenter responds (1 minute):

"How did it feel? What would you do differently?"

Move to next presenter. Keep the pace moving.

Between presenters, brief transition:

"Next up — [name]. Take a minute to set up anything you need. Everyone, fresh rubric."

Repeat for all presenters in the first group.

Closing (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"For today's presenters — what you just did took courage. Facilitating in front of peers who know the material as well as you do is harder than facilitating for people who don't. You stood up and did it. That matters.

For tomorrow's presenters — you just watched your cohort members do it. You saw what worked and what didn't. Use tonight to tighten your lesson. Adjust based on what you observed today.

*Closing round: **One word — what are you taking away from today?**"*

Talking piece.

Facilitator:

"Homework for everyone: 1. Tomorrow's presenters — finalize your lesson. Practice it out loud at least one more time. 2. Today's presenters — in your journal, write a self-assessment: What worked? What didn't? What would you do differently next time? Be specific. 3. Everyone — keep your observation rubrics. We'll use the patterns in Thursday's session.

See you tomorrow."

Session 43 Checklist

- Room arranged for presentations
- Observation rubrics distributed
- Rubric format explained and walked through

- Expectations set for presenters and observers
- All scheduled presenters delivered 30-minute lessons
- Timer used — presenters signaled at 25 min, cut at 30
- Feedback rounds completed after each presenter (3 peers + facilitator)
- Presenter self-reflection invited after each feedback round
- Observation rubrics collected (or participants keep for reference)
- Closing round completed
- Homework assigned (self-assessment journal for presenters, final prep for remaining presenters)

SESSION 44: Teaching Practicum 2

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Deliver a structured 30-minute lesson using the Hook-Content-Practice-Debrief format 2. Provide specific, constructive feedback using the observation rubric 3. Identify common facilitation challenges and practical solutions 4. Articulate their personal facilitation strengths and growth areas

Session Plan

Opening (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Day 2 of the practicum. Yesterday's presenters — you set the standard. Today's presenters — you had the advantage of watching. Let's see what you do with it.

Before we start — presenters from yesterday, is there anything you want to say to today's group? Any advice? Any warnings?"

Allow 2-3 brief comments from yesterday's presenters. Common things they'll share: "Don't read from your notes." "Watch the time — it goes fast." "The practice section is harder to run than you think." "Ask more questions than you plan to."

"Good. Same rules as yesterday. Rubrics out. Participate fully. Give honest feedback. Let's go."

Teaching Practica — Second Group (80 minutes)

Same structure as Session 43. For each presenter: - Lesson delivery: 30 minutes (signal at 25, cut at 30) - Feedback round: 10-12 minutes

Facilitator approach: Same as Session 43. Observe, don't intervene. Take detailed notes for feedback.

Key differences to watch for in Day 2: - Are today's presenters adapting based on what they observed yesterday? - Is the quality trending upward? (It usually does.) - Are peer feedback comments getting more specific and useful? (Push if they're not.)

After the final presenter and feedback round:

Facilitator:

"Every person in this room has now done something that most people never do: planned a lesson, stood up in front of a group, facilitated learning, and received honest feedback. Take a minute to let that register. Two weeks ago you were learning about the mentor identity. Today you taught a session."

Debrief: Common Facilitation Challenges and Solutions (20 minutes)

Purpose: Draw out patterns from both days of observation and turn them into collective learning.

Facilitator:

"Let's talk about what we all observed over these two days. I want to pull out the common challenges — not to embarrass anyone, but because every one of you will face these same issues when you facilitate for real. What patterns did you see? What challenges came up most often?"

Facilitate a group discussion. Draw out common challenges and discuss solutions together. Expect these:

Challenge 1: Talking too much during the content section.

"This was the most common one. Almost everyone spent more time lecturing than they planned. The fix? Set an internal limit: no more than 3 minutes of talking before asking a question or shifting to an activity. If you catch yourself monologuing, stop mid-sentence and say, 'Let me check in with you — what's landing so far?' That forces participation."

Challenge 2: Weak or missing hooks.

"Some presentations started with 'Today we're going to talk about...' That's not a hook. That's an announcement. A hook creates curiosity or urgency. A good test: would your opening make a skeptical dorm member lean in or check out? If it's check out, rework it."

Challenge 3: Practice instructions that were unclear.

"Several exercises fell flat not because the exercise was bad but because the instructions were confusing. When you set up a practice, be explicit: Who does what. How long they have. What the outcome should be. Then ask: 'Does everyone understand the instructions?' And check for real understanding — don't just accept nods."

Challenge 4: Rushed or skipped debriefs.

"Time pressure hit hard at the end. Several presenters ran out of time and either skipped the debrief or rushed through it. Remember: the debrief is where learning cements. If you're running short, cut content, never the debrief. Better to teach less and process it deeply than to cover everything and process nothing."

Challenge 5: Reading from notes instead of connecting.

"Notes are fine. Notes are good. But there's a difference between glancing at notes to stay on track and reading every word from a page with your head down. The group needs your eyes and your energy. Know your material well enough that notes are a safety net, not a script."

Challenge 6: Not managing the room.

"Some presenters didn't notice when someone checked out, when a side conversation started, or when one person dominated the discussion. Facilitating means seeing the whole room, not just the person who's talking. That comes with practice — and it starts with being willing to look."

Facilitator:

"What else did you notice that we haven't covered? Any challenges you experienced as a presenter that you want to name?"

Allow 3-4 additional observations. Then close the discussion:

"Every single challenge we just discussed is normal. It's what first-time facilitators face. The goal isn't to eliminate these challenges — the goal is to recognize them and get better at handling them. By the time you facilitate in Phase 3, you'll have practiced enough that most of these become manageable."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Closing round: What's the most important thing you learned about facilitation — from your own experience presenting, from watching others, or from both?"

Talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Homework: 1. All presenters — write a final self-assessment in your journal: What worked? What didn't? What's the one thing you'll focus on improving as a facilitator? At least half a page. 2. Everyone — review your observation rubrics from both days. Identify the top 3 strengths you saw across all presenters and the top 3 challenges. Bring that to Thursday's session. 3. Tomorrow is about the moments that test a facilitator — when someone shuts down, goes off track, gets emotional, challenges you, or a conflict erupts in your session. Come ready to be uncomfortable. We're going to role-play all of it. See you Thursday."

Session 44 Checklist

- Room arranged for presentations
- Observation rubrics distributed
- Yesterday's presenters offered advice to today's group
- All remaining presenters delivered 30-minute lessons
- Timer used — signal at 25, cut at 30
- Feedback rounds completed (3 peers + facilitator per presenter)
- Common facilitation challenges debrief completed
- Patterns from both days identified and discussed
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (self-assessment journal + review rubrics for patterns)

SESSION 45: Group Dynamics and Difficult Moments

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Identify 5 common difficult moments that arise during facilitation 2. Demonstrate at least 2 strategies for responding to each difficult moment 3. Practice handling challenging group dynamics in real time through role-play 4. Explain why silence is a tool, not a problem

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in round. What were the top 3 strengths and top 3 challenges you identified from reviewing the observation rubrics? And — how are you feeling about facilitation now compared to the beginning of the week?"

Talking piece. Listen for growth in confidence, emerging self-awareness, and honest naming of challenges.

Why This Session Matters (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"You've now planned and delivered a lesson. You know what it feels like to stand in front of a room. Here's what you don't know yet: what it feels like when things go sideways.

And they will go sideways. Not because you're a bad facilitator — because you're facilitating for human beings. Human beings who are in prison, dealing with stress, trauma, frustration, power dynamics, and a hundred things you can't see. Sooner or later, someone in your group will shut down, go off track, start crying, challenge your authority, or start a conflict with another participant. In the middle of your session. While everyone is watching to see how you handle it.

Today we practice those moments. We don't just talk about them — we live them. By the end of today, you'll have experienced each of these situations in a safe environment so that when they happen for real, your body and your brain have already been there."

The 5 Difficult Moments (15 minutes)

Purpose: Name each scenario clearly before role-playing it.

Facilitator:

"Here are the five moments that test every facilitator. I'm going to describe each one, and then we're going to role-play all five."

Moment 1: Someone Shuts Down

"You're in the middle of a session. One participant goes quiet. Arms crossed. Head down. He was engaged earlier, but something hit a nerve — maybe a topic, maybe something someone else said, maybe something unrelated that's sitting on him — and he's gone. He's physically in the room but emotionally checked out.

This happens in prison environments more than anywhere else. Men have years of practice at shutting down. It's a survival mechanism. Pushing him to participate will usually make it worse."

Moment 2: The Group Goes Off Track

"You're teaching emotional regulation and someone brings up a completely unrelated issue — a dorm beef, a policy change, something they saw on the news. Suddenly the whole group is off topic and energized about something that has nothing to do with your lesson. The conversation is alive, but it's not YOUR conversation."

Moment 3: Someone Gets Emotional

"You're facilitating a discussion on accountability or trauma or family, and a participant starts crying. Or his voice breaks. Or he goes silent with tears in his eyes. The room gets tense. Some men look away. Some get uncomfortable. Some might make jokes because they don't know what to do with emotion."

Moment 4: Someone Challenges You

"'This is stupid.' 'You don't know what you're talking about.' 'Who made you the expert?' 'This program is a waste of time.' The challenge might be directed at you personally, at the material, or at the program. It might come from genuine skepticism or from someone having a bad day and looking for a target."

Moment 5: Conflict Erupts Between Participants

"Two participants get into it during your session. Maybe a discussion gets heated and crosses the line from debate to disrespect. Maybe there's pre-existing tension that surfaces. Maybe one participant says something that triggers another. Now you've got two angry men in your space and the group is watching to see what you do."

Facilitator:

"Each of these moments is a test — not of your knowledge, but of your composure, your judgment, and your skill. Let's practice."

Role-Play Block (70 minutes)

Format for each scenario: 1. Setup (2 min): Facilitator describes the scene, assigns roles 2. First attempt (5-7 min): The designated facilitator responds in real time 3. Freeze (1 min): Stop the action, ask the facilitator "What are you thinking right now?" 4. Group coaching (3-4 min): Group offers suggestions, alternative

approaches 5. Replay (4-5 min): Facilitator tries again with coaching incorporated 6. Debrief (3-4 min): What worked? What would you do differently? Key takeaway

Total per scenario: ~15 minutes. Aim for all 5 but prioritize quality over quantity. If time runs short, do 4 and address the 5th verbally.

Assign different participants to facilitate each scenario. Select participants who were NOT among the strongest presenters — this is their chance to practice under pressure.

SCENARIO 1: Someone Shuts Down

Facilitator:

"Here's the scene. [Name], you're facilitating a session on accountability. You've just asked the group to think about a time they hurt someone and what they'd say to that person now. [Name 2] — you're the participant who shuts down. The topic hits too close to home. You go quiet, cross your arms, look at the floor. If the facilitator addresses you, respond with 'I'm fine' or 'I just don't have anything to say.' Don't make it easy, but don't be hostile. You're hurting, not angry. Everyone else — participate normally but notice what's happening."

Let it play for 5-7 minutes. Freeze.

"Facilitator — what are you thinking right now? What do you notice? What are your instincts telling you to do?"

Allow the facilitator to respond honestly.

"Group — what did you observe? What worked? What would you do differently?"

Key coaching points to offer if the group doesn't raise them: - Don't put the quiet person on the spot in front of everyone. That usually makes it worse. - Acknowledge without pressuring: "I can see this is heavy. You don't have to share right now." - You can normalize it: "Some of these topics hit hard. If you need a minute, that's okay." - Check in privately after the session. Walk up to him and say: "Hey, I noticed that topic was tough for you. You okay? I'm here if you want to talk — no pressure." - Continue the session. Don't let one person's shutdown derail the whole group. Trust that he can manage, and respect his space. - The worst thing to do: ignore it completely. The group sees you not responding, and it erodes trust.

Replay with coaching incorporated.

Brief debrief: "Key takeaway from this scenario — what's the one thing to remember?"

SCENARIO 2: The Group Goes Off Track

Facilitator:

"[Name], you're facilitating a session on communication styles. You're 10 minutes in. [Name 2] — you bring up something that just happened in the dorm: a CO shook down someone's bunk unfairly and everyone is fired up about it. [Name 3] and [Name 4] — jump in and feed the off-topic energy. This is important to you and you want to talk about it. Facilitator — go."

Let it play. Freeze.

"Facilitator — the room is alive, but it's not your lesson. What do you do?"

Key coaching points: - Don't dismiss what the group cares about. That kills trust: "That's not what we're talking about" feels like "I don't care about your problem." - Acknowledge the energy: "I can tell this is important to you. And it is — it's a real issue." - Bridge it to your topic if possible: "You know what? How you communicate about this situation is exactly what we're talking about. How do you bring this up with staff in a way that's assertive, not aggressive? Let's use your real situation as our case study." - If you can't bridge it: "Here's what I want to do. This matters, and it deserves time. But we have a lesson today that also matters. Can we park this for the last 10 minutes and come back to it? Or I can talk to the facilitator about making it next session's topic." - Set a time limit: "Let's give this 3 minutes, then we need to move back to our plan." - The worst response: fighting the group's energy. You'll lose every time. Redirect, don't resist.

Replay. Brief debrief.

SCENARIO 3: Someone Gets Emotional

Facilitator:

"[Name], you're facilitating a session on empathy. You've asked the group to think about someone they've hurt. [Name 2] — you start talking about your kids. How you weren't there. How your daughter asked your ex, 'Is Daddy coming home?' and you found out about it through a letter. You get emotional. Voice breaks. Tears come. You try to hold it together but can't. Facilitator — go."

Let it play. Freeze.

"Facilitator — what's happening inside you right now? What do you want to do? What are you afraid of?"

Key coaching points: - Do NOT rush to fix it. "Don't cry, bro" or "It's okay" or "Stay strong" — all of these communicate that his emotion is a problem. It's not. - Be present. Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is nothing. Let there be silence. Let him feel it. - Validate: "Thank you for sharing that. What you're feeling right now is real, and it takes courage to let the room see it." - Manage the room: If others are uncomfortable, normalize it: "This is what happens when someone is honest. This is the kind of space we're building." - If someone makes a joke or dismissive comment, address it immediately: "That's not how we do this. When someone is being real, we show respect." - Offer practical support: "Do you need a minute? Do you want to keep going? It's your call." Give them agency. - Don't ignore the room: After the emotional moment passes, debrief briefly: "What you just witnessed is what happens when people trust the space. That's the culture you're building as a facilitator." - The worst response: freezing, looking away, or changing the subject like it didn't happen. That teaches the room that emotions aren't safe here.

Replay. Brief debrief.

SCENARIO 4: Someone Challenges You

Facilitator:

"[Name], you're facilitating a session on thinking errors. [Name 2] — you're the challenger. You don't buy it. Midway through the session, you say: 'This thinking errors stuff is just a way to blame us for what happened to us. What about the system? What about the people who failed us? Everything isn't a thinking error.' You're not being disrespectful — you believe what you're saying and you're challenging the content. Facilitator — go."

Let it play. Freeze.

"Facilitator — what's your first instinct? What do you want to say?"

Key coaching points: - First instinct is usually to defend the material. Don't. Defending puts you in an argument, and the room takes sides. - Get curious: "That's a real question. Tell me more about what you mean." Let the challenger feel heard. - Acknowledge truth in the challenge: "You're right — the system plays a role. External factors are real. AND — thinking errors are also real. Both things can be true. The question is: which one can you actually control?" - Involve the group: "Who agrees with [name]? Who sees it differently? Let's hear from both sides." - Don't take it personally. Even if the challenge feels personal — "Who made you the expert?" — it usually isn't about you. It's about what you represent: authority, structure, someone who seems to

have it figured out. - Stay grounded. Don't get defensive, don't get sarcastic, don't pull rank. Your composure IS the lesson. The room is watching how you handle being challenged. If you handle it well, they learn that challenge doesn't have to become conflict. - If the challenge becomes disrespectful: "I hear your disagreement and I welcome it. The disrespect I don't welcome. You can push back on the content all day — that makes us better. Attacking the person doesn't." Then move on.

Replay. Brief debrief.

SCENARIO 5: Conflict Erupts Between Participants

Facilitator:

"[Name], you're facilitating a session. [Name 2] and [Name 3] — you're in conflict. Maybe one made a comment during discussion that the other took as disrespect. It escalates. Voices rise. One stands up. The room tenses. Facilitator — go."

Let it play. DO NOT let it go too far — freeze when it gets heated enough to be realistic but not so heated that it stops being a learning exercise.

"Facilitator — freeze. What's your first priority right now? Not what are you going to say — what is your FIRST PRIORITY?"

Answer should be: safety.

Key coaching points: - First priority is ALWAYS safety. If there's any risk of physical violence, separate the participants. Step between them if it's safe. Use a calm, firm voice: "We're going to stop right here. Both of you, sit down. No one is getting hurt in this room." - Use the FORGE conflict resolution model — this is what you trained for in Phase 1: 1. Pause & Posture — calm your own body first 2. Name the Heat — "I can see you're both angry right now. That's real." 3. Facts > Stories — "I want to hear from both of you. One at a time. 60 seconds each. No insults." 4. Needs & Options — "What do you actually need here?" 5. Agreement & Check-Back — "How do we move forward?" - Manage the room: Other participants will be watching, taking sides, or checking out. Acknowledge them: "I know this is tense. I need everyone to stay seated and stay calm. We're going to handle this." - Do NOT take sides, even if one person is clearly wrong. In front of the group, stay neutral. You can address individual accountability later. - If it can't be resolved in the moment: "This is too heated to resolve right now. Both of you are going to take a break. I'm going to talk to each of you after session. The rest of us are going to continue." - After the session, follow up individually with both participants and address it with the group at the next session: "What happened last time is part of the work. Conflict will show up. What matters is how we handle it." - The worst response: ignoring it, hoping it dies down. It won't. The group loses trust in your leadership, and the conflict festers.

Replay. Brief debrief.

The Power of Silence (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Before we close, I want to address something that showed up in every role-play and in most of the practica: the fear of silence.

Most new facilitators treat silence as a problem to solve. Someone finishes talking and there's a pause — two seconds, five seconds, ten seconds — and the facilitator jumps in to fill it. Asks another question. Makes a comment. Does anything to avoid the quiet.

*Here's the truth: **silence is one of the most powerful tools you have.***

Silence after a powerful question means people are thinking. If you fill it, you rob them of the chance to go deeper. Count to 10 in your head before you speak. It will feel like an eternity. It isn't.

Silence after someone shares something vulnerable means the room is processing. If you rush past it, you signal that the moment didn't matter. Let it sit.

Silence when you're managing conflict means you're composing yourself instead of reacting. That composure is the most leadership thing you'll ever do.

Silence when someone challenges you and you don't respond immediately — that's power. Not the power of domination. The power of self-control.

Don't fear the silence. Use it."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Closing round for Week 15. This has been a big week. You've delivered a lesson, received feedback, and practiced handling the hardest moments a facilitator faces.

*Here's your closing prompt: **'The facilitator I was on Tuesday is different from the facilitator I am today because...'** Complete that sentence."*

Talking piece goes around.

Facilitator (closing):

"Homework: 1. Final journal reflection for the week: 'What kind of facilitator am I becoming? What's my biggest strength and my biggest growth area?' At least half a page. 2. Revise your lesson plan based on your practicum experience and the feedback you received. This revised plan goes in your Phase 2 portfolio. 3. If your lesson plan was one of the stronger ones, start thinking about a second topic — you'll need 3 complete lesson plans in your portfolio by the end of Phase 2.

You've now experienced the three pillars of facilitation: planning, delivering, and adapting. Next week we move into motivational interviewing — the art of helping someone find their own motivation to change when they don't think they want to.

Service Over Self. See you Tuesday."

Session 45 Checklist

- Room in circle formation
- Opening circle completed — observation patterns discussed
- 5 difficult moments introduced and described
- Scenario 1 role-played: Someone shuts down (attempt → freeze → coach → replay → debrief)
- Scenario 2 role-played: Group goes off track
- Scenario 3 role-played: Someone gets emotional
- Scenario 4 role-played: Someone challenges you
- Scenario 5 role-played: Conflict erupts between participants
- The power of silence discussed
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (journal reflection + revise lesson plan + portfolio preparation)

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 15

What to Watch For

Practicum performance spread: There will be a wide range of quality across presentations. Some participants will be natural facilitators. Others will struggle significantly. Resist the urge to over-coach the weaker presenters during their lesson. The learning comes from doing it, not from being rescued. Save your coaching for the feedback round.

Peer feedback quality: Early feedback comments tend to be vague and overly positive: "That was good." Push for specificity every time. Model it yourself. By the end of Day 2, the group's feedback should be noticeably more useful.

Emotional responses to feedback: Some participants will struggle to receive critical feedback. Watch for defensiveness, dismissiveness, or shutting down after feedback. If you see it, address it directly but gently: "Receiving feedback is a skill — just like giving it. The fact that it's uncomfortable doesn't mean it's wrong. It means it's landing. Let it land."

Role-play engagement vs. performance: During the difficult moments role-plays, some participants will stay in character too lightly — not creating enough realistic pressure for the facilitator. Others might take it too far and actually escalate. Set expectations clearly before each scenario: "Make it realistic. Don't make it easy. But don't cross the line into actual disrespect or aggression."

The emotional scenario: Scenario 3 (someone gets emotional) may trigger real emotion in the person playing the role. Be prepared for this. If someone genuinely gets emotional during the role-play, pause the exercise, check in, and give them the option to continue or step back. The line between role-play and real feeling can blur, especially around topics like family, children, and loss.

Silent participant during role-plays: Some participants will never volunteer to be the facilitator in the role-plays. Don't let anyone hide. Assign roles if necessary. Everyone needs this practice.

Common Week 15 Challenges

"That role-play wasn't realistic." Response: "You're right — it's always going to be somewhat artificial in a practice setting. But the feelings are real. The pressure is real. And your response patterns are real. When this happens for real, your body will remember what you practiced today. That's the point."

"I don't know what to do when someone cries." Response: "Most people don't. We're taught — especially as men, especially in this environment — that emotion is weakness. But think about it: when someone cries in your session, they're telling you the space is safe enough to be real. That's the highest compliment a facilitator can receive. Your job isn't to stop the tears. It's to honor them."

"I can't handle being challenged without getting angry." Response: "That's honest, and that's exactly why we practiced it today. The anger you feel when someone challenges you — where does it come from? Usually it's about feeling disrespected, or feeling exposed, or feeling like your authority is being questioned. Name the trigger. Use the regulation techniques from Phase 1. A challenged facilitator who stays calm teaches more in that moment than a whole lesson ever could."

"What if a real fight breaks out in my session?" Response: "Safety first. Always. You are not a CO. You don't physically restrain people. You create distance, you use your voice, you de-escalate. If it's beyond your ability to manage safely, you get help. There is no shame in calling for assistance. The shame would be in letting someone get hurt because you were too proud to ask."

Participant who performed poorly and is discouraged: Pull them aside privately. Be direct: "Today was hard, and I know it didn't go the way you wanted. But you did it. You stood up and tried. That's more than most people ever do. The gap between your first facilitation and your tenth will be enormous. Don't judge yourself by today — judge yourself by the trajectory."

Preparation for Week 16

- Review Motivational Interviewing basics — the 4 principles (partnership, acceptance, compassion, evocation) and OARS (Open questions, Affirmations, Reflections, Summaries)
- Prepare realistic MI practice scenarios relevant to the prison context (resistant mentee, someone considering leaving the program, someone stuck in precontemplation)
- Have the stages of change model ready to teach: precontemplation, contemplation, preparation, action, maintenance
- Collect and review all observation rubrics from the practica — identify participants who may need additional practice or coaching
- Begin thinking about Phase 2 portfolio requirements — remind participants of what they'll need (3 lesson plans, simulation records, MI practice logs, co-facilitation notes, self-reflection, peer evaluations)
- Consider pairing stronger facilitators with weaker ones for mutual coaching during the coming weeks

Week 16: Motivational Interviewing Basics

Week 16 Overview

Purpose: Equip participants with the foundational skills of Motivational Interviewing (MI) — the evidence-based approach to helping people find their own motivation for change. By the end of this week, every participant should understand the spirit of MI, be able to use OARS skills in a mentoring conversation, and apply MI techniques to realistic FORGE scenarios.

Context: Participants have completed Phase 1 (self-work) and Weeks 13-15 (mentor identity, teaching skills, facilitation practice). They know who they are and they know how to teach. Now they learn how to meet someone where they are — especially someone who doesn't want to be met.

Sessions This Week: - Session 46 (Tuesday): The Spirit of MI - Session 47 (Wednesday): MI Skills for Mentors - Session 48 (Thursday): MI in FORGE Context

Materials Needed: - FORGE Handbooks (participants should have these already) - MI Quick Reference cards (1 per participant — see Appendix B of Program Design) - Stages of Change handout (1 per participant) - Readiness Ruler handout (1 per participant) - Journals/notebooks - Easel paper or whiteboard (if available) - Scenario cards for exercises (facilitator prepares — templates provided below)

SESSION 46: The Spirit of MI

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 46 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Explain the four principles of MI (partnership, acceptance, compassion, evocation) in their own words 2. Describe why "rolling with resistance" works better than confrontation 3. Distinguish between change talk and sustain talk in a conversation 4. Identify the five stages of change and recognize which stage a person is in 5. Explain why pushing someone to change before they're ready usually backfires

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Set up: Chairs in circle. No tables if possible.

Facilitator:

*"Check-in round. Two things: How are you doing today? And this question — think about it before you answer: **Has anyone ever tried to change your mind about something by arguing with you? What happened?"***

Send the talking piece. Let people share. Most will describe the same thing: they dug in harder. That's the setup for everything today.

Facilitator (after the round):

"Notice what almost everyone just said. When someone pushed, you pushed back. When someone argued, you argued harder. When someone told you what to do, part of you wanted to do the opposite — even if they were right. Hold onto that. That's the starting point for everything we're going to learn this week."

Review and Reflection (10 minutes)

Purpose: Connect to Weeks 13-15 and bridge to MI.

Facilitator:

"Over the last three weeks, you've learned what a mentor is, how to set boundaries, how adults learn, how to facilitate instead of lecture, and how to plan and deliver a lesson. You've practiced teaching in front of this group. Some of you were nervous. Some of you surprised yourselves.

But here's the gap we haven't filled yet: What do you do when the person you're trying to help doesn't want help? What do you do when your mentee is sitting across from you with his arms folded saying, 'I don't need this program'? What do you do when a dorm member is heading straight for a bad decision and you can see it coming, but he can't — or won't?

That's what Motivational Interviewing is for."

Instruction: What Is Motivational Interviewing? (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Motivational Interviewing — MI — was developed in the 1980s by two psychologists named William Miller and Stephen Rollnick. It started in addiction treatment, but it's been used in healthcare, corrections, education, and mentoring programs all over the world. The research behind it is massive — hundreds of studies showing that it works.

*Here's the one-sentence version: **MI is a way of talking with people that helps them find their own reasons for change.***

Not your reasons. Their reasons. That's the whole game.

Let me tell you why this matters in here. You're going to be mentoring men who live in the same environment you do. They face the same pressures. They deal with the same frustrations. Some of them are doing things that are going to hurt them — gambling, fighting, running their mouths, refusing to engage in anything productive. You can see it. They can't — or they can, but they're not ready to do anything about it.

*Your instinct is going to be to tell them what to do. 'Stop gambling.' 'You need to get in this program.' 'You're messing up your life.' And that instinct comes from a good place — you care. But here's what MI teaches us: **telling someone to change almost never produces change. Helping them talk themselves into change does.**"*

Pause. Let it land.

"MI is not a trick. It's not manipulation. It's not reverse psychology. It's a genuine, respectful way of being with another person that honors their ability to make their own decisions — while gently helping them see what those decisions are actually costing them."

The Four Principles of MI (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"MI is built on four principles. Think of these as the spirit behind the technique. If you get the techniques right but the spirit wrong, it doesn't work. People can smell manipulation. These principles have to be real."

Write each principle where everyone can see it, or read each one twice.

1. Partnership

"MI is not something you do TO someone. It's something you do WITH them. You're not the expert on their life — they are. You're walking alongside them, not dragging them forward. In a corrections environment, people get told what to do all day long. COs tell them. The system tells them. Everyone tells them. A mentor who comes in and starts telling them what to do is just another voice in that chorus. Partnership means: I'm here with you, not above you."

2. Acceptance

"Acceptance doesn't mean you approve of everything they're doing. It means you accept them as a whole human being with the right to make their own choices — even bad ones. It means you believe they have worth, even when their behavior doesn't reflect it. This is hard. When your mentee is doing something destructive, every part of you wants to shake him. Acceptance means you resist that urge. You see the person, not just the behavior."

3. Compassion

"Compassion means your mentee's well-being comes first. Not your ego. Not your desire to be right. Not your frustration. His well-being. When you're in a mentoring conversation, the question in the back of your mind should always be: 'Is what I'm about to say for his benefit or mine?' If it's for yours — to prove a point, to feel smart, to win the argument — don't say it."

4. Evocation

"This is the one most people miss. Evocation means the motivation for change is already inside the person — your job is to draw it out. You're not pouring something into an empty cup. You're helping them see what's already there. Every person in this facility has something they care about — their kids, their future, their reputation, their self-respect. Your job is to find that thing and connect it to the change they need to make."

Check for understanding:

"In your own words — what's the difference between a mentor who uses MI and a mentor who just gives advice? Someone tell me."

Let 2-3 people respond. Guide toward: MI draws out the person's own motivation; advice-giving imposes the mentor's motivation.

Rolling with Resistance (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Let's go back to what we talked about in the opening. When someone pushes, you push back. In MI, that push-back is called 'resistance' — and the technique for handling it is called 'rolling with resistance.'

Imagine this: A man in your dorm says, 'I don't need any program. Programs don't work. I've been in three programs and nothing changed.'

Here's what most people do — they argue: 'But this program is different.' 'You just didn't try hard enough.' 'You need to give it a chance.'

What happens? He digs in deeper. Now he's defending his position AND annoyed at you.

Rolling with resistance means you don't fight it. You acknowledge it. You move alongside it. Watch:"

Demonstrate:

"He says: 'Programs don't work. I've been in three and nothing changed.'

Rolling with resistance: 'You've been through three programs and none of them made a difference. That's frustrating. What would it take for something to actually work for you?'

Notice what I did. I didn't argue. I didn't defend FORGE. I validated his experience. And then I asked a question that invites HIM to think about what change would look like. I took his resistance and turned it into a conversation."

Another example:

"He says: 'I'm fine. I don't need to change anything.'

Wrong response: 'Come on, man, look at where you are.'

Rolling with resistance: 'You feel like things are working for you right now. Tell me about that — what's going well?'

See what happens? Either he starts talking about what's going well — and you can explore whether it's really going as well as he thinks — or he pauses, because the honest answer is that things aren't going that well.

Either way, the conversation keeps moving without a fight."

*"The principle behind rolling with resistance is simple: **you cannot argue someone into wanting to change.** You can only create the space where they discover they want to change."*

Change Talk vs. Sustain Talk (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"When you're having a conversation with someone about change, they're going to say two kinds of things. Learning to hear the difference is one of the most important MI skills.

***Change talk** is anything that moves toward change. Listen for these:*

- **Desire:** *'I wish things were different.' 'I want to be a better father.'*
- **Ability:** *'I could probably do it if I tried.' 'I've done it before.'*
- **Reason:** *'If I keep going this way, I'm going to lose everything.' 'My kids deserve better.'*
- **Need:** *'I have to do something.' 'Something's got to give.'*
- **Commitment:** *'I'm going to make a change.' 'I'm done living like this.'*

When you hear change talk, your job is to reinforce it. Reflect it back. Ask more about it. 'Tell me more about wanting to be a better father. What would that look like?'

***Sustain talk** is anything that keeps things the same:*

- *'I can't change.' 'It's too late.' 'This is just who I am.' 'It's not that bad.' 'Everyone does it.'*

When you hear sustain talk, don't argue with it. Acknowledge it and gently redirect: 'It sounds like part of you feels like it's too late. Is there another part that's not so sure?'

The most honest conversations contain both. A man sitting across from you might say, 'I want to change, but I don't know if I can.' Both of those are real. Your job is to amplify the change talk without dismissing the sustain talk."

The Stages of Change (15 minutes)

Distribute Stages of Change handout or write on board.

Facilitator:

"People don't go from 'I'm fine' to 'I'm going to change my entire life' in one conversation. Change happens in stages. If you try to push someone from stage 1 to stage 5 in one sitting, you'll lose them. Understanding where someone is tells you what kind of support they need."

Walk through each stage with a prison-specific example:

1. Precontemplation — 'I don't have a problem.'

"This is the man who genuinely doesn't think anything needs to change. He's not in denial — from his perspective, things are fine. Or maybe he knows there's a problem but he has zero intention of doing anything about it.

Example: The guy who gambles every night and says, 'Everybody does it. It's just how we pass time.' He doesn't see gambling as a problem.

What he needs from you: Not a lecture. Not pressure. Just a relationship. Be present. Be consistent. Plant a small seed and walk away. 'I hear you. I'm around if you ever want to talk about it.'"

2. Contemplation — 'Maybe I have a problem, but...'

"This person is thinking about change but hasn't committed. He's weighing the pros and cons. He might go back and forth in the same conversation.

Example: 'I know I should stop gambling, but it's the only thing that makes the time go by. And honestly, I'm not even sure I could stop if I wanted to.'

What he needs from you: Help him explore the pros and cons himself. Don't rush him. Ask questions like, 'What would be different if you stopped?' and 'What worries you about stopping?'"

3. Preparation — 'I'm going to do something about this.'

"He's decided to change and he's making a plan. This is fragile — he can slip back to contemplation easily.

Example: 'I'm going to stop gambling starting next week. I just need to settle one more debt first.'

What he needs from you: Help him make the plan concrete. 'What's your plan for when the guys start a game and invite you in? What are you going to do instead? Who's going to support you?'"

4. Action — 'I'm doing it.'

"He's actively making changes. This is where the work happens — and where it's hardest.

Example: He stopped gambling three weeks ago. He's finding other ways to spend his time. But he's bored, he's irritable, and the guys keep asking him to play.

What he needs from you: Encouragement. Affirmation of his effort. Help troubleshooting obstacles. 'Three weeks. That took real discipline. What's been the hardest part?'"

5. Maintenance — 'I'm keeping it going.'

"The change has stuck. He's built new habits. But he's not out of the woods — relapse is always possible, especially under stress.

Example: He hasn't gambled in four months. He's started reading in the evenings instead. But he just got bad news from home and he's tempted.

What he needs from you: Reminders of how far he's come. 'Four months, man. Remember where you were? You built that. One bad night doesn't erase four months of discipline.'"

Exercise (10 min):

Facilitator:

"I'm going to read five short scenarios. For each one, tell me: What stage of change is this person in? Write your answer in your journal, then we'll discuss."

Scenario 1: "A dorm member says, 'I don't know why you keep talking to me about anger management. I don't have an anger problem. Other people have a problem with me.'" (*Answer: Precontemplation*)

Scenario 2: "A mentee says, 'I know I need to stop hanging around those guys. Every time I do, I end up in trouble. But they're the only people who have my back in here.'" (*Answer: Contemplation*)

Scenario 3: "A FORGE participant says, 'I talked to my cellie and told him I'm going to start doing my thinking reports every night. He thinks I'm crazy but I don't care.'" (*Answer: Preparation*)

Scenario 4: "A mentee who used to get into fights weekly hasn't had a confrontation in six weeks. He's been using the STOP technique. He says, 'It's hard, but it's working.'" (*Answer: Action*)

Scenario 5: "A senior dorm member has been conflict-free for eight months. Other men come to him for advice. He runs an informal check-in circle every Sunday." (*Answer: Maintenance*)

Debrief (5 min): Discuss answers. Emphasize that the stage tells you what kind of support to provide — and more importantly, what NOT to do.

