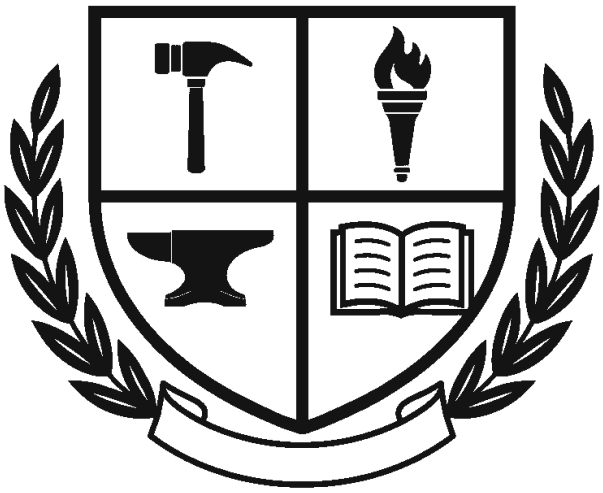
FORGE



PARTICIPANT WORKBOOK

THE COMPLETE PROGRAM · WEEKS 1–36

Phase 1: Foundation — Know Yourself
Phase 2: Development — Build Others
Phase 3: Practicum — Lead and Serve

Dooly State Prison

Name: _____

How to use this workbook

This workbook has everything for the 36 weeks of FORGE in one book.

Each week has two parts. First come the **session pages**: one for every session, with the big idea, the key points the facilitator covered, any tools or words the session taught, and your homework. Then come that week's **worksheets**, the forms you fill in.

Homework tells you where to write. When a worksheet goes with an assignment, the homework names it and gives its page number. Longer writing (journal entries, letters, essays) goes in your journal.

Use it to review after each session, catch up if you missed one, and study before each assessment. It does not replace being in the room.

If something here is different from what you were taught, follow your facilitator and ask.

THE FORGE ELEVATOR SPEECH

FORGE — Facilitating Opportunities for Reentry, Growth and Empowerment. We're building a new prison experience — where men lead by example, support one another, and prepare to make a positive impact — both inside these walls and beyond them. Our goal is simple: to turn time served into time that serves others. Our purpose: to build mentors who create a culture of peace, responsibility, and service — modeling the change we want to see in every community.

Learn it by heart (Session 1). Be ready to say it in 30 seconds, without looking.

FORGE — Facilitating Opportunities for Reentry, Growth and Empowerment.
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PHASE 1

Foundation

Know Yourself

Weeks 1–12

Phase 1 is about you. Before you can help anyone else, you do your own work. Over these twelve weeks you learn how your thinking drives what you feel and do, how to name and manage your emotions, how to listen and speak so you are heard, how to handle conflict, how to own your choices, and how to make better decisions. The phase ends with the Phase 1 assessment and your move into Phase 2.

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WEEK 1

Orientation and Community Building

This week: You learn what FORGE is, why it exists, and what it will ask of you over the next 9 months. You sign your commitment, help write your group's agreements, start your journal, and take on your first service challenge.

This week's worksheets: One Thing I Want to Be Different in 9 Months, page 8

SESSION 1

Welcome to FORGE

BIG IDEA *You are a stakeholder in this system, not a victim of it, and FORGE trains you to make any room better through skill, composure and service.*

KEY POINTS

- **This is "not a check-the-box program."** It asks you to look at yourself honestly, change how you think, and then help other men do the same. A FORGE mentor can walk into any room and make it better: "Not through muscle. Not through reputation. Through skill, composure, and service."
- **Why FORGE exists.** Violence inside Georgia's prisons has skyrocketed. Staff want to go home to their families. So do we. How conflicts get handled, and whether a new man gets tested or helped, is shaped more by the men inside than by the administration.
- **"We are stakeholders in this system."** Not victims of it. Not passengers in it. A stakeholder has a real share in how a place turns out, so you carry a responsibility to everyone living in this space. FORGE changes the culture of a dorm "not by force. By example. By skill. By service."
- **Three phases.** Phase 1, "Know Yourself" (Weeks 1-12): your own work, the hardest phase for most men because it takes honesty. Phase 2, "Build Others" (Weeks 13-24): learning to teach, lead and listen, with simulation training. Phase 3, "Lead and Serve" (Weeks 25-36): mentoring for real, toward certification as a FORGE Mentor.
- **Show up.** Three 2-hour sessions a week for 36 weeks. Attendance is required, and more than 5 minutes late counts as an absence. "The man sitting next to you is counting on you to be here."
- **The Code of Conduct is not symbolic.** A weapon means removal from the program right away: "One strike." Violence, threats, bullying, intimidation and gang language have no place here. Self-defense is a human right, but you don't go looking for trouble and you don't escalate.

TOOL: THE FORGE ELEVATOR SPEECH

Every FORGE participant must be able to explain the program in 30 seconds. People will ask. Some will be curious, some will be mocking. "Either way, you need to own it."

"FORGE — Facilitating Opportunities for Reentry, Growth and Empowerment. We're building a new prison experience — where men lead by example, support one another, and prepare to make a positive impact — both inside these walls and beyond them. Our goal is simple: to turn time served into time that serves others. Our purpose: to build mentors who create a culture of peace, responsibility, and service — modeling the change we want to see in every community."

HOMEWORK

1. **Memorize the elevator speech.** Practice it at least 3 times before next session.
2. **Write down the one thing you want to be different about yourself in 9 months,** as you said it in the closing go-around: not what you want to happen to you, but what you want to be different about who you are. You will come back to it at the end.
   Workbook: One Thing I Want to Be Different in 9 Months, page 8
3. **Journal at least half a page:** What does it mean to you to be a stakeholder?

SESSION 2

Building the Container

BIG IDEA *Trust is not built all at once; it is built "one honest moment at a time," inside a space the group makes safe together.*

KEY POINTS

- **The circle process.** An old peacemaking practice, and a core part of how FORGE works. When you hold the talking piece, the room belongs to you. When you don't, your job is to listen: "not plan your response, not judge, not check out." You can always say "I pass."
- **The group writes its own agreements.** The Code of Conduct gives the rules that don't bend. Group agreements are the promises you make each other, starting from one question: "What do you need from this group in order to feel safe enough to be honest?"
- **You made them, so you own them.** When someone breaks one, "it's not me policing you — it's the group holding each other to what we promised."
- **What is said here stays here, with one limit.** It doesn't become dorm gossip and doesn't get used against you. But if someone shares an immediate safety risk, like a weapon or a plan to hurt someone or himself, the facilitator has to act.
- **Trust grows one honest moment at a time.** In Two Truths and a Question, each man shared two true things the group didn't know, then asked a question he really wanted answered.
- **Your journal is yours.** No one asks to see it unless you choose to share. No grade, no minimum length; three sentences can be an entry. "The only requirement is honesty."
- **You will journal four ways:** free writing, prompted writing, thinking reports (you learn these next week), and reflections after exercises and simulations.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Container** — the safe space a group builds together so its members can be honest.
- **Cohort** — the group of men going through the program together.

TOOL: THE CIRCLE RULES

1. **Only the person holding the talking piece speaks.** Everyone else listens.
2. **Speak from the heart.** Say what's true for you, not what you think people want to hear.
3. **Listen from the heart.** When someone is speaking, your only job is to hear him.
4. **Say just enough.** Don't give a speech. Say what needs to be said and pass the piece.
5. **Trust the process.** Circles feel strange at first. Give it a chance.

HOMEWORK

1. **Memorize the elevator speech.** Be ready to deliver it without looking at the page.
2. **Finish your journal entry on the stakeholder question,** at least half a page: "What does it mean to you to be a stakeholder in this system? Do you believe it? Why or why not?" If you think it's BS, write that. If it rings true, write why.

SESSION 3

Service Over Self

BIG IDEA *Service Over Self means "I choose to use my time, my energy, and my influence for something bigger than my own comfort."*

KEY POINTS

- **Own the elevator speech.** Deliver it from memory: clear, confident, believable. "Slow down." "Look people in the eye." "Say it like you mean it — because you do."
- **What service is not.** Not submission: you are not a doormat, and you don't give up your safety or your dignity. Not performing: "If you're only helping when someone's watching, that's image management, not service." Not control: not fixing people or telling everyone what to do because you went through a program.
- **What service is.** "A daily decision to make things better for the people around you — even when it costs you something." The man who cleans the common area when it isn't his turn. The man who tells a scared new arrival, "Let me show you how things work here." The mentor who knows "the mentee isn't the enemy; the mentee's pain is the enemy."
- **Service is not a sacrifice.** Men who practice it say it is what finally made them feel free. "Not free as in released. Free as in unburdened."
- **Other programs found the same thing.** PEP in Texas, GRIP at San Quentin and RSVP in San Francisco all run on men who have changed teaching and mentoring the men coming in behind them. PEP calls it "servant leadership." "The most powerful force for change in a prison is not staff, not programs, not policies. It's one man who's changed his life showing another man that he can change his."
- **Service needs no permission.** Help a man read a legal document. Check on someone who has gone quiet. Help someone write a letter home. Settle a small dispute before it grows. "The question is: will you do them?"

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Servant leadership** — leading by serving: you learn something, then you serve others by teaching it.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write your commitment in the front of your journal:** how you finished the sentence "The kind of man I'm committed to becoming through FORGE is..." On the hard days, read it.
2. **Do 3 deliberate acts of service in your dorm** before next session. It has to be for someone else's benefit, not yours. Don't ask for credit. Write about each one in your journal: what you did, how it felt, and how the other person responded.
3. **Be ready to deliver the elevator speech from memory.** You may be called on at random.
4. **Read the "Attitude & Mindset" section in your handbook.**

One Thing I Want to Be Different in 9 Months

Use with: Session 1 homework. Keep it. You come back to it in Weeks 10, 12 and 36.

In the closing circle you named one thing you want to be different about yourself in 9 months. Write it the way you said it. Not what you want to *happen* to you, but what you want to be different about *who you are*. One sentence.

Coming back to it. Each time this question comes up again, read what you wrote above. Then write a line or two: what *is* different now, and what isn't yet.

Week 10:

Week 12:

Week 36:

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WEEK 2

How Thinking Works

This week: You learn the idea the whole program is built on: your thinking drives your feelings and your actions, not the other way around. You learn to spot your automatic thoughts, name the 8 thinking errors, and replace a bad thought with a better one. By the end of the week you can fill out a thinking report and use the STOP technique.

This week's worksheets: Sample Thinking Reports, page 13; The 8 Thinking Errors, page 14; Thinking Report, page 15; Alternative Thought Bank, page 16

SESSION 4

Thinking Controls Behavior

BIG IDEA *Between every situation and every reaction there is a thought, and that thought, not the situation, drives what you feel and do.*

KEY POINTS

- **Your thinking controls your behavior.** Not the situation, not the other person, not what happened to you. The facilitator called this the single most important thing in FORGE: "If you get nothing else from FORGE, get this."
- **The Think-Feel-Act cycle.** Something happens. You have a thought about it, usually fast and automatic. The thought creates a feeling. The feeling drives an action. The action brings a consequence. Every time.
- **Same situation, two outcomes.** A group laughs as you walk through the dorm. Man A thinks, "They're laughing at me," gets angry, and ends up in a confrontation. Man B thinks, "Has nothing to do with me," and keeps his peace. The only difference was the thought.
- **Automatic thoughts feel like facts, but they are stories.** "He's disrespecting me" feels like reality. It is an interpretation, and your brain might be wrong.
- **Many automatic thoughts were once survival strategies.** If disrespect could get you hurt growing up, your brain learned to scan for it. Those habits made sense then. Most of them are not serving you now.
- **The first step is to see the thought before it takes over.** You can't change what you can't see.
- **Ask whether a thought is helpful, not only whether it is true.** Even if the other man really was disrespecting you, a thought that leads to a consequence you don't want is not serving you.
- **The goal is not to stop reacting.** It is to choose your reaction instead of having it chosen for you.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Automatic thought** — a thought that shows up on its own, fast and convincing, before you have chosen it.
- **Consequence** — what happens as a result of what you did.

TOOL: THE THINKING REPORT

Situation	Thought	Feeling	Action	Consequence
What happened? Just the facts, no interpretation.	What went through your mind?	What did you feel? Name it.	What did you do?	What happened as a result?

Write what actually went through your mind, not what you think you should have thought. The point is honesty, not perfection. Your thinking reports are private; no one reads them without your permission.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write 3 more thinking reports** about situations from your own life where you had a strong reaction. It does not have to be a fight: getting frustrated, shutting down, or stewing all day counts.
   Workbook: Thinking Report, page 15
2. **Notice your automatic thoughts as they happen.** Don't try to change them yet. Just say to yourself, "There it is again."

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SESSION 5

Thinking Errors

BIG IDEA *Everyone has thinking errors; the man who grows is the one who learns to catch the error before it drives the action.*

KEY POINTS

- **Thinking errors are habits, not signs of being stupid or crazy.** Everyone in the room has them, the facilitator included. We name them so we can catch them.
- **Closed thinking: "I'm right, period."** Refusing to hear another side. If you are always right, you never grow.
- **Victim stance: "It's not my fault."** Seeing yourself as always acted upon, never the actor. Some men here were truly harmed, and that is real. Victim stance is staying stuck there. "I was harmed, and I need to heal" is honest. "Everything is everyone else's fault" is a thinking error.
- **Lack of empathy: "I don't care how they feel."** Like the man who plays his music loud at midnight and, when someone asks him to turn it down, says "Deal with it." Often it is not cruelty, just not thinking about others at all.
- **Minimizing: "It's not that serious."** "I only pushed him." It is the error that lets you sleep at night after doing something you know was wrong.
- **Power thrust: "I'll make them do it."** Using intimidation or threats to control people. It feels like strength. Real strength is holding power and choosing not to use it destructively.
- **Entitlement: "I deserve it."** Believing the rules don't apply to you. Entitlement is the enemy of service.
- **Cognitive indolence: "I don't want to think about it."** Mental laziness. "I'll talk to him tomorrow" becomes next week, and next week the problem explodes.
- **Discontinuity: "I meant to, but..."** The gap between what you say and what you do. Meaning it is not enough.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Thinking error** — a habit of thinking that bends the facts and pushes you toward harmful behavior.
- **Cognitive indolence** — big words, simple idea: being too lazy to think a problem through.
- **Discontinuity** — good intentions with no follow-through.

HOMEWORK

1. **Catch yourself in 3 thinking errors** before the next session. When you notice one, write down the situation, the thought, and which error it was.
   Workbook: The 8 Thinking Errors, page 14
2. **Learn all 8 thinking errors by name.** Review the reference sheet. Next session you learn how to challenge and replace them.

SESSION 6

Cognitive Restructuring

BIG IDEA *Catch the bad thought, check it, and replace it with one that is more accurate, more helpful, or both.*

KEY POINTS

- **Cognitive restructuring means catching a bad thought and replacing it with a better one.** It is not lying to yourself or pretending everything is fine. It is asking honest questions about your own thoughts.
- **Three questions to ask about any thought:**
  1. Is this thought accurate? Do I have all the facts, or am I filling in blanks?
  2. Is this thought helpful? Even if it's true, is it leading me where I want to go?
  3. Is there another way to see this? What would a calm, clear-headed version of me think?
- **Every thinking error has a challenge.** Victim stance: "I'm in here because the judge had it out for me." Challenge: "I can be angry about the sentence AND honest about my choices." Discontinuity: "I was going to do my homework, but I forgot." Challenge: "Did I really forget, or did I choose not to?"
- **Every challenge does the same thing.** It slows you down, makes you think honestly, and breaks the automatic chain.
- **STOP is the tool you use in the moment,** not just on paper afterward.
- **One breath is the most important part.** It puts a gap between the trigger and your response.
- **Choose what leads to the best outcome in an hour, a day, a week,** not what feels best right now. A man bumps your shoulder in the common area: "One bump isn't worth my peace."

TOOL: STOP

1. **S — Stop.** Pause. Say nothing. Don't move toward the situation. Take one breath.
2. **T — Think.** What am I thinking right now? Is there a thinking error in it?
3. **O — Options.** Come up with at least two ways to respond. There is always more than one.
4. **P — Plan.** Choose the option that leads to the best outcome, not the one that feels best in the moment.

HOMEWORK

1. **Use STOP at least twice before next week,** in a real situation, even a small one. In your journal, write what happened: the situation, whether you stopped, what you thought, the options you saw, and what you chose.
2. **Write at least 2 more thinking reports,** and on each one include the restructured version: the better thought and the new feeling, action and consequence it leads to.
   Workbook: Thinking Report, page 15
3. **Start your alternative thought bank.** In your journal, make two lists: "Thoughts that get me in trouble" and "Thoughts that keep me steady." Add to it all week.
   Workbook: Alternative Thought Bank, page 16

Sample Thinking Reports

FORGE · WEEK 2 · SESSIONS 4 TO 6 · HOW THINKING WORKS

Three completed thinking reports, from the situations the sessions use. The top row is what happened. The shaded row traces the chain with a different thought (Session 6: same situation, a new thought, a new feeling, a new action, a new consequence). Write what actually went through your mind, not what you think you should have thought. The point is honesty, not perfection.

The chow line Session 4

	SITUATION	THOUGHT	FEELING	ACTION	CONSEQUENCE
WHAT HAPPENED	Another man cut in front of me in the chow line.	"He thinks I'm soft. If I let this go, everyone will see."	Anger. Embarrassment.	I confronted him. Got loud. Told him to get to the back.	He got loud back. A CO came over. We both almost got written up. I was worked up for the rest of the day.
A DIFFERENT THOUGHT	(the same)	"This dude's just being impatient. Not worth my energy."	Calm.	Let it go.	Nothing. My day stays mine.

YOUR TURN Which thinking errors do you see in the first thought? Write their names next to it (Session 5).

The laughing group Session 4 (Man A and Man B)

	SITUATION	THOUGHT	FEELING	ACTION	CONSEQUENCE
WHAT HAPPENED	Walking through the dorm, I passed a group of guys. One said something and they laughed. I didn't hear what.	"They're laughing at me. They're disrespecting me. I need to check that right now."	Anger. Adrenaline. Face hot.	Walked up to the group: "You got something to say? Say it to my face."	Confrontation. Maybe a fight. Maybe a write-up. Maybe worse.
A DIFFERENT THOUGHT	(the same)	"Somebody said something funny. Has nothing to do with me."	Nothing in particular.	Walk past. Nod. Go about my day.	Nothing. Peace.

YOUR TURN Which thinking errors do you see in the first thought? Write their names next to it (Session 5).

The shoulder bump Session 6 (with STOP)

	SITUATION	THOUGHT	FEELING	ACTION	CONSEQUENCE
WHAT HAPPENED	In the common area, a guy I have history with walked past and bumped my shoulder. Didn't say anything.	"He did that on purpose. He's testing me."	Anger.	Said something aggressive.	Confrontation.
A DIFFERENT THOUGHT	(the same)	"Is that accurate? I don't know. People bump into each other. One bump isn't worth my peace."	Alert, but steady.	Stay alert. Don't escalate. If it happens again, address it calmly.	My record stays clean. He doesn't get the power to ruin my day.

YOUR TURN Which thinking errors do you see in the first thought? Write their names next to it (Session 5).

The 8 Thinking Errors

FORGE · WEEK 2 · SESSIONS 5 AND 6 · HOW THINKING WORKS

Every one of us has thinking errors. They aren't signs of being stupid or crazy. They're habits: patterns your mind falls into, usually without you knowing it. We name them so you can catch them. Most situations involve more than one. Write the name next to the Thought column of your thinking report.

1 Closed thinking

"I'm right. I don't want to hear it. My mind is made up."

SOUNDS LIKE "That's just the way I am." "I already know what happened. I don't need to hear their side."

IN THE DORM He decides his bunkmate is stealing from him. He won't listen to any explanation.

THE CHALLENGE "Do I really know? Or am I assuming? What would it cost me to listen for 2 minutes?"

2 Victim stance

"It's not my fault. This was done to me. I had no choice."

SOUNDS LIKE "She made me do it." "If I'd had a different upbringing, I wouldn't be here."

IN THE DORM He gets into a fight and says, "He started it. I didn't have a choice."

THE CHALLENGE "I can be angry about the sentence and honest about my choices." ("I was harmed, and I need to heal" is honest.)

3 Lack of empathy

"I don't care how they feel. That's their problem."

SOUNDS LIKE "That's not my problem." "She'll get over it."

IN THE DORM He plays his music loud at midnight. Asked to turn it down: "Deal with it."

THE CHALLENGE "If I was in his situation, how would I feel? What kind of man do I want to be?"

4 Minimizing

"It's not that serious."

SOUNDS LIKE "I only pushed him." "Nobody got hurt. What's the big deal?"

IN THE DORM He borrows something without asking: "Relax, I was going to give it back."

THE CHALLENGE "How did he experience it? The impact matters, not just the degree."

5 Power thrust

"I'll make them do it. I'll force the outcome I want."

SOUNDS LIKE "Nobody's going to punk me." "I need to show these people who's in charge."

IN THE DORM He doesn't like how someone looked at him, so he gets in his face.

THE CHALLENGE "What am I actually trying to accomplish? Is intimidation going to get me what I want?"

6 Entitlement

"I deserve this. I shouldn't have to wait, work, or earn it."

SOUNDS LIKE "I've been here longer, so I get first pick." "I shouldn't have to clean. That's beneath me."

IN THE DORM He takes the best seat in the common area and won't move for anyone.

THE CHALLENGE "Why not? What makes me special? Am I living by Service Over Self?"

7 Cognitive indolence

"I don't want to think about it. I'll deal with it later."

SOUNDS LIKE "Whatever, I'll figure it out." "It'll work out somehow."

IN THE DORM "I'll talk to him tomorrow." Tomorrow becomes next week. Next week the problem explodes.

THE CHALLENGE "Is it going to go away or get worse? What would the man I'm becoming do?"

8 Discontinuity

"I meant to, but..."

SOUNDS LIKE "I was going to apologize, but then I got busy." "I know I said I'd be there, but something came up."

IN THE DORM He promises his kid on the phone he's changing, then acts exactly the same.

THE CHALLENGE "Did I really forget, or did I choose not to? What am I going to do differently right now?"

Three honest questions (Session 6) for any thought: **Is it accurate?** Do I have all the facts, or am I filling in blanks? **Is it helpful?** Even if it's true, is it leading me toward the outcome I want? **Is there another way to see this?** What would a calm, clear-headed version of me think? The man who grows learns to catch the error before it drives the action.

Thinking Report

Use with: Sessions 4, 5 and 6. For more reports, copy the five columns into your journal.

Pick a real situation where you had a strong reaction. Write what actually went through your mind, not what you think you should have thought. Honesty, not perfection.

Situation	Thought	Feeling	Action	Consequence
Another man cut in front of me in the chow line.	*"He thinks I'm soft. If I let this go, everyone will see."*	*Anger. Embarrassment.*	*Got loud. Told him to get to the back.*	*A CO came over. I was worked up all day.*

Session 5: next to each thought, name the thinking error, if there is one.

Session 6 — the restructured version. Take one report above and rewrite it with a better thought. Ask: Is the thought accurate? Is it helpful? Is there another way to see this?

Situation	Better thought	Feeling	Action	Consequence

Alternative Thought Bank

Use with: Session 6 homework. Keep adding to it all week.

Write the automatic thoughts that get you in trouble on the left. On the right, write a thought that keeps you steady instead.

Thoughts that get me in trouble	Thoughts that keep me steady
"He's disrespecting me."	*"This dude's just being impatient. Not worth my energy."*

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WEEK 3

Emotional Literacy

This week: Last week was about your head. This week is about your heart. You learn to name what you feel, read the signals your body sends, calm yourself down before you boil over, and look honestly at what your anger is covering.

This week's worksheets: The Emotion Wheel, page 21; The Escalation Curve, page 22; Emotion Wheel Reference, page 23; Body Map, page 23; Emotion Tracking Log, page 24; Beneath My Anger — Writing Exercise, page 25

SESSION 7

Understanding Emotions

BIG IDEA *Anger is the bodyguard; the real feeling, the one that hurts, is standing behind it.*

KEY POINTS

- **Emotions are the other half.** Thinking was last week. If you understand your thinking and your emotions, "you're operating with a full dashboard instead of driving blind."
- **More words, more choices.** Most men can name four to six emotions. "If 'angry' is the only word you have, angry is all you'll ever feel — and angry is all you'll ever act on."
- **The emotion wheel.** The big emotions sit in the center: anger, sadness, fear, joy, surprise, disgust. Around them are more exact words. Instead of "I'm angry," you can say "I'm resentful." "I feel disrespected and hurt" gives you two things to work with.
- **Anger is almost always a secondary emotion.** Something more vulnerable comes first: fear, shame, hurt, rejection, powerlessness or grief. In here, anger is the one emotion that feels safe to show, so men turn everything into anger. Then you are "treating the bodyguard instead of the person it's protecting."
- **The phone call home.** A man learns his kid's mother is seeing someone new. First he feels hurt, rejection, and fear that his kid will call another man "Dad." Within seconds it turns to anger, and he snaps at his bunkmate. Underneath is "a man in pain who doesn't know what to do with it."
- **Your body knows first.** Anger: clenched jaw, tight fists. Fear: tight stomach, shallow breathing. Shame: heat in your face, wanting to shrink. Sadness: heavy chest, tight throat. "These are not weaknesses. They're data." Catch the tight jaw early and you have time to use STOP.
- **Feel everything, choose your response.** No one is asking you to cry in the dorm, only to know what you feel. "The toughest men I've ever seen aren't the ones who feel nothing. They're the ones who feel everything and choose how to respond."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Secondary emotion** — a feeling that comes second and covers up the first one. Anger is the usual one.