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Closing round. One sentence: **What's one thing from today that changes how you'd approach a conversation with someone who doesn't want to change?**"*

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

*"Tomorrow we get into the specific skills — OARS. These are the tools that make MI work in real time. Tonight, I want you to do one thing: **have a conversation with someone in the dorm where you practice rolling with resistance.** Don't announce it. Don't say, 'I'm practicing MI on you.' Just listen. When they say something you disagree with, try acknowledging it instead of arguing. See what happens. Journal about it tonight.*

See you tomorrow."

Session 46 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
- Opening circle completed — "Has anyone tried to change your mind by arguing?"
- Connection made from Weeks 13-15 to MI
- MI defined and explained — "helping people find their own reasons for change"
- Four principles taught: partnership, acceptance, compassion, evocation
- Rolling with resistance explained with examples
- Change talk vs. sustain talk defined with examples
- Five stages of change taught with prison-specific examples
- Stage identification exercise completed (5 scenarios)
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (practice rolling with resistance + journal)

SESSION 47: MI Skills for Mentors

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 47 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Use the four OARS skills: Open questions, Affirmations, Reflections, Summaries 2. Distinguish between open and closed questions and explain why open questions matter 3. Deliver specific, genuine, effort-focused affirmations 4. Demonstrate simple and complex reflections 5. Deliver a summary that captures the essence of what someone has shared

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in round. How are you doing? And: **Did you try rolling with resistance in a conversation last night? What happened?"***

Send the talking piece. Listen for stories — some will have tried it, some won't. For those who did, ask briefly: "How did the other person respond?" Most will report that the conversation went differently than usual. That's the hook.

Review and Bridge (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Yesterday we learned the spirit of MI — the why. Partnership, acceptance, compassion, evocation. Today we learn the how. There are four core skills in MI, and they're easy to remember because they spell OARS. Think of a rowboat. You're not dragging someone to shore. You're rowing alongside them. OARS are your tools."

Distribute MI Quick Reference cards (from Program Design Appendix B) if available, or write OARS on the board.

OARS Skill 1: Open Questions (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"The first tool is **Open Questions**. Let me show you the difference between an open question and a closed question.

Closed question: 'Are you okay?' Open question: 'What's going on with you today?'

Closed question: 'Did you get in a fight?' Open question: 'Tell me what happened.'

Closed question: 'Do you want to stay in FORGE?' Open question: 'What's your experience been like in FORGE so far?'

See the difference? A closed question gets a one-word answer — yes, no, fine. A door shuts. An open question invites someone to talk. A door opens."

"Here's the rule of thumb: If someone can answer with one word, it's a closed question. If they have to actually think and explain, it's open.

Why does this matter? Because change talk lives in the details. If you ask a closed question, you'll never hear it. If you ask an open question, people start talking — and in the talking, they often discover what they actually think and feel.

Now — open questions don't mean vague questions. 'How's life?' is open but useless. Good open questions are specific and purposeful:

- 'What concerns you about the path you're on right now?'
- 'What would you want your life to look like when you leave here?'
- 'What's the hardest part about making that change?'
- 'What would it take for you to feel ready?'

Each of those opens a door that leads somewhere."

Practice (8 min):

"Pair up. I'm going to give you five closed questions. Your job is to rewrite each one as an open question. Work together. Write them in your journals."

Closed questions to convert: 1. "Are you angry?" → (e.g., "What are you feeling right now?") 2. "Do you want to change?" → (e.g., "What would change look like for you?") 3. "Is the program helping?" → (e.g., "What impact has the program had on you?") 4. "Did you think before you acted?" → (e.g., "Walk me through

what was going through your mind.") 5. "Are you going to do it again?" → (e.g., "What's your plan for next time you're in that situation?")

Share out (5 min): Each pair shares their best one. Facilitator highlights particularly strong examples and explains what makes them effective.

OARS Skill 2: Affirmations (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"The second OARS skill is **Affirmations**. And I need to be clear about what this means, because most people get it wrong.*

*An affirmation is **NOT** flattery. It's not 'Good job, bro.' It's not vague praise. It's not something you say to make someone feel good.*

*An affirmation is a **specific, genuine statement that recognizes a person's strengths, effort, or values**. It notices what's right — especially when everything else feels wrong.*

Here's the difference:

Flattery: 'You're doing great, man.' Affirmation: 'You walked away from that argument yesterday. That took discipline — especially because everyone was watching.'

Flattery: 'You're a good person.' Affirmation: 'You've been showing up to every session for six weeks, even after that setback with your family. That tells me you're committed to something bigger than the moment.'

Flattery: 'Keep it up.' Affirmation: 'I noticed you checked on Davis when he was having a rough day. Nobody asked you to do that. That's service.'

*See the pattern? Good affirmations are **specific** — they name exactly what the person did. They're **genuine** — you actually mean it. And they're **effort-focused** — they recognize the choice and the work, not just the outcome."*

"Why do affirmations matter? Because the men you'll mentor have spent most of their lives hearing what's wrong with them. From the system. From staff. From family. From themselves. A well-timed affirmation that's specific and honest can shift how a man sees himself. Not because you're blowing smoke — because you're showing him something real that he might not be able to see."

Three rules for FORGE affirmations:

*"1. **Be specific.** Name the behavior you're affirming. 'You stayed calm when Johnson got in your face' — not 'You're so calm.'*

*1. **Be genuine.** If you don't mean it, don't say it. People in here have the best BS detectors in the world. A fake affirmation does more damage than no affirmation.*

*2. **Focus on effort and choice, not personality.** 'You chose to walk away' — not 'You're such a peaceful person.' Effort can be repeated. Personality labels are fragile."*

Practice (10 min):

"Pair up. One of you is going to tell a short story — something you did in the last two weeks that took effort. The other person's job is to listen and then deliver an affirmation that's specific, genuine, and effort-focused. Then switch. I'm going to be walking around, and I want to hear real affirmations, not 'good job.'"

Debrief (3 min):

"How did it feel to receive a genuine affirmation? How did it feel to give one? For most of us, both are uncomfortable — because we're not used to it. That discomfort will fade. The impact won't."

OARS Skill 3: Reflections (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"The third OARS skill is **Reflections**. This is the workhorse of MI. If you only master one skill, make it this one.

A reflection is when you say back to someone what you heard them say — or what you heard beneath what they said. It tells the person: *I'm listening. I hear you. You matter.*

There are two types:"

Simple Reflection — Repeating or rephrasing what someone said.

"He says: 'I'm tired of being in trouble all the time.'

Simple reflection: 'You're exhausted from the constant cycle of getting in trouble.'

That's it. You're not adding anything. You're just proving you heard him. Simple reflections slow the conversation down and create safety."

Complex Reflection — Reflecting the meaning or emotion underneath what someone said.

"He says: 'I'm tired of being in trouble all the time.'

Complex reflection: 'Part of you is starting to wonder if there's a different way to live.'

See the difference? The complex reflection goes deeper. It names something he hasn't said out loud yet but is clearly feeling. A good complex reflection makes someone stop and say, 'Yeah... that's exactly it.'

Here's another example:

He says: 'My kids don't even know me. I've been locked up since my youngest was two.'

Simple reflection: 'You've been away from your kids for a long time.'

Complex reflection: 'Being separated from your kids is one of the heaviest things you carry. And it sounds like the thought of them not knowing you drives a lot of what you want to change.'

The complex reflection connects what he said to what he feels and what he wants. That's where change talk lives."

Common mistakes with reflections:

"1. **Parroting.** Don't just repeat their exact words back to them like a recorder. Rephrase it. Show that you processed it, not just heard it.

1. **Turning it into a question.** 'So you're tired of being in trouble?' — that question mark changes everything. It puts them on the defensive. Make it a statement. 'You're tired of being in trouble.' Period.
2. **Adding judgment.** 'You're tired of being in trouble — well, yeah, you should be.' No. A reflection is clean. No opinions attached."

Practice (10 min):

"Groups of three. Person A shares something they've been thinking about — something real, not a made-up scenario. Person B delivers a simple reflection. Person C delivers a complex reflection. Then rotate. Three rounds."

Debrief (3 min): Ask: "Which type of reflection had more impact — simple or complex? When would you use each one?" Guide toward: simple reflections build trust and slow things down; complex reflections deepen the conversation and surface change talk.

OARS Skill 4: Summaries (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"The last OARS skill is **Summaries**. A summary is when you pull together everything someone has shared and reflect it back as a whole picture. It's like holding up a mirror to an entire conversation.*

Summaries do three things:

- 1. They show the person you were really listening — not just to one thing they said, but to everything.*
- 2. They help the person hear their own story organized and clear.*
- 3. They create a natural transition — either to a deeper conversation or to a close.*

Here's what a summary sounds like:

'So let me see if I've got this right. You came into FORGE because your cellie told you about it, and at first you weren't sure it was for you. Over the past few weeks, you've started to see some changes in how you handle conflict, and that feels good. But you're also struggling because some of the guys in your dorm are giving you a hard time about being in the program, and part of you wonders if it's worth the hassle. On one hand, you see the growth. On the other hand, the social cost feels high. Did I get that right?'

Notice the last question: 'Did I get that right?' Always end a summary by checking. You might have missed something. You might have misunderstood. Asking tells the person their story matters enough to get right."

"Pro tip: When you summarize, pay special attention to the change talk and include it. If someone mentioned wanting to be a better father, wanting to stay out of trouble, wanting to do something different — put that in the summary. Let them hear their own motivation reflected back."

Integrated Practice: Full OARS Conversation (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Now we put it all together. Pair up. One of you is a resistant mentee. One of you is the mentor. The mentee's scenario: You've been in FORGE for three weeks and you're thinking about quitting. You haven't told anyone yet, but you're losing motivation.

Mentor — your job is to have a 5-minute conversation using all four OARS skills. Ask open questions. Deliver at least one affirmation. Use reflections — both simple and complex. Close with a summary. Don't try to fix anything. Don't try to convince them to stay. Just explore.

I'll call time at 5 minutes. Then switch roles."

Facilitator circulates during practice. Listen for: - Are they asking open questions or slipping into closed ones? - Are affirmations specific or generic? - Are reflections clean or loaded with judgment? - Are summaries capturing the key themes?

Debrief (5 min):

"How was that? Mentors — what was hardest? Most people say the hardest part is not giving advice. Your mentee is sitting there saying, 'I want to quit,' and every fiber of your being wants to say, 'Don't quit!' But what happens when you use OARS instead? The conversation goes deeper. And the person starts finding their own reasons to stay — which are always more powerful than yours."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Closing round: Which OARS skill feels most natural to you, and which one is going to be the hardest to master?"

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Homework for tonight: Have one real conversation in the dorm using OARS. All four skills. Pick someone who's dealing with something — it doesn't have to be heavy, just real. Use open questions, give at least one genuine affirmation, practice reflections, and try to close with a summary. Write about it in your journal: What did you say? How did the other person respond? What would you do differently?"

Tomorrow we put MI into FORGE-specific situations — the real stuff you're going to face as mentors. See you Thursday."

Session 47 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
- Opening circle completed — check on rolling with resistance homework
- OARS introduced and MI Quick Reference cards distributed
- Open questions taught — closed-to-open conversion exercise completed
- Affirmations taught — three rules (specific, genuine, effort-focused)
- Affirmation practice in pairs completed
- Simple and complex reflections taught with examples
- Reflection practice in triads completed
- Summaries taught with full example
- Integrated OARS practice in pairs completed (5 min each direction)
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (real OARS conversation + journal)

SESSION 48: MI in FORGE Context

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 48 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Apply MI techniques to realistic FORGE mentoring scenarios 2. Use the "readiness ruler" (1-10 scale) to assess and explore someone's motivation 3. Demonstrate MI skills when a dorm member doesn't want to change 4. Use MI when someone is considering leaving the program 5. Integrate MI into conflict resolution conversations

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in round. How are you doing? And: Tell us about the OARS conversation you had last night. What happened?"

Send the talking piece. Listen for successes and struggles. Common reports: "It felt weird not giving advice." "He actually opened up more than usual." "I couldn't think of a good open question in the moment." All of these are learning.

Review: OARS Quick Refresh (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Quick review. Someone give me one example of each — an open question, an affirmation, a reflection, and a summary. Just off the top of your head."

Call on four people. Correct or sharpen if needed. Move quickly — this is a warm-up, not a re-teach.

The Readiness Ruler (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Before we get into scenarios, I want to teach you one more MI tool. It's called the **Readiness Ruler**, and it's one of the simplest, most effective things you'll ever use as a mentor.*

Here's how it works. You ask someone: 'On a scale of 1 to 10, where 1 is not at all ready and 10 is completely ready — how ready are you to [make this change]?'

That's it. One question. But what you do with the answer is where the magic is.

Let's say your mentee says he's at a 4. Most mentors would hear '4' and think: low. He's not ready. I need to convince him. Wrong.

Here's what you say: 'A 4. So you're not at a 1. What makes you a 4 and not a 1?'

Now he's telling you his reasons for change. He's arguing for change. You didn't have to make the argument — he's making it himself. Whatever he says next is change talk, and you reflect it back.

Then, if the conversation is going well, you can ask: 'What would it take to move from a 4 to a 5 or 6?' Now he's identifying what he needs. He's building his own plan.

The readiness ruler works because it gives people permission to not be at a 10. It meets them where they are. A 4 is real. And the distance from 4 to 5 is manageable. The distance from 4 to 10 is overwhelming."

Demonstrate with a volunteer:

"I need a volunteer. I'm going to play the mentor. You're a dorm member who's been getting into arguments every week. I'm going to use the readiness ruler."

Run a quick 2-minute demonstration. Show how "Why not a 1?" draws out change talk.

"See how that works? I never told him to stop arguing. I never lectured him. He told ME why he wants to change. That's the difference."

Quick practice (5 min):

"Pair up. One of you asks the readiness ruler question about any change the other person has been thinking about — real or scenario-based. Practice the follow-up: 'Why not a 1?' and 'What would it take to go up one number?'"

Scenario Block: MI in FORGE Situations (50 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Now we take everything from this week and apply it to the real situations you're going to face. I'm going to set up three scenarios. For each one, we'll have two volunteers run the conversation in front of the group. Then we'll break it down together."

Scenario 1: The Dorm Member Who Doesn't Want to Change (15 min)

Facilitator sets the scene:

"Marcus has been in your dorm for two years. He runs a small gambling operation — cards, sports bets, commissary stakes. He's never been violent about it, but you've seen the tension it creates when people can't pay. Two weeks ago, a near-fight broke out over a debt. You've built a decent relationship with Marcus over the past few months. You decide to have a conversation.

Marcus's position: 'Gambling isn't hurting anyone. It's entertainment. People choose to play. If they can't afford to lose, they shouldn't sit down. I'm not the problem — they are.'

I need one person to play Marcus and one to play the mentor. Mentor — your only tools are OARS and the readiness ruler. You are not trying to make Marcus stop gambling today. You're trying to start a conversation that might lead somewhere eventually. Go."

Run the scene (5 min). Facilitator can freeze once to coach if the mentor gets stuck.

Group debrief (10 min): - What MI skills did the mentor use well? - Where did the mentor slip into advice-giving or arguing? - What stage of change is Marcus in? (*Precontemplation — he doesn't see a problem.*) - What's the realistic goal for this conversation? (*Not to change Marcus. To plant a seed. To keep the relationship open.*) - What open question would you have asked? - What reflection could have gone deeper?

Scenario 2: Someone Considering Leaving the Program (15 min)

Facilitator sets the scene:

"Terrence is a FORGE participant in Week 8. He's been doing good work — his thinking reports are solid, he participates in circle, he completed his service challenge. But today he pulls you aside and says: 'I don't know if I want to keep doing this. I got into it with my cellie last night and he called me soft for being in FORGE. A few other guys have been making comments too. I'm tired of defending myself. Maybe this isn't worth the hassle.'

This is a contemplation moment. Part of him wants to stay; part of him wants to leave. Your job is not to argue him into staying. Your job is to help him explore both sides.

I need a mentor and a Terrence. Go."

Run the scene (5 min). Facilitator can freeze once to coach.

Group debrief (10 min): - What stage of change is Terrence in? (*Contemplation — weighing pros and cons.*) - What's the biggest mistake a mentor could make here? (*Dismissing his concerns: "Don't worry about what they think." That invalidates his experience.*) - What affirmation was available? (*His eight weeks of effort. His solid work. The fact that he came to you instead of just disappearing.*) - What complex reflection could work? (*Something like: "The program is changing you, but the cost of being different in here is real — and you're wondering if the growth is worth the grief."*) - Did the mentor use the readiness ruler? If not, where could it have fit? (*"On a scale of 1 to 10, how much do you want to stay in FORGE?" Then: "Why not a 1?"*)

Scenario 3: MI During Conflict Resolution (15 min)

Facilitator sets the scene:

"Two men in your dorm, Ray and Deon, have been in a cold war for a week. It started over a spot at the day room table. Ray was sitting there, got up to use the restroom, came back and Deon had taken his seat. Ray said something. Deon said something back. Now they're not speaking, and the tension is affecting the whole dorm. Other people are starting to take sides.

You decide to talk to each of them separately before attempting any mediation. You're starting with Ray.

Ray's position: 'He disrespected me. In front of everybody. I'm not talking to him. I don't have anything to say to him. If he wants to act like that, we don't need to be cool.'

I need a mentor and a Ray. Mentor — use MI to explore what's really going on. You're not mediating yet. You're just talking to Ray. Go."

Run the scene (5 min). Facilitator can freeze once to coach.

Group debrief (10 min): - On the surface, this is about a seat. What's it really about? (*Respect. Status. Being seen. Feeling disrespected in front of others.*) - What MI skills helped the mentor get beneath the surface? -

What change talk might emerge? (Ray might say something like, "I don't want this to blow up into something bigger" or "We used to be cool and I don't know why it got like this." Those are openings.) - How does MI support the FORGE conflict resolution model? (MI opens the door. The 5-step conflict model walks through it. MI gets someone to the point where they're willing to sit down. The conflict model gives them the structure to resolve it.)

Facilitator:

*"Here's the key insight from all three of these scenarios: **MI is not a replacement for your other skills. It's the tool that makes your other skills possible.** You can't mediate a conflict if neither person is willing to talk. You can't teach someone who doesn't want to learn. You can't mentor someone who doesn't trust you. MI opens doors. Everything else you've learned walks through them."*

Putting It All Together: The MI Mentor Mindset (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Before we close out this week, I want to name something. Learning MI is going to feel unnatural at first. Everything in your experience tells you to push. To argue. To tell people what they need to hear. To be direct. And directness has its place — you've been direct your whole life.

But MI asks you to do something harder than being direct. It asks you to be patient. To sit with someone's ambivalence without trying to resolve it for them. To trust that the person across from you has the capacity to find their own path — and that your job is to help them find it, not to build it for them.

That's the MI mindset for FORGE mentors:

- **I don't have to fix anyone.**
- **I trust that people have their own reasons for change — and my job is to help them find those reasons.**
- **Resistance is not my enemy. It's information.**
- **The speed of change is not up to me.**
- **Asking the right question is more powerful than giving the right answer.**

You're going to get this wrong at first. You're going to slip into advice-giving. You're going to ask a closed question when you should have asked an open one. You're going to forget to reflect. That's fine. MI is a practice, not a performance. The more you use it, the more natural it becomes.

Next week, we start simulation training. Everything you've learned — conflict resolution, communication, de-escalation, teaching, facilitation, MI — all of it comes together. You're going to practice responding to real scenarios in real time, with coaching and feedback. It's intense, and it's the thing that's going to make you ready for Phase 3."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Final round for the week. Complete this sentence: 'The biggest thing I'm taking from MI week is...'"

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Homework over the weekend:

- 1. Practice MI in at least two real conversations. Use OARS. Use the readiness ruler if the opportunity comes up. Journal about each one — what you said, what they said, what you'd do differently.*
- 2. Review your MI Quick Reference card. Know it cold. You'll be using these skills in simulations starting Tuesday.*
- 3. Review the FORGE Conflict Resolution model (5 steps from the handbook). Next week you'll be using MI and conflict resolution together in simulated scenarios.*

Tuesday we begin simulation training. I'm going to be honest with you — simulations are the most challenging part of Phase 2. They're also the most valuable. You're going to mess up. You're going to freeze. You're going to say the wrong thing. That's the whole point. Better to make mistakes here, with coaching, than out there for real.

Good week. Rest up. See you Tuesday."

Session 48 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
- Opening circle completed — OARS homework debrief
- Quick OARS review completed
- Readiness ruler taught with demonstration and practice
- Scenario 1 completed: Dorm member who doesn't want to change (Marcus/gambling)
- Scenario 2 completed: Someone considering leaving FORGE (Terrence)
- Scenario 3 completed: MI during conflict resolution (Ray/Deon seat dispute)
- MI mindset principles shared
- Connection made to upcoming simulation training
- Closing circle completed

- [] Homework assigned (2 real MI conversations + review reference card + review conflict resolution model)

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 16

What to Watch For

Natural MI talent: Some participants will take to MI immediately. They're the ones who've always been good listeners. Note who they are — they can help model for the group during simulation training.

The fixers: Some participants will struggle with not giving advice. They genuinely want to help and their instinct is to tell people what to do. This is a strength channeled the wrong way. Coach them: "Your caring is an asset. We're just redirecting how you express it."

Surface-level practice: Watch for participants going through the motions — asking open questions that sound right but have no depth, or giving affirmations that are technically specific but don't feel genuine. Push for authenticity.

Resistance to MI itself: Some participants may think MI is "soft" or manipulative. Address it directly: "MI isn't about being soft. It's about being strategic. Confrontation feels tough, but it rarely works. MI feels gentle, but it changes people."

Common Week 16 Challenges

"This feels fake." Normal response to any new communication skill. "Everything feels fake the first time you try it. The first time you used the STOP technique, it felt fake too. Now some of you do it without thinking. MI will get there."

"Why can't I just tell someone the truth?" Good question. "You can. And sometimes you should. MI isn't about never being direct. It's about choosing when to be direct and when to draw someone out. If a man has a weapon, you don't use the readiness ruler — you refer. But if a man is making slow, self-destructive choices, direct confrontation usually just makes him defend those choices."

"What if they never change?" Honest answer: "Some won't. Not everyone is ready, and not everyone will get ready in your timeline. That's not your failure. Your job is to keep the door open and keep the relationship intact. Some of the most important conversations you'll have as a mentor are with people who don't change for months — and then one day, something shifts."

Preparation for Week 17

- Review the Simulation Training format in the Program Design (Part III)
- Prepare scenario cards for Simulation 1 (Property Dispute) and the Introduction to Simulations session
- Set up the room for simulations — clear a space for the "stage" area
- Review the scoring rubric — be prepared to explain it clearly
- Prepare observer role cards (what to watch for during simulations)
- Have extra scenario copies for role-players
- If Senior Mentors are available, brief them on their role during simulations (they may play scenario characters)

Weeks 17–20



Simulation Training

Week 17: Simulation Training Block 1a

Week 17 Overview

Purpose: Introduce simulation training — FORGE's core innovation — and begin the first block of dorm conflict simulations. By the end of this week, every participant should understand how simulations work, be comfortable with the freeze-and-coach process, and have completed their first two dorm conflict simulations.

Context: Participants now have a full toolkit: cognitive restructuring, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, communication, de-escalation, teaching, facilitation, and Motivational Interviewing. Simulation training is where all those skills get tested under pressure. This is not a test — it's practice. The goal is to build muscle memory so that when real situations arise, participants respond with skill instead of instinct.

Sessions This Week: - Session 49 (Tuesday): Introduction to Simulations - Session 50 (Wednesday): Simulation 1 — Property Dispute Escalating to Threats - Session 51 (Thursday): Simulation 2 — Gossip and Reputation Damage

Materials Needed: - Simulation Scoring Rubric (1 per participant + extras for observers) - Observer Role cards (1 per observer — template below) - Scenario cards for Simulations 1 and 2 (role-player copies and mentor copies) - Lessons Learned sheets (blank, 1 per participant per simulation) - Journals/notebooks - Easel paper or whiteboard for debrief notes - Timer or watch for scene timing

Room Setup Note: Starting this week, arrange the room differently. Clear a space in the center or at one end for the "stage" — where simulations happen. Remaining chairs form a semicircle around the stage for observers. This setup will be used for all simulation sessions.

SESSION 49: Introduction to Simulations

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 49 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Explain why simulation training is effective and how it builds skills differently than discussion 2. Describe the simulation format: scene set, first attempt, freeze and coach, replay, debrief 3. Demonstrate the "freeze and coach" technique 4. Describe observer roles and what to watch for during a simulation 5. Articulate the psychological safety agreements for simulation training 6. Understand the simulation scoring rubric (6 criteria, 1-4 scale)

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in round. How are you doing? And this question: **Have you ever had to deal with a real situation in the dorm where you wished you'd practiced beforehand — where you had to figure it out in the moment with no preparation?**"*

Send the talking piece. Most people will have stories. That's the setup — simulations exist so you don't have to figure it out cold.

Why Simulation Training Works (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Starting today, we're entering the part of FORGE that separates this program from almost every other program in the state. Simulation training.

Most programs talk about what to do. FORGE makes you do it.

Think about it this way. If you were training to be a firefighter, would you sit in a classroom for six months reading about fire and then get sent into a burning building? No. You'd practice. In controlled conditions. With experienced people coaching you. Over and over until your body knows what to do before your brain has to think about it.

That's what simulations are. You're going to practice responding to the exact situations you'll face as a FORGE mentor — dorm conflicts, resistant mentees, safety situations, crisis moments. You'll do it in front of this group, with coaching, with feedback, with the chance to try again.

Here's what the research says: people who practice skills through simulation retain them at roughly double the rate of people who only discuss them. When the pressure is on, your body goes to what it's practiced, not what it's read. We're training your reflexes."

"I want to be straight with you about something: simulations are uncomfortable. You're going to stand up in front of this group and respond to a scenario in real time. You're going to make mistakes. You're going to freeze. You're going to say the wrong thing. And every person in this room is going to see it.

*That sounds brutal. But here's the truth: **every mistake you make in a simulation is a mistake you don't make in real life.** In real life, the stakes are someone's safety. In here, the stakes are your pride. I'd rather you bruise your pride now than fail someone later."*

How Simulations Work (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Every simulation follows the same format. Learn this — it won't change."

Write or display each step:

Step 1: Scene Set (2 minutes)

"I describe the scenario. Who's involved, what's happening, what the mentor walks into. Role-players get their character cards — they know their motivation, their mood, their lines. The mentor gets a brief setup: Here's what you know. Here's what you don't. Go.

The mentor doesn't get time to prepare a script. That's intentional. Real life doesn't give you a script."

Step 2: First Attempt (5 minutes)

"The simulation begins. The mentor walks into the situation and responds however they respond. Role-players stay in character. The scene plays out in real time.

During the first attempt, the mentor is on their own. No help. This shows us your natural instincts — what you default to under pressure. Your defaults are important information."

Step 3: Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes)

"At some point during the first attempt — or at the end of 5 minutes — I call 'Freeze.' Everyone stops. I turn to the mentor and ask: 'What are you thinking right now? What's your plan? What do you need?'

Then I open it up to the group: 'What's working? What could be different? What would you try?'

This is not a pile-on. This is coaching. The feedback should be specific and actionable. Not 'You should have done better' — that's useless. Instead: 'When he raised his voice, your body tensed up. Try dropping your shoulders and slowing your voice next time. Match his energy with calm, not with tension.'"

Step 4: Replay with Adjustments (5 minutes)

"The mentor goes back into the scene and tries again, incorporating the coaching. Same scenario, same characters — but different approach. This is where the real learning happens. You get to feel the difference between your first instinct and a coached response.

Sometimes the replay goes better. Sometimes it doesn't. Both are valuable."

Step 5: Group Debrief (10 minutes)

"After the replay, we all sit down and break it down:

- What skills did the mentor use?
- What worked and why?
- What was the hardest moment?
- What would we do differently?
- What did we learn that applies to real life?

Every person in the room learns from every simulation — not just the person in the hot seat. Observers often learn more than participants because they can see the dynamics clearly."

Step 6: Document Lessons Learned

"After each simulation, every participant writes a brief lessons learned entry in their journal. What did you observe? What would you take into a real situation? This becomes part of your Phase 2 portfolio."

The Freeze and Coach Technique — Demonstration (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Let me show you how freeze and coach works. I need two volunteers. One of you is going to play a mentor. The other is going to play a dorm member who's angry because someone moved his stuff off a shelf. This is not a graded simulation. This is a demonstration. The point is to see the format, not to perform perfectly."

Set up a simple scenario:

"Here's the scene: You walk into the common area and a man is standing over his belongings, which have been moved off the shelf and piled on the floor. He's loud. He's angry. He's saying, 'Whoever did this is going to hear from me.' A couple of other men are watching. You're a FORGE mentor in this dorm. Go."

Let the scene run for 2 minutes. Then call "Freeze."

Facilitator:

"[Mentor's name] — freeze right there. Don't move. What's going through your head right now?"

Let the mentor respond.

"Good. Group — what's working so far? What would you adjust?"

Take 2-3 suggestions. Pick one and tell the mentor: "Try that. Same scene. Go."

Run the replay for 2 minutes. Then call "Cut."

"That's freeze and coach. See how it works? You get to stop the clock, think, get input, and try again. In real life, you don't get that luxury. In here, you do. Use it."

Observer Roles (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Not everyone will be in the hot seat for every simulation. When you're not the mentor, you're an observer. Observers are not spectators. You have a job."

Distribute or explain observer roles:

"When you're observing, you're watching for specific things. Here are the six categories on the scoring rubric. Each observer will be assigned one or two categories to focus on:"

- 1. De-escalation:** *Did the mentor reduce the tension or increase it? What specific moves did they make to bring the temperature down? Body language, tone, distance, pacing.*
- 2. Communication:** *Was the mentor clear? Assertive? Respectful? Did they use open questions, reflections, affirmations? Or did they lecture, accuse, or talk too much?*
- 3. Boundaries:** *Did the mentor stay in their role? Did they try to be a CO? Did they try to be a friend instead of a mentor? Did they know when something was beyond their scope?*
- 4. Resolution:** *Did the mentor move toward a workable outcome? Was dignity preserved? Was there an agreement? Or did the situation just fade without resolution?*
- 5. Composure:** *Did the mentor stay calm? If they lost composure, did they recover? Did their presence ground the situation or add to the chaos?*
- 6. Referral Judgment:** *Did the mentor recognize when something was beyond their scope? Did they know when to step back and involve staff? Or did they try to handle everything themselves?*

"During the debrief, I'm going to ask observers to share what they noticed in their assigned category. Be specific. 'I noticed that when the volume went up, the mentor took a step back and lowered his voice. That worked because it broke the escalation pattern.' That kind of feedback helps everyone."

The Scoring Rubric (10 minutes)

Distribute the Simulation Scoring Rubric.

Facilitator:

"This is the rubric we'll use to score simulations — not today, and not for the rest of this block. These first simulations are practice. But starting in Week 23, you'll have graded simulation assessments. You need to pass 3 of 5 to advance to Phase 3. So you need to understand this rubric now."

Walk through each criterion:

"Each of the six categories is scored 1 through 4:

1 — Needs Work: You either made the situation worse or you froze and couldn't respond.

2 — Developing: You tried, and some of it worked, but it was inconsistent. You're on the right track but not there yet.

3 — Competent: You handled the situation effectively. Tension went down. Communication was clear. Boundaries were maintained. This is the target.

4 — Exemplary: You handled it at a level that could be used to train others. Not just competent — masterful. This is rare, and it's what you're building toward."

Scoring Rubric (Full Detail):

Criteria	1 (Needs Work)	2 (Developing)	3 (Competent)	4 (Exemplary)
De-escalation	Escalated the situation or froze entirely	Attempted de-escalation but was inconsistent — some moves helped, some didn't	Effectively reduced tension through deliberate technique	Masterful — calm, strategic, lowered the temperature for everyone in the room
Communication	Aggressive, passive, or unclear — the message didn't land	Some effective techniques but mixed with unhelpful responses	Clear, assertive, respectful — the person felt heard	Exceptional — empathetic, precise, every word served a purpose
Boundaries	Overstepped role (acted like CO or authority) or had no boundaries at all	Boundaries were unclear — wobbled between roles	Maintained appropriate mentor role throughout	Modeled boundaries so naturally they became invisible
Resolution	No resolution attempted or situation left worse than it started	Partial resolution — some progress but no clear outcome	Reached a workable agreement with dignity preserved	Durable solution that addressed root cause, not just surface conflict
Composure	Lost composure — visibly agitated, reactive, or shut down	Lost composure but recovered — showed self-awareness	Maintained composure throughout, even under pressure	Composed AND grounding — their presence calmed others

Criteria	1 (Needs Work)	2 (Developing)	3 (Competent)	4 (Exemplary)
Referral Judgment	Failed to refer when the situation clearly required it	Recognized the need but delayed or was unsure how to refer	Recognized the boundary and referred in a timely, appropriate way	Proactive safety awareness — anticipated the need before it became critical

"Maximum score: 24. Minimum to pass a graded assessment: 15 — that's an average of 2.5 per category. You need to be solidly between 'developing' and 'competent' across the board.

But forget the numbers for now. For the next two weeks, the only thing that matters is practice. Make mistakes. Get coached. Try again. The scores will take care of themselves if you put in the work."

Psychological Safety Agreements (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Before we start running simulations tomorrow, we need to agree on something. Simulations require vulnerability. You're going to stand up in front of people you live with and possibly look foolish. That takes guts. And it only works if this room is safe.

Here are the simulation agreements. These are non-negotiable:"

1. What happens in simulation stays in simulation.

"If someone freezes up, says the wrong thing, or gets flustered — that stays in this room. It does not become a joke in the dorm. It does not get brought up to embarrass someone. Ever. If I find out someone is using simulation performance to mock another participant, that's a Code of Conduct violation."

2. Feedback is coaching, not attacking.

"When you give feedback, you're helping someone get better. You're not scoring points. You're not proving you're smarter. Specific, actionable, respectful. 'Here's what I'd try differently' — not 'That was terrible.'"

3. Role-players stay in character.

"If you're playing a role, commit to it. Don't go easy on the mentor to be nice, and don't go hard to make them look bad. Play the character as written. The scenario should feel real — not like a setup."

4. Everyone participates.

"Over the next two weeks, every person in this room will be in the hot seat. No exceptions. You don't get to be a permanent observer. If you're uncomfortable — good. That's the point. Discomfort is where learning lives."

5. Respect the process.

"When a simulation is running, the room is quiet. No side conversations. No laughing at mistakes. Full attention. The person in the hot seat deserves your respect, just like you'll want theirs when it's your turn."

"Can everyone commit to these? If you have concerns, raise them now."

Allow genuine discussion. If someone raises a real concern (e.g., "What if I really can't do this in front of everyone?"), address it honestly:

"I hear you. And I'm not going to pretend it's easy. But here's what I know: every single person who's gone through simulation training says the same thing afterward — 'I wish I'd done more of it.' The first one is the hardest. After that, it gets easier. And you'll have coaching every step of the way. You're not alone up there."