TOOL: THE EMOTION TRACKING LOG

Time	Situation	Emotion	Body signal	Intensity
What time is it?	What's happening?	What am I feeling? Use the wheel.	Where do I feel it in my body?	How strong, 1 to 10?

HOMEWORK

1. **Track your emotions 3 times a day for the rest of the week:** morning, midday and evening. Each time, write the time, what is happening, the emotion (use the wheel), where you feel it in your body, and how intense it is from 1 to 10.
   Workbook: Emotion Tracking Log, page 24
2. **Keep your emotion wheel with you.** When you're not sure what you're feeling, look at it. Go beyond "angry," "fine" and "I don't know."
   Workbook: Emotion Wheel Reference, page 23
3. **Keep writing thinking reports, and make the feeling specific.** Not "angry." What kind of angry? Frustrated? Resentful? Hostile?
   Workbook: Thinking Report, page 15

SESSION 8

Emotional Regulation

BIG IDEA *Catch it early, at Stage 2, because the higher you climb the escalation curve, the harder it is to come back down.*

KEY POINTS

- **Intervene at Stage 2.** When you are agitated, you still have options: breathe, walk away, use STOP. At Stage 4, "your body has taken the wheel." Think of the last time you really lost it and find the moment you felt it building. "That's the window."
- **4-4-4 breathing costs nothing and works anywhere:** the dorm, the chow hall, the phone. Fast, shallow breathing tells your brain "We're in danger." Slow breathing tells it "We're safe." "It's not soft — it's tactical."
- **5-4-3-2-1 grounding is for a racing mind,** like lying on your bunk at night replaying a phone call that went bad. Your senses pull you back to right now.
- **When to use what.** Breathing calms your body. Grounding calms your mind. STOP helps you make a decision. In a real situation you might use all three.
- **You will coach other men through this.** Walk him through a technique, then ask, "What's your level now? What shifted?" You will be "the calm presence in someone else's storm."
- **These tools are for everyday life, not emergencies.** If someone is swinging at you, do what keeps you safe. The phone call that makes your blood boil: breathe. A rumor about you in the dorm: ground. A CO who talks to you like you're nothing: STOP. "Regulation isn't weakness. Regulation is strategy."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Regulation** — turning the volume down on a feeling before it turns you up.

TOOL: THE ESCALATION CURVE

1. **Baseline / Calm.** You think clearly. Be here as much as you can.
2. **Agitated / Triggered.** Heart picks up, muscles tighten, thinking narrows. You can still step in here.
3. **Flooded / Escalated.** Your emotional brain takes over. Most bad decisions get made here.
4. **Crisis / Peak.** Fights happen; words get said that can't be taken back.
5. **Recovery / Cool-down.** You come back to yourself, and regret shows up: "Why did I do that?"

TOOL: BREATHING AND GROUNDING

- **4-4-4 breathing:** breathe in through your nose for 4 seconds, hold for 4, breathe out through your mouth for 4. Three cycles take about 36 seconds.
- **5-4-3-2-1 grounding:** name 5 things you can see, 4 you can touch, 3 you can hear, 2 you can smell, and 1 you can taste.

HOMEWORK

1. **Use a regulation technique at least 3 times before next session:** 4-4-4, 5-4-3-2-1, or STOP. Journal each one: the situation, the technique, and your level before and after.
2. **Keep your emotion tracking log,** 3 entries a day.
   Workbook: Emotion Tracking Log, page 24
3. **Watch another man who starts to escalate.** Where is he on the curve? What body signals do you see? Don't step in. Just observe.
   Workbook: Escalation Curve, page 22

SESSION 9

The Anger Beneath the Anger

BIG IDEA *Once you name what is underneath your anger, "it stops controlling you from the dark."*

KEY POINTS

- **Three things you can do with pain.** Process it: feel it, name it, grieve it. That is the healthy way and the hardest. Numb it: "The bill comes due later. Always." Or convert it into anger, which most men do, "not because they're weak — because they were never taught another way."
- **Stored pain looks for an exit.** Every time you went from zero to a hundred over nothing, "that was stored pain looking for an exit." Like a pressure cooker, it blows at the wrong person, at the wrong time.
- **Four feelings men most often turn into anger:**
  1. **Shame:** "I am bad," not "I did something bad."
  2. **Rejection:** "I'm not wanted." She stops writing; the parole board says no.
  3. **Powerlessness:** "I have no control." Aggression gives a fake power: "I can't control my sentence, but I can control what happens in this dorm."
  4. **Grief:** "I've lost something I can never get back." "You can't punch grief. You can't outrun it."
- **The daughter on the phone.** His daughter sounds distant; her stepdad is taking her to the movies. He feels grief and fear, and he shows anger: he punches his locker. If he can name it, the pain doesn't disappear, but it doesn't explode on innocent people. "Both men hurt. One destroys things. The other endures it with dignity."
- **Recognize, regulate, understand.** That is the whole week: recognize the emotion (the wheel, body signals), regulate it (breathing, grounding, STOP), and understand it (what's beneath the anger). As a mentor, you will see this in other men every day.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Emotional literacy** — being able to read yourself: recognize what you feel, regulate it, and understand where it comes from.

TOOL: BENEATH MY ANGER

Pick a time you were really angry and write:

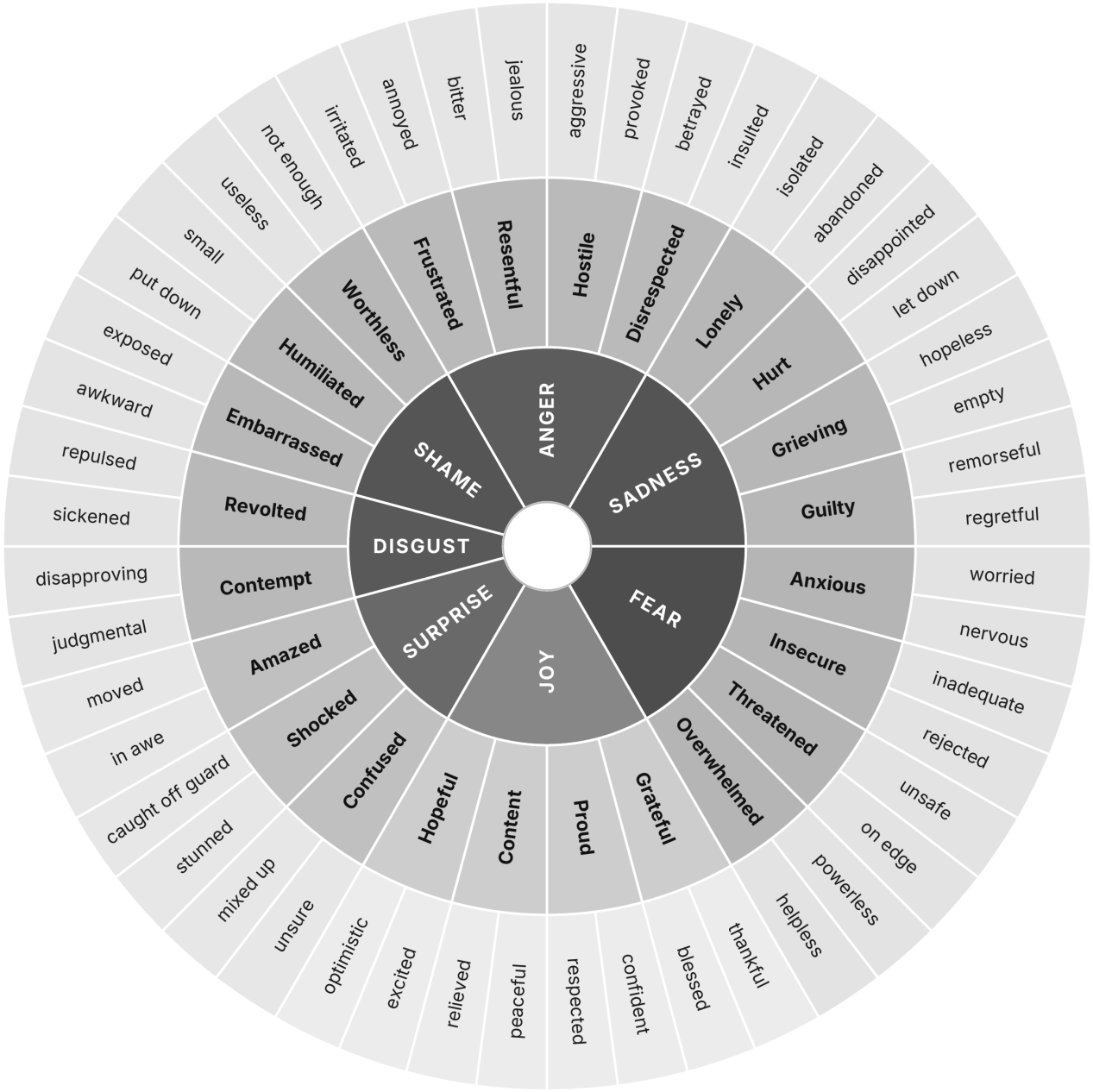
1. **What happened?** Describe the situation.
2. **What did you show?** What did your anger look like on the outside?
3. **What was underneath?** Shame? Rejection? Powerlessness? Grief? Fear? Hurt? Name it.
4. **Where did that deeper emotion come from?** Does it connect to something older, from your childhood, your family, your history?
5. **If you could go back with what you know now,** what would you do differently? What would you let yourself feel?

HOMEWORK

1. **Keep your emotion tracking log.** By next session, have at least 5 days of entries, 3 a day. Look for patterns: times of day, situations or people that bring up the same emotions.
   Workbook: Emotion Tracking Log, page 24
2. **Use your regulation techniques at least once a day.** Journal the result.
3. **Write a second "Beneath My Anger" entry** about a different situation, using the same 5 prompts.
   Workbook: Beneath My Anger — Writing Exercise, page 25
4. **Sit with this question:** "What is one thing that happened to me that I've never fully let myself feel about?" You don't have to write about it yet.

Emotion Wheel

FORGE · WEEK 3 · SESSION 7 · EMOTIONAL LITERACY



HOW TO USE IT

Start in the center with the big emotion. Move out to find the more exact word. “I feel disrespected and hurt” gives you more to work with than “I’m angry.”

IN SESSION

Circle three emotions you felt in the last 24 hours. Don’t use “angry,” “sad” or “fine.” Find the more specific word.

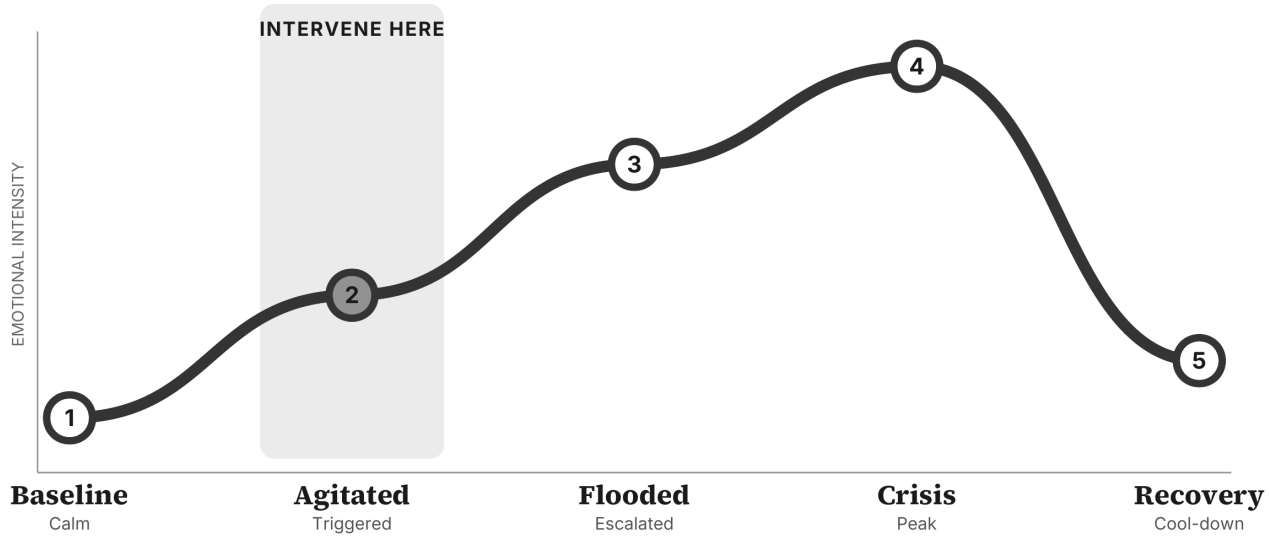
KEEP IT WITH YOU

When you’re not sure what you feel, look at it. Anger often covers something underneath: check the other slices too.

The Escalation Curve

FORGE · WEEK 3 · SESSION 8 · EMOTIONAL REGULATION

How emotional intensity works: how you go from calm to crisis, and what happens at each stage. A map of your own emotional system.



1 · BASELINE / CALM
Your normal resting state. You're thinking clearly. You can make good decisions. Your body is relaxed.

2 · AGITATED / TRIGGERED
Heart rate picks up, muscles tighten, thinking starts to narrow. You're still functional, but you're moving.

3 · FLOODED / ESCALATED
Your emotional brain has taken over. Seeing red. Tunnel vision. Fight-or-flight. Most bad decisions get made here.

4 · CRISIS / PEAK
Full escalation. Fights happen. Things get said that can't be taken back. You're operating on instinct.

5 · RECOVERY / COOL-DOWN
Intensity drops. You come back to yourself. Regret shows up. Minutes or hours, depending on how high you went.

The further up the curve you go, the harder it is to come back down. At Stage 2 you have options: you can breathe, you can walk away, you can use STOP. At Stage 4 you have almost no options; your body has taken the wheel. **So intervene at Stage 2.** Catch it early. Use a technique before you hit Stage 3. Once you're flooded, you're just trying to survive the moment.

4-4-4 breathing
When your *body* is escalating: heart racing, muscles tightening, anger rising. In for 4, hold for 4, out for 4. Three cycles. Calms your body.

5-4-3-2-1 grounding
When your *mind* is spiraling: racing thoughts, replaying, catastrophizing. 5 things you see, 4 you touch, 3 you hear, 2 you smell, 1 you taste. Calms your mind.

STOP
When you need to make a *decision*: Stop, Think, Options, Plan. Structures your thinking. Breathe, ground, then STOP: they work together.

THINK ABOUT IT The last time you lost it, really lost it: can you find the moment you were at Stage 2, when you felt it building but kept going? That's the window. This week, watch a man who starts to escalate: where on the curve is he? What body signals do you see? Don't step in. Just observe.

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WEEK 3 WORKSHEET

Emotion Wheel Reference

Use with: Session 7. Keep it with you. Look at it any time you're not sure what you feel.

The big emotions are on the left, the more exact words on the right. “I feel disrespected and hurt” gives you more to work with than “I’m angry.” **In session:** circle three emotions you felt in the last 24 hours. Don’t use “angry,” “sad” or “fine.”

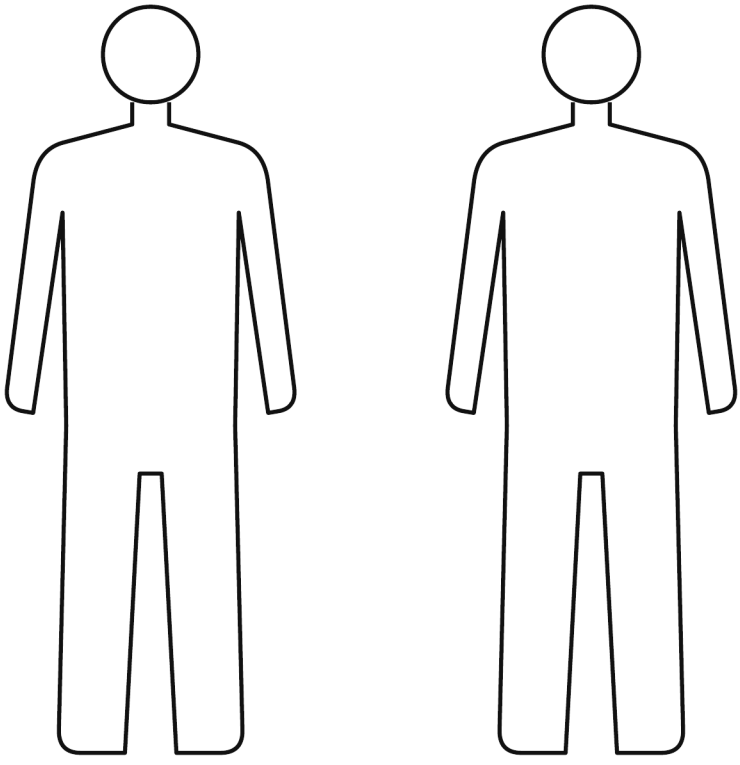
Big emotion	More exact words
Anger	frustrated · irritated · resentful · hostile · bitter · jealous · disrespected · betrayed
Sadness	lonely · hurt · disappointed · hopeless · guilty · grieving
Fear	anxious · insecure · threatened · rejected · inadequate · powerless · overwhelmed
Joy	grateful · proud · content · hopeful · relieved · excited
Surprise	confused · shocked · stunned · amazed · caught off guard
Disgust	contempt · revolted · judgmental · disapproving
Shame	*(some wheels add it)* embarrassed · humiliated · exposed · worthless

WEEK 3 WORKSHEET

Body Map

Use with: Session 7 (in session).

Think of the last time you felt each emotion strongly. Where did you feel it in your body? Mark the spot. Next to each mark, write what it felt like: *tight, hot, heavy, buzzing, hollow.* Not sure? Put a **?** where you think something happens. There is no right answer. **Marks:** anger **X** · fear **O** · shame **///** · sadness **dots** · joy **stars**



Emotion Tracking Log

Use with: Sessions 7–12. Your portfolio needs at least 3 weeks of entries. When this log is full, copy the five columns into your journal.

Three times a day (morning, midday, evening), stop and write: What time is it? What's happening? What am I feeling? (Use the wheel.) Where do I feel it in my body? How strong is it, 1 to 10? Write the date before each day's first entry.

From Week 4 on: when a reaction seems bigger than the situation, ask yourself, "Is this about what just happened, or about something older?"

Time	Situation	Emotion	Body signal	Intensity 1–10
7:30 am	*Mail call. Nothing from home again.*	*Disappointed, lonely*	*Heavy chest*	*6*

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Time	Situation	Emotion	Body signal	Intensity 1–10

Patterns I notice (times of day, situations or people that bring up the same emotions):

WEEK 3 WORKSHEET

Beneath My Anger — Writing Exercise

Use with: Session 9 (first entry, in session) and Session 9 homework (second entry, a different situation).

Write this in your journal. It is private unless you choose to share it. Pick a time you were really angry: a time your anger led to something you regret, or felt bigger than the situation. Use these five prompts:

1. **What happened?** Describe the situation.
2. **What did you show?** What did your anger look like on the outside? What did you do?
3. **What was underneath?** Peel back the anger. Shame? Rejection? Powerlessness? Grief? Fear? Hurt? Name it.
4. **Where did that deeper emotion come from?** Is it new, or does it connect to something older: your childhood, your family, your history?
5. **If you could go back** with what you know now, what would you do differently? Not just the action. What would you let yourself feel?

Stuck? Start with what happened. The rest will come.

After each entry, note what you found. Keep the details in your journal.

Entry	Date	What I showed	What was underneath
1 (in session)			
2 (homework)			

WEEK 4

Trauma Awareness

This week: You learn what trauma is, how it shaped the way you react, and how to spot survival responses in yourself and in other men. The message running through the week: trauma is not an excuse for harmful behavior; it is an explanation that opens a path to change. You finish with a personal plan for coping safely.

This week's worksheets: Trauma: The Three E's, page 29; The Four Trauma Responses, page 30; My Safe Coping Card, page 31; Safe vs. Unsafe Coping Strategies, page 31

SESSION 10

Understanding Trauma

BIG IDEA *Trauma explains the wiring but does not excuse the damage, and once you understand the wiring, you can rewire.*

KEY POINTS

- **Your safety comes first.** You can step out for a minute any time, no explanation needed. "This is FORGE — not therapy. We're going to understand trauma, not treat it."
- **Trauma is not weakness.** "Trauma is a normal human response to abnormal circumstances." A child in a violent home learns to scan for danger and trust no one. The brain doesn't switch that off later, so "it keeps you responding to the past even when you're living in the present."
- **ACEs: Adverse Childhood Experiences.** A large study of over 17,000 people, first published in 1998, tied hardship in childhood to trouble later in life. The ACE questionnaire counts 10 kinds of hardship before age 18: physical, emotional and sexual abuse; physical and emotional neglect; a parent with a substance abuse problem; a parent who was incarcerated; witnessing domestic violence; a parent with a mental health condition; and parental separation or divorce. Each one you lived through counts 1 point toward your ACE score. The higher the score, the higher the risk of nearly every bad outcome, from heart disease to incarceration.
- **This is about the men in this room.** "Among incarcerated men, studies show that 75 to 90% have experienced significant trauma." That doesn't make everyone here a victim. It means something probably happened to you before you made the choices that got you here.
- **An explanation, not an excuse.** If your car keeps pulling right, the bad alignment explains why, but you still caused the damage. "My trauma made me do it" is still victim stance. "My trauma shaped me, but I'm learning to shape myself": that man is free. What happened to you as a child was not your fault; your choices as an adult are your responsibility.
- **You are not alone.** Your ACE score is yours; you never turn it in. But the room saw how many men carry the same kind of history. "Shame lives in secrecy." Healing starts when you see that what you thought made you broken is shared by the men next to you.

TOOL: THE THREE E'S

It takes all three for something to be trauma.

1. **Event** — what happened, once (an assault, a loss) or over years (abuse, chaos at home).
2. **Experience** — how you lived through it: how frightened, how alone, how long, how much control you had.
3. **Effect** — what it did to you going forward.

HOMEWORK

1. **Keep writing on the prompt "How has my past shaped my present?"** At least a full page. If you're not ready to write about specific events, write about patterns in your reactions and choices.
2. **Keep your emotion tracking log.** When a reaction seems bigger than the situation, ask yourself: "Is this about what just happened, or is this about something older?"
   Workbook: Emotion Tracking Log, page 24
3. **Take care of yourself after this session.** Use 4-4-4 breathing and grounding. Talk to someone you trust if you need to. Don't sit alone with heavy feelings if they're pulling you under.

SESSION 11

Trauma Responses in the Dorm

BIG IDEA *"The trigger is in the present. The reaction is from the past."*

KEY POINTS

- **Survival responses fire on their own,** in milliseconds, before your thinking brain has a chance to weigh in.
- **Each one kept somebody alive once.** The kid who fought back, the kid who froze, the kid who pleased the violent adult to keep the peace: each was surviving. The trouble is when the response fires and you're not in real danger. In here we call it "attitude" or "that dude's crazy."
- **It's not about the bump.** When a man goes from zero to a hundred because someone bumped him in the hallway, an old wound has been set off by a present moment.
- **Reacting vs. responding.** Reacting is automatic and belongs to the past. Responding comes after the pause and belongs to the present. Every tool you have learned (STOP, breathing, grounding) makes that gap.
- **See it in other men.** Recognize a man's fight as a survival response and you don't have to match it. Understand a man who freezes and you can give him space.
- **Know your default, and don't judge it.** Most men have a main response and a backup. You might fight with peers but freeze with authority. Knowing your default gives you a chance to change it. The goal is not to get rid of these responses but to keep them from running the show when you're not in danger.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Trigger** — something in the present that sets off an old reaction.

TOOL: THE FOUR SURVIVAL RESPONSES

Response	What your brain says	What it can look like in the dorm
Fight	"Attack it. Overpower it. Destroy it before it destroys you."	A CO tells a man to move from his bunk for count and he explodes. "The CO is just the trigger."
Flight	"Run. Get away."	Bad news from his lawyer, and he sleeps for three days. "Sleep is flight when you can't run."
Freeze	"Go still. Play dead. Disappear."	In a confrontation he just stands there. "It's not cowardice. It's a wired response."
Fawn	"Make it happy. If I give it what it wants, it won't hurt me."	He keeps giving his commissary to a man pressuring him and laughs it off.