Preview: Tomorrow's Simulation (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Tomorrow we run our first full simulation. Here's the setup — I want you to think about it tonight:

Two men in the dorm are arguing about a stolen radio. Voices are rising. Other people are gathering. You're a FORGE mentor and you walk into it.

That's all I'm telling you. Think about it. What would you do? What skills would you use? What's the first thing you'd say? Don't script it out — just sit with it. Journal anything that comes to mind.

See you tomorrow. Get some sleep. Tomorrow we do this for real."

Closing Circle (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Quick closing round: **One word** — how are you feeling about starting simulations?"*

Send the talking piece. Expect words like: nervous, excited, scared, ready, anxious. All of them are correct.

Facilitator (closing):

"Every word I just heard is the right answer. If you're nervous, that means you care about doing well. If you're excited, that means you're ready to learn. If you're scared, welcome to growth.

Tomorrow. Be ready."

Session 49 Checklist

- Room set up with stage area and observer semicircle
- Opening circle completed — "Wished you'd practiced beforehand?"
- Why simulation training works — explained with firefighter analogy
- Six-step simulation format taught (scene set, attempt, freeze/coach, replay, debrief, document)
- Freeze and coach demonstration completed with volunteers
- Observer roles explained (6 categories)
- Scoring rubric distributed and walked through
- Psychological safety agreements discussed and committed to
- Tomorrow's simulation previewed (property dispute)

- [] Closing circle completed
- [] Homework assigned (think through property dispute scenario + journal)

SESSION 50: Simulation 1 — Property Dispute

Escalating to Threats

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 50 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Apply de-escalation techniques to a dorm conflict in real time 2. Use the FORGE conflict resolution model under pressure 3. Manage a multi-person situation (two disputants plus bystanders) 4. Demonstrate composure when someone challenges their authority 5. Document lessons learned from a simulation experience

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Quick check-in. One sentence: How are you doing and how did you prepare for today?"

Keep this short. People will be anxious. Acknowledge it.

Facilitator:

"Some of you look nervous. Good. That means you take this seriously. Remember — this is practice, not a test. Every mistake is a lesson. Let's get into it."

Simulation 1 Setup (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Here's the scenario."

Read the scene aloud:

"It's mid-afternoon. You're walking through the dorm and you hear raised voices coming from the bunk area. Two men — Williams and Carter — are standing face to face. Williams is accusing Carter of stealing his radio from under his bunk while he was at chow. Carter says he doesn't know what Williams is talking about. Williams's voice is getting louder. He says, 'I know it was you. Everybody knows it was you. If I don't get it back by tonight, we're going to have a problem.'

Five or six other men are watching. Some are egging it on. One says, 'Handle your business, Williams.' Another is just watching silently.

You're a FORGE mentor who lives in this dorm. You walk up. Go."

Assign roles: - **Mentor:** First volunteer (or facilitator assigns — spread the opportunities across the group over the two weeks) - **Williams (accuser):** Senior Mentor or participant. Character brief: You're angry. You're sure Carter took the radio. You've been disrespected. If you don't handle this, you look weak. You're not violent yet, but you're close. - **Carter (accused):** Participant. Character brief: You didn't take the radio (or maybe you did — don't reveal it either way). You're defensive. You don't like being accused in front of people. You're not going to back down, but you're not trying to fight either. - **Bystander 1 (instigator):** Participant. Character brief: You're stirring the pot. "Handle your business." You want to see action. - **Bystander 2 (silent observer):** Participant. Character brief: You're watching. You're worried. You don't want this to blow up. If the mentor approaches you, you'll cooperate.

Assign observers: Each remaining participant gets one rubric category to focus on.

Simulation 1 Run (27 minutes)

First Attempt (5 minutes):

Start the scene. Let the role-players get into character for 30 seconds before the mentor enters. The mentor walks in and responds.

Facilitator watches for: - Does the mentor address the bystanders or go straight to the two in conflict? - What's the mentor's body language? Position? Volume? - Does the mentor try to separate Williams and Carter?

- Does the mentor acknowledge emotions or go straight to facts? - Does the mentor get drawn into the content (who took the radio?) or focus on the process (bringing the temperature down)?

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Call "Freeze" at a natural pivot point — when the mentor is stuck, when the scene is escalating, or at the 5-minute mark.

"Freeze. [Mentor's name], don't move. What's going through your head right now?"

Let the mentor share their internal state.

"Observers — what did you notice? Let's go category by category. De-escalation — what did you see?"

Take brief, specific feedback from observers. Then:

"What's one thing you could try differently in the replay?"

Pick 1-2 actionable coaching points. Keep it focused — too much feedback is overwhelming.

Replay with Adjustments (5 minutes):

"Same scene. Same characters. Take what you just heard and try again. Go."

Reset the scene. Let the mentor approach it differently.

Complications (introduce one if the mentor handles the initial situation well):

- Carter says: "I don't answer to you. You're not a CO. You're just an inmate with a title."
- Bystander 1 says: "Man, just let them fight. This ain't your problem."
- Williams says: "If I don't get my property back by lockdown, I'm going to handle it myself. You understand what I'm saying?"

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Everyone sits down. Facilitator leads the debrief.

Facilitator:

"Let's break this down. [Mentor's name], you go first — what worked for you and what was hardest?"

Let the mentor reflect first. Then open to the group.

Key debrief questions: - What was the first thing the mentor did when they walked up? Why did that matter? - When Williams challenged the mentor's authority ("You're just an inmate with a title"), how did the mentor respond? What would have been effective? - The bystanders added pressure. How do you handle the crowd while dealing with the conflict? - Was resolution realistic in this situation, or was the goal just de-escalation? (*Answer: The immediate goal is de-escalation. Resolution — figuring out what actually happened with the radio — comes later, when emotions are down.*) - When Williams said he'd "handle it himself" — that's a threat. What's the right response? (*Address it directly: "I hear you. And I want to make sure this gets resolved without anyone catching a charge. Let's figure this out together."*) - At what point, if any, would you need to involve staff? (*If the threat becomes specific and imminent, or if a weapon is mentioned.*)

Facilitator synthesis:

"Here's what I want everyone to take from this. Property disputes are one of the most common conflicts in a dorm. They look simple — someone's stuff is missing. But they're never really about the stuff. They're about respect. They're about whether someone can take from you without consequences. That's why the emotions run so high. When you intervene, you're not solving a property dispute — you're navigating a respect issue. If you address the respect, the property part usually works itself out."

Document Lessons Learned (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Everyone — open your journals. Write a 'Lessons Learned' entry for this simulation. Three questions:

- 1. What did I observe that worked?*
- 2. What would I do if I were in the hot seat?*
- 3. What's one technique or principle I want to remember for real life?"*

Give 5 minutes of quiet writing time.

Second Run: Different Mentor (30 minutes)

Facilitator:

"We're running this scenario again with a different mentor. Same setup. Same characters. But different roles — I need new role-players too."

Assign new mentor, new role-players, and new observer assignments.

Run the full cycle again: - Scene set (2 min) - First attempt (5 min) - Freeze and feedback (5 min) - Replay (5 min) - Group debrief (10 min)

Compare approaches: In the debrief, explicitly compare what the two mentors did differently.

"We ran the same scenario twice with two different mentors. What was different? What worked better and why? There's no single right answer — but there are approaches that consistently work better than others. What are they?"

Document Lessons Learned — Second Run (3 minutes)

Repeat the journal entry for the second run.

Closing Circle (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Quick closing. What surprised you about today — either about the simulation or about yourself?"

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Tomorrow: Simulation 2. Gossip and reputation damage. Someone's been labeled a snitch and they come to you. Think about it tonight — this one has different dynamics than a property dispute. The threat isn't physical yet, but it could become that fast.

Good work today. Every one of you learned something. See you tomorrow."

Session 50 Checklist

- Room set up with stage area and observer semicircle
- Opening circle completed
- Simulation 1 scenario read and roles assigned
- First run completed: first attempt, freeze/coach, replay, debrief
- Complications introduced during replay
- Lessons learned documented (first run)
- Second run completed with different mentor and role-players
- Comparison debrief conducted
- Lessons learned documented (second run)
- Closing circle completed
- Preview of Simulation 2 given (gossip/reputation damage)

SESSION 51: Simulation 2 — Gossip and Reputation Damage

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 51 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Assess the safety level of a reputation-based conflict 2. Use MI and active listening when someone is emotionally activated 3. Navigate the social dynamics of gossip and labeling in a correctional environment 4. Determine when a reputation issue becomes a safety concern requiring referral 5. Demonstrate appropriate mentor boundaries when asked to intervene directly

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in round. How are you doing? And: **What did you take from yesterday's simulation that's still on your mind?**"*

Send the talking piece. Use this to reinforce lessons from Session 50 — people will naturally debrief what they're still processing.

Pre-Simulation Discussion: Gossip, Labels, and Safety (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Before we run today's scenario, let's talk about why gossip in a prison environment is different from gossip anywhere else.

On the outside, gossip is annoying. In here, gossip can be dangerous. Labels like 'snitch,' 'rat,' or 'he's talking to the police' — those aren't just words. Those labels can get someone hurt. Everyone in this room knows that. As a FORGE mentor, you're going to encounter this. Someone will come to you because a rumor is spreading about them. They'll be scared. They'll be angry. And they'll be looking to you for help. The challenge is: you can't control what other people say. You can't go around the dorm demanding people stop talking. But you also can't ignore a situation that could turn violent.

Today's simulation is about navigating that space."

Simulation 2 Setup (3 minutes)

Read the scene aloud:

"A man in your dorm — Thomas — pulls you aside. He's visibly upset but trying to hold it together. He says: 'Someone's been telling people I'm cooperating with staff. That I gave information about the cell search last week. It's not true. I didn't say anything to anybody. But people are looking at me different. A couple guys stopped talking when I walked up. And Jackson — you know Jackson — he said to my face, 'Be careful, people are watching you.' That's a warning. I need to set the record straight before this gets out of hand.'

Thomas is scared, but his fear is showing up as anger. He wants to confront whoever started the rumor. He's also considering approaching Jackson directly. He wants your help."

Assign roles: - **Mentor:** Volunteer or assigned - **Thomas:** Participant. Character brief: You're frightened for your safety but you don't want to show fear. You're angry that someone would spread this lie. You want the mentor to fix it — talk to Jackson, find out who started the rumor, clear your name. If the mentor doesn't offer to help directly, you get frustrated: "What good is FORGE if you can't even help me with this?" - **Observers:** Assigned to rubric categories

Note: This simulation starts as a one-on-one conversation, not a group conflict. The mentor is sitting with Thomas. No bystanders initially.

Simulation 2: First Run (27 minutes)

First Attempt (5 minutes):

The mentor and Thomas are seated, having a conversation. Let it play out.

Facilitator watches for: - Does the mentor validate Thomas's fear or rush to problem-solving? - Does the mentor ask open questions to understand the full picture? - Does the mentor assess the actual safety level (Is this gossip or a credible threat?) - When Thomas asks the mentor to confront Jackson, does the mentor maintain boundaries? - Does the mentor recognize that this might need staff involvement?

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Call "Freeze."

"[Mentor's name] — what are you thinking right now? What's your assessment of the danger level?"

Let the mentor respond. Then:

"Observers — what did you see? Let's focus on communication and boundaries. Thomas asked the mentor to go talk to Jackson. How was that handled?"

Key coaching points to offer: - *Validation first:* "Thomas is scared. Before you solve anything, he needs to know you hear him. A reflection like 'This is serious — being labeled like that in here is dangerous, and I understand why you're scared' goes a long way." - *Assess the threat:* "There's a difference between gossip and a credible threat. Jackson's comment — 'people are watching you' — is ambiguous. Is it a warning from a friend? Or a threat from an enemy? You need more information before you decide how to respond." - *Boundaries:* "Thomas wants you to be his enforcer. That's not your role. Your role is to support him, help him think through options, and determine if staff needs to be involved. If you go confront Jackson, you're not mentoring — you're inserting yourself into a conflict that could become your conflict."

Replay with Adjustments (5 minutes):

"Same scene. Same Thomas. Take what you heard and try again."

Complications to introduce during replay: - Thomas says: "You're not going to help me? Then what's the point of this program? I need to handle this myself." - Thomas says: "Don't tell staff. If staff gets involved, that makes the rumor look true. Then I'm really in danger." - Thomas asks: "Be honest with me — do you think I'm safe?"

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Facilitator:

"Let's talk about this. What makes this scenario different from the property dispute yesterday?"

Key debrief points: - **Urgency assessment:** Not every gossip situation is a safety emergency. But the "snitch" label in prison can be life-threatening. The mentor needs to assess: Is Thomas in immediate danger? Has anyone made a specific threat? Is there a pattern of escalation? - **What the mentor can and can't do:** The mentor can listen. The mentor can help Thomas think through options. The mentor can observe the dorm dynamic. The mentor can, if the threat level is high enough, involve staff — even if Thomas doesn't want that. What the mentor cannot do: investigate who started the rumor, confront Jackson, or guarantee Thomas's safety. - **The hardest moment:** When Thomas says, "Don't tell staff." This is a judgment call. If the mentor genuinely believes Thomas is in danger, the obligation to safety overrides the request for confidentiality. But it should be explained, not done behind Thomas's back: "I hear you, and I respect what you're saying. But if I believe your safety is at risk, I can't stay quiet. That's not about snitching — that's about keeping you alive." - **MI connection:** This is a situation where OARS are critical. Thomas is activated. He wants action, not conversation. The mentor has to slow it down without dismissing the urgency. "Tell me exactly what's happened, from the beginning" — that open question serves two purposes: it gets information, and it gives Thomas space to organize his thoughts.

Document Lessons Learned (5 minutes)

Journal entry: three questions (same format as Session 50).

Second Run: Different Mentor (30 minutes)

Run the full cycle again with a different mentor and different Thomas.

For the second run, add a layer: After the conversation with Thomas, the mentor encounters Jackson in the common area. Jackson says, unprompted: "Hey, you've been spending a lot of time talking to Thomas. What's that about?"

This tests the mentor's ability to navigate a conversation without revealing confidential information or escalating the situation.

Debrief the second run with comparison to the first.

Document Lessons Learned — Second Run (3 minutes)

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Closing round. Two parts: Name one thing you did well or observed that worked today, and name one thing you want to work on before the next simulation."

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"This week you were introduced to simulations and you ran through two full scenarios. Property disputes and gossip. Both common, both different.

Here's what I want you to sit with over the weekend:

*Every scenario we run is going to test different skills. Some test de-escalation. Some test MI. Some test boundaries. Some test referral judgment. But ALL of them test one thing: **Can you stay composed under pressure and respond with skill instead of instinct?** That's the through-line. Whatever else happens, composure is the foundation.*

Next week we run three more simulations — new arrival being pressured, gambling debt, and racial tension. Each one gets harder. Each one gets more real.

Homework:

- 1. Review your lessons learned entries from this week. What patterns do you see?*
- 2. Practice OARS in at least one real conversation over the weekend. Journal about it.*
- 3. Read the FORGE conflict resolution model one more time. You should be able to recite the five steps without thinking.*
- 4. Think about the scenarios coming next week. If a new arrival was being pressured in your dorm, what would you actually do? If you learned about a gambling debt creating tension, how would you handle it? Don't script it — just sit with it.*

Good week. You did real work. See you Tuesday."

Session 51 Checklist

- [] Room set up with stage area and observer semicircle
- [] Opening circle completed

- [] Pre-simulation discussion on gossip and labels in prison
- [] Simulation 2 scenario read and roles assigned
- [] First run completed: first attempt, freeze/coach, replay, debrief
- [] Complications introduced (Thomas asking mentor not to tell staff, etc.)
- [] Safety assessment vs. gossip assessment discussed
- [] Boundary discussion: what mentors can and can't do
- [] Lessons learned documented (first run)
- [] Second run completed with different mentor — Jackson encounter added
- [] Comparison debrief conducted
- [] Lessons learned documented (second run)
- [] Closing circle completed
- [] Weekend homework assigned (review notes + practice OARS + review conflict model)

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 17

What to Watch For

Performance anxiety: The first simulation session will be nerve-wracking for most participants. Normalize the anxiety. The participants who are most anxious often take the process most seriously.

Natural ability vs. effort: Some participants will be naturals — calm under pressure, good instincts. Others will struggle. Both need coaching. The naturals may need to be pushed to use specific techniques instead of relying on charm. The struggling participants need encouragement and specific, actionable feedback.

Group dynamics during feedback: Watch for feedback that's competitive rather than supportive. "I would have done it better" is not helpful. "Here's what I noticed and what I might try" is. Correct this early — it sets the tone for all remaining simulations.

Role-player intensity: Brief your role-players before each simulation. They should be realistic but not cruel. The goal is to test the mentor, not to break them. If a role-player goes too far, call "Freeze" and redirect.

Who's avoiding the hot seat: By the end of Week 17, every participant should have been in the mentor role at least once. If someone is consistently finding ways to avoid it, address it directly and privately: "I notice you haven't volunteered. You're up next session. I'll make sure you're ready."

Common Week 17 Challenges

"I froze." Normal. "Freezing is your brain recognizing that it doesn't have a practiced response for this situation yet. That's exactly why we're doing this. The more you practice, the less you freeze."

"It doesn't feel real." Fair point. "It's not real — and it doesn't need to be. It needs to be realistic enough to trigger the same thinking and emotional responses. If your heart rate went up, if you felt pressure, if you had to make decisions in real time — the simulation is working."

"The role-player went too hard on me." Address this with the role-player privately. But also coach the mentor: "In real life, people don't follow a script. They'll say things that surprise you. Part of what we're training is your ability to handle the unexpected."

The competitive mentor: Some participants will try to show off during simulations — performing for the group rather than practicing skills. Coach them privately: "I can see you have confidence. What I need from you is depth, not performance. Show me the skills, not the style."

Preparation for Week 18

- Prepare scenario cards for Simulations 3 (New Arrival), 4 (Gambling Debt), and 5 (Racial Tension)
- The racial tension simulation requires especially careful facilitation — review the scenario thoroughly and plan your debrief questions in advance
- Ensure every participant has been in the hot seat at least once before the end of Week 18
- Begin thinking about which participants may need extra practice before graded assessments in Week 23
- Have the scoring rubric available but continue emphasizing that these are practice, not graded

Week 18: Simulation Training Block 1b

Week 18 Overview

Purpose: Complete the first block of simulation training with three remaining dorm conflict scenarios — each increasing in complexity and requiring more advanced judgment. By the end of this week, every participant should have been in the mentor hot seat at least twice, and the group should have a working understanding of how to intervene in a range of dorm conflicts.

Context: Participants completed Simulations 1 (property dispute) and 2 (gossip/reputation damage) last week. This week escalates the challenge: a vulnerable new arrival being pressured, an inter-dorm gambling debt, and the most sensitive scenario — racial tension in shared space. These simulations test not just de-escalation and communication, but boundaries, referral judgment, and the mentor's ability to navigate situations where there may not be a clean resolution.

Sessions This Week: - Session 52 (Tuesday): Simulation 3 — New Arrival Being Tested/Pressured - Session 53 (Wednesday): Simulation 4 — Gambling Debt Creating Tension - Session 54 (Thursday): Simulation 5 — Racial Tension in Shared Space + Block 1 Review

Materials Needed: - Simulation Scoring Rubric (copies for observers) - Scenario cards for Simulations 3, 4, and 5 (role-player and mentor copies) - Observer Role cards - Lessons Learned sheets - Journals/notebooks - Easel paper or whiteboard for debrief notes - Timer or watch

Room Setup: Stage area and observer semicircle (same as Week 17).

SESSION 52: Simulation 3 — New Arrival Being Tested/Pressured

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 52 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Intervene on behalf of a vulnerable person without creating additional conflict 2. Navigate group dynamics when the people applying pressure have seniority 3. Protect someone who says they don't want help 4. Address the behavior of a FORGE participant who is part of the problem 5. Balance protection with respect for everyone's dignity

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in round. How are you doing? And: **Think back to when you first arrived at this facility. What was the first week like? What did you need that you didn't get?**"*

Send the talking piece. This question primes empathy for the scenario. Most participants will remember the vulnerability, the confusion, the testing. That memory is fuel for what comes next.

Pre-Simulation Discussion (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Every one of you just described some version of the same experience: showing up in a new place, not knowing the rules, being watched, being tested. Some of you were helped by someone. Most of you weren't. Today's simulation is about the new arrival. The man who just walked onto this dorm and is figuring out where the lines are. The group that's figuring out where he fits. And you — the FORGE mentor who sees something happening and has to decide what to do about it.

This scenario is tricky because you're not just dealing with a conflict. You're dealing with a power dynamic. The group applying pressure has seniority and social standing. The new arrival has neither. And the new arrival might not want your help — because accepting help from a mentor might make him look weaker than he already feels.

Let's run it."

Simulation 3 Setup (3 minutes)

Read the scene aloud:

"A new arrival — Peterson — came to the dorm three days ago. He was assigned a lower bunk near the back. You've noticed that a group of three men — Davis, Franklin, and Mitchell — have been pressuring Peterson to swap his bunk location. Davis wants that lower bunk because he's had an upper bunk for months and claims seniority.

You walk by and overhear Davis saying to Peterson: 'Look, I'm not asking again. That bunk should have been mine. You just got here. You don't know how things work yet. Make it easy on yourself.'

Peterson is sitting on his bunk. His jaw is tight. He says quietly, 'I'm good right here.'

Franklin, standing behind Davis, says: 'He said he's good. For now.' There's a clear implication.

Mitchell is a FORGE participant. He's standing with the group but hasn't said anything."

Assign roles: - **Mentor:** Assigned participant (prioritize someone who hasn't been in the hot seat yet) - **Davis (the leader):** Character brief: You've been on this dorm 14 months. You feel entitled to the lower bunk. You're not threatening violence directly, but you're using social pressure and implication. If the mentor steps in, your first move is: "This isn't your business. This is between me and the new man." - **Peterson (new arrival):** Character brief: You're scared but you don't want to show it. If the mentor tries to help you, you say: "I can handle it." You don't want to look like you need protection. But if the mentor earns your trust through respect, you'll open up slightly. - **Franklin (enforcer):** Character brief: You follow Davis's lead. You make vaguely threatening comments but nothing specific. If confronted, you say: "I didn't threaten anybody." - **Mitchell**

(FORGE participant): Character brief: You're uncomfortable. You know this is wrong, but Davis is your friend and you don't want to pick sides. If the mentor addresses you directly, you feel caught. You might say: "I'm just standing here. I didn't do anything." - **Observers:** Assigned to rubric categories.

Simulation 3: First Run (27 minutes)

First Attempt (5 minutes):

Let the scene play. The mentor walks up.

Facilitator watches for: - Does the mentor address the group as a whole or pull individuals aside? - Does the mentor confront Davis directly, risking escalation? Or does the mentor redirect without making it a power struggle? - How does the mentor handle Peterson's "I can handle it" — does the mentor respect it or push through it? - Does the mentor address Mitchell? This is a critical moment — a FORGE participant is part of the pressure. Ignoring it lets it slide. Calling it out in front of Davis could humiliate Mitchell. What's the right move? - Does the mentor focus on the bunk issue (content) or the behavior (process)?

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Call "Freeze." Standard process.

"[Mentor's name] — what's your read on this situation? What's your biggest concern right now?"

Then to the group:

"Let's talk about the Mitchell problem. You have a FORGE participant standing with a group that's pressuring a new arrival. How do you handle that?"

Key coaching points: - *Don't make it a confrontation with Davis:* If you position yourself against Davis in front of his group, you've created a power struggle. He can't back down without losing face. Better approach: "Hey, Davis, can I talk to you for a second?" — pull him aside. Make it a private conversation, not a public challenge. - *Peterson doesn't want help:* Respect that in the moment. Don't force help on someone. But check back later, privately: "Hey, Peterson, I'm [name]. I live on this dorm. If you need anything or if things get uncomfortable, I'm around." Leave the door open without pushing through it. - *Mitchell requires a separate conversation:* Not in front of the group. Later. Privately. "Mitchell, I saw you with Davis's group earlier when they were pressing Peterson about his bunk. I'm not here to lecture you. But I am going to ask you this: Is that who you want to be in this dorm? Because that's not what FORGE is about." This is an accountability conversation, not a punishment.

Replay with Adjustments (5 minutes):

Complications to introduce: - Davis says: "You've been in this dorm, what, four months? I've been here 14. You don't outrank me." - Peterson says: "I told you I'm good. Stop making this bigger than it is." (*He's worried the mentor's intervention will make things worse for him after the mentor walks away.*) - Mitchell says: "Come on, man, nobody's doing anything wrong. We're just talking."

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Key debrief questions: - What's the difference between protecting someone and rescuing someone? (*Protecting: ensuring no one gets harmed. Rescuing: taking over the situation in a way that makes the person more dependent, not less.*) - Peterson's "I can handle it" — is that real or is it fear? How do you tell the difference? (*You can't always tell in the moment. That's why you check back later. If he's genuinely handling it, great. If not, the door is open.*) - The Mitchell conversation — when do you have it, and how? (*Not in front of the group. Not in anger. But it must happen. A FORGE participant participating in intimidation — even passively — undermines the entire program.*) - What's the realistic best outcome here? (*Davis stops pressuring Peterson — at least openly. Peterson keeps his bunk and feels supported. Mitchell gets an accountability conversation. Davis doesn't catch a charge. Nobody gets hurt. That's a win.*) - At what point would this require staff involvement? (*If the pressure escalates to explicit threats of violence. If you learn that the group has been targeting multiple new arrivals. If Peterson is physically prevented from using his bunk.*)

Document Lessons Learned (5 minutes)

Journal entry with the three standard questions.

Second Run: Different Mentor (30 minutes)

Run the full simulation cycle with a new mentor and new role-players. Adjust complications based on what the first run revealed.

For the second run, add: After the main intervention, Peterson approaches the mentor privately an hour later and says: "Thanks for stepping in. But you made it worse. Now they think I need a babysitter. What am I supposed to do?" This tests the mentor's ability to handle the unintended consequences of their intervention.

Debrief the second run. Compare approaches.

Document Lessons Learned (3 minutes)

Closing Circle (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Quick closing: What's the hardest part about helping someone who says they don't want help?"

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Tomorrow: Simulation 4. Gambling debt. Different kind of situation — the danger isn't in the room with you. It's coming from another dorm. And the person in trouble is begging you not to tell anyone. Think about that tonight. See you tomorrow."

Session 52 Checklist

- Room set up with stage area and observer semicircle
- Opening circle completed — "First week at this facility" question
- Pre-simulation discussion on new arrival dynamics
- Simulation 3 scenario read and roles assigned
- First run completed: first attempt, freeze/coach, replay, debrief
- Mitchell (FORGE participant) accountability discussed
- Peterson's refusal of help explored
- Lessons learned documented (first run)
- Second run completed with different mentor — "you made it worse" complication added
- Comparison debrief conducted
- Lessons learned documented (second run)
- Closing circle completed
- Preview of Simulation 4 given (gambling debt)

SESSION 53: Simulation 4 — Gambling Debt

Creating Tension

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 53 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Assess the risk level of an inter-dorm conflict and determine whether it requires referral 2. Support an individual who is asking the mentor to keep a dangerous secret 3. Navigate the tension between confidentiality and safety obligation 4. Demonstrate MI skills with someone who is frightened and defensive 5. Recognize the limits of the mentor role when organized activity (gambling networks) is involved

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in round. How are you doing? And: **Has there ever been a time in your life when someone asked you to keep a secret that you knew you shouldn't keep? What happened?"***

Send the talking piece. This primes the central tension of today's simulation — the clash between loyalty and safety.

Pre-Simulation Discussion (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Gambling is a reality of prison life. Everyone in this room knows it exists. FORGE doesn't pretend it doesn't. But here's what FORGE does say: when gambling creates danger — when debts lead to threats, extortion, or violence — that's a safety issue. And safety is always within a mentor's scope.

Today's scenario puts you in a difficult position. You learn about a situation that's dangerous. The person involved is begging you not to say anything. You're going to have to decide: Where's the line between respecting someone's privacy and protecting their safety?

There's no easy answer. That's the point."

Simulation 4 Setup (3 minutes)

Read the scene aloud:

"You're sitting in the day room when a dorm member named Harris walks up. He's usually talkative, but today he's quiet and keeps looking over his shoulder. He sits down next to you and says, almost under his breath: 'I need to talk to you. But you can't say anything to anyone. I mean it.'

You agree to listen. Here's what Harris tells you:

He's been gambling — sports bets, mostly. He lost. A lot. He owes a man named Cortez in C-Dorm — someone he doesn't know well. The debt started at 10 soups and has grown to 5 books of stamps and commissary worth about \$200. Cortez sent word through someone yesterday: 'Payment is due by this weekend or we'll come collect.'

Harris is scared. He doesn't have the commissary to pay. He doesn't want to tell staff because he's worried about being labeled and because gambling itself can get him written up. He wants you to help him figure out a way to get the commissary together — maybe borrow from other people in the dorm.

You're his FORGE mentor. Go."

Assign roles: - **Mentor:** Assigned participant - **Harris:** Character brief: You're terrified but covering it with nervous energy. You want the mentor to help you solve the money problem, not make it bigger. If the mentor suggests involving staff, you shut down: "No. Absolutely not. If staff gets involved, I'm the one who gets in trouble for gambling. And Cortez will know I talked. That makes it worse, not better." If the mentor uses MI and explores what you're really feeling, you'll gradually reveal that you're afraid you're going to get hurt. If pushed too hard, you say: "Forget it. I shouldn't have said anything." - **Observers:** Assigned to rubric categories.

Note: This is a one-on-one conversation. No bystanders, no confrontation. The entire simulation is a mentoring conversation that tests judgment.

Simulation 4: First Run (27 minutes)

First Attempt (5 minutes):

The mentor and Harris sit together. Let it play out.

Facilitator watches for: - Does the mentor validate Harris's fear before doing anything else? - Does the mentor start problem-solving immediately (helping Harris find commissary) or does the mentor step back and assess the risk first? - When Harris says "Don't tell anyone" — how does the mentor respond? Automatic agreement? Honest acknowledgment with limits? - Does the mentor recognize that this has crossed from a personal problem into a safety concern? "We'll come collect" is a threat. - Does the mentor ask the right questions? ("How well do you know Cortez?" "Has he been violent before?" "Has anyone else been in this situation with him?" "What do you think 'come collect' means?") - Does the mentor try to solve it alone or does the mentor recognize this may be beyond peer mentoring scope?

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Call "Freeze."

"[Mentor's name] — right now, in this moment, do you think Harris is safe? What's your honest assessment?"

Let the mentor respond. Then:

"Group — let's talk about the confidentiality question. Harris asked the mentor not to tell anyone. What are the mentor's options?"

Lay out the options clearly for the group:

"Option 1: Keep the secret and try to help Harris solve it privately. Risk: Harris gets hurt because the mentor underestimated the danger level. The mentor is now complicit in hiding a safety issue.

Option 2: Go straight to staff immediately. Risk: Harris gets written up for gambling. Harris is labeled as someone who talks. Cortez retaliates. Harris loses trust in FORGE.

Option 3: Be honest with Harris. 'I hear you, and I respect that you came to me. I'm not going to go behind your back. But I need you to understand something — if someone is threatening to hurt you, I can't sit on that. Not because I want to get you in trouble, but because keeping you safe matters more than keeping a secret. Let's figure out together what the right move is.'

That third option is the FORGE way. It's honest. It's transparent. It preserves the relationship while honoring the safety obligation."

Replay with Adjustments (5 minutes):

Complications to introduce: - After the mentor's approach, Harris says: "You don't understand. Cortez has people. If he finds out I talked to anyone — anyone — it's going to be ten times worse." - Harris reveals: "This isn't the first debt. I owed someone else three months ago. I borrowed from Cortez to pay that one off. Now I owe Cortez." - Someone walks by and Harris goes quiet immediately, then whispers: "See? I can't even have this conversation without looking over my shoulder."

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Key debrief questions: - When does a gambling debt cross from a personal problem into a safety concern? (*When threats are made. When someone outside the dorm is sending messages. When the debtor is afraid for their physical safety.*) - Harris's request to "not tell anyone" — can a mentor ever agree to blanket confidentiality? (*No. The correct response is always: "I'll keep this between us as much as I can. But if I believe your safety is at risk, I have to act on that. I'd rather have you mad at me than hurt."*) - Harris's gambling pattern — he borrowed from Cortez to pay a previous debt. What does that tell you? (*This is a pattern, not an isolated incident. Harris may need more than intervention on this one debt — he may need support for gambling as a behavior. This is MI territory: "What's gambling doing for you? What's it costing you?"*) - What does the mentor actually do after this conversation? (*Depends on the assessment. If the threat is credible and imminent, staff needs to be involved — with Harris's knowledge if possible. If the threat is less immediate, the mentor can work with Harris on a plan and monitor closely. Either way, the mentor documents the conversation and checks in daily.*) - Can the mentor go to Cortez? (*Absolutely not. A FORGE mentor does not insert themselves into an inter-dorm debt situation. That's stepping into territory that could become dangerous for the mentor. This is a boundary the mentor must hold.*)

Facilitator (synthesis):

"Here's the bottom line: You cannot help someone if they're not alive and safe. Confidentiality matters — hugely. But safety always outranks confidentiality. When those two things conflict, safety wins. And the way you handle that conflict — with honesty, with transparency, with care — is what separates a FORGE mentor from everyone else."

Document Lessons Learned (5 minutes)

Second Run: Different Mentor (30 minutes)

Run the full simulation cycle with a new mentor and new Harris.

For the second run, add a third character: Later that day, a man the mentor doesn't know well approaches and says: "I hear you've been talking to Harris. Just so you know — what goes on between Harris and Cortez is their business. You might want to stay out of it." This is a warning. It tests the mentor's composure and judgment when they themselves become a target of pressure.

Debrief the second run. The warning from the third party changes everything. Discuss: - When the mentor becomes a target, what changes? - Does this require staff involvement? (*Yes. When someone warns you to stay out of a situation, the situation is bigger than peer mentoring.*) - How do you protect yourself while still supporting Harris?

Document Lessons Learned (3 minutes)

Closing Circle (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Quick closing: What made today's simulation harder than the ones we've done so far?"

Send the talking piece. Most will point to the confidentiality tension and the lack of a clear "right answer."

Facilitator (closing):

"Tomorrow is the last simulation of Block 1 — and it's the most sensitive one. Racial tension in a shared space. I need to be upfront: this topic requires maturity, honesty, and respect. We're going to talk about race in the way it actually shows up in a dorm — not the way people talk about it on TV.

Come prepared to be honest and to listen to perspectives different from yours. This is where FORGE mentors prove they can handle the hardest conversations. See you tomorrow."

Session 53 Checklist

- Room set up with stage area and observer semicircle
- Opening circle completed — "secret you shouldn't keep" question
- Pre-simulation discussion on gambling and safety
- Simulation 4 scenario read and roles assigned
- First run completed: first attempt, freeze/coach, replay, debrief
- Confidentiality vs. safety obligation discussed thoroughly
- Mentor's scope limitations discussed (cannot approach Cortez)
- Lessons learned documented (first run)
- Second run completed with different mentor — "stay out of it" warning added
- Mentor-as-target dynamics discussed
- Lessons learned documented (second run)
- Closing circle completed
- Preview and context set for Simulation 5 (racial tension)

SESSION 54: Simulation 5 — Racial Tension in Shared Space + Block 1 Review

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Session Number:** 54 **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Intervene in a racially charged situation without dismissing, taking sides, or escalating 2. Acknowledge racial dynamics honestly while redirecting toward shared interests 3. Recognize when racial tension is a symptom of deeper issues (resource scarcity, disrespect, fear) 4. Know the limits of what a mentor can address alone and when broader intervention is needed 5. Reflect on their own growth across all five Block 1 simulations

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in round. How are you doing today?"