HOMEWORK

1. **Notice one trauma response this week, yours or someone else's.** Journal about it: What happened? What was the response? What might have been triggered from the past?
2. **Practice reacting vs. responding at least once before next session.** Catch yourself in a reaction and deliberately shift to a response, using STOP, breathing or grounding. Journal what happened.
3. **Review your thinking reports from the last two weeks** with new eyes. Were any of those situations trauma responses? Were any of your thinking errors your survival system firing?
   Workbook: Thinking Report, page 15

SESSION 12

Coping and Safety

BIG IDEA *Everyone copes; what matters is whether your way handles the pain without creating bigger problems.*

KEY POINTS

- **Unsafe coping works, for a while.** Substance use, violence, isolation, gambling and debt, manipulation, self-harm. "They work — until the consequences hit. And the consequences always hit." If you are hurting yourself, tell the facilitator, "not for punishment, but for help."
- **Safe coping is in your control today.** Exercise, breathing and grounding, journaling, talking to one person you trust, prayer or meditation, creative work, a routine, helping someone else, naming the emotion. "The question isn't whether you have options. The question is whether you'll use them."
- **Self-care in here is basic.** Drink water, eat at chow, get outside when yard is open, sleep at night, keep yourself clean, and say "I'm not okay" to one person. "You can't pour from an empty cup — even in here."
- **FORGE is trauma-aware, not therapy.** It helps you understand trauma, not treat it. Nightmares, flashbacks or suicidal thoughts call for professional support, "and there is no weakness in that."
- **As a mentor: listen, validate, refer.** "You are not a therapist." Always refer when someone talks about hurting himself or someone else, has flashbacks or severe dissociation, is in a mental health crisis beyond a bad day, or tells you about ongoing abuse, including sexual abuse in the facility. Stay with him, keep him safe, and get help.
- **Your toolkit after four weeks.** A thinking error: challenge it and replace it. Escalating: breathe or ground. A decision under pressure: STOP. A trauma response firing: "This is my survival system. I'm not in danger right now. I have a choice."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Safe coping** — handling pain in a way that doesn't create more problems.
- **Trauma-aware** — understanding how trauma affects people, without trying to treat it.

TOOL: YOUR SAFE COPING CARD

Your personal safety plan, small enough to keep in your pocket or journal. When you're at Stage 2 and climbing, pull it out.

1. **My top 2 thinking errors** — the ones I fall into most.
2. **My main trauma response** — fight, flight, freeze or fawn.
3. **My body's early warning signal** — jaw tightens? Chest gets hot? Stomach drops?
4. **My 3 go-to safe coping strategies** — things I will actually do here.
5. **My person** — one person I can talk to when things get heavy.

HOMEWORK

1. **Carry your Safe Coping Card.** Use it at least once before next session. Journal what happened.
2. **Try one new safe coping strategy,** one you have never tried. Push yourself a little outside your comfort zone. Journal the result.
   Workbook: Safe vs. Unsafe Coping Strategies, page 31
3. **Keep up your emotion tracking log and thinking reports.** If they aren't habits yet, recommit. They are the evidence of your growth, and you will need them for your Phase 1 portfolio.
4. **Write a reflection, at least half a page:** "What I understand now about myself that I didn't understand a month ago."

Worksheet: My Safe Coping Card, page 31

Trauma: The Three E's

Use with: Session 10.

SAMHSA (the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) defines trauma with three E's: **Event, Experience and Effect.** It takes all three for something to be trauma.

1 · EVENT

Something happens. It could be a single incident: an assault, an accident, a loss. Or it could be ongoing: years of abuse, neglect, living in a violent environment, poverty, chaos in the home. The event is the thing that happened.

2 · EXPERIENCE

How the person lived through it. Two people can go through the same event and experience it differently. A 5-year-old who witnesses violence experiences it differently than a 25-year-old. A child who has a supportive adult afterward experiences it differently than a child who has no one. The experience includes how frightened you were, how alone you were, how long it lasted, and how much control you had.

3 · EFFECT

The lasting impact. How the event and the experience change you: your brain, your body, your behavior, your relationships, your worldview. The effect is what you carry forward.

Trauma isn't just what happened. It's what happened, how you lived through it, and what it did to you going forward. All three.

Trauma is not about being weak. It is a normal human response to abnormal circumstances. A child's brain adapts to a violent, unpredictable home: it learns to scan for danger, to react fast, to trust no one. Those adaptations made sense there. The problem is that the brain doesn't turn them off when the environment changes. That is what trauma does: it keeps you responding to the past even when you're living in the present.

Trauma is not an excuse for harmful behavior. It is an explanation that creates a pathway to change.

Notes:

The Four Trauma Responses

Use with: Session 11.

When your brain senses a threat, it chooses one of four survival responses, fast and without asking you. Each one made sense once. In the dorm, it can fire at the wrong time.

Response	Your brain says	What it can look like in the dorm
Fight	"The threat is here. Attack it. Overpower it. Destroy it before it destroys you."	A CO tells a man to move from his bunk for a count, and he explodes and gets in the CO's face. His brain isn't answering the CO; it's answering every authority figure who ever hurt him.
Flight	"The threat is here. Run. Get away. Escape."	Bad news from his lawyer, and he sleeps for three days: no chow, no programming. Sleep is flight when you can't run.
Freeze	"The threat is here and I can't fight it or flee from it. Go still. Play dead. Disappear."	In a confrontation he just stands there: doesn't speak, doesn't move. It's not cowardice. It's a wired response.
Fawn	"The threat is here. Appease it. Make it happy. If I give it what it wants, it won't hurt me."	He keeps giving his commissary to someone pressuring him and laughs it off. A survival program installed when he was a child is making him a target.

Most disproportionate reactions are not about the present situation. They are about a past wound being triggered by a present moment.

Reacting is automatic. It happens before thinking. It belongs to the past. **Responding** is conscious. It comes after the pause. It belongs to the present.

Which response do I fall into most? When?

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WEEK 4 WORKSHEET

My Safe Coping Card

Use with: Session 12 (in session) and its homework. It goes in your Phase 1 portfolio.

Your personal safety plan, small enough to carry. Copy it onto a card or inside your journal's cover and keep it with you. When you're at Stage 2 on the escalation curve and climbing, pull it out and use it.

What goes on it	Mine
1. My top 2 thinking errors — the ones I fall into most	1.
	2.
2. My main trauma response — know your default	fight · flight · freeze · fawn *(circle one)*
3. My body's early warning signal — jaw tightens? chest gets hot? stomach drops?	
4. My 3 go-to safe coping strategies — things I will actually do, in here, now	1.
	2.
	3.
5. My person — one person I can talk to when things get heavy	

WEEK 4 WORKSHEET

Safe vs. Unsafe Coping Strategies

Use with: Session 12 and its homework (try one new safe coping strategy).

Unsafe coping works for a while, until the consequences hit. Safe coping handles the pain without creating bigger problems, and all of it is in your control today. Check what you already do, on both sides. Then circle one safe strategy you have never tried, and try it before the next session.

Safe coping	Unsafe coping
☐ Physical activity: push-ups, walking the yard	☐ Substance use: drugs, alcohol, pruno
☐ Breathing and grounding: 4-4-4, 5-4-3-2-1	☐ Violence: letting the pressure out on someone
☐ Journaling	☐ Isolation: not eating, sleeping all day
☐ Talking to one person you trust	☐ Risk-taking: gambling, debt, rule-breaking
☐ Prayer or meditation	☐ Manipulation and control
☐ Creative work: drawing, writing, music	☐ Self-harm
☐ Routine and structure	
☐ Helping someone else	
☐ Naming the emotion: "This is shame."	

If you are hurting yourself, tell the facilitator. Not for punishment. For help.

WEEK 5

Active Listening and Communication

This week: You turn from the work inside you to the man in front of you. You learn how to really listen, how to say what you need without starting a fight, and how to give and take honest feedback. These skills are the base for everything that comes next: conflict resolution, mediation, and mentoring.

This week's worksheets: The 5 Components of Active Listening, page 35; Communication Styles, page 36; SBI Feedback Model, page 37; "I" Statement Practice Sheet, page 38; SBI Practice Sheet, page 39

SESSION 13

Active Listening

BIG IDEA *Hearing happens on its own, but listening is a choice, and it is a skill you can learn.*

KEY POINTS

- **Hearing is passive. Listening is active.** Sound hits your ears whether you want it to or not. Listening takes effort and discipline. Most people are bad at it because no one ever taught them how.
- **Survival mode makes listening harder in here.** You have trained yourself to stay alert and watch your back. When your brain is always scanning for threats, it is hard to focus on the man talking to you.
- **Attending is the foundation.** Looking at the TV or glancing at the door while someone talks says "you don't matter enough for my full attention." In a dorm, full attention is rare, so when you give it, it means something.
- **Reflect the meaning.** Someone says, "My daughter won't answer my calls anymore. I don't know what I did." You say, "You're hurt that she's not picking up, and you're not sure why." Capture the feeling underneath, not his exact words.
- **Validating is the one most people skip, and it matters most.** To validate is to show a man his feelings are real and make sense, without approving of what he did: "I understand why you're angry — I would be too. But swinging on him would have made everything worse." That is validation plus accountability. That is what a mentor does.
- **Know your barriers.** Seven things get in the way: planning your response while he talks, judging him in the first 10 seconds, assuming you know what he will say, jumping to advice too early, getting caught up in your own emotions, distractions, and thinking you are above him. Everyone falls into at least two or three of these. The goal is not perfection. Notice it and come back.
- **Listening is a kind of power.** Not the kind that comes from intimidation. "The kind that comes from making someone feel seen."

TOOL: THE 5 COMPONENTS OF ACTIVE LISTENING

1. **Attending.** Face the person. Make eye contact, not a stare-down. Put down what you are doing. Keep your arms uncrossed.
2. **Reflecting.** Say back the heart of what you heard. "What I'm hearing is..."
3. **Clarifying.** Ask questions so you don't assume. "When you say he disrespected you, what did he actually say or do?" You are not a detective.
4. **Summarizing.** Pull it all together and hand it back, then ask, "Is that right?" That question lets him correct you.
5. **Validating.** "I can see why you'd feel that way." "That makes sense, given what you've been dealing with."

HOMEWORK

1. **Practice active listening in at least 2 real conversations** before the next session. It can be anyone: your cellie, someone at chow. Use the 5 components and see what happens.
2. **Journal about it.** What did you do differently? How did the other person respond? What was hard?

SESSION 14

Communication Styles

BIG IDEA *Assertive communication respects you and the other man at the same time, and it takes more courage than any other style.*

KEY POINTS

- **Everyone has a default style, especially under stress.** You may switch styles in different situations, but most people have a home base. Many men are assertive when little is at stake and something else when it matters most.
- **Aggressive is about winning.** "You better back off before something happens." It usually comes from fear. "Most aggressive communication is armor, not strength." It gets you obedience now and enemies later.
- **Passive is about disappearing.** "Whatever you want is fine." Saying yes when you mean no. Your needs never get met, the anger builds, and one day you explode, and everyone says, "He seemed fine."
- **Passive-aggressive is the most toxic.** It hides anger behind politeness: "I'm not mad," said through clenched teeth while slamming a locker. Sarcasm, the silent treatment, spreading rumors. It never gets resolved. It just festers.
- **Assertive is what FORGE teaches.** "I'm not okay with that. Here's what I need." A calm, steady voice and open posture. You are not trying to win. You are trying to resolve. Aggression, shutting down, and attacking from cover are easy. Being honest and direct at the same time is hard.
- **"You" statements attack. "I" statements own.** An attack on his character, like "You're a snitch," makes a man defensive every time: "Nobody hears anything after 'you're a...'" An "I" statement, like "I feel betrayed that what I told you got shared," describes what happened and how it hit you. It gives him room to respond instead of react.
- **Name a real feeling.** "I feel like you're always talking about me" is a "you" statement in disguise. Stick to real emotions: frustrated, hurt, disrespected, anxious.
- **"I" statements are not weakness.** Writing them on paper is easy. Saying them when someone is in your face is the challenge, and that is why you practice. "The man who stays calm and says 'Here's what I need' while everyone else is losing control — that man has the room. Every time."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Assertive** — saying what you mean clearly and calmly, while respecting both yourself and the other person.
- **Passive-aggressive** — showing anger sideways, under the surface, instead of saying it directly.

TOOL: THE "I" STATEMENT

"I feel [emotion] when [specific behavior] because [impact on me]."

- "You" statement: "You're a slob. You never clean up after yourself."
- "I" statement: "I feel frustrated when the cell doesn't get cleaned up, because I need to live in a space I can feel decent about."

HOMEWORK

1. **Use "I" statements in at least 3 conversations** before the next session. They don't have to be conflicts. "I appreciate when you..." is an "I" statement too.
   Workbook: "I" Statement Practice Sheet, page 38
2. **Journal about your default communication style and where it came from.** When did you first learn to communicate that way? What were you modeling?

SESSION 15

Giving and Receiving Feedback

BIG IDEA *Honest feedback is a service: give it about what a man did, never about who he is, and take it without hitting back.*

KEY POINTS

- **Feedback is a service.** Most of us learned feedback from judges, parole boards, and COs, so we hear it as an attack. But when someone tells you the truth, it means he hasn't written you off. The man who says nothing while you head the wrong way is protecting his own comfort, not your growth.
- **Mentors give feedback all the time.** Without skill, you will either avoid hard conversations, which means you are not leading, or say the truth so harshly that people stop hearing you.
- **SBI keeps feedback clean.** No name-calling, no "you always," no guessing at his motives. Compare "This morning when we were cleaning the common area, you sat on your bunk and didn't participate even though it was your turn on the rotation. The other guys who were cleaning noticed, and I heard two of them talking about it afterward. It's creating resentment," with "You're lazy and you never do your part." Same issue, completely different result. SBI can be positive too; it shows a man what to do more of.
- **Your ego has an immune system.** When feedback comes, your brain starts building a defense. It attacks the truth the same way it attacks an insult, because it can't tell the difference.
- **How to receive feedback:**
    1. Listen fully. Don't interrupt.
    2. Breathe. Buy yourself 3 seconds.
    3. Reflect it back: "So what you're saying is..."
    4. Look for the truth, even a grain of it, and own that part.
    5. Say thank you, even if it stings. That makes it safe for people to tell you the truth.
    6. Don't retaliate later. No cold shoulder in the dorm, no "feedback" of your own to get even.
- **SBI separates the person from the behavior.** You are not telling someone who he is. You are telling him what he did and what it caused.

TOOL: SBI FEEDBACK

1. **S — Situation.** When and where did it happen? A specific moment, not "you always."
2. **B — Behavior.** What did he actually do? Only what you saw or heard. "You were rude" is a judgment. "You started talking before he finished" is a fact.
3. **I — Impact.** What was the effect, on you, on others, on the situation? Impact is where the learning happens.

HOMEWORK

1. **Give one piece of genuine SBI feedback to someone** before next week. It can be positive or constructive. In your journal, write what you said, how he responded, and how it felt. *Workbook: SBI Practice Sheet,* page 39
2. **Practice active listening and "I" statements every day.** Make it a habit, not a technique.
3. **Journal reflection:** "What's the hardest truth someone could tell me right now, and how would I handle it?"

The 5 Components of Active Listening

Use with: Session 13.

1. **Attending**
   Face him, square your body. Eye contact, not a stare-down. Put down what you're doing. Lean in a little, arms uncrossed. Nod.

2. **Reflecting**
   Say back the essence, not word for word: "What I'm hearing is..."

3. **Clarifying**
   Ask questions so you understand: "Can you say more about that?" Not interrogating.

4. **Summarizing**
   Pull it together, and end with: "Is that right?"

5. **Validating**
   His feelings are real and make sense, without endorsing what he did: "I can see why you'd feel that way."

Notes:

Communication Styles

FORGE · WEEK 5 · SESSION 14 · COMMUNICATION STYLES

Everyone has a default way of communicating, especially under stress. Most people never think about it. They just react. Which one is your home base? You might use different styles in different situations; most people do.

	Aggressive	Passive	Passive-aggressive	Assertive
THE GOAL	Domination: to win, to control, to shut the other person down.	Disappearing: avoid conflict at any cost, even your own needs, dignity or safety.	Aggression hidden behind politeness or compliance.	Resolution: respect for you and the other person at the same time.
WHAT IT SOUNDS LIKE	“You better back off before something happens.” “Shut up and listen for once.” Raised voice. Hard eye contact. Invading space.	“Whatever you want is fine.” “I don't care.” (When you do.) “It doesn't matter.” (When it does.) Silence when you should speak up.	“Sure, I'll do it.” (And then you don't.) “I'm not mad.” (Slamming a locker.) “Must be nice to have it so easy.” Sarcasm with an edge. The silent treatment. Rumors.	“When you played your radio past midnight, I couldn't sleep. I need us to figure out a solution.” “I disagree, and here's why.” “I hear you. I see it differently.”
WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	Leaning forward. Finger pointing. Jaw clenched. Chest puffed out.	Looking down. Mumbling. Shrinking. Saying yes when you mean no.	Through clenched teeth. A slammed locker. Deliberate exclusion.	Calm, direct eye contact. Open posture. Steady voice. Standing your ground without puffing up.
WHERE IT COMES FROM	Usually fear: of being disrespected, of losing control, of looking weak. Armor, not strength.	Usually a history of being punished for speaking up. Having a voice got you hurt.	Feeling angry but not safe saying it directly, so it comes out sideways.	Self-respect plus other-respect. You're not trying to win. You're trying to resolve.
WHAT IT GETS YOU	Short-term compliance. Long-term: resentment, isolation, enemies, escalation.	Your needs never get met. Resentment builds. Eventually you explode, and “he seemed fine.”	Confusion and distrust. It poisons relationships slowly. In a dorm it never gets resolved. It festers.	Real respect, not fear. People trust you because they know where they stand.

> **The hard truth:** assertive communication takes the most courage. Aggression is easy: you just react. Passivity is easy: you just shut down. Passive-aggression is easy: you attack from cover. Assertiveness asks you to be honest, vulnerable and direct at the same time. The tool: **“I feel [emotion] when [specific behavior] because [impact on me].”**

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SBI Feedback Model

Use with: Session 15.

S **Situation**
When and where did it happen?
"Last session during the circle process..."

B **Behavior**
What did he actually do? Observable actions only.
"...you started talking before he finished his sentence and changed the subject to your situation."

I **Impact**
What was the effect: on you, on others, on the situation?
"...Marcus went quiet after that and didn't share again for the rest of the session."

Not in it: name-calling · "you always" or "you never" · guessing his intent · judging his character.

Situation. Behavior. Impact. Three pieces. Every time.

Notes:

"I" Statement Practice Sheet

Use with: Session 14 (in session) and its homework.

"I feel [emotion] when [specific behavior] because [impact on me]."

Rewrite each "you" statement as an "I" statement. Name a real feeling: *frustrated, hurt, disrespected, anxious.* Watch out for "I feel like you..." That is a "you" statement in disguise.

Example: "You're a slob." → *"I feel frustrated when the cell doesn't get cleaned up, because I need to live in a space I can feel decent about."*

1. "You're always running your mouth about me behind my back."

2. "You think you're better than everybody because you're in some program."

3. "You never help clean up. You just sit there like a king."

4. "You cut in line and you know it. Don't play dumb."

5. "You told the CO about the phone. I know it was you."

Homework: use "I" statements in at least 3 real conversations before the next session. They don't have to be conflicts. "I appreciate when you..." counts too.

Who I said it to	What I said	How it went

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SBI Practice Sheet

Use with: Session 15 (triads in session) and its homework. Use it again to get ready for the peer feedback in Session 33.

Feedback that is specific, fair and hard to argue with. Three parts, every time. It can be positive, too: it shows a man what to do *more* of. Plan it here before you say it.

The part	Example	In the triad	My real feedback (homework)
S — Situation. When and where? A specific moment, not "you always."	*This morning, when we were cleaning the common area,*		
B — Behavior. What did he actually do? Only what you saw or heard.	*you sat on your bunk and didn't help, even though it was your turn on the rotation.*		
I — Impact. What did it cause, for you, for others, for the situation?	*The other guys noticed. I heard two of them talking about it after. It's creating resentment.*		

Before you say it, check: no name-calling · no "you always" or "you never" · no guessing what he meant · no labels like "lazy" or "selfish."

When you are the one receiving feedback: listen fully · breathe · reflect back what you heard · find the truth in it · say thank you.

Homework: give one piece of real SBI feedback before next week, positive or constructive. Then write in your journal what you said, how he responded, and how it felt.

WEEK 6

Conflict Resolution Deep Dive

This week: You put every skill so far to work under pressure: catching your thinking, calming your body, listening, and speaking assertively. You learn the FORGE 5-step model in depth, how to rate a conflict's heat, how to bring a heated man down, and how to mediate between two other men. This is where theory becomes practice.

This week's worksheets: The Heat Scale, page 44; The FORGE 5-Step Conflict Resolution Model, page 45; Scenario Rating Exercise, page 46; De-escalation Checklist, page 47; Mediation Ground Rules, page 48; Conflict I Faced, page 49

SESSION 16

The FORGE Conflict Resolution Model (Expanded)

BIG IDEA *Read how hot a conflict really is, match your response to it, and work it step by step.*

KEY POINTS

- **Conflict resolution is every skill you've learned, used under pressure.** Your thinking errors will scream at you: "I'm right, they're wrong." "They started it." Your emotions can flood you, and a flooded man can't think.
- **Step 1, Pause & Posture, is the most important.** Skip it and nothing else works. Buy 3 to 5 seconds with the 4-4-4 breathing from Week 3. Shoulders down, hands visible, palms open, body turned slightly to the side, at least arm's length away. It calms him, and it calms you.
- **Step 2, Name the Heat.** "I can tell you're both frustrated right now." Never say "Calm down": "Those two words have never in human history made anyone calm down."
- **Step 3, Facts > Stories.** "He disrespected me in front of everybody" is a story. The fact might be, "He made a comment about my shoes during chow." Give each man 60 seconds, uninterrupted, to say what was said and done. Often the situation turns out smaller than they thought.
- **Step 4, Needs & Options.** Ask, "What do you actually need here? Not what you want to happen to him." Common needs: respect, safety, fairness, space, acknowledgment. Push for at least 2 or 3 options. The first is usually just "He apologizes."
- **Step 5, Agreement & Check-Back.** Who does what, by when, and what happens if it doesn't hold? "'We're cool' is not an agreement. It's a handshake over an unresolved wound." Then check back. If it fell apart, that is information, not failure. Go back to Step 3.
- **Match your response to the heat.** Treating every conflict like an 8 makes you look controlling. Treating an 8 like a 3 can get someone hurt. That is judgment, and it separates a trained mentor from a man who just means well.

TOOL: THE HEAT SCALE

Heat	Looks like	What you do
1–3 Low	TV too loud, a rude comment	The two men talk it out. Often one "I" statement does it.
4–6 Medium	Ongoing tension, disrespect becoming a pattern	The full 5-step model. A mentor may mediate. Most dorm conflicts live here.
7–8 High	Threats, physical posturing, a crowd gathering	De-escalate now. Separate first, resolve later. Consider referring it.
9–10 Red line	Weapons, assault, suicidal statements, gang-directed violence, sexual assault	Don't try to resolve it. Keep yourself safe. Refer to staff immediately.

Before you respond to any conflict, ask: what is the actual number here? Respond to the number, not to your emotions.

HOMEWORK

1. **Memorize the 5 steps.** Be able to say them without looking: Pause & Posture, Name the Heat, Facts > Stories, Needs & Options, Agreement & Check-Back.
2. **Journal about a past conflict you handled poorly.** Walk through it again using the 5-step model. What would you have done differently at each step?

Worksheet: Conflict I Faced, page 49

SESSION 17

De-escalation Techniques

BIG IDEA *You can't argue a man out of his anger, but your body, your voice, and your words can give his brain a reason to come down.*

KEY POINTS

- **Logic doesn't reach a flooded brain.** De-escalation changes what his brain is taking in. When your body, voice, and words say "I'm not a threat, I see you, I'm here to help," his heart rate drops and his thinking comes back.
- **Your body speaks first.** Feet shoulder-width apart, body angled slightly: "Square is confrontational." Hands visible, palms out. Never pockets, crossed arms, fists, or pointing. Give an escalated man more space, not less. Stepping back "is not retreating — it's strategic." Steady eyes, not a stare-down, and a face that is neutral to warm.
- **Pace your voice down.** Lower, slower, and steadier than he is. "If they're at a 7 in volume, you're at a 4."
- **Tactical empathy.** A term from crisis negotiation: show a man you understand his feelings, even when you don't agree with what he's doing. A man says his cellie stole from him: "If someone stole from you, I understand why you're angry. That's your property. That matters. I want to help you figure this out without making things worse for yourself." Notice the "if." You don't take sides on the facts.
- **The redirect.** When a man is stuck in a loop ("He disrespected me. He disrespected me."), validate first. If he keeps looping, move him from what happened to what happens next: "What would resolution look like for you?" Redirect too early and he will feel dismissed.
- **Know the red lines,** the situations beyond a mentor. Weapons. Direct threats of serious violence, with a specific target, intent, and time. Gang-directed conflict. Suicidal or self-harm statements: stay with him, don't leave him alone, and get help. Sexual assault or coercion. In all of these, you step back and refer to staff.
- **Knowing your limits is wisdom, not weakness.** "The bravest thing you can do in a red-line situation is swallow your pride and get help." If you're not sure, refer.