Then, before moving on:

"Before we run today's simulation, I want to say something directly. Today's scenario deals with racial tension. This is a reality of prison life. It shows up in seating arrangements, in TV choices, in who eats with whom, in who has whose back. Some of you live in dorms where the lines are clearly drawn. Some of you have managed to build relationships across those lines. Either way, this is real.

What I need from everyone today is this: **honesty and respect**. You can be honest about what racial dynamics look like in your dorm without being disrespectful. You can acknowledge that tensions exist without endorsing them. And you can practice intervening without pretending to have all the answers.

FORGE mentors don't pretend race doesn't matter. They also don't accept that racial division is inevitable. You're training to build a culture where everyone has dignity — and that means being able to navigate conversations that most people avoid.

Let's do this."

Simulation 5 Setup (3 minutes)

Read the scene aloud:

"The TV room has two televisions. For as long as anyone can remember, one TV has been controlled by Black dorm members and the other by white dorm members. It's not an official rule — it's an unwritten arrangement that everyone follows.

Last week, one of the TVs broke. Now there's one TV and two groups who are used to watching different things. For the first few days, people took turns informally. But now it's breaking down.

Tonight, a group of Black dorm members is watching a basketball game. A white dorm member named Reeves walks up and says, 'Game's over in 20 minutes and then we're watching something else. That's the deal.' A Black dorm member named Cooper says, 'The game's got 45 minutes left. You can wait.' Reeves says, 'We waited last night. And the night before. It's always the same — you all take the TV every night and we get whatever's left.'

The room is getting tense. Other people from both groups are watching. Someone from Cooper's group says, 'If you got a problem with it, take it up with the CO.' Reeves says, 'I don't need a CO to handle this.' The implication is clear.

You're a FORGE mentor standing in the doorway. You can see this going bad. Go."

Assign roles: - **Mentor:** Assigned participant - **Reeves:** Character brief: You feel like your group is being treated unfairly. You're frustrated, not racist — in your mind, this is about fairness, not color. But you're using language that draws racial lines. If the mentor tries to mediate, you'll cooperate if you feel heard. If you feel dismissed, you'll dig in: "Every time I bring this up, I'm the bad guy. That's how it always works." - **Cooper:** Character brief: You see Reeves's complaint as entitlement. You've been here longer. You didn't break the TV.

You're not going to be told when you can and can't watch a game. If the mentor steps in, you'll cooperate if the mentor is fair. If you feel like the mentor is siding with Reeves, you'll say: "Oh, so now FORGE is taking sides too?" - **Bystander from Cooper's group:** Character brief: You escalate subtly. "We don't have to listen to this." "Let him go talk to the CO." You're testing whether the mentor will stand up or fold. - **Observers:** Assigned to rubric categories.

Simulation 5: First Run (27 minutes)

First Attempt (5 minutes):

The mentor enters the room. Let the scene play.

Facilitator watches for: - Does the mentor acknowledge the racial dynamic or pretend it's just about a TV? - Does the mentor take sides — even subtly? - Does the mentor address both Reeves and Cooper with equal respect? - Does the mentor try to solve the TV problem (practical solution) or address the underlying tension (relationship issue)? Both are needed. - How does the mentor handle the bystander who's escalating? - Does the mentor maintain composure when someone says, "FORGE is taking sides"?

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Call "Freeze."

"[Mentor's name] — what's the real issue here? Is it the TV?"

Let the mentor respond. The right answer: No. The TV is the trigger. The real issue is perceived unfairness, competing group interests, and racial tension that has been managed by separation — and now the separation is gone.

"Group — this is one of the hardest situations a mentor can face. Let's talk about why."

Key coaching points:

- *Acknowledge the racial dynamic without making it the entire conversation:* "I can see this has gotten tense, and I know some of it goes deeper than the TV. I'm not going to pretend otherwise. But right now, we have a practical problem — one TV, two groups. Let's start there." This names the elephant in the room without making anyone feel accused.

- *Don't take sides:* The mentor must be perceived as genuinely neutral. If either group feels the mentor is siding with the other, trust is gone. Talk to both Reeves and Cooper with equal respect, equal time, equal attention.
- *Solve the practical problem:* Before you can address deeper racial dynamics, you need to solve the immediate conflict. A schedule, a rotation, a coin flip — something fair and transparent. "What if we set up a schedule that both groups agree to? 30 minutes on, 30 minutes off, alternating who picks first each night." It's not profound, but it's fair.
- *Address the deeper issue — but not tonight:* Tonight is about de-escalation. The deeper conversation about racial dynamics in the dorm is important, but it can't happen when people are heated. The mentor can plant the seed: "This is bigger than the TV and we all know it. I'd like to talk about this more — but not when everyone's ready to fight. Let's solve tonight and talk about the rest when things are calm."
- *Know the limits:* A FORGE mentor cannot solve systemic racial tension in a prison dorm. That's a reality shaped by decades of history, institutional culture, and survival instincts. What a mentor CAN do: model respectful cross-racial interaction, create spaces for honest conversation, build one-on-one relationships across lines, and refuse to participate in division.

Replay with Adjustments (5 minutes):

Complications to introduce: - Cooper says: "You don't understand what it's like. You're [same race as Reeves / different context]. Of course you'd see it his way." (*This challenges the mentor's neutrality based on their identity.*) - Reeves says: "I'm not racist. I just want things to be fair. But every time I say that, I'm the one who looks bad." (*This is a common statement that requires acknowledgment without validation of the underlying framing.*) - A third person from the doorway says: "This dorm was fine until they started mixing people. Some things should just stay separate." (*This tests whether the mentor addresses overtly segregationist thinking.*)

Group Debrief (12 minutes):

This debrief requires extra care. Facilitate firmly but sensitively.

Facilitator:

"Let's talk about this honestly. Raise your hand if racial tension exists on your dorm."

Most or all hands will go up.

"Right. So this isn't theoretical. This is your life. Let me ask some hard questions."

Debrief questions: - When the mentor walks into this situation, is the goal to fix racial tension? (*No. That's a generational project. The goal tonight is to prevent violence, solve the practical problem, and keep the door open for deeper conversation.*) - When Cooper says, "You don't understand, you're [race]" — what does the mentor do? (*Acknowledge it: "You're right that I see things from my own experience. I'm not pretending to know exactly what this is like for you. What I do know is that nobody in this room benefits from this turning into a fight." You don't argue about whether race matters. It does. You acknowledge it and refocus on the shared interest: safety and fairness.*) - When someone says, "Some things should just stay separate" — does the mentor let that slide? (*No. But the mentor doesn't lecture either. Something like: "I hear you. And I know that's how a lot of people feel. FORGE is built on a different idea — that we can share this space with respect, even when we're different. That's not easy, and I'm not going to pretend it is. But it's what we're working toward."*) - What's the difference between being colorblind and being color-honest? (*Colorblind: "I don't see race." — That dismisses people's real experiences. Color-honest: "Race shapes our experiences in here. I see that. And I still believe we can treat each other with dignity." — That's realistic and respectful.*)

Facilitator (synthesis):

"Racial tension in a dorm is one of the hardest things a mentor will face. There's no script for it. There's no five-step model that makes it clean. What FORGE asks of you is this: Don't pretend it doesn't exist. Don't make it worse. Solve the immediate problem. Keep people safe. And when the moment is right, create space for honest conversation. That's all anyone can do. But doing that — consistently, with integrity — changes a dorm over time."

Document Lessons Learned (5 minutes)

Block 1 Simulation Review (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"We've completed five simulations over the past two weeks. Let's step back and look at the big picture."

Reviewing all five simulations:

"We covered:

1. **Property dispute** — Two men, rising tempers, a crowd forming. You learned: Address the respect underneath the stuff. Manage the crowd. De-escalate before you resolve.
2. **Gossip and reputation damage** — A man labeled a snitch. You learned: Assess the safety level. Listen before you act. Hold the boundary when someone asks you to be their enforcer.
3. **New arrival being pressured** — A vulnerable person saying, 'I don't need help.' You learned: You can't force help on someone. But you can make yourself available. And you address FORGE members who participate in intimidation.
4. **Gambling debt** — A secret someone doesn't want you to share. You learned: Safety overrides confidentiality. Be honest about your limits. Don't insert yourself into inter-dorm dynamics.
5. **Racial tension** — The deepest, most complex situation. You learned: Acknowledge what's real. Stay neutral without being blind. Solve the practical problem first. Don't try to fix what took decades to build — just start."

Group reflection:

"I want to hear from you. What's the through-line? What skill showed up in every single simulation?"

Let 4-5 people respond. Guide toward these themes: - **Composure** — Every scenario tested your ability to stay calm. - **Listening** — In every scenario, the mentor who listened first did better than the mentor who acted first. - **Boundaries** — Knowing what's your role and what isn't saved mentors from making situations worse. - **Judgment** — Not every situation has the same solution. You have to read the room and adjust.

Facilitator:

"Here's what I want every one of you to hear: **You are further along than you think.** Two weeks ago, the idea of standing up in front of this group and responding to a conflict in real time scared most of you. Today, you've done it. You've been coached. You've improved. You've watched each other learn.

In Weeks 19 and 20, we move to Simulation Block 2 — the situations get harder. Someone with a weapon. A mental health crisis. A mentor being manipulated. These will test everything you've learned, plus things you haven't faced yet.

But you're ready. Not because you're perfect — because you've practiced. And practice beats perfection every time."

Personal Assessment (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Open your journals. I want you to do a quick self-assessment. Rate yourself 1 to 4 on each of the six rubric categories, based on where you think you are right now. Be honest — this is for you, not for me.

- 1. De-escalation: 1-4*
- 2. Communication: 1-4*
- 3. Boundaries: 1-4*
- 4. Resolution: 1-4*
- 5. Composure: 1-4*
- 6. Referral judgment: 1-4*

Then write one sentence: What's the one area I most need to develop before graded assessments?"

Give 5 minutes. This becomes part of their Phase 2 portfolio.

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Final round for Block 1. Complete this sentence: 'After two weeks of simulation training, I now know that I...'"

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Homework:

1. **Review all five of your lessons learned entries.** Write a half-page summary: What are your strengths? What needs work? What surprised you?
2. **Continue practicing MI in real conversations.** You should be using OARS daily by now. It should be becoming habit, not exercise.
3. **Read ahead in your handbook** about restorative practices if available. After Simulation Block 2 in Weeks 19-20, we move into restorative circles and accountability conversations.

You did real work these two weeks. Every one of you stood up and put yourself on the line. That takes courage. And courage is a skill, just like everything else — the more you use it, the stronger it gets.

See you next Tuesday."

Session 54 Checklist

- Room set up with stage area and observer semicircle
- Opening circle completed with direct framing on racial tension
- Psychological safety re-established for sensitive topic
- Simulation 5 scenario read and roles assigned
- First run completed: first attempt, freeze/coach, replay, debrief
- Racial dynamics discussed honestly — colorblind vs. color-honest
- Practical solution and deeper conversation distinguished
- Lessons learned documented
- Block 1 review completed — all five simulations summarized
- Through-line themes identified (composure, listening, boundaries, judgment)
- Personal self-assessment on rubric categories completed
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (lessons learned summary + continue MI practice + read ahead)

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 18

What to Watch For

The racial tension simulation: This is the most sensitive scenario in Block 1. Watch for: - Participants who check out or disengage — the topic may trigger personal experiences - Participants who use the simulation to express genuinely held prejudices — redirect firmly: "In FORGE, every person in this dorm has dignity. That's not negotiable. We can talk about what's hard about living together. We can't talk about who doesn't deserve to be here." - Participants who claim "I don't see color" — gently push: "That's a common thing to say. But the men you'll mentor do see color, because it shapes their daily experience. If you want to help them, you have to see what they see." - Cross-racial interactions in the debrief — note who engages honestly across racial lines and who stays in their comfort zone. This is data for future mentoring assignments.

Fatigue by Session 54: By the end of six simulation sessions, participants are tired. The emotional energy required is significant. Acknowledge it: "This is hard work. Your brain is tired because it's growing. That's a good sign."

Skill progression across the two weeks: Review your notes from Sessions 50-54. Has each participant improved? Who made the biggest jumps? Who is plateauing? This informs your preparation for Block 2 and your individual coaching.

Common Week 18 Challenges

"I don't want to talk about race." Address directly: "I understand. It's uncomfortable for everyone. But the dorm doesn't care about your comfort level — racial tension happens whether we're comfortable discussing it or not. A mentor who can't navigate this conversation can't lead a dorm."

"What if I'm the wrong race to intervene?" Important question. "Your race will shape how people receive you. That's real. If you're intervening in a conflict between two people of a different race, some may question your motives. That doesn't mean you don't intervene — it means you do it with extra awareness and humility. Lead with fairness, not authority. And if someone challenges you based on your race, don't argue — acknowledge it: 'I hear you. I'm not here to take sides. I'm here because nobody benefits from this going bad.'"

Participants who haven't been in the hot seat enough: By the end of Week 18, every participant should have been the mentor in at least two simulations. If anyone has only done one, prioritize them for the second run in Session 54 or schedule extra practice before Block 2.

The self-assessment is too generous or too harsh: Some participants will rate themselves all 4s. Some will rate themselves all 1s. Neither is useful. In individual check-ins, compare their self-assessment to your observations: "You rated yourself a 3 on composure. I'd agree with that — here's what I saw. You rated yourself a 4 on boundaries. I'd say 2 — here's why."

Preparation for Weeks 19-20 (Simulation Block 2)

- Review Simulation scenarios 6-12 in the Program Design (Part III)
- Block 2 scenarios are significantly harder: weapons, substance use, mental health crises, gang pressure, staff conflicts
- Brief any Senior Mentors who will play roles — these scenarios require nuanced acting
- Consider inviting a staff member to observe one Session if appropriate and if the relationship allows it
- Begin individual check-ins with each participant about their self-assessment and development plan
- The mental health crisis simulation (someone expressing suicidal thoughts) requires extra preparation — know your facility's crisis procedures, have the referral pathway clear, and be prepared for participants who may be triggered by this content

Simulation Scoring Rubric — Quick Reference

Criteria	1 (Needs Work)	2 (Developing)	3 (Competent)	4 (Exemplary)
De-escalation	Escalated or froze	Attempted but inconsistent	Effectively reduced tension	Masterful — calm, strategic
Communication	Aggressive, passive, or unclear	Some effective techniques	Clear, assertive, respectful	Exceptional — empathetic, precise
Boundaries	Overstepped or absent	Unclear boundaries	Maintained appropriate role	Modeled boundaries naturally
Resolution	No resolution attempted	Partial resolution	Reached workable agreement	Durable solution, dignity preserved
Composure	Lost composure	Recovered after losing it	Maintained composure	Composed and grounding to others

Criteria	1 (Needs Work)	2 (Developing)	3 (Competent)	4 (Exemplary)
Referral judgment	Failed to refer when needed	Delayed referral	Recognized and referred timely	Proactive safety awareness

Maximum score: 24 | Minimum passing score: 15 (average 2.5 per category)

Week 19: Simulation Training Block 2a — Complex Situations

Week 19 Overview

Purpose: Move into the hardest simulation scenarios participants will face. Block 1 covered dorm conflicts — situations with relatively clear paths to resolution. Block 2 is different. These scenarios involve safety red lines, manipulation, substance use, and mental health crises. Some of them have no clean resolution. Some require the mentor to recognize that the right move is to step back and refer. This week tests judgment, not just skill.

Sessions This Week: - Session 55 (Tuesday): Red Line — The Weapon - Session 56 (Wednesday): Substance Use Relapse & Internal FORGE Conflict - Session 57 (Thursday): Manipulation and Boundary Testing

Materials Needed: - Simulation scenario cards (1 per scenario — printed or handwritten) - Observer feedback forms (2-3 per simulation) - Scoring rubrics (facilitator copy — for coaching, not grading this week) - Easel paper or whiteboard for documenting lessons learned - Talking piece for circle processes - Journals/notebooks

Important Note for Facilitators: Block 2 scenarios are deliberately harder than Block 1. Participants will struggle. Some will freeze. Some will make mistakes that would have real consequences. That is the point. It is far better to make these mistakes in a simulation than in a dorm at 11 PM. Your job is not to rescue them — it is to let them struggle, then coach them through the replay. Resist the urge to step in too early.

SESSION 55: Red Line — The Weapon

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Recognize a red-line safety scenario that requires mandatory referral 2. Navigate a weapon disclosure without creating a more dangerous situation 3. Articulate why FORGE's zero-tolerance weapons policy exists and how to enforce it with care 4. Demonstrate the ability to hold a boundary under emotional pressure 5. Distinguish between situations they can handle and situations that require staff involvement

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in. One sentence: How are you showing up today — honestly?"

Send the talking piece. Listen for energy levels. This session will be intense. Note who seems settled and who seems distracted — you may want to adjust role assignments accordingly.

Facilitator (after the round):

"Today we start Block 2. Everything we've done in simulations so far — the property disputes, the gossip, the new arrival getting tested — those were real situations, but they had a common thread: you could handle them. With skill, patience, and the right approach, you could reach some kind of resolution.

Block 2 is different. The scenarios this week and next are situations where the answer is not always clear. Some of them will push you past what a mentor can handle on their own. Some of them will test whether you know your limits.

That's the real skill: knowing when you're the right person to handle something, and knowing when you need to step back and get help. A mentor who doesn't know the difference is dangerous."

Simulation Framework Review (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Quick review of the format. Same as Block 1:

- 1. I set the scene — 2 minutes*
- 2. First attempt — 5 to 7 minutes. You respond to the situation in real time*
- 3. Freeze — I stop the scene. I ask you: 'What are you thinking right now?'*
- 4. Feedback — the group coaches you. What's working, what's not, what would you try differently*
- 5. Replay — you run it again with the coaching incorporated*
- 6. Group debrief — 10 minutes. We document what we learned*

Observers — your job matters. Watch for body language, tone, word choice, boundary management, and especially this week: referral judgment. Did the mentor recognize when the situation was beyond their scope? Write it down. Your feedback makes this work."

Red Line Briefing (10 minutes)

Purpose: Before running the weapon scenario, ground the group in FORGE's red-line protocols.

Facilitator:

"Before we run the first simulation, I need to talk about red lines. Open your handbooks to the Red Lines section.

A red line is a situation where the mentor's role shifts from 'handle it' to 'refer it.' There are five categories:"

Read through the Red Lines list:

*"1. **Weapons mentioned or discovered** — zero tolerance. Always refer. 2. **Threats of serious violence** — not posturing, but credible, specific threats. 3. **Suicidal or self-harm statements** — beyond peer mentoring scope. 4. **Gang-related conflict** — FORGE mentors do not investigate or confront gang dynamics. 5. **Staff safety concerns** — if staff or the dorm is in danger, this goes up.*

When you hit a red line, three things happen:

First — you stay calm. Panicking makes everything worse. Second — you do not make promises you cannot keep. If someone says 'Don't tell anyone,' you do not say 'I won't.' You say something like, 'I hear you, and I care about you, and I need to make sure you're safe.' Third — you follow the referral protocol. That means getting the information to the right person — a staff member, a counselor, program lead — without creating additional danger.

The hardest part about red lines is this: the person in front of you will often beg you not to refer. They'll say they can handle it. They'll say they'll take care of it themselves. They'll say you're betraying their trust.

And you have to do it anyway. Because a mentor who ignores a weapon to protect a friendship is not a mentor. He's an accomplice to whatever happens next."

Pause. Let it land.

"Questions before we begin?"

Simulation 6: Someone Confides They Have a Weapon (40 minutes)

Scene Set (2 minutes):

Facilitator:

"Here's the scenario. I need one mentor and one role-player. Everyone else is observing.

The scene: You're in the dorm. A man you've been mentoring — someone who's been doing well in FORGE, someone you genuinely like — pulls you aside. He's nervous. He looks around to make sure no one is listening. He says: 'I need to tell you something, but you have to promise not to say anything.'

You don't know what it is yet. He pauses, then says: 'I've got something. A blade. I don't want it, but I got threatened last week and I don't feel safe. I've been carrying it for three days. I don't know what to do.'

Mentor — this is your scenario. Role-player — you are scared. You are not aggressive. You genuinely don't want the weapon. But you are terrified of the person who threatened you, and you believe the weapon is the only thing keeping you alive. If the mentor pushes you to get rid of it, push back. Say you'll handle it yourself. Say you'll throw it away tomorrow. If the mentor says they have to tell someone, get upset. Say, 'I trusted you. You're supposed to be on my side.'

Observers — watch for: Does the mentor stay calm? Does the mentor make promises they shouldn't? Does the mentor recognize this as a red line? Does the mentor handle the referral decision with both firmness and care?"

Select participants. Assign roles.

First Attempt (5-7 minutes):

Let the scene play. Do not intervene unless the situation goes completely sideways. The mentor will likely struggle. That is expected. Common mistakes to watch for: - Agreeing to keep the secret - Trying to take the weapon themselves - Lecturing instead of listening - Freezing and not knowing what to do - Getting angry at the mentee

Freeze (5 minutes):

Stop the scene at a critical moment — ideally right when the mentor is at the decision point.

Facilitator:

"[Mentor's name] — freeze. Don't move. Tell us: What are you thinking right now? What are you feeling?"

Let them answer honestly. Then turn to the group:

"Observers — what did you see? What worked? What would you do differently?"

Take 3-4 observations. Coach specifically: - If the mentor promised confidentiality: "What just happened? You made a promise you can't keep. Now what?" - If the mentor tried to take the weapon: "You just put yourself in

possession of a weapon. What does the Code of Conduct say about that?" - If the mentor froze: "That's honest. Freezing is a real response. Now — what do you do next?"

Replay (5 minutes):

"Run it again. Same scenario. Incorporate what you just heard. Role-player — same energy. Don't make it easy."

Let the replay run. The goal is to see improvement — not perfection.

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Facilitator:

"Let's talk about what just happened. A few questions for the group:"

Discussion questions: 1. "What is the right thing to do when someone tells you they have a weapon?" 2. "How do you refer without destroying the relationship?" 3. "What would you say to the person? — Give me the exact words." 4. "What if he says, 'I'll get rid of it myself'? Do you accept that?" 5. "What happens if you don't refer and someone gets hurt?"

Key teaching points to land:

Facilitator:

"Let me be direct about this. There is no gray area with weapons. FORGE has zero tolerance. If someone tells you they have a weapon, you have one job: make sure the right people know about it so no one gets hurt — including the person holding the weapon.

Here's what you say — something like this: 'I hear you. I can tell you're scared, and I believe you. But I can't keep this between us. A weapon in this dorm puts everyone at risk — including you. I'm going to help you, but the way I help you is by making sure this gets handled the right way, not the way that ends with someone bleeding or you catching a new charge.'

You don't threaten. You don't lecture. You don't moralize. You acknowledge the fear, you hold the boundary, and you follow through.

The relationship might take a hit. He might be angry. He might feel betrayed. That's a cost you accept. Because the alternative — staying quiet and something happening — is something you cannot live with."

Document lessons learned on easel paper or whiteboard.

Simulation Debrief and Journal (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Take 10 minutes right now and write in your journal. The prompt:

What would make it hard for you to refer in a situation like this? Be honest about the pressure you'd feel.

What would you tell yourself to follow through anyway?

This isn't hypothetical. You will face some version of this. Maybe not a weapon — but something where someone asks you to keep a secret that you can't keep. What you write now is your preparation for that moment."

Closing (5 minutes):

Facilitator:

"Go-around. One word: What is this session making you think about?"

Tomorrow we run two more simulations — substance relapse and conflict between FORGE members.

Different challenges, different skills. Rest tonight. See you tomorrow."

Session 55 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
 - Opening circle completed
 - Block 2 introduction delivered
 - Red-line protocols reviewed thoroughly
 - Simulation 6 (Weapon) — scene set, first attempt, freeze, feedback, replay, debrief
 - Key teaching points on mandatory referral delivered
 - Lessons learned documented
 - Journal reflection completed
 - Closing go-around completed
-

SESSION 56: Substance Use Relapse & Internal FORGE Conflict

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Respond to a mentee's substance use relapse with compassion and appropriate action 2. Distinguish between accountability and punishment in a relapse scenario 3. Mediate a conflict between two FORGE members while maintaining neutrality 4. Manage the additional complexity of conflict within the FORGE community 5. Apply MI techniques in emotionally charged situations

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in. Yesterday was heavy. Some of you are probably still thinking about the weapon scenario. That's good — it should stick with you.

*Today's check-in: **What's one thing you took from yesterday's simulation that you want to carry forward?"***

Send the talking piece.

Simulation 7: A Mentee Relapses into Substance Use (45 minutes)

Context Briefing (5 minutes):

Facilitator:

"Substance use inside prisons is real. You know it. I know it. We're not going to pretend it doesn't happen. When someone you're mentoring relapses, it's not a simple situation. There's shame involved. There's risk — disciplinary, health, everything. And there's a question you'll have to answer as a mentor: What is my role here?"

You are not a substance abuse counselor. You are not a CO. You are a peer mentor. Your role is to hold the relationship, be honest, and connect the person to help. Not to fix it. Not to ignore it. Not to punish it."

Scene Set (2 minutes):**Facilitator:**

"I need one mentor and one role-player.

The scene: You've been mentoring this man for about two months. He's been doing well — showing up, engaging, making progress. Today, you notice something is off. He's not making eye contact. He missed the last session and didn't explain why. When you sit down with him, he's evasive. After a few minutes, he admits: he used. He got high two days ago. He says it was a one-time thing. He says it won't happen again. He asks you not to tell anyone because he'll get kicked out of FORGE.

Role-player — you are ashamed. You are not defensive. You genuinely feel like you failed. If the mentor comes at you hard, shut down. If the mentor shows compassion, open up more — maybe mention that you got bad news from home and that's what triggered it. If the mentor asks what you need, say you don't know.

Observers — watch for: Does the mentor lead with judgment or curiosity? Does the mentor use MI skills? Does the mentor know where the line is between support and enabling?"

First Attempt (5-7 minutes):

Let the scene play. Common mistakes: - Leading with disappointment or anger - Immediately jumping to consequences - Making promises about keeping it quiet - Trying to be a counselor instead of a mentor - Ignoring it ("Well, just don't do it again")

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Stop the scene. Ask the mentor: "What are you thinking right now?"

Turn to observers:

"What did you see? What MI skills did you notice — or not notice? Was the mentor leading with judgment or curiosity?"

Coach specifically: - If the mentor led with disappointment: "What happened to rolling with resistance? He's already ashamed. Piling on shame doesn't help him — it helps you feel righteous." - If the mentor ignored the issue: "You just told him it's fine. Is it? What about the people counting on him? What about his own goals?" - If the mentor did well: "What specifically worked? What tone, what words?"

Replay (5 minutes):

Run it again. Encourage the mentor to use OARS — open questions, affirmations of what's real ("It took courage to tell me this"), reflections, summaries.

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Discussion questions: 1. "What's the difference between holding someone accountable and punishing them?" 2. "When someone relapses, what do they need from a mentor?" 3. "What are the limits of your role here? What can you do and what needs a professional?" 4. "How do you balance compassion with honesty? Can you be both caring and direct?" 5. "What would you say? — Give me the words."

Key teaching points:

Facilitator:

"Here's what the research tells us about relapse: it is common. For most people recovering from substance use, relapse is part of the process — not the end of the process. That does not mean you excuse it or pretend it didn't happen. It means you treat it as information, not as failure.

Your job as a mentor in this situation is three things:

First — don't make it worse. The person is already drowning in shame. Adding your disappointment on top of that is not helpful.

Second — be honest. 'I care about you, and I'm concerned. This affects your program, your goals, and your wellbeing. I'm not going to pretend it didn't happen.'

Third — connect to help. 'I'm not a counselor. I can walk with you through this, but you need to talk to someone who knows how to help with this specifically. Can I help you make that connection?'

What you do NOT do: promise to hide it, act like it's no big deal, or decide on your own what the consequences should be. You're a mentor, not a judge."

Document lessons learned.

Simulation 8: Two FORGE Members in Conflict (40 minutes)

Scene Set (2 minutes):

Facilitator:

"New scenario. I need one mentor and two role-players.

The scene: Two men who are both in FORGE — both in your cohort — are in conflict. It started with something small — one borrowed something without asking, or made a comment that the other took as disrespectful. It's been building for a week. Now they're not speaking, and other people in the dorm are starting to feel the tension.

They each come to you separately. Each one wants you on their side. Each one says the other is in the wrong. One of them says, 'If you don't handle this, I'm going to handle it myself.' The other says, 'I expected more from a FORGE brother.'

Role-players — you are both genuinely upset. You both believe you're right. Neither of you wants to back down. But you're also both invested in FORGE and don't want to lose your place in the program.

Mentor — here's the challenge. You probably like one of these guys more than the other. You might think one of them is more in the right. But your job is to stay neutral, mediate, and bring them together. This is harder than mediating between strangers — because you have relationships with both of them.

Observers — watch for: Does the mentor stay neutral? Does the mentor get pulled into triangulation? Does the mentor use the conflict resolution model?"

First Attempt (5-7 minutes):

Let the scene play. The mentor will likely start with one party. Let them experience the pull of being asked to take sides.

If the scene allows, have both role-players present at the same time for a mediation attempt.

Common mistakes: - Taking sides (even subtly) - Making a judgment call about who's right - Avoiding the conflict entirely - Lecturing both parties about FORGE values - Trying to solve it for them rather than facilitating resolution

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Stop the scene. Same process — mentor shares thinking, observers provide feedback.

Coach specifically: - If the mentor took a side: "What happens to your credibility with the other person now? Can you mediate after you've chosen?" - If the mentor lectured: "Did that work? Did they actually hear you? Or did they just get quiet because you're in authority?" - If the mentor stayed neutral well: "What did you do to stay neutral when you probably had an opinion? How did that feel?"

Replay (5 minutes):

Encourage the mentor to use the FORGE Conflict Resolution model: 1. Pause & Posture 2. Name the Heat 3. Facts > Stories — let each person speak without interruption 4. Needs & Options — what do you each actually need here? 5. Agreement & Check-Back

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Discussion questions: 1. "Why is conflict between FORGE members harder to handle than conflict between strangers?" 2. "What happens to the dorm culture when FORGE members are fighting?" 3. "How do you stay neutral when you think one person is clearly wrong?" 4. "What if mediation fails? What's your next step?" 5. "How does this connect to restorative practices? — We're going to dig into that in Week 21."

Key teaching points:

Facilitator:

"FORGE-on-FORGE conflict is one of the most damaging things that can happen to this program. When two FORGE members are fighting, every skeptic in the dorm says, 'See? They're no different.' That's why this matters so much.

When you mediate between two brothers in the program, three things are true:

One — you are not a judge. You are a facilitator. Your job is to create the space for them to work it out, not to render a verdict.

Two — you hold a higher standard. These are FORGE members. They made commitments. Part of your mediation is reminding them — respectfully — of what they signed up for. Not as a weapon. As a mirror.

Three — if you can't resolve it, escalate. Bring in the program lead or a senior mentor. Don't let it fester because you're embarrassed that you couldn't fix it yourself."

Document lessons learned.

Closing (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Two simulations today. Both of them required something beyond technique — they required judgment. Knowing when to push and when to hold. Knowing when to support and when to refer. Knowing when to mediate and when to step aside.

Tomorrow we run the manipulation scenario — someone testing you, trying to use the FORGE relationship for personal gain. That one is going to test a different muscle.

*Journal prompt tonight: **Think about the substance use simulation. If your mentee relapses, what would your first instinct be? Be honest about the judgment you'd feel. Then write about how you'd work past that judgment to actually help.***

See you tomorrow."

Session 56 Checklist

- Opening circle completed
- Simulation 7 (Substance Relapse) — full cycle completed
- MI techniques discussed and coached
- Accountability vs. punishment distinction taught
- Lessons learned documented
- Simulation 8 (FORGE Members in Conflict) — full cycle completed
- Neutrality and mediation skills coached
- FORGE Conflict Resolution model applied
- Lessons learned documented
- Journal prompt assigned
- Closing completed

SESSION 57: Manipulation and Boundary Testing

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Recognize when a mentee or program participant is testing boundaries or attempting manipulation 2. Maintain firm boundaries without losing compassion or destroying the relationship 3. Distinguish between genuine need and strategic manipulation 4. Respond to personal challenges to their authority or integrity without escalating 5. Reflect on their own vulnerability to manipulation and why certain tactics work

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in. How are you doing after yesterday? We covered heavy ground. Today's question: **Is there anything from this week's simulations that surprised you about yourself?**"*

Send the talking piece. This question is important — self-awareness about their own responses is the real learning.

Manipulation in Context (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Before we run today's simulation, let's talk about manipulation. I want to be careful with this word, because it gets thrown around in prisons like it means nothing. Not every request is manipulation. Not every test is a scheme.

But here's the reality: some people will try to use the mentor relationship for personal advantage. Not because they're evil — because this is an environment where working angles is survival. You've all done it. I'm not judging. But as a mentor, you need to be able to see it when it's happening to you.

Common forms of manipulation you'll encounter as a mentor:"

List and briefly discuss:

*"1. **Flattery** — 'You're the only one who understands me. You're different from the others.' When someone makes you feel special, ask yourself: what do they want?"*

- 1. **Guilt** — 'I thought we were brothers. I thought FORGE was about loyalty.' Using your commitment to service against you.*
- 2. **Urgency** — 'I need this right now, there's no time to think about it.' Pressure to act before you can assess.*
- 3. **Victim positioning** — 'Everyone is against me. You're the only one I can trust.' Isolating you from other perspectives.*
- 4. **Testing the fence** — Small asks that slowly escalate. Each one seems reasonable. By the time you realize you've crossed a line, you're in deep.*

*The key question when you feel uncertain: **Would I be comfortable if the program lead saw exactly what I'm doing right now?** If the answer is no, stop."*

Simulation 9: A Mentor Being Manipulated/Tested (45 minutes)

Scene Set (2 minutes):

Facilitator:

"I need one mentor and one role-player.

The scene: A newer FORGE participant has been in the program for about a month. He's charming, well-liked, and says all the right things in sessions. But you've noticed something. He's using his FORGE affiliation to build social capital — dropping the program's name in conversations to establish status, selectively following the code when it benefits him, and quietly undermining another participant who he sees as competition.

Today, he approaches you. He starts with flattery — tells you how much he respects you, how much he's learned from you. Then the ask: he wants you to speak to the program lead about giving him more responsibility. He thinks he'd be a good peer facilitator. He drops hints that the other participant — the one he's been undermining — 'isn't really committed.'

Role-player — you are smart, likeable, and strategic. You genuinely believe you deserve the role. You're not purely malicious — you actually do want to be a mentor. But your methods are manipulative. If the mentor pushes back, shift tactics. Try guilt: 'I thought you believed in me.' Try urgency: 'If you don't say something, they'll give the role to someone who doesn't deserve it.' If the mentor holds firm, test the boundary harder: 'So you're just like everyone else — politics over people.'

Observers — this is a subtle scenario. Watch for: Does the mentor recognize what's happening? Does the mentor get pulled in by the flattery? How does the mentor hold the boundary? Does the mentor address the behavior directly or dodge it?"

First Attempt (5-7 minutes):

Let the scene play. This one is tricky because the manipulation is subtle. Many mentors will initially be taken in by the flattery.