TOOL: TACTICAL EMPATHY PHRASES

- "I can see why you'd feel that way."
- "That makes sense."
- "Anybody in your shoes would be frustrated."
- "I hear you. Let me make sure I understand."
- "What do you need right now?"

Use them until they're second nature.

HOMEWORK

1. **Practice your de-escalation posture** before the next session. Stand in front of a mirror if you can. Check your stance, your hands, and your expression until that position becomes automatic.
2. **Journal:** Write about a time you were escalated and someone, or something, brought you down. What did they do? What worked? If you can't think of a person, what did you do yourself that helped?

SESSION 18

Mediation Skills

BIG IDEA *A mediator is not the judge; he is the mirror who helps two men see the truth and agree on a way forward.*

KEY POINTS

- **Neutral means** you have no stake in the outcome, you don't decide who's right, and you give both men equal respect and equal time. It does not mean you don't care, put up with threats, or stay neutral on Code of Conduct violations.
- **Don't take sides, even when one man is more wrong.** The moment you do, the other man stops trusting you. Ask questions, reflect, and summarize until the facts make it clear. "You're not the judge. You're the mirror."
- **Enforce the ground rules.** That is not taking sides: "We agreed: no insults. If that happens again, we pause the conversation."
- **Don't get triangulated.** That is when two men in a conflict each come to you separately to get you on their side. Then "you're no longer a mediator — you're a weapon." Your answer is always: "I'll help you both, but I won't be a messenger. Let's have the conversation together."
- **When both men are heated:**
    1. Separate first. If both are at a 7 or above, take a break. Check on each man, but don't start the mediation one-on-one.
    2. When you sit down together, name the heat and ask, "Are you willing to try?"
    3. Let the more heated man speak first. He is the bigger risk.
    4. Find the overlap: "You both feel disrespected. You both want this resolved."
    5. If it stalls, take a break and set a time to come back.
- **The structure works:** ground rules, both sides heard, the overlap, a specific agreement, a check-back. Each time you mediate, you show two men that conflict can end without violence or grudges. "You're changing the culture one conversation at a time."

TOOL: FORGE MEDIATION GROUND RULES

Both men agree to these out loud before a word about the conflict is spoken. If someone won't agree, the mediation doesn't happen.

1. **One person speaks at a time.**
2. **No insults, no name-calling, no threats.**
3. **Speak for yourself.** "I felt..." not "Everyone thinks you..."
4. **Be honest.**
5. **Stay until we're done or we agree to pause.** Don't storm off.
6. **What's said here stays here.**

HOMEWORK

1. **Write a reflection in your journal:** What is the hardest part of staying neutral for you personally? Where does your bias show up?
2. **Practice the 5-step model in your head.** When you see a conflict this week, even a small one, walk through the steps. What would you do at each step?
3. **Review your journal entries from the past 5 weeks.** Next week moves from skills to character: accountability and integrity.

The Heat Scale

Use with: Session 16.

Rate the conflict 1 to 10. The number tells you what to do.

HEAT	WHAT IT LOOKS LIKE	WHAT TO DO	KEY SKILL
1–3 LOW HEAT	**Annoyances and minor friction.** TV too loud, things borrowed without asking, a rude comment.	A direct, calm conversation, usually a simple "I" statement. A mentor may not need to be involved.	*Assertive communication*
4–6 MEDIUM HEAT	**Real conflict, escalating emotions.** Ongoing roommate tension, disrespect becoming a pattern, property disputes, broken agreements.	The full 5-step model; a mentor may mediate. Most dorm conflicts live here.	*Active listening, "I" statements, mediation*
7–8 HIGH HEAT	**Serious tension, potential for violence.** Direct threats, physical posturing, a crowd gathering, retaliation being planned.	De-escalate now. Separation first, resolution later. Consider a referral.	*De-escalation, body language, tactical empathy*
9–10 RED LINE	**Imminent danger or beyond a mentor's scope.** Weapons present or mentioned, active assault, suicidal statements, gang-directed violence, sexual assault.	Do not try to resolve it. Keep yourself safe. Refer to staff immediately.	*Knowing your limits*

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The FORGE 5-Step Conflict Resolution Model

Use with: Session 16.

1. **Pause & Posture**
   Don't react. Buy 3–5 seconds (4-4-4 breathing). Shoulders down, hands visible, palms open, turned 15–20 degrees, at least an arm's length away.

2. **Name the Heat**
   "I can see this is heated." Never "Calm down."

3. **Facts > Stories**
   60 seconds each, no interrupting, no insults. What was said and done. Reflect the facts back.

4. **Needs & Options**
   The needs under dorm conflicts: respect, safety, fairness, space, acknowledgment. Push for 2–3 options.

5. **Agreement & Check-Back**
   Who does what, by when, and what happens if it doesn't hold. Check back. If it falls apart, go back to Step 3.

Notes:

Scenario Rating Exercise

FORGE · WEEK 6 · SESSION 16 · THE HEAT SCALE

Rate each scenario on the heat scale, 1 to 10, and write how you'd respond. **Write your rating down first, then we'll discuss.** No shouting out: think before you speak. Match your response to the actual heat level. That's judgment.

1–3 · Low heat	4–6 · Medium heat	7–8 · High heat	9–10 · Red line
TV too loud, a rude comment. The two men talk it out. Often one "I" statement does it.	*Ongoing tension, disrespect becoming a pattern.* The full 5-step model. A mentor may mediate. Most dorm conflicts live here.	*Threats, physical posturing, a crowd gathering.* De-escalate now. Separate first, resolve later. Consider referring it.	*Weapons, assault, suicidal statements, gang-directed violence, sexual assault.* Don't try to resolve it. Keep yourself safe. Refer to staff immediately.

#	SCENARIO	HEAT	HOW I'D RESPOND
1	Your neighbor's radio is louder than it should be after lights-out. It's happened twice this week.	☐	
2	Two men are arguing at the card table. One accuses the other of cheating. Voices are raised but there's no physical posturing yet.	☐	
3	A man finds out someone has been telling people on the yard that he "snitched" to a CO. He tells you he's going to "handle it tonight."	☐	
4	Two cellmates aren't speaking to each other. The tension has been building for a week. Others in the dorm are starting to pick sides.	☐	
5	Someone makes a sarcastic comment about another man's family during a group conversation. The other man stiffens up but says nothing.	☐	
6	You see two men from different parts of the facility standing chest-to-chest in the common area. A crowd is forming.	☐	
7	A man tells you he heard that someone in another dorm has "put a green light" on him.	☐	
8	Someone borrowed your pen last week and hasn't returned it. You've asked twice.	☐	
9	Two FORGE participants are in a heated argument about who's not pulling their weight on a group project. Both are raising their voices.	☐	
10	A man approaches you, visibly shaking, and says someone threatened to stab him if he doesn't pay a debt by tomorrow.	☐	

Where I disagreed with the group, and why *("That's where the interesting conversations are.")*

> Before you respond to any conflict, ask: **what's the actual number here?** Then match your response to the number, not to your emotional reaction.

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De-escalation Checklist

FORGE · WEEK 6 · SESSION 17 · DE-ESCALATION TECHNIQUES

You can't argue a man out of his anger. Logic doesn't reach a flooded brain. You change what his brain is taking in: your body, your voice and your words say **"I'm not a threat, I see you, I'm here to help."** You're not controlling him. You're giving his brain a reason to come down.

1 · CHECK THE HEAT FIRST

- ☐ **7–8?** De-escalate now. Preventing violence comes first. Separate first, resolve later.
- ☐ **9–10?** A red line. Don't try to resolve it. Keep yourself safe. Step back and refer (bottom right).
- ☐ **Pause.** 3 to 5 seconds. 4-4-4 breathing: in for 4, hold for 4, out for 4. Walk in calm. Your energy sets the tone.

2 · YOUR BODY speaks first

- ☐ **Stance.** Feet shoulder-width apart, weight balanced. Not leaning in, not leaning back. Turn 15–20 degrees to the side. *Square is confrontational.*
- ☐ **Hands.** Visible at all times: at your sides, palms slightly forward, or raised gently to chest level, palms out. *Never pockets, crossed arms, fists or pointing.*
- ☐ **Distance.** At least arm's length. If he's escalated, give him **more** space, not less. If he moves toward you, step back calmly. *Creating space is strategic, not retreating.*
- ☐ **Eyes.** Steady, not hard. Soften your gaze to the bridge of his nose. If he looks away, don't chase it.
- ☐ **Face.** Neutral to warm. Not blank, not smiling. *Someone who cares and isn't scared.*

3 · YOUR VOICE pace it down

- ☐ **Volume.** Drop below his. *"If they're at a 7 in volume, you're at a 4."*
- ☐ **Speed.** About 30% slower. Put… pauses… between… your sentences.
- ☐ **Pitch.** Lower, in the low range of your natural voice. Steady.

> Not: "Hey, you need to stop right now, this isn't going anywhere good!"
> But: "Hey… I hear you. I can see this is real for you. Let's talk about it."

4 · YOUR WORDS tactical empathy

- ☐ "I can see why you'd feel that way."
- ☐ "That makes sense."
- ☐ "Anybody in your shoes would be frustrated."
- ☐ "I hear you. Let me make sure I understand."
- ☐ "What do you need right now?"

Never: "Calm down." "It's not that serious." "You need to relax."

> "**If** someone stole from you, I understand why you're angry. That's your property. That matters. I want to help you figure this out without making things worse for yourself." *Validate the feeling. Don't take sides on the facts. Point toward a way out.*

5 · IF HE KEEPS LOOPING the redirect

Validate first. Redirect second. Too early and he feels dismissed.

- ☐ "I hear you on what happened. Now help me understand — what would resolution look like for you?"
- ☐ "If you could wave a magic wand and fix this, what would that look like?"
- ☐ "What outcome are you looking for here?"
- ☐ "What's the best-case scenario you'd accept?"

RED LINES · STEP BACK AND REFER

- ☐ **Weapons:** mentioned, seen or suspected, even "for protection." Get yourself out of immediate danger. Don't try to disarm or negotiate.
- ☐ **Direct threats of serious violence:** a specific target, intent and time: "I'm going to hurt him. Tonight."
- ☐ **Gang-directed conflict:** recognize it, step back, refer. Don't mediate it.
- ☐ **Suicidal or self-harm statements:** stay present, listen, **don't leave him alone**, and get help.
- ☐ **Sexual assault or coercion:** staff, immediately. Don't confront the man doing it.

Not sure? Refer. It's better to refer unnecessarily than to not refer when someone is in danger.

Here, I go to: *(your facilitator gives you this)* _____

> **Knowing your limits is wisdom, not weakness.** The bravest thing you can do in a red-line situation is swallow your pride and get help.

Mediation Ground Rules & Agreement

FORGE · WEEK 6 · SESSION 18 · MEDIATION SKILLS

For the triad practice in Session 18 (The Shared Space, The Rumor, The Debt), and to walk through a mediation in your head. You're not the judge. You're the mirror. Write **A** and **B**, never names: what's said here stays here.

BEFORE YOU START · GROUND RULES before a word about the conflict is spoken

"Before we start, I need both of you to agree to some ground rules. These aren't optional — they're what make this work. Can I go through them?" Then, after each one: "Can you commit to that? Both of you?"

		A agrees	B agrees
1	**One person speaks at a time.** When it's not your turn, you listen.	☐	☐
2	**No insults, no name-calling, no threats.** Attack the problem, not the person.	☐	☐
3	**Speak for yourself.** "I felt..." not "Everyone thinks you..."	☐	☐
4	**Be honest.** It starts with the truth. Both of you.	☐	☐
5	**Stay until we're done or we agree to pause.** Need a break? Say so. Don't storm off.	☐	☐
6	**What's said here stays here.** It doesn't become dorm gossip.	☐	☐

If someone won't agree to the ground rules, the mediation doesn't happen. If a rule is broken during it, you enforce it: "We agreed: no insults. If that happens again, we pause the conversation." That's not taking sides.

STEPS 1–2 · PAUSE & POSTURE, NAME THE HEAT

Heat now: A _____ B _____ Both at 7 or above? **Separate first.** Check on each man; don't start the mediation one-on-one.