Common mistakes: - Agreeing to advocate without questioning motives - Being flattered and not recognizing the dynamic - Seeing the manipulation but not addressing it directly - Getting angry and attacking the person's character instead of addressing the behavior - Making promises to avoid confrontation

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Stop at a critical moment — ideally when the role-player shifts tactics.

Facilitator:

"[Mentor's name] — freeze. Tell us: What's going on in your head right now? Do you trust this conversation?"

Turn to observers. Draw out what they noticed — body language, tone shifts, the flattery-to-pressure progression.

Coach specifically: - If the mentor was taken in: "No shame in that. The flattery felt good, right? That's what makes it work. What was the first sign that this wasn't a straight conversation?" - If the mentor got angry: "You saw it. Good. But you attacked the person instead of the behavior. What's the difference between saying 'You're a manipulator' and 'I'm noticing that you're asking me to take sides against another participant, and I'm not going to do that?'" - If the mentor handled it well: "What gave you the signal? When did you know something was off?"

Replay (5 minutes):

Coach the mentor to: - Acknowledge the positive ("I see your energy in the program, and that's real") - Name the pattern without name-calling ("What I'm noticing is...") - Hold the boundary clearly ("I'm not going to advocate against another participant. That's not how FORGE works") - Redirect to genuine growth ("If you want more responsibility, here's what that actually looks like")

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Discussion questions: 1. "Why is flattery so effective? What does it do to your judgment?" 2. "How do you tell the difference between someone who genuinely wants mentorship and someone who wants to use the relationship?" 3. "What's the right way to address manipulative behavior without shaming the person?" 4. "Have you ever been the manipulator? Be honest. What were you looking for?" 5. "What makes mentors vulnerable to manipulation?"

Key teaching points:

Facilitator:

"Here's what I want you to take from this. Manipulation in a correctional environment is not a personality defect — it's an adaptation. People learn to work angles because that's how they survived. When you see it in someone, you don't need to hate them for it. But you absolutely need to name it.

The most effective response to manipulation is not anger. It's clarity. 'I see what's happening. I'm not going to go along with it. And I'm still here for you.'

That combination — clear boundary, continued care — is what separates a FORGE mentor from everyone else in this person's life who either got played or cut them off. You hold both. That's the work."

Document lessons learned.

Week 19 Integration Discussion (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Three simulations this week. The weapon. The relapse. The manipulation. Let me ask the big question: Which one was hardest for you, and why?"

Open discussion. Let 5-6 people respond. Listen for patterns.

Facilitator:

"Every one of you found a different scenario hardest. That's important information. The one that was hardest for you is the one you need to think about the most. That's where your growing edge is.

Here's what all three scenarios have in common: they required you to hold two things at the same time. Care for the person AND adherence to the standard. Compassion AND boundaries. Love AND truth.

That tension — between caring about someone and doing what's right even when they don't want you to — that IS mentoring. If it were easy, everyone would do it."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Closing round. Complete this sentence: **The hardest part of being a mentor will be...**"*

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (after the round):

"Write down what you just said. Then journal on this tonight:

Think about someone in your life who held you accountable when you didn't want to hear it. What did they do that made you eventually listen — even if you were angry at first?

Next week — Simulations 10 through 12. Mental health crisis, staff conflict, and gang pressure. These are the most complex scenarios in the program. Bring your best. See you Tuesday."

Session 57 Checklist

- [] Opening circle completed

- [] Manipulation context briefing delivered
- [] Simulation 9 (Manipulation/Testing) — full cycle completed
- [] Flattery, guilt, and boundary-testing dynamics discussed
- [] Lessons learned documented
- [] Week 19 integration discussion held
- [] Closing circle completed
- [] Journal prompt assigned
- [] Preview of Week 20 given

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 19

What to Watch For

Emotional activation: These scenarios hit differently than Block 1. The weapon scenario in particular may activate participants who have personal experience with violence, weapons, or losing someone to violence. Watch for men who go quiet, check out, or get unusually agitated. Check in with them individually after the session.

The "I would never refer" response: Some participants will resist the mandatory referral concept. They'll argue that referring is snitching. This is a critical conversation — don't avoid it. Address it directly: "If your mentee has a weapon and stabs someone, and you knew about it, who is responsible? Not legally — morally. Can you live with that? FORGE says you don't have to. You refer because you care, not because you're complying."

Overconfidence vs. humility: After Block 1, some participants may feel like they've mastered simulations. Block 2 is designed to humble them. That's intentional. Watch for who adjusts and who gets defensive when they struggle.

Personal triggers in the substance use scenario: If any participant has personal substance use history, this scenario may bring up shame or grief. Normalize it: "If this hit close to home, that's because it is close to home. That experience — if you've processed it — is exactly what makes you a powerful mentor for someone going through it."

Adjustments

If a scenario runs long: Cut into the debrief time rather than the replay. The replay — the second attempt with coaching — is where the deepest learning happens.

If no one volunteers to be the mentor: Assign. By Week 19, participants should be accustomed to simulation work. If someone is resistant, have a private conversation. Fear of failure in front of the group is real — acknowledge it and push through it.

If the group gets stuck on whether referring is snitching: Pause the simulation work and have the conversation. This is too important to rush past. Use real examples: "If your child's teacher knew another

student brought a knife to school and said nothing because they didn't want to be a snitch — would you accept that? Your mentee is someone's child. Someone's brother. You protect them by referring."

Preparation for Week 20

- Review Simulations 10-12 (Mental Health Crisis, Staff Conflict, Gang Pressure)
- If possible, coordinate with mental health staff to review the facility's mental health referral process — participants need to know the actual steps, not just the theory
- Prepare scenario cards for all three remaining simulations
- Consider inviting a senior mentor who has faced a real staff conflict situation to share briefly during Session 59

Week 20: Simulation Training Block 2b — The Hardest Scenarios

Week 20 Overview

Purpose: Complete the simulation training with the three most complex scenarios in the FORGE library: a mental health crisis, a staff conflict, and gang pressure. These scenarios share a common thread — in all three, the mentor's primary job is NOT to solve the problem. It is to keep people safe, keep the dorm stable, and know the limits of their role. These are the scenarios where the wrong move has the worst consequences.

Sessions This Week: - Session 58 (Tuesday): Mental Health Crisis — Suicidal Statements - Session 59 (Wednesday): Staff Conflict — A CO Treating Someone Unfairly - Session 60 (Thursday): Gang Pressure & Block 2 Capstone Debrief

Materials Needed: - Simulation scenario cards (1 per scenario) - Observer feedback forms (2-3 per simulation) - Scoring rubrics (facilitator copy) - Facility mental health referral information — actual names, actual process (not generic) - Facility grievance procedure summary (for staff conflict scenario) - Easel paper or whiteboard for lessons learned - Talking piece - Journals/notebooks

Critical Note for Facilitators: The mental health crisis simulation is the most sensitive scenario in the entire program. Some participants will have personal experience with suicidal ideation — their own or someone they've lost. Before this session, remind the group that anyone who needs to step out can do so without explanation. Have a plan for individual check-ins after the session. This is not a drill — this is preparation for real situations that save real lives.

SESSION 58: Mental Health Crisis — Suicidal Statements

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Recognize warning signs of a mental health crisis, including suicidal statements 2. Respond to suicidal statements with presence and calm — not panic, not dismissal 3. Follow the facility's referral protocol for mental health emergencies 4. Stay with someone in crisis until appropriate help arrives 5. Understand the limits of peer mentoring in mental health situations 6. Process their own emotional response to a crisis situation

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in. Before we begin, I want to say something about today's session.

Today's simulation is about a mental health crisis — specifically, someone making statements about wanting to hurt themselves. This is real. It happens in here. Some of you may have personal experience with this — your own, or someone you care about.

If at any point today you need to step out, do it. No explanation needed. No judgment. I'll check in with you after. Your wellbeing matters more than completing an exercise.

*Check-in question: **One word — how are you arriving today?**"*

Send the talking piece. Keep it brief. Read the room.

Mental Health Crisis Briefing (15 minutes)

Purpose: Ground the group in what they need to know BEFORE running the simulation. This is not optional content — it is life-saving information.

Facilitator:

"Let me share some facts. In the United States, people who are incarcerated die by suicide at a rate roughly three times the general population. In state prisons, suicide is the leading cause of death after illness. It happens in cells, in dorms, in showers, in recreation areas. And in many cases, someone knew something was wrong before it happened.

As a FORGE mentor, you are not a therapist. You are not a crisis counselor. But you are often the first person someone talks to. That means you need to know three things:

One — how to recognize the signs. Two — how to respond in the moment. Three — how to get help."

Warning Signs:

"Here are the signs you watch for. Not every person in crisis shows all of these, but any combination should get your attention:

- *Giving away personal property — especially items that have sentimental value*
- *Withdrawing from people they're normally connected to*
- *Sudden calm after a period of distress — this is counterintuitive, but when someone who's been agitated suddenly seems at peace, it can mean they've made a decision*
- *Saying things like 'It doesn't matter anymore,' 'Everyone would be better off,' 'I'm tired of fighting,' 'I can't do this'*
- *Talking about death, asking about what happens when someone dies*
- *Increased substance use*
- *Reckless behavior — provoking fights, taking risks they normally wouldn't*
- *Receiving devastating news — parole denial, death in the family, relationship ending"*

What to Do:

"If you see these signs, or if someone makes a direct statement about hurting themselves, here's what you do:

Step 1: Stay. *Do not leave them alone. This is the most important thing you can do. Your presence matters more than your words.*

Step 2: Ask directly. *This goes against what most people think. You might believe that asking about suicide 'gives someone the idea.' That is a myth. Research is clear: asking directly does not increase risk. It reduces it. You say something like: 'Are you thinking about hurting yourself?' or 'I need to ask you straight — are you thinking about ending your life?'*

Step 3: Listen. *If they say yes, or if they don't deny it, don't argue. Don't say 'You have so much to live for.' Don't say 'Think about your kids.' Don't try to talk them out of it. Just say: 'I hear you. I'm here. I'm not going anywhere.'*

Step 4: Get help. *This is a red-line referral. You are not equipped to handle this alone, and you shouldn't try. At this facility, here is the process:"*

Facility-specific referral process — Adapt this section to reflect actual procedures at Dooly State Prison:

"Here's how you get help: - During the day: [Specific contact — counselor name, office location, how to reach them] - After hours: [Specific contact — which CO to notify, how to initiate a mental health emergency response] - If you cannot reach anyone immediately: Stay with the person. Send someone else to find a CO. Do not leave.

What you say when you refer: *'I have someone here who's in crisis and needs to talk to mental health staff right away.' You don't need to share details. You don't need to explain the whole story. You just need to get the right people there.*

Step 5: After. *After mental health staff takes over, take care of yourself. Talk to the program lead or a senior mentor. What you just experienced is heavy. You don't carry it alone."*

Pause.

"Questions before we simulate this?"

Answer any questions thoroughly. Do not rush this section.

Simulation 10: Mental Health Crisis (45 minutes)

Scene Set (2 minutes):

Facilitator:

"I need one mentor and one role-player. This scenario requires emotional range from the role-player — not performance, not drama. Quiet desperation.

The scene: It's evening. The dorm is winding down. You notice a man sitting on his bunk, not doing anything. He's been quieter than usual for the past few days. You've noticed he gave his radio to someone else yesterday. You sit down near him. He looks at you and says, 'You don't need to check on me. I'm fine.' But he clearly is not fine.

After a few minutes, if the mentor stays and shows patience, he says: 'I'm just tired, man. Tired of all of it. Sometimes I think everyone would be better off if I just... wasn't here anymore.'

Role-player — you are not dramatic. You are quiet. Flat. Exhausted. You're not asking for attention. If anything, you're embarrassed that someone noticed. If the mentor panics, shut down. If the mentor dismisses you, say 'Forget it, I'm fine.' If the mentor stays calm and present, open up slightly more. Maybe mention the parole denial. Maybe mention that your girl stopped answering the phone. If the mentor says they need to get help, resist at first — 'Don't tell anyone. I don't want to be on watch. Please.' But don't fight it hard. Part of you wants help.

Observers — watch for everything. Does the mentor stay? Does the mentor ask directly? Does the mentor panic? Does the mentor listen or try to fix? Does the mentor follow through on the referral? This is the most important simulation in the program."

First Attempt (7 minutes):

Give this one more time than usual. The scenario needs space to develop. Do not freeze too early.

Common mistakes: - Panicking and immediately running for help (leaving the person alone) - Dismissing it: "Come on, man, you'll be alright" - Trying to fix it: "Think about your kids, you've got so much going for you" - Freezing and not knowing what to say - Agreeing not to tell anyone - Getting uncomfortable and changing the subject

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Stop at the referral decision point — when the person has disclosed and the mentor has to decide what to do next.

Facilitator:

"[Mentor's name] — freeze. What's happening inside you right now? Not what you think I want to hear. What are you actually feeling?"

This is a moment for honesty. Many mentors will admit they were scared, uncomfortable, or didn't know what to say. That's the right answer.

Turn to observers:

"What did you see? What worked? What would you change?"

Coach specifically: - If the mentor panicked: "Your instinct was to fix it fast. That makes sense. But when you jumped up, what did the person on the bunk see? They saw you scared. What do they need to see? Calm. Presence. Someone who can handle hearing the truth." - If the mentor dismissed: "You said 'You'll be alright.' How do you know that? He doesn't think he will be. What he needs is not reassurance — it's someone who will take him seriously." - If the mentor stayed and listened: "What allowed you to do that? Where did you find the calm?"

Replay (5 minutes):

Run the full sequence: approach, listen, ask directly, stay present, make the referral.

Coach the mentor to use these words or their own version:

"I hear you. What you're feeling is real, and I'm not going to pretend it isn't. I'm going to sit right here with you. And I need you to know — I'm going to make sure someone who can really help you knows about this. Not to get you in trouble. Because your life matters and I'm not going to act like it doesn't."

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Facilitator:

"Let's debrief. I'm going to ask some hard questions."

Discussion questions: 1. "When he said 'Don't tell anyone' — what do you say?" 2. "What if mental health staff isn't available? It's 10 PM. What do you do?" 3. "What if other dorm members see you sitting with him and start asking questions? How do you protect his dignity?" 4. "What if he gets angry at you for referring? How do you handle that?" 5. "How do you take care of yourself after something like this?"

Key teaching points:

Facilitator:

"I want to land three things.

*First: **Presence is the intervention.** Before any referral, before any protocol, the most powerful thing you can do is stay. Sit down. Be there. You don't need the perfect words. You need to not leave.*

*Second: **Asking directly saves lives.** 'Are you thinking about hurting yourself?' That question is not rude. It is not invasive. It is the most respectful thing you can say, because it tells the person: I see you. I'm not afraid of your pain. I can handle hearing the truth.*

*Third: **You are not enough, and that's okay.** You are a peer mentor, not a therapist. Your job is to be the bridge between crisis and help. You hold the person. You get the help. You don't try to be the help. Knowing that limit is not weakness — it's wisdom.*

*One more thing. If you ever find yourself in this situation for real, and you feel like you failed because you didn't say the right thing — hear me on this: **you showed up. You stayed. That alone may be the reason someone makes it through the night.**"*

Pause. Let the room breathe.

Document lessons learned.

Decompression (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"That was heavy. I'm not going to pretend it wasn't.

*Before we close, I want to do a round. No talking piece — just open. **What's one thing you're feeling right now?** One word or one sentence. Whatever's true."*

Let people share freely. Don't analyze or coach. Just receive.

"If this brought up something personal for you — if you've been in that place yourself, or if you've lost someone — I want you to know that I'm available after this session, and so is [senior mentor's name]. You don't have to carry it alone. That's what we say to our mentees. It applies to us too.

Journal tonight if you need to. Tomorrow we shift gears to staff conflict and gang pressure. Different energy. But still hard.

Take care of yourselves tonight."

Session 58 Checklist

- Safety statement delivered at opening (permission to step out)
- Opening circle completed
- Mental health crisis briefing delivered thoroughly
- Warning signs reviewed
- Five-step response model taught (Stay, Ask, Listen, Get Help, Take Care of Yourself)
- Facility-specific referral process reviewed with actual contacts
- Simulation 10 (Mental Health Crisis) — full cycle completed
- Key teaching points delivered (Presence, Direct question, Know your limits)
- Lessons learned documented
- Decompression round completed
- Facilitator available for individual check-ins after session

SESSION 59: Staff Conflict — A CO Treating Someone Unfairly

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Navigate a situation where staff behavior is inappropriate without escalating 2. De-escalate the dorm response to a staff conflict — managing the crowd, not the CO 3. Articulate FORGE's position on staff authority and the grievance process 4. Distinguish between standing up for someone and making a situation worse 5. Support a dorm member who has been mistreated without undermining institutional processes

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in. Yesterday was one of the most important sessions in this entire program. Before we move on: **Is there anything from yesterday that you need to say before we start today?**"*

Send the talking piece. If someone shares something personal, acknowledge it. Don't rush past it.

Staff Conflict Context (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Today's scenario is different from everything we've done so far. In every other simulation, the conflict was between inmates — between people at your level. Today, the conflict involves a CO.

This is the hardest scenario for most men in this environment. And here's why: you're going to watch someone get treated unfairly by someone who has authority over you. Every instinct you have will say 'Do something.' And your job — as a mentor — is going to feel wrong.

Let me explain FORGE's position on this, because if you don't understand it before we simulate it, you'll reject it.

***FORGE does not override staff authority.** Period. Even when staff is wrong. Even when what they're doing is clearly unfair. And here's why:*

It's not because COs are always right. They're not. Some are excellent. Some are terrible. Most are somewhere in between. It's because the moment an inmate challenges a CO's authority in front of a dorm full of people, the situation becomes infinitely more dangerous. For the CO. For the person being mistreated. For you. For everyone in that dorm.

*Your job as a mentor is not to confront the CO. Your job is to **de-escalate the dorm**. The CO's behavior is above your pay grade. The dorm's response to the CO's behavior — that IS your pay grade.*

After the situation passes, there are legitimate channels. Grievance procedures exist. The program lead can escalate through administrative channels. FORGE mentors can document and report. Justice doesn't require you to be a hero in the moment. It requires you to be smart."

Pause.

"I know some of you are already pushing back in your heads. That's fine. Let's run the scenario and then talk about it."

Simulation 11: Staff Conflict (45 minutes)

Scene Set (2 minutes):

Facilitator:

"I need one mentor and two role-players — one playing the person being mistreated by the CO, and one playing a dorm member who's getting agitated about it. I'll play the CO's actions through narration — no one needs to role-play the officer.

The scene: A CO is conducting a search of the dorm. He's being rough with one person in particular — tossing his belongings, making disrespectful comments, using excessive force during a pat-down. The dorm member being searched is trying to stay compliant, but he's humiliated. Other dorm members are watching. The energy in the room is shifting.

One dorm member — a FORGE participant — steps toward the situation and says loudly, 'This isn't right. Somebody needs to do something about this.'

Mentor — you need to manage this. The CO is still in the room. The dorm is getting heated. The person being searched is on the edge. And one of your own FORGE brothers is about to make it worse.

Role-player 1 (the searched person) — you are trying to be compliant but you're about to break. If the mentor comes to you, accept the support quietly.

Role-player 2 (the agitated FORGE member) — you are angry. You think the CO is wrong. You think FORGE should stand for something. If the mentor tells you to back down, push back: 'So we're just going to let this happen? What's the point of FORGE if we don't stand up?' If the mentor talks about grievance procedures, be dismissive: 'A grievance? That's a joke. Nothing ever happens.'

Observers — watch for: Does the mentor focus on the CO or on the dorm? How does the mentor handle the FORGE member who wants to act? Does the mentor protect the person being searched without escalating?"

First Attempt (5-7 minutes):

This scenario is chaotic by design. The mentor has multiple people to manage and a tense atmosphere. Let it play.

Common mistakes: - Confronting the CO (even indirectly) - Ignoring the agitated FORGE member - Getting pulled into the anger - Doing nothing and hoping it passes - Giving a speech about FORGE values instead of managing the immediate situation

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Stop mid-scene — ideally when the agitated FORGE member is pushing the mentor to act.

Facilitator:

"[Mentor's name] — freeze. You've got two people who need different things from you right now. What are you prioritizing?"

Turn to observers. Key feedback areas: - Did the mentor manage the dorm's energy or get caught up in the injustice? - Did the mentor address the FORGE member's anger with respect? - Did the mentor protect the searched person without confronting authority?

Replay (5 minutes):

Coach the mentor to manage in sequence: 1. Address the agitated FORGE member first — he's the biggest risk for escalation 2. Use calm, direct language: "I see it too. I'm angry too. But if you step to that CO right now, you catch a charge, he catches a charge [pointing to the searched person], and nothing gets better for anyone. Stand down. We handle this the right way." 3. After the immediate tension passes, check on the person who was searched 4. Document what happened. Report through proper channels

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Discussion questions: 1. "How does it feel to watch someone get mistreated and not confront the person doing it?" 2. "What's the difference between being passive and being strategic?" 3. "The FORGE member said, 'What's the point of FORGE if we don't stand up?' — What's the answer to that?" 4. "What do you do AFTER the CO leaves? What's the action plan?" 5. "How do you support someone who's been mistreated without undermining the institution?"

Key teaching points:

Facilitator:

"I'm going to say something that might be hard to hear. Your job in that scenario was not to fix the injustice. Your job was to prevent a catastrophe.

If a FORGE member confronts that CO, here's what happens: the CO escalates, backup gets called, the dorm goes on lockdown, people catch charges, the man being searched gets it worse, and FORGE loses credibility with the administration. Everyone loses.

If a FORGE mentor manages the dorm — keeps the temperature down, keeps people from doing something they'll regret, supports the person who was mistreated, and then files a proper grievance with documentation — here's what happens: nobody catches a charge, the person being mistreated knows someone had his back, and there's a paper trail that creates accountability.

Which one of those outcomes actually serves the person who was wronged?

Standing up doesn't always look like standing up. Sometimes it looks like keeping the peace in the moment and fighting smart afterward. That's not weakness. That's discipline. That's what makes a FORGE mentor different from everyone else in that dorm."

"And let me say one more thing. The FORGE member who was angry? He wasn't wrong to be angry. His anger was righteous. Your job wasn't to tell him his anger was wrong. Your job was to redirect that anger into action that actually produces results instead of consequences."

Document lessons learned.

Transition (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Take 5 minutes. Stand up, stretch, use the restroom if you need to. We've got one more simulation — and it's the last one of Block 2."

Preview of Tomorrow's Final Simulation (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Tomorrow we close Block 2 with the gang pressure scenario. I'll say this now: gang dynamics are the most dangerous situations you'll encounter in a dorm. FORGE mentors do not confront gang leaders. FORGE mentors do not investigate gang activity. FORGE mentors do not position themselves as authorities in gang-related situations. What FORGE mentors DO is protect the FORGE culture, support individuals who are under pressure, and know when something is beyond their scope.

*Tonight, journal on this: **Think about a time when you chose the strategic response instead of the emotional one. What made you choose strategy? What was the result?***

See you tomorrow."

Session 59 Checklist

- Opening circle completed — space given for carryover from Session 58
- Staff conflict context delivered — FORGE position on staff authority explained
- Simulation 11 (Staff Conflict) — full cycle completed
- Mentor coached on managing the dorm, not the CO
- Grievance and documentation process discussed
- Distinction between being passive and being strategic taught
- Lessons learned documented
- Journal prompt assigned
- Preview of Session 60 given



SESSION 60: Gang Pressure & Block 2 Capstone Debrief

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Recognize gang pressure tactics and understand the risks involved 2. Support a FORGE participant under gang pressure without putting themselves or the program at risk 3. Know when gang dynamics require referral to staff 4. Synthesize all lessons from Block 2 into a personal readiness assessment 5. Identify their own areas of strength and areas still needing growth

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Last day of simulation Block 2. Check-in: **What has this week taught you about the kind of mentor you're becoming?"**"*

Send the talking piece.

Gang Dynamics Briefing (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Let me be direct about this topic. I'm not going to pretend that gang dynamics don't exist in this facility. You know the landscape better than I do. You know who's who. You know where the lines are. I'm not going to insult your intelligence by acting like this is theoretical.

What I am going to tell you is what FORGE's position is, and why.

FORGE mentors do not engage with gang dynamics directly. *This is not a limitation — it's wisdom. Here's why:*

Gang dynamics are organized systems with their own authority structures, their own rules, and their own consequences for breaking those rules. A FORGE mentor who steps into that space — no matter how good their intentions — puts themselves, their mentee, and the entire program at risk.

What FORGE mentors CAN do:

- 1. Protect the FORGE space.** *Gang identity does not come into FORGE sessions. That boundary has to be absolute.*
- 2. Support individuals.** *If a FORGE participant is being pressured, you can support them privately. Help them think through their options. Help them see a path.*
- 3. Refer when safety is at risk.** *If pressure becomes threat, that's a red line. It goes to staff.*
- 4. Model an alternative.** *The most powerful thing FORGE does against gang culture is offer a different identity. A man who sees himself as a FORGE mentor has something to protect that's bigger than affiliation.*

What FORGE mentors do NOT do:

- 1. Confront gang members*
- 2. Investigate who's pressuring whom*
- 3. Try to mediate between gangs*
- 4. Take sides in gang-related disputes*
- 5. Use FORGE identity as a shield or a counter-affiliation*

This is about survival and sustainability. FORGE can change culture over time. It cannot win a confrontation with organized gang structures. And it shouldn't try."

Simulation 12: Gang Pressure on a FORGE Participant (45 minutes)

Scene Set (2 minutes):

Facilitator:

"I need one mentor and one role-player.

The scene: A FORGE participant — someone who's been in the program since Phase 1 and has shown real growth — comes to you looking stressed. He's been distant for a few days. When you press him, he tells you that people he used to run with are pressuring him. They're telling him he's gone soft. They're telling him he needs to 'prove he's still solid.' He hasn't done anything yet, but the pressure is increasing. Yesterday someone said, 'You need to decide whose side you're on.'

He's scared. He doesn't want to go back to that life. But he also knows what happens to people who walk away from their set without permission.

Role-player — you are torn. You believe in FORGE, but you're also terrified. The people pressuring you are real threats. If the mentor gives you easy answers, push back: 'You don't understand — these aren't people you just say no to.' If the mentor suggests going to staff, resist: 'If I talk to staff, I'm dead. That's not an option.' If the mentor says FORGE will protect you, challenge: 'How? FORGE can't be there 24 hours a day.'

Observers — this is the most complex scenario we've done. Watch for: Does the mentor take the threat seriously? Does the mentor give false reassurance? Does the mentor recognize the limits of what they can offer? Does the mentor help the person think without trying to solve an unsolvable problem?"

First Attempt (7 minutes):

Give this one extra time. The conversation needs room to develop. The role-player should be genuinely challenging — not hostile, but realistic about the danger.

Common mistakes: - Minimizing the threat: "Just tell them you're not interested anymore" - Giving false reassurance: "FORGE has your back, don't worry" - Trying to solve it: offering to talk to the gang members - Getting overwhelmed and not knowing what to say - Immediately jumping to "tell staff" without acknowledging why that's terrifying

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Stop the scene when the mentor is at a decision point.

Facilitator:

"[Mentor's name] — freeze. This man's safety is on the line. What options do you actually have?"

Turn to observers. This is a moment for honest group assessment of what's possible and what's not.

Coach: - If the mentor minimized: "You just told a man facing real threats that it'll be fine. Why would he trust your judgment now?" - If the mentor tried to solve it: "What are you solving? Do you have the power to stop

gang pressure? What happens if your intervention backfires?" - If the mentor was honest about limits: "Good. What did it feel like to say 'I don't have a solution for this'? And what can you offer even without a solution?"

Replay (5 minutes):

Coach the mentor toward a response that includes: 1. Taking the threat seriously: "I hear you. This is real, and I'm not going to pretend it's simple." 2. Exploring options without prescribing: "Let's think through what you've got. What are the options — even the bad ones?" 3. Being honest about limits: "I can't make this go away. But I can sit here and think it through with you." 4. Planting the seed for referral: "There may come a point where your safety requires talking to someone with more authority than me. I know that's scary. But we might get there." 5. Affirming the person's identity: "The fact that you're sitting here talking to me about this instead of just going along — that tells me who you are. Don't lose that."

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Discussion questions: 1. "What can a mentor actually do in this situation? Be honest about the limits." 2. "When does this become a red-line referral? Where is that line?" 3. "The person said going to staff means he's dead. How do you weigh that against the risk of doing nothing?" 4. "How does FORGE protect its participants without becoming a rival power structure?" 5. "What is the value of just being present with someone in a situation you can't fix?"

Key teaching points:

Facilitator:

"This is the hardest truth in mentoring: sometimes you can't fix it. Sometimes the situation is bigger than you, bigger than FORGE, bigger than anything one person can solve.

And here's what makes a great mentor: being there anyway. Sitting with someone in an impossible situation and saying, 'I'm not going to pretend this is easy. I'm not going to give you a bumper-sticker answer. I'm going to stay right here and help you think.'

That sounds small. It's not. For a man who's been told his whole life that he's alone — that nobody cares, that it's every man for himself — having someone sit with him in the hard place is revolutionary.

On the practical side: if this situation escalates to direct threats of violence, it's a red line. Full stop. That goes to staff. Yes, the person will resist. Yes, it's complicated. But a dead FORGE participant is not something any of us can live with.

And on the cultural side: the best long-term defense against gang pressure is the FORGE culture itself. When a man has a community, an identity, a purpose, and people who genuinely care about him — the pull of the old life gets weaker. Not overnight. Not in a week. But over time. That's the work."

Document lessons learned.

Block 2 Capstone Debrief (25 minutes)

Purpose: Integrate all seven simulations from Block 2 and help participants assess their readiness.

Facilitator:

"Block 2 is done. Seven simulations across two weeks. Let's look at what we covered:

- *The Weapon — mandatory referral under pressure*
- *Substance Relapse — compassion without enabling*
- *FORGE Members in Conflict — neutrality and mediation within the family*
- *Manipulation — recognizing it, naming it, holding boundaries*
- *Mental Health Crisis — presence, direct questions, and knowing your limits*
- *Staff Conflict — managing the dorm, not the CO*
- *Gang Pressure — sitting with someone in an unsolvable situation*

I want to do two things before we close."

Exercise 1: Personal Readiness Assessment (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"In your journal, I want you to write two lists.

List 1: Scenarios I feel ready to handle. *Which of these seven simulations do you feel confident about? Where do you trust your skills?*

List 2: Scenarios that still scare me. *Which ones exposed a gap? Which ones showed you something about yourself that you need to work on?*

Be honest. This is for you, not for me. A mentor who thinks they're ready for everything is a mentor who hasn't been paying attention."

Give them 7-8 minutes to write.

Exercise 2: Group Lessons Learned (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Let's build a master list. As a group, what are the biggest lessons from Block 2? I'll write them down. Call them out."

Capture on easel paper. Prompt if needed. Lessons that should emerge:

- Some situations require referral, not resolution

- You can be caring and firm at the same time
- Presence is sometimes the most powerful intervention
- Knowing your limits is a strength, not a weakness
- Manipulation works when you want to be needed
- The dorm's response is your responsibility, even when the problem isn't
- Not every situation has a clean answer
- Your own emotional reactions are data — pay attention to them

Facilitator (closing this section):

"Keep this list. These aren't just simulation lessons. These are the principles that will guide your mentoring. Every one of these will come up in Phase 3 — in real situations, with real consequences. You've practiced. You've stumbled. You've gotten better. That's the process."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Final round for Block 2. Complete this sentence: **After these simulations, the one thing I know about myself as a mentor is...**"*

Send the talking piece. Facilitator goes last.

Facilitator (after the round):

*"Block 2 is behind you. You've faced the hardest scenarios in the FORGE library. Some of you surprised yourselves. Some of you found edges you didn't know you had. Both of those are exactly right. Next week — Week 21 — we shift from crisis response to culture building. Restorative practices. Circle keeping. Accountability conversations. Building a dorm culture that prevents half of what we just simulated. It's a different energy. But it's just as important. Because the best mentor isn't the one who handles every crisis perfectly — it's the one who builds an environment where fewer crises happen in the first place. Journal this weekend: **Write a letter to a future FORGE participant who's about to start simulation training. What do you wish someone had told you before you began?** See you Tuesday."*

Session 60 Checklist

- Opening circle completed
- Gang dynamics briefing delivered — FORGE position clearly stated
- Simulation 12 (Gang Pressure) — full cycle completed
- Honest conversation about limits of mentoring in gang situations
- Lessons learned documented
- Block 2 capstone debrief conducted
- Personal readiness assessment completed (journal)
- Master lessons-learned list created with group
- Closing circle completed
- Weekend journal prompt assigned

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 20

What to Watch For

Session 58 (Mental Health Crisis) — emotional fallout: This is the most likely session to trigger personal responses. Have a plan for after-session check-ins. Know who on your team (senior mentors, staff) is available if a participant needs support. Do not skip the decompression round at the end of Session 58.

Session 59 (Staff Conflict) — pushback on FORGE's position: Many participants will resist the idea that they shouldn't confront a CO who is mistreating someone. This resistance is healthy and should be honored. Do not shut it down. Let the debate happen in the debrief. The goal is not blind compliance — the goal is strategic thinking. Validate the anger. Redirect the energy.

Session 60 (Gang Pressure) — personal exposure: Some participants have direct experience with gang pressure. They may reveal more than they intended. Be careful about what gets shared in the group. Remind participants that what's shared in the circle stays in the circle — but also be aware of safety implications if someone discloses current gang-related threats.

Fatigue: Block 2 is emotionally exhausting. By Thursday, participants will be drained. The capstone debrief should feel like an exhale, not another climb. Keep the energy steady and the tone warm.

The "Snitching" Conversation

It will come up this week if it hasn't already. Every referral scenario bumps against the cultural prohibition on talking to staff. Here is how to navigate it:

Do not dismiss the concern. The no-snitching norm exists because it has real consequences in this environment. Acknowledge that.

Reframe: "There's a difference between snitching and saving someone's life. Snitching is giving information to hurt someone or to benefit yourself. Referring is getting help because someone is in danger. A mentor who stays silent while someone dies is not loyal. He's complicit."

Let the group wrestle with it. This is one of the most important conversations they'll have.

Preparation for Week 21

- Review restorative justice circle keeping practices — Kay Pranis's "The Little Book of Circle Processes" is an excellent reference
- Prepare a talking piece for practice circles (or let the group choose one)
- Prepare accountability conversation scenario cards for Session 62
- Draft a sample community circle plan that participants can use as a template in Session 63
- Review the FORGE Conflict Resolution model — Session 62 builds directly on it
- Shift your own energy. Week 21 is proactive, constructive, and hopeful. After two weeks of crisis scenarios, the group needs to build something.

Weeks 21–24



Practice & Assessment

Week 21: Restorative Practices

Week 21 Overview

Purpose: Shift from crisis response to culture building. After two weeks of the hardest simulations in the program, participants now learn the tools that prevent many of those crises from happening in the first place. Restorative practices — circle keeping, accountability conversations, and building a restorative dorm culture — are the proactive side of mentoring. This week answers the question: What does a FORGE dorm look like when it's working well?

Sessions This Week: - Session 61 (Tuesday): Circle Keeping - Session 62 (Wednesday): Accountability Conversations - Session 63 (Thursday): Building a Restorative Dorm Culture

Materials Needed: - Talking piece (or multiple — one per practice circle group) - Circle process reference cards (1 per participant — see template below) - Accountability conversation model handout (1 per participant) - Scenario cards for accountability conversation practice (Session 62) - Community circle planning template (1 per participant — Session 63) - Easel paper or whiteboard - Journals/notebooks

Tone Shift for Facilitators: The energy this week should feel different from Weeks 19-20. Those weeks were about surviving the worst. This week is about building the best. Bring warmth. Bring hope. These practices are the heart of what a FORGE mentor does every day — not the crisis moments, but the daily work of building a community where people treat each other with dignity.

SESSION 61: Circle Keeping

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Explain the restorative circle process — opening, rounds, and closing 2. Describe the role and significance of the talking piece 3. Identify four types of circles and when to use each one 4. Demonstrate the circle keeper's role — holding space, not directing 5. Plan and facilitate a community-building circle

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in. You've been using circles since Week 1 of FORGE. Every session starts with one. You've experienced what it feels like to sit in a circle, hold a talking piece, and speak your truth.

Today, we go deeper. You've been a participant in circles. Now you learn how to keep one.

*Check-in question: **What has the circle process meant to you since you started FORGE? Has it changed how you listen?**"*

Send the talking piece. Let this round run — the answers will demonstrate the value of what you're about to teach.

The History and Philosophy of Circles (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Circles aren't something that got invented in a university. They've been used by indigenous peoples around the world for thousands of years — Native American communities, Maori in New Zealand, First Nations in Canada, tribal communities across Africa. When people needed to make decisions, resolve conflict, heal after harm, or simply connect with each other, they sat in a circle.

Why a circle? Think about it physically. No one is at the head. No one is in the back row. Everyone can see everyone. There is no podium, no stage, no hierarchy built into the seating. The shape itself says: we are equal here.

In the criminal justice context, restorative circles came from the restorative justice movement — a different way of thinking about harm. The traditional system asks three questions: What law was broken? Who broke it? What punishment do they deserve? Restorative justice asks different questions: Who was harmed? What do they need? Whose responsibility is it to make it right?

FORGE uses circles for both. For building community. And for repairing it when it breaks."

The Circle Process (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Let me walk you through the structure. Every circle has three parts: opening, rounds, and closing."

Opening:

"The opening sets the tone. It signals that this is different from a regular conversation. The keeper — that's the person facilitating the circle — opens with something intentional. It can be:

- *A reading or a quote*
- *A moment of silence*
- *A grounding exercise (deep breath, close your eyes, arrive in this space)*
- *A brief statement of purpose ('We're here today to...')*

The opening should take 1-3 minutes. Its job is to slow people down. In the dorm, people are moving fast, thinking fast, reacting fast. The opening says: we're going to be different in this space. We're going to be present.

After the opening, the keeper introduces the talking piece and reviews the circle guidelines."

Review circle guidelines:

"You know these, but let me formalize them:

- 1. **Speak only when holding the talking piece.** No exceptions. No quick comments. No reactions.*
- 2. **Speak from the heart.** Honest words, not performance.*
- 3. **Listen from the heart.** When someone else holds the piece, your only job is to hear them.*
- 4. **Say just enough.** Don't monopolize. Say what's true and pass it on.*
- 5. **You may pass.** No one is forced to speak. Passing is always respected.*

The keeper states these at the beginning of every circle. Even if the group has heard them fifty times. Because the guidelines are not just information — they're a ritual that creates the container."

Rounds:

"A round is one trip of the talking piece around the circle. The keeper poses a question or a prompt. The piece goes around. Everyone who wants to speak gets to speak. One round, one question.

Most circles have 2-4 rounds. The first round is usually low-stakes — a check-in, a warm-up. 'How are you arriving today?' 'What's one word for how you're feeling?' This gets people talking and builds safety.

The second and third rounds go deeper. The questions get harder. The keeper builds toward the purpose of the circle.

The final round is usually a closing question — a takeaway, a commitment, a reflection. 'What are you leaving with today?' 'What's one thing you want to carry from this conversation?'

The art of circle keeping is in the questions. Good questions open people up. Bad questions shut them down. We'll practice this."

Closing:

"The closing mirrors the opening. It brings the circle to a formal end. It can be:

- A summary by the keeper of what was shared (without naming individuals unless invited to)*
- A moment of silence*
- A group affirmation or shared statement*
- A simple 'Thank you for your honesty. This circle is closed.'*

The closing matters because it says: what happened here was held. It was honored. It's complete."

The Talking Piece (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"The talking piece is not just a prop. It's the mechanism that makes the circle work.

When you hold it, the room belongs to you. No one interrupts. No one reacts. No one side-eyes. You get to finish your thought. In a world where most of us have never had that — where we've been talked over, shut down, dismissed — holding the talking piece and being truly heard is powerful.

When you don't hold it, your job is singular: listen. Not plan your response. Not judge. Not check out. Listen. That's harder than it sounds. Most of us listen only until we have something to say. The circle trains a different muscle — listening to understand, not to respond.

Choosing the talking piece matters. It should be something meaningful. Some groups use a stone, a book, a carved figure, something someone made. What matters is that the group gives it significance. When a man holds that piece, he's holding the group's trust."

Facilitator:

"What have we used as our talking piece in FORGE? Has it felt meaningful to you? If you were going to run a circle in your dorm, what would you choose as the talking piece, and why?"

Brief discussion — 3-4 responses.

Types of Circles (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Not all circles are the same. As a FORGE mentor, you'll use four types. Each has a different purpose and a different energy."

1. Community-Building Circles:

"These are the most common and the most important. They're not about solving a problem. They're about building connection before a problem happens.

You run these regularly — weekly if possible. The questions are simple. 'What's something good that happened this week?' 'What's one thing people don't know about you?' 'Who's someone who believed in you when you didn't believe in yourself?'

These circles feel light. People laugh. People share. People start seeing each other as human beings instead of cell numbers. That's the foundation everything else is built on.

When you know the man next to you — when you know he has a daughter who sends him drawings, when you know he's working on his GED, when you know he's afraid of going home — it's a lot harder to treat him like nothing."

2. Problem-Solving Circles:

"When there's a tension in the dorm — not a crisis, but a growing issue — a problem-solving circle brings people together to address it collectively. The questions are structured:

- *'What's the issue as you see it?'*
- *'How is this affecting people?'*
- *'What options do we have?'*
- *'What can we agree to?'*

The keeper doesn't solve the problem. The circle solves the problem. The keeper just holds the space."

3. Healing Circles:

"After something hard happens — a fight, a loss, a violation that shook the dorm — a healing circle gives people space to process. These are slower. The questions are gentler. The room needs to be safe.

These circles are the hardest to keep. People may cry. People may sit in silence. People may share things they've never said out loud. The keeper's job is to hold all of it without trying to fix it.

You do NOT run a healing circle about something that's still actively dangerous. If the situation is ongoing, it's not a healing circle — it's a problem-solving circle or a referral."

4. Reintegration Circles:

"When someone is coming back from a setback — disciplinary action, a conflict, time in segregation — a reintegration circle helps them rejoin the community. The questions are direct:

- *'What happened?'*
- *'How has it affected the group?'*
- *'What does the person need to rejoin?'*
- *'What does the group need from them?'*

This is restorative justice in action. Not punishment, not pretending nothing happened — but creating a real pathway back in."

The Keeper's Role (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"The circle keeper is not a facilitator in the traditional sense. You're not leading a discussion. You're not teaching. You're holding space. There's a difference.

Here's what the keeper does:

1. **Prepares the space.** *Chairs in a circle. No tables. Talking piece ready. Distractions minimized.*
2. **Opens with intention.** *Sets the tone. Reviews the guidelines. Introduces the talking piece.*
3. **Asks the questions.** *Good questions, in the right order, at the right depth.*
4. **Holds silence.** *When the room goes quiet — and it will — the keeper does not fill the space. Silence in a circle is not a problem. It's often where the deepest processing happens.*
5. **Protects the process.** *If someone speaks out of turn, the keeper gently redirects. If someone is being attacked, the keeper intervenes. If the guidelines are violated, the keeper names it and restores them.*
6. **Does not take sides.** *In a problem-solving or healing circle, the keeper is neutral. Always.*
7. **Closes with care.** *Summarizes without judging. Thanks the group. Formally closes.*

Here's what the keeper does NOT do:

- *Give advice during the circle*
- *Share their own opinion on the issue (unless it's a community-building circle and they're participating too)*
- *Side with anyone*
- *Force someone to speak*
- *Analyze what people share*
- *Try to reach a conclusion that hasn't emerged naturally"*

Practice: Run a Community-Building Circle (25 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Time to practice. I need a volunteer to keep a circle. Right now. In front of everyone.

You're going to run a 15-minute community-building circle with this group. Here's what I want you to do:

- 1. Open the circle — whatever feels right to you. A reading, a moment of silence, a statement of purpose.*
- 2. Review the guidelines.*
- 3. Run two rounds with questions you choose. One lighter, one a little deeper.*
- 4. Close the circle.*

I'll observe. The group participates genuinely — don't make it hard for the keeper, but don't make it fake either. Be real."

Select a volunteer. If no one volunteers, assign someone who you've seen demonstrate natural facilitation ability.

The keeper runs the circle (15 minutes). Facilitator observes. Takes notes. Does not intervene unless the process completely breaks down.

Feedback (10 minutes):

Facilitator:

"Nice work. Let's debrief. [Keeper's name], how did that feel?"

Let the keeper share first.

Then to the group:

"What worked? What would you adjust?"

Provide specific feedback: - Opening: Was it intentional? Did it change the energy? - Questions: Were they open enough? Did they build in depth? - Silence: Did the keeper hold it or fill it? - Closing: Did it feel complete?

Facilitator:

"Circle keeping is a skill you build by doing it. You'll get more practice this week and throughout Phase 3. The first one always feels awkward. That's normal. The tenth one will feel natural."

Closing (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Tonight, I want you to do two things.

*First — journal: **Design three circle questions you could use for a community-building circle in your dorm. One warm-up question, one deeper question, one closing question.***

Second — think about what talking piece you would use in your dorm and why.

Tomorrow: accountability conversations. Different skill, same heart. See you Wednesday."

Session 61 Checklist

- Opening circle completed
 - Circle history and philosophy taught
 - Three-part circle process explained (opening, rounds, closing)
 - Circle guidelines formalized
 - Talking piece significance discussed
 - Four types of circles taught (community-building, problem-solving, healing, reintegration)
 - Keeper's role defined — what to do and what not to do
 - Practice circle run by a participant
 - Feedback on practice circle given
 - Journal prompt assigned (design 3 circle questions + choose talking piece)
-

SESSION 62: Accountability Conversations

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Explain the difference between accountability and punishment 2. Use the 4-step accountability conversation model 3. Conduct a hard conversation with someone they care about without destroying the relationship 4. Receive accountability from others without becoming defensive 5. Apply restorative principles to everyday interactions

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in. Did you design your three circle questions last night? Give me one of them — the deeper one."

Send the talking piece. As participants share their questions, note the quality — this tells you who's internalizing circle keeping and who's still on the surface.

Accountability vs. Punishment (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Let me ask you a question. Think about the worst punishment you ever received — in here, growing up, wherever. What did it teach you?"

Let 3-4 people respond. Listen for themes. Most answers will fall into one of two categories: "It taught me not to get caught" or "It taught me nothing except that the person with power will use it."

Facilitator:

"Now think about a time someone held you accountable — not punished you, held you accountable. Someone who cared about you looked you in the eye and said, 'What you did hurt people, and I expect more from you.' What did that teach you?"

Let 3-4 people respond.

Facilitator:

"Hear the difference? Punishment is about pain. It's about making someone suffer for what they did. It's backward-looking. The only question is: How much do they deserve to suffer?"

Accountability is about responsibility and repair. It's forward-looking. The questions are: What happened? Who was hurt? What needs to change? How do we move forward?"

Punishment says: 'You're bad.' Accountability says: 'You did something that caused harm, and I believe you're capable of doing better.'

That's a fundamentally different message. One destroys. The other builds.

As a FORGE mentor, you will need to hold people accountable regularly. Your mentees will make mistakes. They'll break commitments. They'll fall short of what they said they'd do. And your job is not to punish them — there are enough people in their lives doing that. Your job is to hold them accountable in a way that maintains the relationship and invites growth.

That's one of the hardest skills in mentoring. Caring about someone AND telling them the truth. Most people can do one or the other. FORGE mentors do both."

The 4-Step Accountability Conversation Model (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Here's a model you can use. Four questions. In order. Every time."

Write these where everyone can see them:

Step 1: What happened?

"Start with facts. Not accusations. Not interpretations. Facts. 'You missed the last three sessions.' Not 'You obviously don't care about FORGE.' 'You said something in the dorm that hurt Marcus.' Not 'You're a bully.' The person you're talking to needs to agree on the facts before you can move forward. If they deny or distort, gently redirect: 'I'm not asking why yet. I'm asking: did this happen?'"

Step 2: Who was affected and how?

"This is where empathy comes in. You're asking the person to look beyond themselves. 'When you missed those sessions, who was affected? Your cohort was short a member. Your partner in the exercise didn't have a partner. The facilitator had to adjust. How do you think that landed?'"

Or: 'When you said that to Marcus, what do you think he felt? What about the people who heard it?'"

You're not telling them how people felt — you're asking them to see it. There's a difference. When someone discovers the impact on their own, it sticks deeper than when you lecture them about it."

Step 3: What needs to happen to make it right?

"This is the repair step. And it comes from THEM, not from you. You ask: 'What do you think needs to happen to make this right?'"

If their answer is weak ('I'll just say sorry'), push: 'What would a real apology look like? What would actually repair the trust that was broken?'"

If their answer is nothing ('I don't owe anyone anything'), slow down. Use MI. Reflect their words back. 'So you're saying that what happened didn't affect anyone. Is that really what you believe?'"

Sometimes the repair is an apology. Sometimes it's a changed behavior. Sometimes it's a conversation with the person who was harmed. The key is that the person takes ownership of the repair — you don't impose it."

Step 4: How do we move forward?

"This is the commitment step. 'What are you going to do differently? What can I count on from you going forward?'"

And then the follow-up: 'I'm going to check in with you about this on Thursday. Not to hover. Because I care enough to follow through.'

This last step is what separates accountability from a one-time lecture. If you don't follow up, the conversation didn't happen. The follow-up IS the accountability."

Summarize:

"Four steps. What happened? Who was affected? What needs to happen to make it right? How do we move forward?"

Notice what's not in this model: shame. Threats. Punishment. Power plays. The goal is not to make someone feel bad. The goal is to help them see the impact of their actions and choose to do better. That's restorative accountability."

Practice: Accountability Conversations in Triads (35 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Time to practice. Get into groups of three. Here's how it works:

- *Person A is the mentor having the accountability conversation*
- *Person B is the person being held accountable*
- *Person C is the observer — watching, taking notes, coaching*

You'll rotate through all three roles. Each round takes about 8 minutes — 5 minutes for the conversation, 3 minutes for observer feedback.

I'm going to give each group a scenario card. These are realistic FORGE situations."

Distribute scenario cards. Here are six scenarios — print enough so each group gets at least two different ones across rotations:

Scenario 1: A FORGE participant has been talking behind another participant's back, undermining his credibility in the dorm. When confronted, he says, "I was just being honest about what I think."

Scenario 2: A mentee promised he would complete three thinking reports this week and completed zero. This is the third week in a row. When you bring it up, he says, "I've been busy."

Scenario 3: A FORGE member got into a verbal altercation in the dorm — raised his voice, used threatening language. No physical contact, but the dorm was shaken. He says, "He came at me first."

Scenario 4: A mentor has been showing up late to sessions repeatedly. Not egregiously — 5-10 minutes. When asked about it, he says, "I was handling something in the dorm. I'm still here, aren't I?"

Scenario 5: A FORGE participant made a joke at another participant's expense during a session. The group laughed, but the target clearly felt humiliated. The joker says, "It was just a joke, he needs thicker skin."

Scenario 6: A mentee has been telling you he's been practicing regulation techniques. You learn from another mentor that the mentee had two anger blowups this week that he didn't tell you about. When you bring it up, he says, "Those weren't real anger, I was just frustrated."

Round 1 (8 minutes): Assign roles. Start.

Facilitator circulates. Listen for: - Are they starting with facts or accusations? - Are they asking about impact or telling? - Are they letting the person own the repair? - Are they planning follow-up?

Round 2 (8 minutes): Rotate roles. New scenario if available.

Round 3 (8 minutes): Rotate again.

Debrief (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Come back together. Let's debrief. I've got three questions."

Question 1: "Which role was hardest — the mentor, the person being held accountable, or the observer? Why?"

Let 3-4 people respond. Common answers: Being the mentor is hard because you have to balance care and directness. Being held accountable is hard because it triggers defensiveness. Observing is hard because you can see what's not working but can't intervene.

Question 2: "What happened when the mentor led with facts vs. when they led with judgment? What was different?"

Facilitator:

"When you say 'You missed three sessions' — that's a fact. The person can engage with it. When you say 'You obviously don't take this seriously' — that's an interpretation. The person gets defensive. Facts open doors. Judgments close them."

Question 3: "What's the hardest step of the four? Where do most conversations break down?"

Common answer: Step 2 (Who was affected) — because getting someone to see beyond themselves requires patience and skill. And Step 4 (How do we move forward) — because follow-through is where most people drop the ball.

Key teaching point:

Facilitator:

"Let me leave you with this. The reason accountability conversations are so important is that the alternative is worse. If you don't hold someone accountable, one of two things happens:

One — the behavior continues and gets worse. The harm grows.

Two — resentment builds. You start avoiding the person. The relationship dies quietly.

An accountability conversation — done with care, done respectfully, done with the 4-step model — is an act of love. You're saying: 'I care about you enough to have this uncomfortable conversation. I believe you're capable of better.'

That's not easy. But it's what mentors do."

Closing (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Journal tonight: **Think about someone in your life you need to have an accountability conversation with. It could be here, it could be outside. Write out the 4 steps. What happened? Who was affected? What needs to happen? How do you move forward? You don't have to have the conversation yet — just plan it.***

Tomorrow — the big picture. Building a restorative dorm culture. How do you take circles, accountability conversations, and everything you've learned and create an environment where these practices are normal — not special occasions, but the way things work.

See you Thursday."

Session 62 Checklist

- Opening circle completed
- Accountability vs. punishment distinction taught thoroughly
- 4-step accountability conversation model introduced
- Each step explained with examples and coaching language
- Triad practice completed — all three rounds
- Facilitator observed and coached during practice
- Debrief discussion held — hardest role, facts vs. judgment, where conversations break down
- Key teaching point delivered (accountability as an act of care)
- Journal prompt assigned (plan a real accountability conversation)



SESSION 63: Building a Restorative Dorm Culture

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Describe the difference between a reactive culture and a proactive/restorative culture 2. Explain how regular community circles prevent conflict 3. Plan how to introduce restorative practices to a dorm that has never experienced them 4. Anticipate and respond to resistance from dorm members 5. Design a 30-minute community circle for their housing unit

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Last session of Week 21. Check-in: **What is one thing you've learned this week that you want to take into your dorm?**"*

Send the talking piece.

Reactive vs. Proactive: Two Dorm Cultures (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"I want you to picture two dorms. Same facility. Same type of men. Same COs. Same rules. But completely different cultures.

Dorm A — the reactive dorm:

In Dorm A, problems get handled after they blow up. Someone steals, someone retaliates. A conflict simmers for a week until it becomes a fight. When someone has a bad day, they take it out on the nearest person. The mood of the dorm is set by whoever is having the worst day. People keep to themselves. Trust is low. Everyone is watching their back.

Staff responds to incidents after the fact — write-ups, separations, lockdowns. The cycle repeats. Nothing changes. The culture reproduces itself because no one is doing anything proactive.

Dorm B — the restorative dorm:

In Dorm B, there's a check-in circle every week. Fifteen minutes. People go around and say how they're doing. That's it. But over time, people start actually knowing each other. When someone's struggling, others notice before it becomes a crisis.

When conflict happens — and it still happens — someone intervenes early. Not with threats, but with a conversation. 'Hey, what's going on between you two? Let's talk about it before it gets worse.' If it's serious, a problem-solving circle.

When someone makes a mistake, the response is accountability, not punishment. 'What happened? Who was affected? How do you make it right?' The person stays in the community. The harm gets repaired.

The mood of the dorm is set by the men who've decided to lead. Not by the worst day, but by the steady presence of people who care."

Pause.

Facilitator:

"Which dorm do you live in right now? Be honest."

Let 3-4 people respond. Most will describe something closer to Dorm A.

"And which dorm do you want to live in?"

Let 2-3 respond.

"Here's the thing: Dorm B is not a fantasy. It's what FORGE dorms in other programs look like after 6-12 months of mentors doing exactly what you're learning. It doesn't happen overnight. It doesn't happen because someone gives a speech. It happens because mentors show up, day after day, and do the small things — the circles, the conversations, the check-ins — that slowly change what 'normal' looks like.

That's your job. Not to fix the dorm in a week. To start a process that changes it over time."

Regular Check-In Circles as Prevention (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"The single most powerful prevention tool you have is a regular check-in circle. Here's why it works:

It catches problems early. *When someone shares that they're stressed, that they got bad news, that they're having trouble with someone — that information lets you act before things escalate. Most crises don't come out of nowhere. They build. A regular circle is an early warning system.*

It builds relational capital. *Every time men sit in a circle and listen to each other honestly, trust grows. Not dramatically. Incrementally. But it accumulates. And when a conflict comes, that accumulated trust is what allows you to intervene. The person trusts you because you've been showing up, week after week, in the circle.*

It normalizes vulnerability. *In a dorm, admitting you're struggling is usually seen as weakness. In a circle, it's participation. Over time, the circle teaches men that being honest about what they're carrying is not weakness — it's strength. And that changes everything.*

It creates shared ownership. *When the dorm has a regular circle, it stops being 'the FORGE mentor's thing' and becomes 'what we do here.' That's normative culture — the group owns the standard."*

Practical considerations:

"Here's what a weekly check-in circle looks like in practice:

- **When:** *Same time every week. Consistency is everything. If you do it on Sundays at 7 PM, it's always Sundays at 7 PM.*
- **Where:** *Common area. Wherever people can sit in a rough circle. It doesn't have to be perfect.*
- **How long:** *15-30 minutes. Don't make it an ordeal. People have short patience at first. Keep it tight.*
- **Who:** *Open to anyone. Voluntary. No pressure. But consistent.*
- **What:** *Simple check-in questions. 'How was your week?' 'What's on your mind?' 'What do you need from this group?'*

For the first few weeks, maybe 3-4 people come. That's fine. The key is: you keep doing it. You show up even if only two people come. Because the consistency is the message. It says: this isn't a program. It's a practice. It's not going away."

Introducing Restorative Practices to a Skeptical Dorm (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Now the hard part. You walk into a dorm and say, 'Hey, I want to start a circle where we sit and talk about our feelings.' What happens?"

Let the group respond. They'll be realistic: laughter, mockery, suspicion, refusal.

Facilitator:

"Right. So how do you actually do this? Let me give you some strategies — learned from people who've done it before."

Strategy 1: Don't use jargon.

"Don't walk in talking about 'restorative circles' and 'accountability frameworks.' That's program language. Use regular language. 'I want to get a few guys together once a week just to check in. See how everybody's doing. 15 minutes. No program stuff. Just real talk.' That sounds different than 'I want to facilitate a restorative community-building circle.'"

Strategy 2: Start with the willing.

"You're not going to convert the whole dorm on day one. Start with 3-4 people who are open to it. Maybe other FORGE members. Maybe guys who you've already built trust with. Run the circle with them. Let it grow organically. When someone who's not in the circle sees that the guys who are in it seem calmer, more connected, more together — curiosity will bring them."

Strategy 3: Lead by example, not by lecture.

"Don't tell people about restorative practices. Live them. When a conflict comes up, mediate it restoratively — facts, impact, repair, forward. When someone's struggling, check in. When someone makes a mistake, hold them accountable without destroying them. People will notice. And when they ask, 'How do you do that?' — that's your opening."

Strategy 4: Use natural moments.

"You don't always need a formal circle. After something happens in the dorm — a fight, a lockdown, some bad news — gather whoever's willing: 'That was intense. Anyone want to talk about it?' That informal circle plants the seed. People experience the value before they hear the theory."

Strategy 5: Expect resistance and don't take it personally.

"Some people will never come to a circle. Some will mock it. Some will attend once and never come back. That's fine. You're not trying to save everyone. You're building a culture. Culture is set by the committed few, not the entire population. Focus on depth, not breadth."

Resistance and Patience (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Let me talk about patience for a minute. Because most of you — being the kind of men who sign up for a 9-month program — are action-oriented. You want results. You want to see change.

Culture change is slow. Painfully slow. You will run circles that feel pointless. You will have accountability conversations that seem to bounce off. You will model restorative practices and watch people go right back to destructive patterns.

And you have to keep going anyway.

Here's what I want you to hold onto: you are not responsible for outcomes. You are responsible for effort. You cannot control whether someone changes. You can control whether you show up, whether you're consistent, whether you treat people with dignity, whether you keep the circle going when nobody else seems to care.

The programs that work — GRIP, PEP, RSVP — they all say the same thing: the culture shift takes 6-12 months of consistent effort. Not a week. Not a big event. Months of small, unglamorous, repeated actions.

That's the work. And it's worth it. Because the alternative is Dorm A. And you know what Dorm A feels like."

Exercise: Plan a Community Circle for Your Housing Unit (25 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Enough theory. Let's build something real.

I'm handing out community circle planning templates. You're going to design a 30-minute circle that you could actually run in your dorm. Not hypothetical. Real. Something you could do this weekend if you wanted to.

Here's what your plan needs to include:"

Template elements:

*"1. **Purpose:** What is this circle for? (Community building? Addressing something specific?) 2. **Who:** Who will you invite? How will you invite them? 3. **When and where:** Specific day, time, location. 4. **Talking piece:** What will you use? 5. **Opening:** How will you open? (Reading, silence, grounding, statement of purpose — write it out) 6. **Round 1 question:** (Warm-up) 7. **Round 2 question:** (Deeper) 8. **Round 3 question:** (Closing/takeaway) 9. **Closing:** How will you close? (Write it out) 10. **Anticipated challenges:** What resistance might you face? How will you handle it?"*

Individual work (15 minutes). Facilitator circulates, reviews plans, asks questions, pushes for specificity.

Share out (10 minutes):

"Who wants to share their plan? I want to hear at least 3. Tell us: what's your opening, what's your deep question, and what's the biggest challenge you're expecting."

Let 3-4 participants share. Group provides feedback and suggestions.

Facilitator:

"Keep these plans. In Phase 3, you'll actually run them. This isn't homework — it's preparation for the real thing."

Week 21 Closing Circle (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"This has been a different week. After two weeks of crisis simulations — weapons, suicidal statements, gang pressure — we spent this week learning how to build something. Circles. Accountability. Culture.

Both are necessary. You need to know how to handle the worst. And you need to know how to build the best. The mentor who can do both — who can de-escalate a crisis on Tuesday and run a community circle on Wednesday — that's a FORGE mentor.

Final circle for this week. I want you to think about this carefully.

Complete this sentence: 'The dorm culture I want to build is one where...'"

Send the talking piece. Facilitator goes last.

Facilitator (after the round):

"Write that down. Tape it inside your journal. That's your vision. Everything you do from here on — every circle you keep, every accountability conversation you have, every time you choose patience over reaction — is in service of that vision.

Journal this weekend: Write out your plan for the first month as a FORGE mentor in a dorm. What would you do in Week 1? Week 2? Week 3? Week 4? Be specific.

Next week we shift to life skills facilitation — you'll practice teaching topics like financial literacy, reentry planning, and health. Different content, same facilitation skills. You're getting close to Phase 3. Keep building.

See you Tuesday."

Session 63 Checklist

- Opening circle completed
- Reactive vs. proactive dorm culture contrasted
- Regular check-in circles explained as prevention tool
- Five strategies for introducing restorative practices to a skeptical dorm taught
- Resistance and patience discussed honestly
- Community circle planning exercise completed (individual plans)
- At least 3 plans shared with group for feedback
- Closing circle completed — dorm culture vision statement
- Weekend journal prompt assigned (first month plan as a FORGE mentor)
- Preview of Week 22 given

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 21

What to Watch For

Energy shift: After the intensity of Weeks 19-20, some participants may initially disengage from the more constructive tone of Week 21. This is normal — crisis scenarios are adrenaline-producing, and circle keeping feels quiet by comparison. Reframe it: "The hardest simulations test your courage. Circle keeping tests your consistency. Both are forms of strength."

Natural circle keepers: Pay attention to who gravitates toward this work. Some participants will take to circle keeping naturally — they have the calm, the patience, the ability to hold space. Note these individuals. They may be your strongest cultural ambassadors in Phase 3.

Participants who struggle with accountability conversations: Some men will have difficulty with the 4-step model because they default to either avoidance or aggression. If someone consistently slips into lecturing, shaming, or making threats during practice, coach them individually. The accountability conversation requires the integration of nearly every Phase 1 skill — emotional regulation, active listening, assertive communication, empathy. If someone's struggling here, identify which underlying skill needs strengthening.

Cynicism about culture change: Some participants will push back on the idea that a weekly circle can change a dorm's culture. Honor the skepticism: "You're right that one circle doesn't change anything. But fifty circles — a year of showing up — changes everything. The question is whether you're willing to do the unglamorous work for long enough to see the results."

Common Questions and Responses

"What if a CO shuts down our circle?" — "This is why FORGE's relationship with administration matters. Before you run a circle in a dorm, make sure the program lead has cleared it with the facility. If a CO doesn't understand what you're doing, don't argue — stop, explain calmly, and follow up through proper channels. Never run a circle in a way that puts you or the participants at risk."

"What if someone uses the circle to air grievances against a specific person who isn't there?" — "The keeper redirects. 'We don't talk about people who aren't here. If you have an issue with someone, I can help you have that conversation directly. But this circle isn't the place for that.' Protect the process."

"What if someone breaks the talking piece rule and I can't control the room?" — "First — don't panic. Gently interrupt: 'Hold on — the talking piece is with [name]. Let them finish.' If the disruption continues, you may need to close the circle early and have a private conversation with the disruptor. A circle that gets overrun teaches the group that the guidelines don't matter. Better to end early and try again next week than to let chaos rule."

Preparation for Week 22

- Review life skills content areas (financial literacy, reentry, health/wellness)
- Prepare mini-lesson assignment for participants (Session 64)
- Each participant should choose one financial literacy topic to prepare a 15-minute lesson on
- Have a reentry checklist template ready for Session 65
- Identify sensitive topics that may arise during Session 66 (health, relationships, parenting) and prepare ground rules for those discussions
- Begin thinking about Phase 2 assessment scheduling — the graded simulations are coming in Week 23

Week 22: Life Skills Facilitation

Week 22 Overview

Purpose: Develop participants' ability to teach practical life skills content — financial literacy, reentry preparation, health and wellness — with a focus not just on knowing the material, but on facilitating it effectively. By the end of this week, every participant will have delivered a mini-lesson, created a reentry planning tool, and practiced leading sensitive group discussions.

Sessions This Week: - Session 64 (Tuesday): Financial Literacy — Teaching Others - Session 65 (Wednesday): Reentry Preparation - Session 66 (Thursday): Health, Wellness, and Relationships

Materials Needed: - Blank paper and pens/pencils (enough for all participants) - Journals/notebooks - Talking piece - Financial Literacy Reference Sheet (prepared by facilitator — see Session 64 notes) - Reentry Checklist Template worksheet (blank — see Session 65) - Mini-Lesson Feedback Forms (1 per participant per presenter — simple form with 3 fields: "What worked," "What to improve," "One thing I learned") - Timer or watch visible to presenters - Easel paper or whiteboard (if available)

SESSION 64: Financial Literacy — Teaching Others

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Explain core financial literacy concepts: budgeting, banking, debt traps, and saving 2. Deliver a 15-minute mini-lesson on a financial topic to a group 3. Evaluate and provide constructive feedback on peer teaching 4. Adapt financial concepts for an audience with limited financial experience

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in round. Two things: **How are you showing up today? And what's one thing about money that you wish someone had taught you earlier in life?"***

Send the talking piece around. Listen for themes — most men in this room had little or no financial education before incarceration. That reality is the foundation of today's session.

Frame: Why Financial Literacy Matters for Mentors (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Today we're going to talk about money. Not because FORGE is a finance program — it's not. But because when you're a mentor, people are going to come to you with money problems. Men getting ready for release who have no idea how to open a bank account. Men who've never made a budget in their life. Men who are going to walk out of here and straight into a payday loan trap because nobody ever showed them another way.

Here's the thing: you don't need to be a financial advisor. You need to know enough to teach the basics and point people in the right direction. Today is about two things — learning the content, and learning how to teach it.

By the end of today, every one of you is going to deliver a 15-minute mini-lesson on a financial topic. You're going to teach your cohort something real and practical. This is what mentoring looks like — taking a skill and passing it on."

Financial Literacy Content Overview (25 minutes)

Purpose: Ensure everyone has a baseline understanding of the four core topics before they prepare to teach.

Facilitator:

"Let me walk through the four areas. Listen for the one that connects with you most — that's the one you're going to teach."

1. Budgeting (5 min)

"A budget is a plan for your money. That's all it is. Income minus expenses. Most people don't budget — and most people are broke. The two things are connected.

The simplest budget is the 50/30/20 rule: 50% of your income goes to needs — rent, food, transportation. 30% goes to wants — things you enjoy but could live without. 20% goes to savings and debt repayment. On the inside, this might look different — but the principle is the same. You have resources. You have choices about how to use them. A budget is making those choices on purpose instead of by accident.

When you're teaching budgeting, the key is making it real. Don't talk in abstractions. Use actual numbers. 'If you make \$2,000 a month after taxes, here's what 50/30/20 looks like.' Make people do the math with their own numbers."

2. Banking (5 min)

"Most men leaving prison don't have a bank account. Some have never had one. Without a bank account, you're paying fees to cash checks, you can't save safely, and you're carrying cash — which makes you a target.

The basics: checking accounts vs. savings accounts. How to open an account — what ID you need, what to expect. Direct deposit. Debit cards vs. credit cards. Online banking.

The biggest barrier for our population is distrust. Some men don't trust banks. Some have had accounts closed or garnished. Some don't have the ID required to open one. When you're teaching this, acknowledge the barriers honestly. Don't pretend it's simple. But show them it's possible and worth doing."

3. Debt Traps (5 min)

"This is the one that can destroy a man's reentry faster than almost anything. Payday loans. Rent-to-own. Buy-here-pay-here car lots. High-interest credit cards. These businesses are predatory — they're designed to keep you in debt.

A payday loan might charge 400% annual interest. That means you borrow \$500 and end up paying back \$2,000. This is legal. And it's targeted at people who don't have other options — which is exactly who walks out of prison.

When you teach this, don't just say 'avoid payday loans.' Explain why. Show the math. Show what happens when someone takes one loan, can't pay it back, takes another to cover the first, and six months later owes \$5,000 on a \$500 loan. Make it vivid. Make it real."

4. Saving (5 min)

"Saving feels impossible when you have nothing. But it starts with the mindset that your future self matters. Even \$20 a month is \$240 a year. That's a security deposit. That's three months of a phone bill. That's the difference between stable and desperate.

The concepts: pay yourself first — save before you spend, not after. Emergency fund — 3 months of expenses is the goal, but start with \$500. The difference between saving and investing. Why compound interest is the most powerful force in personal finance.

When you teach saving, start with the small wins. Don't tell someone with nothing to save \$10,000. Tell them to save \$5 this week. Make it achievable. Build the habit first, then build the amount."

Discussion (5 min):

"Questions on any of the four areas? What connected with you? What did you not know before today?"

Allow 3-4 responses.

Mini-Lesson Preparation (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Here's the assignment. Each of you is going to pick one of these four topics — budgeting, banking, debt traps, or saving. You've got 15 minutes right now to prepare a 15-minute mini-lesson. You're teaching your cohort.

*Your lesson needs three things: 1. **A hook** — something that grabs attention in the first 30 seconds. A question, a surprising fact, a personal story. 2. **The content** — teach the key concepts clearly. Use examples. Use real numbers. 3. **An activity or question** — get the group doing something or thinking about something, not just listening.*

You can use notes, but don't read a script. Teach like you're talking to someone who needs this information to survive out there — because someday, that's exactly what you'll be doing."

Assign topics: Divide participants evenly across the four topics. If participants have preferences, honor them when possible. Aim for 3-4 presenters per topic area across the cohort. Not everyone will present today — select 4-5 to present now and the rest will present at the start of Session 65.

Preparation time (15 min): Participants work individually or in pairs if they share the same topic. Facilitator circulates, answers questions, coaches on structure.

Mini-Lesson Deliveries — Round 1 (40 minutes)

Format for each presenter: - 15 minutes to deliver the lesson - 5 minutes for peer feedback (written feedback forms + 2-3 verbal comments) - Facilitator gives 1 coaching point after each lesson

Facilitator (before first presenter):

"When you're watching, I want you doing two things at once. First, learn — actually absorb what they're teaching. Second, observe — how are they teaching it? What's working? What would you do differently? Fill out your feedback forms. Be specific and be honest. 'Good job' doesn't help anyone grow. 'Your opening question hooked me because it made me think about my own situation' — that's useful feedback."

Run 4-5 presenters. Keep time strictly — a mentor who can't manage time can't manage a session.

After each presenter, ask the group: - "What was the strongest moment in that lesson?" - "What's one thing that could make it even better?"

Facilitator provides one specific coaching point — e.g., "You explained compound interest clearly, but you lost the group when you moved too fast through the math. Slow down at the hard parts."

Debrief and Closing (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"What did you learn today — not just about money, but about teaching? What's harder than you expected? What came naturally?"

Allow 4-5 responses.

"Here's what I noticed: every single one of you knows more about financial survival than you think. You've lived it. You've made mistakes with money. You've seen what happens when people don't have it. That experience is your greatest teaching tool. Don't hide from it — use it.

Tomorrow we're covering reentry preparation. If you didn't present today, you'll open tomorrow's session with your mini-lesson. Come prepared."

Homework: - If you haven't presented yet, finalize your 15-minute mini-lesson for tomorrow - Journal reflection: "What financial mistake have I made that I could teach someone else to avoid? How would I teach that lesson?"

Session 64 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
- Opening circle completed
- Financial literacy frame delivered — why this matters for mentors
- Four content areas covered: budgeting, banking, debt traps, saving
- Topics assigned to participants
- 15-minute preparation time provided
- 4-5 mini-lessons delivered with feedback
- Feedback forms collected for each presenter
- Debrief completed
- Homework assigned (remaining presenters prepare; journal reflection)



SESSION 65: Reentry Preparation

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Identify the five critical areas of reentry preparation: housing, identification documents, employment, healthcare, and family reconnection 2. Describe common misconceptions about "going home" and how to address them as mentors 3. Create a comprehensive reentry checklist template usable with future mentees 4. Facilitate a reentry planning conversation using open-ended questions

Session Plan

Opening: Remaining Mini-Lessons (20 minutes)

Purpose: Participants who didn't present in Session 64 deliver their financial literacy mini-lessons now.

Facilitator:

"Before we get into today's topic, we've got [number] more mini-lessons to hear. Same format — 15 minutes, feedback forms, one coaching point from me. Let's go."

Run remaining presenters. Same feedback process as Session 64.

Facilitator (after final presenter):

"Good. Every one of you has now stood up and taught something to this group. That's not a small thing. You're building the muscle. Let's move on."

Frame: The Reentry Reality (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Here's a number that should bother every one of us: within 3 years of release, more than two-thirds of people released from state prisons are rearrested. Two-thirds. And the biggest factors aren't criminal thinking or bad character. They're practical: no housing, no ID, no job, no healthcare, no support system.

Men walk out of here with a bus ticket and maybe \$50. They don't have a driver's license. They don't have a birth certificate. They might not have anywhere to sleep that night. And we wonder why they end up back inside.

As a FORGE mentor, you're going to work with men who are approaching release. Some will be terrified. Some will be overconfident — convinced everything will just work out. Both need your help. The terrified ones need a plan. The overconfident ones need a reality check — delivered with respect, not condescension. Today we're going to learn the five critical areas of reentry preparation, and you're going to build a tool — a reentry checklist template — that you can actually use with mentees."

Pause.

*"Before we get into the specifics — a question for the room. **What's the biggest misconception people have about going home?**"*

Open discussion (5 min). Let 4-5 people respond. Common answers: "Everything will go back to normal." "My family is just waiting for me." "I'll get a job right away." "I know how the world works." Validate each response.

"Every one of those is something you'll hear from a mentee. And your job isn't to crush their hope. Your job is to help them build a realistic plan so that hope has a foundation."

The Five Critical Areas (35 minutes)

Purpose: Walk through each reentry area in detail. For each area, cover: what needs to happen, common barriers, what a mentor can do, and key questions to ask a mentee.

Facilitator:

"Open your journals. I want you taking notes on this — you're building a knowledge base you'll use with real mentees."

1. Housing (7 min)

"Housing is the foundation. Without stable housing, nothing else works. But here's the reality: most men leaving prison don't have housing lined up. Family may not be an option. Shelters are full. Affordable housing has waitlists measured in months or years. And many landlords won't rent to someone with a felony.

What a mentor needs to know: - Start planning housing 6 months before release, minimum - Transitional housing programs exist — know the ones in your area - Halfway houses, sober living houses, reentry programs with housing components - Family housing is not always safe or stable — just because someone offers doesn't mean it's the right choice - The first 72 hours after release are the most dangerous. Where someone sleeps that first night matters.

Questions to ask a mentee: 'Where will you stay your first night out? Your first week? Your first month? If that falls through, what's your backup? Have you applied to transitional housing yet?'"

2. Identification Documents (7 min)

"You cannot do anything in this country without ID. You can't open a bank account. You can't apply for a job. You can't get housing. You can't access benefits. And most men in prison don't have current ID.

What a mentor needs to know: - At minimum, a person needs: state ID or driver's license, Social Security card, and birth certificate - Many states allow you to start the ID process before release — Georgia included - Know the process: what forms to fill out, what offices to contact, what it costs - Help mentees gather what they need while still inside — don't wait until release day - Certified birth certificates can be ordered by mail from the state vital records office - Social Security cards can be replaced through SSA — the process can begin before release

Questions to ask a mentee: 'Do you have a valid state ID? A Social Security card? A birth certificate? If not, let's start the process now — not the week before you leave.'"

3. Employment (7 min)

"Employment is how someone rebuilds their life. But a felony conviction closes doors. That's the reality. It doesn't close all doors — but the ones that are open require more effort to find.

What a mentor needs to know: - 'Ban the box' laws — what they do and don't do - Second-chance employers — companies that hire people with records - Trade skills and certifications that can be started inside - How to address a criminal record in an interview — honestly, briefly, forward-looking - Temp agencies as a bridge to stable employment - The importance of realistic expectations — you might not get your dream job on day one, and that's okay

Questions to ask a mentee: 'What skills do you have? What kind of work are you willing to do? Have you practiced talking about your record? Do you have a resume?'"

4. Healthcare (7 min)

"Healthcare is the one most people forget about until they need it. Many men inside have chronic conditions — physical and mental — that need ongoing treatment. And many have never had health insurance as an adult.

What a mentor needs to know: - Medicaid expansion — in some states, people leaving prison qualify for Medicaid immediately - Prescription medication: ensure a mentee has a 30-day supply upon release and knows how to get refills - Mental health: if someone is on psych medication, a gap in medication can be dangerous - Substance use treatment: if a mentee has a substance use history, have a plan for treatment or support (NA/AA meetings, outpatient programs) - Community health centers provide care on a sliding fee scale regardless of ability to pay

Questions to ask a mentee: 'Are you on any medication? Do you have a plan for continuing it? Do you have a mental health provider lined up? Do you know where the nearest community health center is?'"

5. Family Reconnection (7 min)

"This is the one that breaks people's hearts. Men inside build up an image of what going home will be like. The reunion. The hugs. Everyone happy to see them. And sometimes that happens. But often it doesn't — or it does for a day, and then reality sets in.

Families have changed while you were gone. Kids grew up without you. Partners moved on — or stayed but built resentment. Parents aged. Siblings have their own problems. Walking back into a family is not picking up where you left off — it's starting over.

What a mentor needs to know: - Set realistic expectations — love doesn't erase hurt - Trust has to be rebuilt, not demanded - Children may be angry, distant, or confused — that's normal - Parenting after absence is its own skill set - Some family relationships may not be salvageable — and that has to be okay - Domestic violence history: some men should not return to the same household

Questions to ask a mentee: 'Who are you going home to? Have you been in contact? What do they expect from you? What do you expect from them? What if it doesn't go the way you're imagining?'"

Exercise: Building the Reentry Checklist Template (30 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Now we're going to build a tool. I want you to work in groups of 3-4 and create a reentry checklist template — a document that a FORGE mentor can sit down with a mentee and work through together, item by item. Think of it as a roadmap for the 6 months before release.

Your checklist should cover all five areas. For each area, include: - Specific action items (not vague — 'Apply for state ID' not 'Get your documents together') - A timeline — when should each item be started? - Resources or contacts where applicable - A space for notes or status tracking

You've got 20 minutes. Then each group presents their checklist and we'll combine the best elements into one master template."

Groups work (20 min). Facilitator circulates, ensures checklists are specific and practical.

Share out (10 min): Each group presents their checklist. Facilitator identifies the strongest elements from each.

Facilitator:

"Here's what we're going to do. I'm going to compile the best elements from all your checklists into one master reentry checklist template. Every one of you will get a copy. This becomes a standard FORGE tool — something you use with every mentee who's approaching release.

You built this. Not me. That's the FORGE model — the people closest to the problem create the solution."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Closing round. If you were being released in 60 days, what's the one thing on today's list you'd be most worried about?"

Send the talking piece. Listen for patterns — they reveal what this group needs.

Facilitator (closing):

"What you're feeling about those questions? Your future mentees will feel the same thing — times ten. They won't have had 22 weeks of FORGE training. That's why you matter.

Tomorrow we're covering health, wellness, and relationships — and how to facilitate conversations about topics that make people uncomfortable. Come ready to be uncomfortable.

Homework: Review your reentry checklist and add anything you think is missing. Journal reflection: "What's one conversation about reentry that I need to have — with myself, my family, or someone I care about?"

Session 65 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
- Remaining financial literacy mini-lessons delivered with feedback
- Reentry reality frame delivered
- Misconceptions discussion completed
- All five critical areas covered: housing, ID documents, employment, healthcare, family
- Reentry checklist exercise completed in groups
- Group checklists presented and best elements identified
- Plan for master template communicated
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (refine checklist; journal reflection on personal reentry conversation)

SESSION 66: Health, Wellness, and Relationships

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Identify core topics in physical health, mental health, and relationships relevant to incarcerated and reentering populations 2. Facilitate a group discussion on a sensitive topic — maintaining safety, dignity, and participation 3. Navigate conversations about substance use, family breakdown, loss, and parenting with empathy and appropriate boundaries 4. Recognize when a health or wellness conversation crosses into territory that requires professional referral

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in round. What's one thing you do — right now, in here — to take care of your physical or mental health?"

Send the talking piece. This opens the door to the day's content and normalizes self-care language.

Frame: Why This Session Is Different (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Today's session is different from the last two. Financial literacy and reentry planning are practical — they're about information and action steps. Today we're getting into territory that's personal: physical health, mental health, relationships, parenting.

These are the topics that make people shut down. A man will sit in a circle and talk about budgeting all day. Ask him about his relationship with his kids and the walls go up. Ask him about his mental health and he changes the subject. Ask him about substance use and he'll either lie or leave.

As a mentor, you're going to have to facilitate conversations about all of these things. Not as a therapist — that's not your role. But as someone who can hold space for hard truths, ask the right questions, and keep the room safe enough for people to be honest.

Today is about two things: the content itself, and the skill of facilitating sensitive topics."

Content Block 1: Physical Health (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Let's start with the straightforward one — physical health. Incarceration takes a toll on the body. Limited nutrition, limited exercise options, stress, poor sleep, lack of medical care. Many men leave prison in worse physical shape than they entered.

*Key topics a mentor should be able to discuss: - **Nutrition on a budget** — healthy eating when money is tight. This matters on the inside and on the outside. - **Exercise as regulation** — physical activity isn't just about fitness. It regulates mood, reduces anxiety, improves sleep. This is a tool, not a luxury. - **Chronic conditions** — diabetes, hypertension, hepatitis C, HIV. Know the basics. Know how to connect people with care. Don't diagnose — that's not your job. But don't ignore symptoms either. - **Sleep** — sleep deprivation is epidemic in prison. It affects thinking, mood, impulse control. Good sleep hygiene is a real skill.*

The mentor's role: normalize talking about health. Model it yourself. 'I've been sleeping badly this week and I notice it's making me short-tempered.' That kind of honesty gives others permission."

Content Block 2: Mental Health (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Now the harder one. Mental health.

Here's the truth: a huge percentage of men in this facility are dealing with depression, anxiety, PTSD, or other mental health challenges. Most will never say the words. The stigma is enormous — especially in this environment, where showing vulnerability is seen as weakness.

*Your job as a mentor is not to be a therapist. I'm going to say that again: **you are not a therapist**. You don't diagnose. You don't treat. You don't prescribe.*

*What you do: - **Normalize** — 'A lot of men in here deal with depression. It doesn't make you weak. It makes you human.' - **Listen** — when someone opens up about how they're feeling, your job is to hear them, not fix them. - **Ask directly** — if you're worried about someone, ask. 'I've noticed you've been withdrawing. Are you okay? Are you having thoughts of hurting yourself?' Asking the question doesn't plant the idea — that's a myth. It opens the door. - **Know your limits** — if someone is in crisis, suicidal, or showing signs of severe mental illness, your job is to stay with them and get help. Not handle it yourself. - **Reduce stigma** — every time you talk openly about mental health, you make it safer for someone else to do the same."*

Pause.

"Let me address substance use directly. Many men in this facility have substance use histories. Addiction is a chronic condition — not a moral failure. When you're mentoring someone with a substance use history, especially someone approaching release, the conversation about relapse prevention is critical. 'What's your plan for staying clean? What are your triggers? Who's in your support network? What will you do in the first 48 hours if you feel the pull?'

You don't have to have a substance use history to have this conversation. You just have to be willing to ask the questions without judgment."

Content Block 3: Relationships and Parenting (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Relationships. This is where most of the pain lives.

Men in prison carry relationship damage — with partners, with children, with parents, with siblings, with friends. Some of that damage existed before incarceration. Some of it was caused by incarceration. Most of it is both.

Key topics for mentors:"

Romantic relationships:

"Some men will be going home to partners. Some will be going home to no one. Both situations are hard. The man going home to a partner needs to understand: you're not the same person you were. She's not the same person she was. The relationship has to be rebuilt, not resumed. And rebuilding requires humility, patience, and honest conversation — skills you've been learning in FORGE.

The man going home to no one may carry shame, loneliness, or desperation — all of which can lead to unhealthy relationship choices. Recognizing healthy vs. unhealthy relationship patterns is a life skill, not a luxury."

Parenting:

"This one cuts deep. Many men in here are fathers. And many of their children are growing up without them. That's a wound — for the child and for the father.

A mentor doesn't tell a man how to be a father. A mentor asks: 'What kind of father do you want to be? What's standing in the way? What can you start doing now — from in here — to build that relationship?'

Some practical realities: maintaining contact from prison is hard and expensive. Some men have lost custody. Some children don't want contact. These are painful truths, and a mentor has to be able to sit in that pain with someone without trying to make it go away."

Loss and grief:

"Men in prison lose people. Parents die. Grandparents die. Friends die. Children grow up and become strangers. And there's no space to grieve properly. No funeral to attend. No family to hold. The grief gets stuffed down and it comes out as anger, withdrawal, or recklessness.

As a mentor, sometimes the most important thing you do is simply say: 'I know you lost your mother last month. I'm sorry. How are you doing with that — honestly?' And then listen."

Skill Practice: Facilitating a Sensitive Topic Discussion (30 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Now the practical part. You've heard the content. But content isn't the hard part — facilitation is. How do you lead a group discussion about mental health without it feeling like a therapy session? How do you talk about parenting with a room full of men who are ashamed of being absent fathers? How do you bring up substance use without someone shutting down?"

Here are five rules for facilitating sensitive topics:"

Write these where the group can see them (or read them twice):

*"1. **Set the container.** Before you get into the topic, remind the group of the agreements. Confidentiality. No judgment. Speak from your own experience. You can pass.*

- 1. **Go first.** Share something real from your own experience — appropriate to your role, but honest. When the facilitator is vulnerable, the group gets permission to be vulnerable.*
- 2. **Use questions, not lectures.** 'What's been your experience with...' opens space. 'Let me tell you about...' closes it.*
- 3. **Watch the room.** If someone goes quiet, check in. If someone gets emotional, hold space — don't rush past it. If the energy shifts, name it: 'I notice it got quiet. That probably means we touched something real.'*
- 4. **Know when to stop.** If someone starts disclosing active trauma or crisis, that's not a group discussion anymore. That's a private conversation and possibly a referral. You can say: 'Thank you for trusting us with that. I want to make sure you get the support you need — can we talk after the session?'"*

Exercise:

"We're going to practice. I need 3 volunteers. Each volunteer is going to facilitate a 10-minute group discussion on one of these topics: - 'What does it mean to be a good father from behind bars?' - 'How do you take care of your mental health in this environment?' - 'What scares you most about going home?'"

The rest of the group participates authentically — don't role-play. Be real. But observe the facilitator: Are they following the five rules? What's working? What's not?"

Run 3 practice discussions (10 min each). After each: - Facilitator asks the group: "What did [name] do well? What's one thing to adjust?" - Give the volunteer facilitator one specific coaching point.

Facilitator (after all three):

"Notice something? Every one of those conversations got real fast. That's what happens when you create safety and ask honest questions. You didn't need a curriculum binder or a projector. You needed courage, a good question, and the skill to hold the space. That's what FORGE mentors do."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"This week you taught financial literacy, built a reentry tool, and facilitated conversations about some of the hardest topics in the human experience. That's not a small week.

*Closing round: **What's one thing from this week that changed how you think about what it means to be a mentor?"***

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Next week is Week 23. It's assessment week. Tuesday and Thursday you'll do your graded simulations — the ones that count toward your Phase 2 gate requirement. Wednesday you'll co-facilitate a 45-minute session with a partner.

This is where everything you've learned since Week 13 gets tested. Not to trip you up — to show you what you're capable of. Prepare the way you've trained: review your simulation notes, review your de-escalation steps, review your boundaries. Trust the work you've done.

Homework: 1. Journal reflection: 'Of the three sensitive topics we discussed today — mental health, relationships, or parenting — which one is hardest for me personally? Why? And what do I need to work on to be able to hold space for someone else in that area?' 2. Review the simulation scoring rubric in your handbook — know the 6 criteria and what 'competent' looks like for each one 3. Review your co-facilitation notes from Weeks 14-15 — you'll be co-facilitating with a partner on Wednesday

You've earned this moment. Now go show what you've built. Service Over Self. See you Tuesday."

Session 66 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
- Opening circle completed
- Frame for facilitating sensitive topics delivered

- Physical health content covered
- Mental health content covered (including substance use)
- Relationships and parenting content covered (including loss/grief)
- Five rules for facilitating sensitive topics presented
- 3 volunteer facilitation practice rounds completed with feedback
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (journal reflection on hardest personal topic; review simulation rubric; review co-facilitation notes)

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 22

What to Watch For

Teaching confidence: Some participants will surprise you — men who are quiet in discussion come alive when they have something to teach. Note who finds their voice this week. These are often your strongest future mentors.

Content gaps: Pay attention to which financial and reentry topics participants struggle with. These gaps reveal what additional training might be needed before Phase 3.

Emotional activation during Session 66: The relationships and parenting conversation will hit close to home for nearly everyone. Watch for men who shut down, leave the room, or become unusually quiet. Check in individually after the session.

Facilitator readiness signals: During the sensitive topic facilitation practice, notice who naturally creates safety and who inadvertently shuts people down. The ones who struggle aren't failing — they're learning. Give them specific, actionable feedback.

Common Week 22 Challenges

"I don't know enough about money to teach it." Reframe: "You know more than someone who's never thought about it. You don't need to be an expert — you need to be one step ahead and willing to be honest about what you don't know."

"I can't talk about my kids." Don't force it. "You can pass. But know that when you're a mentor, someone is going to need you to sit with them in that exact pain. Starting to face it now — even a little — prepares you for that."

"This reentry stuff doesn't apply to me — I've got years left." Correct response: "It applies to the men you'll mentor. And when it's your turn, you'll be the most prepared person in the room."

Preparation for Week 23

- Pull simulation scenarios from the scenario bank — select 5 for graded assessments (3 for Session 67, 2 for Session 69). Mix categories: at minimum 1 from Category A (dorm conflicts), 1 from Category B (mentor challenges), and 1 from Category C (safety situations)
- Prepare scoring rubric sheets — one per participant per simulation (6 criteria, 1-4 scale)
- Assign co-facilitation pairs for Session 68 — pair complementary strengths where possible (e.g., a strong communicator with someone who excels at structure)
- Prepare teaching demonstration assignment for Session 69 — each participant should know their assigned Phase 1 topic
- Review all participant progress to date — note any concerns that need to be addressed before assessment
- Ensure the master reentry checklist template is compiled from Session 65 group work and copies are ready for distribution

Week 23: Integration and Simulation Assessment

Week 23 Overview

Purpose: This is assessment week. Participants demonstrate the skills they've built over 10 weeks of Phase 2 training through graded simulations, co-facilitation, and a teaching demonstration. By the end of this week, every participant will have completed all 5 graded simulations and a teaching demo — the core gate requirements for advancing to Phase 3. This week is not designed to trip anyone up. It's designed to show participants what they're capable of under pressure.

Sessions This Week: - Session 67 (Tuesday): Simulation Assessment 1 — 3 graded simulations - Session 68 (Wednesday): Co-Facilitation Practice — pairs co-facilitate a 45-minute session - Session 69 (Thursday): Simulation Assessment 2 + Teaching Demonstration — 2 graded simulations + 20-minute teaching demo

Materials Needed: - Simulation Scoring Rubric sheets (6 criteria, 1-4 scale) — enough for each participant for each simulation (15-20 copies) - Teaching Demonstration Scoring Rubric sheets (5 criteria, 1-4 scale) — 1 per participant - Co-Facilitation Observation Forms (1 per pair, completed by facilitator and by co-facilitation partner) - Scenario cards (pre-selected from the Scenario Bank — see facilitator notes) - Timer or watch - Journals/notebooks - Talking piece - Pens/pencils

Assessment Overview:

Assessment	Session	Requirement
Simulation Assessment 1	67 (Tuesday)	3 graded simulations, scored on 6-criteria rubric. Min 15/24 per sim.
Co-Facilitation	68 (Wednesday)	Pairs co-facilitate a 45-min session. Observed and scored.
Simulation Assessment 2	69 (Thursday)	2 graded simulations. Same rubric and scoring.
Teaching Demonstration	69 (Thursday)	20-min lesson. Scored on 5-criteria rubric. Min 12/20.
Overall Requirement		Must pass 3 of 5 simulations + teaching demo to advance.

SESSION 67: Simulation Assessment 1

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (required for scoring)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will have: 1. Completed 3 graded simulation scenarios demonstrating de-escalation, communication, boundary maintenance, conflict resolution, composure, and referral judgment 2. Received scored feedback on each simulation using the 6-criteria rubric 3. Identified personal strengths and areas for continued development

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in round. One sentence: **How are you feeling about today?**"*

Send the talking piece. Don't minimize nervousness — name it.

Facilitator (after the round):

"I heard some nerves in this room. Good. That means you care. Let me be clear about something: today is not designed to make you fail. Today is designed to show you — and me — what you can do under pressure. You've been training for this for 10 weeks. You've practiced these scenarios. You've gotten feedback. You've grown.

The simulations today are graded. That's real. But the rubric isn't a secret — you've seen it, you know the criteria. And the bar is fair: 15 out of 24. That's an average of 2.5 on each criterion — solidly in the 'developing to competent' range. You don't need to be perfect. You need to be effective.

Three simulations today. Two more on Thursday. You need to pass 3 out of 5. Let's get to work."

Assessment Framework (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Here's how today works. I'm going to assign each simulation. You won't know the scenario until it starts — just like real life. For each simulation:"

Read the format aloud:

"1. **Setup** (2 minutes): I describe the scenario and assign roles. If you're the mentor, you step into the scene. If you're playing a role — an upset dorm member, a resistant mentee — I'll give you a role card with guidance on how to behave.

1. **Live simulation** (7-10 minutes): You respond to the situation in real time. No pauses. No coaching. This is the graded portion.

2. **Scoring** (2 minutes): I score you on the rubric while it's fresh. [Senior Mentor name] scores independently. We average the scores.

3. **Brief feedback** (3-4 minutes): I give you the headline — what went well, what to work on. We won't do a full debrief today; you'll get your detailed scores after Thursday's session.

Everyone not in the active simulation is an observer. Watch closely. You'll learn as much from watching as from doing."

Simulation Scoring Rubric

Post this where everyone can see it, or distribute copies:

Criteria	1 — Needs Work	2 — Developing	3 — Competent	4 — Exemplary
De-escalation	Escalated the situation or froze entirely	Attempted de-escalation but inconsistent or ineffective	Effectively reduced tension; used specific techniques	Masterful — calm, strategic, situation visibly improved
Communication	Aggressive, passive, or unclear communication	Some effective communication techniques used	Clear, assertive, respectful throughout	Exceptional — empathetic, precise, connected
Boundaries	Overstepped role or failed to maintain boundaries	Boundaries unclear or inconsistently held	Maintained appropriate mentor role throughout	Modeled healthy boundaries naturally

Criteria	1 — Needs Work	2 — Developing	3 — Competent	4 — Exemplary
Resolution	No resolution attempted or made situation worse	Partial resolution; left key issues unaddressed	Reached a workable agreement; addressed core issue	Durable solution achieved; all parties' dignity preserved
Composure	Lost composure; visibly rattled or reactive	Lost composure briefly but recovered	Maintained composure throughout	Composed and grounding presence for others
Referral Judgment	Failed to recognize when referral was needed	Recognized the need but delayed or handled poorly	Recognized and acted on referral needs in a timely way	Proactive safety awareness; anticipated needs before crisis

Minimum passing score: 15/24

Simulation Round 1 (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"First simulation. [Participant name], you're up."

Select Participant 1. Read the scenario setup from the pre-selected scenario card. Assign role players from the cohort — give them their role cards with brief behavioral instructions (e.g., "You're angry. You've been disrespected. You start loud and get louder unless the mentor gives you a reason to calm down.").

Run the simulation (7-10 min). Facilitator and Senior Mentor score independently on rubric sheets. Do not interrupt unless safety is a concern.

After the simulation:

Facilitator:

"[Name], stop there. Thank you. Take a breath."

Score (2 min). Facilitator and Senior Mentor compare scores, average them.

Brief feedback (3-4 min):

"Here's what I saw. [One strength — be specific.] That's real skill. [One area for growth — be specific and constructive.] You'll get your full scores after Thursday. How are you feeling about it?"

Allow the participant to respond briefly. Move on.

Transition: If running simulations sequentially with the same participant group, rotate quickly. If running multiple participants, assign the next one immediately.

Simulation Round 2 (20 minutes)

Same format. Different participant, different scenario. Ensure scenario variety — if Round 1 was a dorm conflict (Category A), Round 2 should be a mentor challenge (Category B) or safety situation (Category C).

Simulation Round 3 (20 minutes)

Same format. Third participant, third scenario.

Note: With a cohort of 12-15, not every participant will do all 3 simulations in Session 67. The facilitator should plan who does which simulations across Sessions 67 and 69 so that every participant completes exactly 5 graded simulations total (3 in Session 67, 2 in Session 69). This may require running some simulations simultaneously in breakout groups with the Senior Mentor scoring one group while the facilitator scores another.

For larger cohorts, use this rotation structure:

Time Block	Group A (Facilitator scores)	Group B (Senior Mentor scores)
Round 1 (20 min)	Participant 1 — Scenario	Participant 2 — Scenario
Round 2 (20 min)	Participant 3 — Scenario	Participant 4 — Scenario
Round 3 (20 min)	Participant 5 — Scenario	Participant 6 — Scenario

Continue until all participants have completed 3 simulations. If time doesn't allow all participants to finish 3 in Session 67, remaining simulations shift to Session 69 (adjust that session plan accordingly).

Processing and Closing (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Everyone take a minute. That was intense. Whether you went today or watched, you just experienced real assessment under pressure."

Group check-in (not scored — just processing):

*"I'm not going to ask anyone to share their scores. What I want to hear is this: **What did you notice — about yourself or about what you watched — that tells you something about the kind of mentor you're becoming?**"*

Allow 4-5 responses. Validate growth. Name what you saw.

Facilitator:

"Two things before you go.

First — if you're worried about your scores, remember: you have 5 simulations total. You need to pass 3. Today was 3. Thursday is 2 more. If you didn't hit 15 on one today, you have two more chances. And even if you need to work on something, that's what this process is for — to show you where to focus.

Second — tomorrow is co-facilitation day. You and your partner are co-facilitating a 45-minute session for this group. Meet with your partner tonight if you can. Review your plan. Decide who leads which sections. The best co-facilitation looks seamless — like two people thinking with one mind. That doesn't happen by accident. It happens by preparation.

Homework: Meet with your co-facilitation partner and finalize your session plan. Review the teaching demonstration rubric — your 20-minute teaching demo is Thursday. Know what's being scored and prepare accordingly.

You did real work today. Be proud of that. See you tomorrow."

Session 67 Checklist

- Room set up appropriately for simulations (enough space for scene work)
- Opening circle completed
- Assessment framework explained — format, rubric, scoring, expectations
- Scoring rubric posted or distributed
- Role cards prepared for role players in each scenario

- Simulation 1 completed and scored
- Simulation 2 completed and scored
- Simulation 3 completed and scored
- Brief feedback delivered to each participant who presented
- Scores recorded on tracking sheet
- Processing discussion held
- Co-facilitation pairs confirmed and reminded to prepare
- Homework assigned (meet with co-facilitation partner; review teaching demo rubric)

SESSION 68: Co-Facilitation Practice

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (as observer/scorer)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Co-facilitate a 45-minute session with a partner, demonstrating coordination, shared leadership, and mutual support 2. Navigate the dynamics of shared facilitation — leading, supporting, transitioning, and adapting together 3. Provide structured feedback to a co-facilitation pair using observation criteria 4. Reflect on their own co-facilitation strengths and growth areas

Session Plan

Opening (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Today is about partnership. In Phase 3, you won't always facilitate alone. You'll co-facilitate sessions with other FORGE mentors. That requires a different skill set than solo facilitation — you have to communicate, share space, support each other, and present a unified front even when things go sideways.

Here's how today works. Each pair has 45 minutes to deliver a session to this group. You choose the topic — it should be a Phase 1 topic that this group has already covered. After each pair, we'll do 10 minutes of feedback: from the group, from me, and from your partner.

We'll get through 2 pairs today — approximately 55 minutes each including feedback. If we have additional pairs, they'll present at the beginning of Session 69 before the remaining simulations."

Note to facilitator: With 12-15 participants, you'll have 6-7 pairs. Getting through all of them in one session isn't realistic. Plan for 2 pairs in Session 68 and schedule remaining pairs across available time. The requirement is that each participant completes one co-facilitation — it doesn't have to happen in a single session. Identify pairs whose demonstration is most critical (e.g., participants who are borderline on other assessments) and schedule them first.

Co-Facilitation Observation Criteria

Share with the group before the first pair presents:

Facilitator:

"When you're watching, here's what to observe."

Criteria	What to Look For
Coordination	Do the co-facilitators work together smoothly? Are transitions between leaders clear? Do they seem prepared?
Shared leadership	Does one person dominate, or do both contribute meaningfully? Do they balance leading and supporting?
Content delivery	Is the material clear, accurate, and well-organized? Do they use activities, not just lecture?
Group management	How do they handle participation, energy, disruptions? Do they read the room?
Mutual support	Do they build on each other's points? Step in when the other struggles? Show respect for each other?
Adaptability	When something unexpected happens, do they adjust together? Can they improvise?

Co-Facilitation Pair 1 (55 minutes)

Pair delivers their 45-minute session.

During the session, the facilitator and Senior Mentor: - Complete the Co-Facilitation Observation Form - Note specific moments to reference in feedback (strengths and areas for growth) - Do not intervene unless there's a safety issue or the session goes significantly off track

Feedback (10 min after the session):

Facilitator:

"Thank you, [names]. Let's hear from the group first."

Group feedback (5 min): - "What did they do well as a team?" - "What was the strongest moment in the session?" - "What's one thing they could improve as a co-facilitation pair?"

Facilitator feedback (3 min): Give 2 specific strengths and 1 specific area for growth. Focus on the partnership dynamic, not just individual performance.

Partner-to-partner feedback (2 min):

"Now I want each of you to tell your partner one thing they did that made your job easier, and one thing you'd want to do differently next time."

Co-Facilitation Pair 2 (55 minutes)

Same format. Different pair, different topic. Encourage variety — if Pair 1 taught conflict resolution, Pair 2 should choose a different Phase 1 topic.

Closing (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Co-facilitation is harder than it looks. You have to manage the group, the content, your own performance, AND your partner's experience — all at the same time. The pairs who did well today did one thing in common: they communicated. Before the session and during it. That's the skill.

Tomorrow is the final assessment session. You've got 2 more graded simulations and your 20-minute teaching demonstration. Here's what I want from you tonight:

- 1. Finalize your teaching demo. You know your topic. You know the rubric. Prepare your hook, your content, your activity. Time yourself — 20 minutes goes faster than you think.*
- 2. Get some rest. You've been under pressure all week. Take care of yourself tonight so you can bring your best tomorrow.*

You're almost there. One more day. See you Thursday."

Session 68 Checklist

- Room set up for facilitation (circle formation or as co-facilitators request)
- Co-facilitation observation criteria shared with group
- Co-Facilitation Pair 1 delivered 45-minute session
- Feedback provided: group, facilitator, and partner-to-partner for Pair 1

- Co-Facilitation Pair 2 delivered 45-minute session
- Feedback provided: group, facilitator, and partner-to-partner for Pair 2
- Observation forms completed and filed
- Remaining co-facilitation pairs scheduled (if applicable)
- Closing delivered
- Homework assigned (finalize teaching demo; rest and prepare)

SESSION 69: Simulation Assessment 2 + Teaching Demonstration

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (required for scoring)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will have: 1. Completed their final 2 graded simulations (bringing the total to 5) 2. Delivered a 20-minute teaching demonstration scored on the facilitation rubric 3. Received initial feedback on simulation and teaching performance 4. A clear picture of where they stand on Phase 2 gate requirements

Session Plan

Opening (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Last assessment session. Two more simulations and your teaching demo. Same standards. Same rubric. Same expectation: be effective, not perfect.

Quick reminder on the teaching demo: you have exactly 20 minutes. Your lesson should be on a Phase 1 topic. It needs a hook, clear content, an activity or engagement piece, and a closing. You're being scored on 5 criteria: preparation, engagement, clarity, adaptability, and debrief quality. Minimum 12 out of 20. You've done this before — in Week 15 and in your mini-lessons this week. This is the same skill. Trust it.

Let's go."

Simulation Round 4 (20 minutes per participant)

Same format as Session 67. Select the next participant(s). Use scenarios from categories not yet used for that individual.

Run simulations. Score on the 6-criteria rubric. Brief feedback after each.

Simulation Round 5 (20 minutes per participant)

Same format. Final graded simulation for each participant.

After the last simulation:

Facilitator:

"That's 5 simulations complete. You've been tested on de-escalation, communication, boundaries, resolution, composure, and referral judgment — in scenarios you didn't see coming. That's the reality of mentoring. You don't get to prepare for the exact situation. You prepare by building the skills. And you've done that."

Teaching Demonstration (20 minutes per participant)

Note: With a full cohort of 12-15, not every participant can deliver a 20-minute demo in the remaining time. The facilitator should schedule teaching demos across Sessions 69 and the beginning of Session 70, or use parallel breakout groups scored by the Senior Mentor. Every participant must complete the teaching demo before portfolio assembly.

Format for each teaching demo: - Participant delivers a 20-minute lesson on an assigned Phase 1 topic - Facilitator and Senior Mentor score independently using the Teaching Demonstration Rubric - 5 minutes of feedback after each demo

Teaching Demonstration Scoring Rubric

Criteria	1 — Needs Work	2 — Developing	3 — Competent	4 — Exemplary
Preparation	Clearly unprepared; no structure or materials	Partially prepared; some structure but gaps	Well-prepared; clear structure, objectives, and materials	Exceptionally prepared; polished, thorough, professional
Engagement	Lectured at the group; no interaction	Some interaction but mostly one-directional	Good participation; asked questions, invited responses	Dynamic and inclusive; every person engaged; energy high

Criteria	1 — Needs Work	2 — Developing	3 — Competent	4 — Exemplary
Clarity	Confusing; key concepts unclear or inaccurate	Somewhat clear but disorganized or incomplete	Clear and logical; concepts explained accurately	Crystal clear; memorable explanations, strong examples
Adaptability	Rigid; couldn't adjust when something wasn't working	Some flexibility but struggled with unexpected moments	Adjusted to group needs; responded to questions well	Seamless adaptation; read the room and shifted naturally
Debrief Quality	No debrief or closing	Surface-level debrief; didn't draw out learning	Drew out key learning; connected to real application	Deep, lasting insight; group left with a clear takeaway

Minimum passing score: 12/20

Run teaching demos. Strict time management — call time at 20 minutes.

After each demo, brief feedback:

Facilitator:

"[Name], what went well in that lesson? [Let them self-assess first.] Here's what I saw: [one strength, one growth area]. Your score will be in your portfolio review materials."

Assessment Summary and Closing (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Take a breath. This week — simulations, co-facilitation, teaching demo — you've been tested on every major skill in Phase 2. And you've done it under pressure, in front of your peers, with real stakes.

I'm going to compile all your scores tonight. Next Tuesday — Session 70 — you'll get your complete assessment results: all 5 simulation scores, your teaching demo score, and your co-facilitation feedback. You'll know exactly where you stand.

But here's what I can tell you right now."

Pause. Look at the group.

"I watched every one of you this week. And what I saw was men who have genuinely developed the skills to help other people. Not perfectly — nobody's perfect at Week 23. But effectively. Authentically. With heart. That's not something I'm grading on a rubric. That's something I'm telling you as a human being who's watched you grow."

Closing round:

*"One sentence: **What did you prove to yourself this week?**"*

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

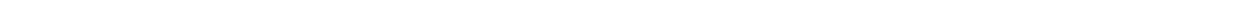
"Next week is the final week of Phase 2. Tuesday you'll assemble your portfolio. Wednesday you'll present to a panel. Thursday we celebrate and preview Phase 3.

Homework: 1. Begin gathering your portfolio materials — you'll need your 3 lesson plans, simulation reflections, co-facilitation notes, MI practice logs, self-reflection, and peer evaluations. We'll compile everything Tuesday, but start pulling it together now. 2. Journal: 'What kind of mentor am I becoming? What's my greatest strength? What's the area I still need to develop most?'

I'm proud of this group. See you Tuesday."

Session 69 Checklist

- Opening delivered
- Simulation Round 4 completed and scored for all scheduled participants
- Simulation Round 5 completed and scored for all scheduled participants
- All participants have now completed 5 total graded simulations
- Teaching demonstrations delivered and scored for all scheduled participants
- Teaching Demonstration Rubric sheets completed
- Brief feedback delivered after each assessment
- Scores recorded on master tracking sheet
- Assessment summary delivered to group
- Closing round completed
- Homework assigned (gather portfolio materials; journal on mentor identity)
- Remaining teaching demos scheduled (if any couldn't be completed today)



FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 23

What to Watch For

Assessment anxiety: Some participants will be visibly nervous. This is normal and healthy. Name it, normalize it, and remind them that nervousness means they care. Do not lower the bar — but do create a supportive atmosphere. The goal is accurate assessment, not intimidation.

Freezing under pressure: Some participants who performed well in practice may freeze during graded simulations. If someone freezes completely (more than 30 seconds of silence), give one gentle prompt: "What are you thinking right now? What's your next move?" This mirrors the coaching they received in training. Do not take over the simulation.

Scoring disagreements: If the facilitator and Senior Mentor scores differ by more than 4 points on a simulation, discuss before finalizing. The averaged score is the official score.

Borderline scores: If a participant scores 13 or 14 on a simulation (just below the 15 minimum), note the specific areas that kept them below threshold. This information is critical for their development in Phase 3 — and for determining whether they pass the "3 of 5" requirement.

Assessment Tracking

Create a master tracking sheet with the following columns:

Participant	Sim 1 Score	Sim 2 Score	Sim 3 Score	Sim 4 Score	Sim 5 Score	Sims Passed (15+)	Teaching Demo Score	Demo Pass?	Co-Fac Complete?
	/24	/24	/24	/24	/24	/5 (need 3)	/20	Y/N (need 12)	Y/N

Phase 2 gate requirement: Must pass 3 of 5 simulations (15/24 each) AND pass the teaching demonstration (12/20) AND complete a co-facilitation session.

If Someone Doesn't Pass

If a participant fails to meet the 3-of-5 simulation requirement or doesn't pass the teaching demo, handle it with dignity:

"You're not being cut from the program. What this means is that there are specific skills that need more development before you're ready to mentor independently. We're going to build a development plan together — targeted practice on the areas where you scored lowest. This might mean additional simulation practice, additional teaching reps, or additional coaching sessions. The goal is the same: getting you ready. The timeline is what adjusts."

Options for remediation: - Additional simulation attempts during Week 24 (before panel review) - One additional teaching demo attempt - Extended Phase 2 practice (participant joins next cohort's Week 23 assessments)

Do not allow someone to advance to Phase 3 without meeting the gate requirements. This protects the participant, their future mentees, and the integrity of the program.

Co-Facilitation Pair Selection Guidance

When assigning co-facilitation pairs: - Pair complementary strengths (e.g., a strong content person with a strong process person) - Avoid pairing the two strongest or two weakest participants together - Consider interpersonal dynamics — pairs should be able to work together professionally - If possible, pair people who haven't worked closely together — this builds the cohort's capacity to collaborate broadly

Preparation for Week 24

- Compile all assessment scores into individual participant summaries
- Prepare portfolio assembly checklist (printed, one per participant)
- Identify panel members for Session 71: Phase 3 mentors (graduates), Senior Mentors, staff observer if available
- Prepare panel review format and questions
- Confirm any remediation needs and schedule additional attempts if needed
- Prepare Phase 2 completion certificates
- Plan the Session 72 celebration — this is a milestone moment; treat it with gravity and warmth
- Compile the master reentry checklist template from Session 65 (if not yet done) for inclusion in portfolios

Week 24: Phase 2 Assessment and Transition

Week 24 Overview

Purpose: This is the final week of Phase 2. Participants compile their portfolios, present to a review panel, and — if they've met all requirements — transition to Phase 3: Practicum. This week marks the shift from learning to do to doing it for real. By Thursday, participants who advance will know their dorm assignments and mentee matches. This week should feel like a milestone — because it is one.

Sessions This Week: - Session 70 (Tuesday): Portfolio Assembly - Session 71 (Wednesday): Panel Review - Session 72 (Thursday): Phase 2 Celebration and Phase 3 Preview

Materials Needed: - Individual assessment summary sheets (prepared by facilitator — all simulation scores, teaching demo score, co-facilitation feedback) - Portfolio Assembly Checklist (printed, 1 per participant — see below) - Blank paper, folders, or binders for portfolio organization - Pens/pencils - Journals/notebooks - Talking piece - Panel Review Score Sheets (1 per panel member per participant — see Session 71) - Phase 2 Completion Certificates (1 per participant who meets requirements) - Phase 3 Assignment Sheets (dorm placement + mentee match information — if available) - Ceremony script (see Session 72)

SESSION 70: Portfolio Assembly

Day: Tuesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will have: 1. Received their complete Week 23 assessment results 2. Compiled a complete Phase 2 portfolio containing all required materials 3. Reviewed their own growth trajectory from Week 13 to Week 24 4. Prepared their panel presentation for Session 71

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in round. Where are you at today — mentally, emotionally — as we start the final week of Phase 2?"

Send the talking piece. This will likely surface a mix of pride, anxiety, and anticipation. Let it all be present.

Assessment Results Distribution (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Before we build portfolios, you need to know where you stand. I'm going to hand each of you your individual assessment summary. It has every score from last week — all 5 simulation scores, your teaching demo score, and your co-facilitation feedback. Take a minute to look it over."

Distribute individual assessment summary sheets. Give participants 3-4 minutes to review privately.

Facilitator:

"I'm not going to ask anyone to share their scores publicly. Your results are yours. But I do want to say this to the whole group:

Every score on that sheet is a snapshot of one moment. A simulation you did on a Tuesday afternoon when you might have been tired, or nervous, or distracted by something happening in the dorm. It's real data — it tells you something. But it doesn't define you.

If you passed everything — congratulations. You earned it. Don't coast.

If you fell short on something — that's information, not a verdict. We'll work on it. Nobody gets left behind in FORGE because of a bad day."

Handle individual situations privately. If any participant did not meet the gate requirements (3 of 5 simulations at 15+ and teaching demo at 12+), pull them aside during the portfolio work time for a private conversation about remediation options. Do not announce failures publicly.

Portfolio Assembly (60 minutes)

Facilitator:

"For the next hour, you're assembling your Phase 2 portfolio. This is the document that tells the story of your development as a mentor over the last 12 weeks. It's not busywork — it's evidence. When you sit in front of the panel tomorrow, this portfolio is what backs up your words."

Distribute the Portfolio Assembly Checklist:

Phase 2 Portfolio Assembly Checklist

Instructions: Organize your portfolio in the following order. Check each item as you locate, review, and include it. If any item is missing or incomplete, flag it immediately and work on it today. Every item on this checklist is required for your portfolio to be considered complete.

Section 1: Lesson Plans - [] Lesson Plan 1: Complete lesson plan with learning objectives, activities, materials list, and debrief questions - Topic: ___ - **Date created:** ___ - [] Lesson Plan 2: Complete lesson plan with learning objectives, activities, materials list, and debrief questions - Topic: ___ - **Date created:** ___ - [] Lesson Plan 3: Complete lesson plan with learning objectives, activities, materials list, and debrief questions - Topic: ___ - **Date created:** ___

Section 2: Simulation Performance Records - [] Simulation Assessment Summary (scores for all 5 graded simulations) - [] Self-reflection on Simulation 1: What went well? What would I do differently? - [] Self-reflection on Simulation 2: What went well? What would I do differently? - [] Self-reflection on Simulation 3: What went well? What would I do differently? - [] Self-reflection on Simulation 4: What went well? What would I do differently? - [] Self-reflection on Simulation 5: What went well? What would I do differently?

Section 3: Co-Facilitation Documentation - [] Co-facilitation session plan (the plan you and your partner prepared) - [] Co-facilitation observation notes (feedback received from facilitator) - [] Partner feedback notes (feedback received from co-facilitation partner) - [] Self-reflection on co-facilitation experience: What did I learn about shared leadership?

Section 4: Motivational Interviewing Practice Logs - [] MI Practice Log Entry 1: Date, context, OARS techniques used, outcome - [] MI Practice Log Entry 2: Date, context, OARS techniques used, outcome - [] MI Practice Log Entry 3: Date, context, OARS techniques used, outcome - [] MI Practice Log Entry 4: Date, context, OARS techniques used, outcome - [] MI Practice Log Entry 5: Date, context, OARS techniques used, outcome

Section 5: Self-Reflection on Mentor Readiness - [] Written self-reflection (1-2 pages): "Am I ready to be a FORGE mentor? Why or why not?" - Must address: greatest strength as a mentor, area of continued growth, what you've learned about yourself through Phase 2, what kind of mentor you want to be

Section 6: Peer Evaluations - [] Peer evaluations received from at least 3 cohort members - Each evaluation should address: integrity, service orientation, growth, composure, accountability - Each evaluation uses the 1-5 scale per dimension - Minimum average: 3.0 across all dimensions - Minimum endorsement: at least 3 peers

Section 7: Teaching Demonstration - [] Teaching demonstration score sheet - [] Teaching demonstration lesson plan (the plan used for the 20-minute demo)

Facilitator:

"Go through the checklist item by item. If you have everything, organize it in order. If you're missing something — a simulation reflection you didn't write, an MI log you forgot to complete — you have time right now to write it. This is your last chance to get it done.

I'm available for questions. [Senior Mentor] is available to help. Use this time well."

Facilitator circulates during work time. Help participants who are struggling to organize. Coach those who need to write missing reflections. Conduct private conversations with any participants who need remediation planning.

Peer evaluations: If peer evaluations haven't been completed yet, build in 15 minutes for participants to write evaluations for 3 peers. Provide the format:

"For each peer you evaluate, rate them 1-5 on these five dimensions: integrity, service orientation, growth, composure, and accountability. Then write 2-3 sentences explaining your rating. Be honest and specific — this is a service to them, not a popularity contest."

Panel Presentation Preparation (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Tomorrow you sit in front of a panel. Here's exactly what's going to happen:

- 1. **Opening statement (3-5 minutes):** You tell the panel why you're ready to be a FORGE mentor. This is personal. Speak from the heart, but be specific. Don't just say 'I've changed.' Say how. Don't just say 'I'm ready.' Say what prepared you.*
- 2. **Skill demonstration (5-7 minutes):** The panel will ask you to demonstrate a specific skill — it might be a de-escalation scenario, a short teaching moment, an MI conversation, or a circle-keeping exercise. You won't know which one until they ask. This isn't about being perfect. It's about showing you can do it under pressure.*
- 3. **Q&A (5-10 minutes):** The panel will ask you questions. They might ask about a specific simulation score, about a situation you'd handle differently now, about what you'll do when things get hard in Phase 3. Answer honestly.*

The panel will be [describe panel composition — typically Phase 3 mentors/graduates, Senior Mentors, facilitator, and a staff observer if available].

Take the last 15 minutes right now to outline your opening statement. Don't write a script — write bullet points. Then practice delivering it out loud, either to yourself or to a partner."

Participants prepare (15 min). Facilitator available for coaching.

Closing (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Tomorrow is your panel review. Thursday is the celebration. This is the final stretch.

*Closing round: **Complete this sentence: 'The man who started Phase 2 twelve weeks ago would not believe that I can now...'**"*

Send the talking piece.

Facilitator (closing):

"Hold onto what you just said. That's your evidence. Not just the scores on a rubric — the change you can name in yourself. That's what the panel needs to hear.

Homework: Practice your opening statement at least 3 times tonight. Review your portfolio one more time.

Come tomorrow ready to show what you've built.

See you tomorrow."

Session 70 Checklist

- Room set up in circle
- Opening circle completed
- Individual assessment summaries distributed
- Private conversations held with any participants needing remediation
- Portfolio Assembly Checklists distributed
- Portfolio work time provided (60 min)
- Peer evaluations completed (if not previously done)
- Panel presentation format explained
- Participants prepared opening statement outlines
- Closing circle completed
- Homework assigned (practice opening statement; final portfolio review)
- All portfolios checked for completeness before participants leave

SESSION 71: Panel Review

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Review Panel (Phase 3 mentors/ graduates, Senior Mentors, staff observer if available)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will have: 1. Presented their case for mentor readiness to a review panel 2. Demonstrated a mentor skill under panel observation 3. Responded to panel questions about their development, their challenges, and their readiness for Phase 3 4. Received a panel decision: advance to Phase 3, conditional advancement, or continued development

Session Plan

Panel Setup (10 minutes before session begins)

Before participants arrive: - Arrange the room: panel members seated at one end (or in a half-circle), presenting participant seated facing them, remaining cohort members seated as observers behind the presenter - Ensure panel members have: each participant's assessment summary, portfolio (if reviewed in advance), and Panel Review Score Sheets - Brief panel members on the format and expectations

Panel Review Score Sheet:

Criteria	1 — Not Ready	2 — Approaching	3 — Ready	4 — Strongly Ready
Self-awareness	Cannot articulate own growth or limitations	Some awareness but lacks depth	Clear understanding of strengths and growth areas	Deep, honest self-knowledge; owns both strengths and struggles
Skill demonstration	Unable to perform requested skill effectively	Attempted but significant gaps	Performed competently under pressure	Performed with confidence, nuance, and natural ability

Criteria	1 — Not Ready	2 — Approaching	3 — Ready	4 — Strongly Ready
Commitment to service	Motivation unclear or self-focused	Some service orientation but inconsistent	Clear commitment to Service Over Self	Service orientation is deeply internalized and evident
Readiness for challenge	Avoids or minimizes difficulty	Acknowledges challenges but uncertain about handling them	Realistic about challenges; has strategies to manage	Embraces challenge; demonstrates resilience and preparation
Communication quality	Unclear, disorganized, or defensive	Somewhat clear but lacks confidence or depth	Clear, honest, and organized presentation	Compelling, authentic, and inspiring communication

Panel decision categories: - **Advance to Phase 3** — Meets all requirements; demonstrates readiness (minimum 12/20 on panel review + all gate requirements met) - **Conditional Advancement** — Meets most requirements; specific area needs additional development during early Phase 3 (panel specifies the condition and timeline) - **Continued Development** — Does not yet meet requirements; specific remediation plan created with dignity and support

Opening (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Today each of you presents to this panel. The panel's job is not to judge you. Their job is to answer one question: Is this person ready to mentor others — to represent FORGE in a dorm, to sit with a man in crisis, to teach, to lead, to serve?"

This is serious. It should feel serious. But it should also feel like what it is — a group of people who believe in you, asking you to show them what you've got.

I'll call you up one at a time. When it's not your turn, you're an observer — listen, learn, support your brother silently. No reactions during the presentation. Save your support for after.

[Introduce panel members by name and role.]

Let's begin."

Panel Reviews (approximately 15-20 minutes per participant)

Format for each participant:

1. Opening Statement (3-5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"[Name], the floor is yours. Tell the panel: Why are you ready to be a FORGE mentor?"

The participant delivers their prepared statement. Panel listens without interruption.

2. Skill Demonstration (5-7 minutes)

Panel lead:

"Thank you. Now we'd like to see a skill in action. [Select one of the following based on the participant's assessment profile — choose an area where they scored well to build confidence, or an area of growth to verify development:]

- "I'm going to play a man who just got denied parole. He's angry and talking about giving up. Show me how you'd approach him."*
- "Teach us something for 5 minutes — any Phase 1 concept. Go."*
- "Two of us are going to have a disagreement. We want you to mediate. Ready?"*
- "I'm a new FORGE participant who's thinking about quitting after Week 3. Use your MI skills."*
- "Set up and open a community circle for this room. You have 5 minutes."*

The participant performs the skill. Panel observes and scores.

3. Q&A (5-10 minutes)

Panel asks questions. Suggested question bank (panel selects 3-4):

- "What's the hardest thing you've faced in Phase 2, and what did it teach you?"*
- "Tell us about a simulation where you didn't do well. What happened and what would you do differently?"*
- "You're going to have a mentee who doesn't want to be helped. What's your approach?"*
- "What will you do when you're having a bad day and you still have to show up for your mentees?"*
- "What's your biggest weakness as a mentor right now? What's your plan to address it?"*
- "How has FORGE changed the way you handle conflict in your daily life — not in a simulation, but for real?"*
- "What does Service Over Self mean to you — not the definition, but what it means in your life?"*
- "A mentee tells you something in confidence that concerns you. How do you handle the tension between confidentiality and safety?"*
- "What kind of dorm culture do you want to build? How will you do it?"*

4. Panel Deliberation

After each participant presents, the panel briefly confers (1-2 minutes) and records their scores. Final decisions can be communicated at the end of the session or individually before Session 72.

Managing the Flow

With 12-15 participants and 15-20 minutes per review, this session will take longer than 2 hours.

Options:

1. **Extended session:** Request additional time if facility scheduling allows.
2. **Split across two sessions:** Run half the panel reviews in Session 71 and the remaining at the start of Session 72 (adjusting celebration time accordingly).
3. **Parallel panels:** If two qualified panels can be formed, run two reviews simultaneously in separate spaces.

The facilitator should plan the approach in advance based on cohort size and facility constraints. Do not rush panel reviews to fit the time — this is a milestone moment and deserves its full weight.

Closing (5 minutes — if time allows after all reviews)

Facilitator:

"Every one of you sat in that chair today and presented yourself honestly. That takes courage — especially in front of people whose opinion you respect.

Panel decisions will be communicated to each of you individually before tomorrow's session. If you're advancing, you'll receive your Phase 3 assignment. If there's additional work to do, you'll receive a specific plan. Either way, you're still part of this cohort and you're still part of FORGE.

Tomorrow is our celebration. Come ready to honor the work you've done and the man you're becoming. See you Thursday."

Session 71 Checklist

- Room arranged for panel format before participants arrive
- Panel members briefed on format, scoring, and expectations
- Panel members have assessment summaries and portfolios
- Panel Review Score Sheets distributed to panel members

- Opening delivered — format and expectations clear
- Each participant completed: opening statement, skill demonstration, Q&A
- Panel scores recorded for each participant
- Panel deliberation completed for each participant
- Decisions communicated to participants (individually, before Session 72)
- Any remediation plans created for participants who need continued development
- Closing delivered

SESSION 72: Phase 2 Celebration and Phase 3 Preview

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor + Panel Members (invited to attend)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will have: 1. Been formally recognized for completing Phase 2 of FORGE 2. Received Phase 2 Completion Certificates 3. Understood Phase 3 expectations, structure, and what "real mentoring" demands 4. Received their Phase 3 dorm placements and mentee assignments (if available) 5. Recommitted to FORGE's mission and Code of Conduct for Phase 3

Session Plan

Room Setup (before participants arrive)

Set the room differently today. This is a ceremony, not a regular session. - Chairs in a circle, but tighter than usual — this is a community moment - If possible, a small table in the center with the talking piece, certificates, and anything symbolic (the group's original talking piece from Week 1, a candle if allowed, the list of group agreements from Session 2) - Phase 2 Completion Certificates laid out, ready for distribution - If panel members, staff, or other guests are invited, arrange additional seating

Opening Circle: Reflection (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Before we do anything else, I want to take this group back to where we started. Not Week 13 — Week 1. Session 1. Some of you were skeptical. Some of you were scared. Some of you didn't know what you were walking into.

*I asked you a question that day: **Name one thing you want to be different about yourself in 9 months.** Today is not 9 months — we still have Phase 3 ahead. But 24 weeks ago, you were strangers sitting in a circle wondering if this was going to be worth your time. Look around. Look at the men you've become — and the men you've helped each other become.*

*Opening round. This is a two-parter: **What did you say you wanted to be different back in Week 1? And what is actually different now?***

If you don't remember exactly, that's fine. Say what you remember. Or say what's changed."

Send the talking piece. Give this round all the time it needs. This is the emotional foundation of the ceremony.

Recognition and Celebration (25 minutes)

Purpose: Formally recognize each participant's Phase 2 journey. This is not perfunctory — every man in this circle has done something extraordinary.

Facilitator:

"What you've accomplished over these 24 weeks cannot be overstated. You started Phase 1 doing your own work — looking in the mirror, confronting your thinking errors, learning to manage your emotions, taking accountability for things most men never face.

Then Phase 2 asked you to take everything you learned about yourself and turn it outward. You learned how to teach. How to facilitate. How to listen in a way that actually helps someone. How to hold boundaries. How to stay calm when everything is escalating around you. You practiced in simulations designed to push you to your limits. You stood in front of this group and taught. You co-facilitated sessions. You sat in front of a panel and defended your readiness.

Not everyone who starts FORGE gets to this moment. You did. And you didn't just get here — you earned it."

Individual recognition:

For each participant, the facilitator (or Senior Mentor) shares one specific observation about that person's growth. This should be personal, specific, and genuine.

Facilitator:

"I want to say something specific about each of you. Not a generic 'good job.' Something I actually noticed."

Go around the circle. For each participant:

"[Name] — [specific observation]. Example: 'When you came into this program, you couldn't sit through a circle without crossing your arms and checking out. Last week, you facilitated a group discussion on mental health that had men sharing things they've never said out loud. That's transformation.' Or: 'In your first simulation, you escalated the situation worse than it started. In your fifth simulation, you de-escalated a man with a weapon concern and referred it perfectly. That's 10 weeks of work showing up when it mattered.'"

This will take time. It should. Every man in this circle deserves to be seen.

Certificate Ceremony (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"I'm going to call each of you forward to receive your Phase 2 Completion Certificate. When I call your name, stand up, come to the center, and receive it. This is yours. You earned it."

Call each participant by name. Hand them the certificate. Shake their hand (or whatever gesture is appropriate and permitted). The cohort applauds — or offers whatever acknowledgment feels right for the group culture.

Facilitator (after all certificates are distributed):

"Hold onto these. Not because a piece of paper defines you — but because on the hard days in Phase 3, when a mentee is testing you, when nothing seems to be working, when you're wondering why you signed up for this — you look at this certificate and remember: I did the work. I earned this. And I'm going to keep going."

Phase 3 Preview: "Now It's Real" (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Celebration is important. And it's over. Now let me tell you what's coming — because Phase 3 is a different animal."

Shift the tone. This section should be honest and sobering — not to kill the energy, but to ensure no one enters Phase 3 with false expectations.

"Phase 3 is called 'Lead and Serve.' Here's what that means in practice:

The structure changes. *You're no longer sitting in a classroom three days a week learning theory. Tuesdays will be supervision sessions — you'll come together as a group to review cases, process what happened in the field, and continue your development. Wednesdays and Thursdays, you're in the field — co-facilitating sessions and meeting with your mentees in your assigned dorms.*

You'll have real mentees. *Not simulations. Real men. Men who are struggling, who are skeptical, who are in pain, who might not want your help. You'll be assigned 2-3 mentees to start. That number will grow to 3-5 as you demonstrate readiness.*

You'll co-facilitate first. *For the first 4 weeks, you'll co-facilitate sessions with an experienced FORGE mentor or Senior Mentor. They lead, you support. You learn the rhythm. Then you'll start leading with them observing. Then you'll lead independently.*

You'll be observed. *Your sessions will be watched and scored. Not every time — but enough to ensure quality. Four of your independently delivered sessions will be formally assessed.*

You'll run community circles. *In your assigned dorm. Building restorative culture from the ground up. This is where FORGE changes the institution — one dorm at a time.*

You'll keep learning. *Weekly supervision sessions aren't optional. You'll bring real cases, real struggles, real questions. The learning doesn't stop — it deepens."*

Pause.

"Let me be direct about what Phase 3 will demand from you."

The hard truths:

*"1. **Your mentee will test you.** Maybe not on purpose. Maybe on purpose. Either way, boundaries will be pushed. Everything you practiced in simulations will happen for real — and it'll be harder, because it's real.*

- 1. **You will fail.** Not permanently — but situationally. You'll handle something poorly. You'll lose your composure. You'll say the wrong thing. That's not the end. That's the beginning of the next lesson. The measure of a mentor isn't perfection — it's recovery.*
- 2. **You will be tired.** Mentoring is emotionally demanding. You'll carry other people's pain alongside your own. Self-care isn't a luxury in Phase 3 — it's a survival skill.*
- 3. **You will want to quit.** Maybe not you specifically — but someone in this circle will hit a wall in Phase 3 and think about walking away. When that happens, this cohort is your lifeline. Lean on each other. That's what brothers do.*
- 4. **You will make a difference.** I can promise you that. Not with everyone. Not every time. But someone in your dorm is going to be in crisis, and you're going to be the one who shows up. Someone is going to be ready to give up, and you're going to be the reason they don't. That moment — that's why FORGE exists."*

Phase 3 Assignments (10 minutes)

If dorm placements and mentee matches are available:

Facilitator:

"Here are your Phase 3 assignments."

Distribute Phase 3 Assignment Sheets. For each participant: - Assigned dorm/housing unit - Co-facilitator partner (for Weeks 25-28) - Initial mentee assignments (2-3 mentees per participant) - Supervision session schedule (Tuesdays, beginning next week)

"Look at your assignment. Know your dorm. Know your co-facilitator. Your first contact with your mentees will happen in Week 25. Between now and then, review your notes on establishing a mentoring relationship — that's Week 25's supervision topic.

If you have questions about your assignment, see me after the session."

If assignments aren't yet available:

"Dorm placements and mentee matches are being finalized. You'll receive your assignments before Tuesday's supervision session. What I can tell you now is that each of you will be placed in a dorm, paired with a co-facilitator, and assigned 2-3 mentees to start."

Recommitment Ceremony (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"We're going to close today the same way we started the program — with a commitment. But this one is different. In Week 1, you committed to the Code of Conduct and to your own growth. Today, you're committing to something bigger: the men who are counting on you.

I'm going to read the FORGE Mentor Recommitment. When I'm done, if you're ready to commit, you'll say 'I commit' — and you'll mean it. Not because I'm asking you to. Because the man you've become demands it of you."

Read the recommitment:

Facilitator (reading slowly, with gravity):

"I am a FORGE mentor.

I commit to Service Over Self — to using my time, my energy, and my influence for the benefit of others, even when it costs me something.

I commit to integrity — to being the same man in the dorm that I am in this circle. To walking the talk. To owning my mistakes and learning from them.

I commit to my mentees — to showing up, to listening, to holding space for their pain without trying to fix it, and to holding them accountable without destroying their dignity.

I commit to this cohort — to leaning on my brothers when I'm struggling and being there when they need me.

I commit to my own growth — to continuing the personal work that brought me here, knowing that I cannot give what I do not have.

I commit to safety — to protecting the well-being of every person in my dorm, to referring when something is beyond my scope, and to never compromising safety for comfort.

I commit to the mission — to building a culture of peace, responsibility, and service in every space I enter.

I am not perfect. I will make mistakes. But I will not quit, I will not hide, and I will not stop growing.

Leadership is not granted. It is forged."

Pause.

"If you are ready to commit — say it now."

Group responds: "I commit."

Facilitator:

"You are FORGE mentors in training. Phase 3 begins Tuesday. Bring everything you have."

Final Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Last round for Phase 2. This one is simple: **Look at the man across the circle from you. Say his name. Then tell him one thing you respect about who he's become.**"*

This round goes differently. Instead of passing the talking piece around the circle sequentially, each person speaks to a specific person across the circle. It creates direct connection.

Facilitator (going last — speaking to the entire group):

"I have watched every one of you grow. From the first day you walked in here to this moment right now — you are different men. Not because this program fixed you. Because you chose to do the work. That choice, repeated every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday for 24 weeks — that's what changed you.

Phase 3 is where it gets real. And I wouldn't trust anyone else to do it.

Service Over Self. See you Tuesday."

Session 72 Checklist

- Room set up for ceremony (tight circle, certificates arranged, talking piece centered)
- Panel decisions communicated to all participants individually before the session
- Opening reflection round completed (Week 1 callback)
- Individual recognition delivered for each participant (specific, personal observations)
- Phase 2 Completion Certificates distributed to each qualifying participant
- Phase 3 preview delivered — structure, expectations, hard truths
- Phase 3 assignments distributed (or timeline for distribution communicated)
- Recommitment ceremony completed
- Final closing circle completed
- Any remediation conversations completed privately for participants who need additional development
- All portfolios collected and filed in participant program records

- [] Assessment tracking sheet finalized and filed

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 24

What to Watch For

Emotional weight of the panel review: Session 71 is the most high-pressure moment in Phase 2. Watch for participants who shut down before, during, or after their presentation. Check in individually with anyone who seemed overwhelmed.

The gap between scores and readiness: Sometimes a participant's scores say "ready" but your gut says "not yet." Trust your observation — if something concerns you, raise it with the panel. The rubric is a tool, not a final authority.

Conditional advancement dynamics: If some participants advance and others receive conditional or continued development plans, manage the group dynamic carefully. The ceremony should honor everyone's work, not create a visible divide between "those who made it" and "those who didn't." Everyone who completed Phase 2 sessions has earned recognition.

Post-ceremony letdown: After the emotional high of the celebration, some participants may feel anxious or deflated. This is normal. The transition from "learning" to "doing" is genuinely intimidating. Name it if you see it.

Handling Participants Who Don't Advance

This requires care, skill, and directness — the same qualities FORGE teaches.

Before Session 72 (private conversation):

"I want to talk with you about where you stand. Your simulation scores [or teaching demo score, or portfolio gap] didn't meet the Phase 2 gate requirement. That doesn't mean you failed FORGE. It means you need more development in [specific area] before you're ready to mentor independently.

Here's the plan: [describe specific remediation — additional simulation attempts, extended practice period, joining next cohort's assessment week]. You're still part of this cohort. You're still in FORGE. The timeline is what's adjusting, not the destination.

How are you feeling about this? What questions do you have?"

During Session 72: Include them fully in the ceremony. They completed Phase 2 sessions. They did the work. Their certificate can read "Phase 2 Completion" (not "Phase 2 Advancement"). Recognize their growth specifically and genuinely.

After Session 72: Follow up within 48 hours with a written remediation plan. Schedule the next assessment opportunity. Maintain connection and support.

The Phase 2 Portfolio as a Living Document

The portfolio assembled in Session 70 is not an end product — it's a foundation. In Phase 3, participants will add: - Mentoring hours logs - Session plans actually delivered - Mentee progress notes - Community circle plans and reflections - Personal growth narrative - Mentor philosophy statement

The Phase 2 portfolio becomes Section 2 of the final FORGE Mentor Portfolio that's presented at the Phase 3 certification review.

Preparation for Phase 3 (Week 25)

- Finalize all Phase 3 dorm placements and mentee assignments
- Brief co-facilitator partners: who's leading, who's supporting, what topics are being covered in Week 25 field sessions
- Prepare Week 25 supervision session plan: "Establishing the Mentoring Relationship — First Meetings, Building Trust"
- Connect with facility staff in assigned dorms to ensure awareness of FORGE mentor placement
- Ensure every advancing participant has a copy of: the master reentry checklist template, the simulation scoring rubric (for reference), the FORGE quick-reference cards (conflict resolution, red lines, OARS, de-escalation checklist)
- Schedule individual check-ins with each advancing participant during Week 25 to assess early adjustment
- Prepare mentoring hour log templates for Phase 3 tracking