Sitting down together: name the heat, then ask, "Are you willing to try?" The more heated man speaks first.

STEP 3 · FACTS > STORIES what was said and done, not what he thinks it meant

A's facts

B's facts

The overlap *("You both feel... You both want...")*

STEP 4 · NEEDS & OPTIONS "What do you actually need here? Not what you want to happen to him."

A needs respect · safety · fairness · space · acknowledgment

B needs respect · safety · fairness · space · acknowledgment

Options *(push for at least 2 or 3; the first is usually just "He apologizes")*

1

2

3

STEP 5 · AGREEMENT & CHECK-BACK "We're cool" is not an agreement

WHO	DOES WHAT	BY WHEN	IF IT DOESN'T HOLD

Check-back with both of them on: _____ **Did it hold?** ☐ Yes ☐ No: that's not failure, it's information.
Go back to Step 3 and find what was missed. **If it stalls,** take a break and set a time to come back.

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Conflict I Faced

Use with: Session 16 homework. For Session 18, walk a conflict you see through the same five steps in your head.

Pick a past conflict you handled poorly. Walk it back through the 5-step model. At each step, what did you do then, and what would you do differently now? Write the rest of the story in your journal.

The conflict _____ **Heat then (1–10)** _____

Step	What I did then	What I would do now
1. Pause & Posture		
2. Name the Heat		
3. Facts > Stories		
4. Needs & Options		
5. Agreement & Check-Back		

WEEK 7

Accountability and Integrity

This week: You move from skills to character. You look honestly at where you stand in owning your choices, test your decisions for integrity, and begin facing the full harm your actions caused. This is the hardest week so far, and it is the work that changes men.

This week's worksheets: The Accountability Spectrum, page 54; The 4 Tests of Integrity, page 55; My Accountability Statement, page 56; Impact Awareness Letter, page 57

SESSION 19

Personal Accountability

BIG IDEA *Accountability means honestly owning the harm your choices caused and committing to change, and it sets you free instead of crushing you.*

KEY POINTS

- **What accountability is not.** Not self-punishment; that is "shame wearing a costume." Not a performance for a parole board. Not a trade: "Real accountability doesn't come with a receipt." Not selective: you own all of your part.
- **What accountability is.** Honestly admitting that your choices created harm, to yourself, to others, and to your community, plus a real commitment to behave differently.
- **Accountability is liberation.** As long as you deny, minimize, or blame, you carry the weight of a lie, and the lie takes energy to keep up. When you put it down, the weight lifts. "Not the consequences. The weight."
- **Watch the small words.** "Just" is "a verbal eraser." "Every word after 'but' erases what came before it." And blaming the other man doesn't hold up: "He didn't reach inside your brain and move your fist."
- **Full accountability holds two truths.** "I grew up in violence, I was addicted, I had no support — AND I chose to rob that man. Both things are true. My background explains how I got there. It doesn't excuse what I did."
- **Guilt says "I did something bad." Shame says "I am bad."** Guilt is about what you did, and it pushes you to change. Shame is about who you are, and it pushes you to hide, numb out, or do more harm. A quick test: if this work makes you feel determined, that is guilt doing its job. If it makes you feel worthless, that is shame. Say something; don't sit in it alone. "Shame thrives in isolation. It dies in the light."

TOOL: THE ACCOUNTABILITY SPECTRUM

Level	What it sounds like
1. Denial	"I didn't do it." "The system set me up."
2. Minimization	"It wasn't that serious." "Nobody really got hurt."
3. Blame-shifting	"He started it." "I had no choice."
4. Partial ownership	"I messed up, but..." Where most people get stuck.
5. Full accountability	"I did this. It caused this harm. There is no excuse. I am committed to being different."

Wherever you are is where you start. There is no judgment for being at a 2 or a 3, "only judgment if you stay there and pretend it's a 5."

Your accountability statement is about one specific harm you caused. No excuses, no "but," no shame spiral: "I [specific action]. This caused [specific harm to specific people]. I take full responsibility for this choice. I am committed to [specific change]." It is private, but "accountability that stays inside your head is half-finished."

HOMEWORK

1. **Identify one area of your life where you're still in denial or minimization.** Write about it in your journal. Don't try to fix it yet. Just see it clearly.
   Workbook: Accountability Spectrum, page 54
2. **Re-read your accountability statement.** Does it hold up? Is there a "but" hiding in it? If so, rewrite it without the qualifier.
   Workbook: My Accountability Statement, page 56

SESSION 20

Integrity Under Pressure

BIG IDEA *Integrity means your values, your words, and your actions match, even when it costs you, because pressure doesn't build character, it reveals it.*

KEY POINTS

- **Integrity is the alignment between your values, your words, and your actions.** Your values are what you say matters to you. Your words are your promises. Your actions are what you actually do, every day, when nobody's watching. When the three don't line up, "that gap is where trust dies."
- **Integrity is not perfection. It is consistency.** The man who admits he messed up and works to repair it has more integrity than the man who never makes a mistake because he never takes a risk.
- **It is tested every day in here.** You face moments when the easy path and the right path are different: cutting corners, going along with something you know is wrong, staying quiet when you should speak up.
- **"Pressure doesn't build character. It reveals character."** Who you are when you're scared, angry, or unwatched is who you really are. FORGE cares about who you are when doing right costs you something.
- **Run the 4 tests.** None of them is about what other people think of you. If a choice fails even one, reconsider.
- **Hard choices have no clean answers.** In groups you worked through four: holding a friend's bag before a shakedown, seeing a cohort member take another man's commissary, being invited into a rule-breaking hustle, and being tempted to lie in an interview to get an opportunity. In real life, integrity often costs you a friendship, an opportunity, comfort, or belonging. "The pressure is the cost."
- **Nobody gets it right every time.** The man with integrity makes the hard choice more often than not. When he fails, he admits it, learns from it, and recommits.

TOOL: THE 4 TESTS OF INTEGRITY

1. **The Mirror Test.** Can you look yourself in the eye after this choice? Tonight, lying in your bunk, can you live with it?
2. **The Public Test.** Would you do this if everyone was watching? Even when no one is, you're watching yourself.
3. **The Child Test.** Would you want your child to see this, or to do this? If you have no children, think of a nephew, a younger brother, or a mentee who copies you.
4. **The Legacy Test.** Is this the man you want to be remembered as? Every decision is building or destroying the man you're becoming.

HOMEWORK

1. **Journal about the ethical dilemma that was hardest for you.** Walk through your thinking. Where did you get stuck? What did the tests reveal?
2. **Notice one moment where your integrity is tested** before the next session. It can be small. Write about what you did and whether it passed the tests.

SESSION 21

Making Amends and Moving Forward

BIG IDEA *You can't undo the harm you caused, but you can live so the rest of your life stands in contrast to it.*

KEY POINTS

- **This is not punishment.** It is "the difference between regret that destroys you and accountability that transforms you."
- **Restorative accountability asks three questions punishment never asks:** Who was harmed? What do they need? Whose obligation is it to meet those needs? It doesn't replace your sentence. It adds understanding.
- **Harm ripples out like a stone thrown in water.** First your primary victims, the people you directly harmed. Then secondary victims, the people connected to them: the woman you robbed has a daughter who saw her come home shaking. Then your own family, who are "serving time too." Then the community.
- **Don't let the ripple push you into shame.** "You did cause harm. You are also here, doing the hardest work of your life. Both things are true."
- **An apology is words. Amends is action.** "An apology alone, without change, is just a sound."
- **Direct amends may never be possible.** The person may not want to hear from you, or may have passed away. "It changes the form of amends, not the obligation."
- **Living amends** means the rest of your life stands in contrast to the harm. Every act of service, every conflict you de-escalate, every young man you mentor away from the path you took. It doesn't erase the past. It means "the past doesn't get the last word."
- **The impact awareness letter is for you.** It is not sent, not for a parole board, not for your victim. It may bring up tears, anger, or numbness; stop and breathe if you need to. Don't write what you think someone wants to read. It goes in your portfolio. In 6 months you will read it again and see how you've grown.

TOOL: THE IMPACT AWARENESS LETTER

1. **What I did.** Plain, specific truth. No minimizing, no legal language. "I [did this] to [this person]."
2. **The impact on my primary victim(s).** What did your actions do to their life, safety, trust, body, mind? If you don't know, imagine honestly. Don't make it better than it was.
3. **The ripple: who else was affected?** Their family, their community, your family, your community. Name each and describe the impact.
4. **What I understand now that I didn't then.**
5. **Who I am becoming.** Not who you wish you were, but who you are actively working to become. What does living amends look like for you?

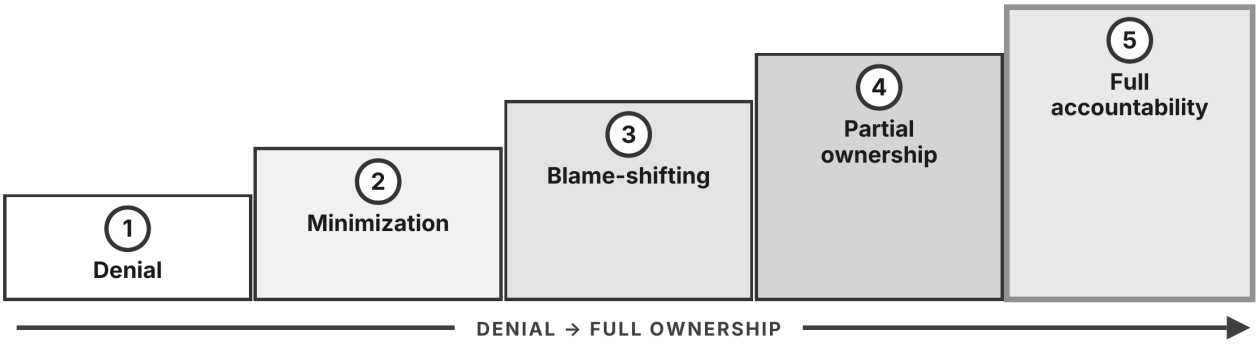
HOMEWORK

1. **Complete the impact awareness letter.** All five parts. Take your time. Be thorough. Be honest.
   Workbook: Impact Awareness Letter, page 57
2. **Journal reflection:** "What is one thing I can do this week — one specific act — that represents living amends?"
3. **Read ahead in your handbook on empathy and perspective-taking.** Next week you turn from looking inward to looking outward.

The Accountability Spectrum

FORGE · WEEK 7 · SESSION 19 · PERSONAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Accountability isn't a switch you flip from off to on. It's a spectrum. Most people move along it over time. Five levels, from denial to full ownership:



1 · DENIAL

"I didn't do it." "It wasn't me." "The system set me up."

You can't change something you won't admit exists.

2 · MINIMIZATION

"It wasn't that serious." "Nobody really got hurt." "It was just..."

"Just" is a verbal eraser. The people who were harmed don't experience it as small.

3 · BLAME-SHIFTING

"He started it." "She made me do it." "I had no choice."

He didn't reach inside your brain and move your fist. You decided.

4 · PARTIAL OWNERSHIP

"I messed up, but..." "I take responsibility for my part, but he..."

Every word after "but" erases what came before it. Where most people get stuck.

5 · FULL ACCOUNTABILITY

"I did this. It caused this harm. There is no excuse. I am committed to being different."

No "but." No conditions. Your background explains how you got there. It doesn't excuse what you did.

> **Full accountability holds two truths.** "I grew up in violence, I was addicted, I had no support — AND I chose to rob that man. Both things are true. My background explains how I got there. It doesn't excuse what I did. I caused harm. I own that."

Wherever you are is where you start. There's no judgment for being at a 2 or a 3. There's only judgment if you stay there and pretend it's a 5. **Growth means movement. Not perfection.**

WHERE I STAND · private: nobody has to share

Be honest with yourself. Not where you want to be. Not where you think you should be. Where you actually are. This is between you and the page. (Rather keep it off this page? Write the number in your journal.)

1 2 3 4 5

One area of my life where I'm still in denial or minimization *(Session 19 homework: don't try to fix it yet — just see it clearly; keep writing in your journal)*

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The 4 Tests of Integrity

Use with: Session 20.

Integrity is the alignment between your values, your words, and your actions.

1 The Mirror Test
Can you look yourself in the eye after this choice?

2 The Public Test
Would you do this if everyone was watching?

3 The Child Test
Would you want your child to see this? Would you want your child to do this?

4 The Legacy Test
Is this the man you want to be remembered as?

Four tests. Mirror. Public. Child. Legacy.

A choice I'm facing, and what the four tests say about it:

My Accountability Statement

Use with: Session 19 (in session) and its homework.

Pick one harm you know you are responsible for: the crime that brought you here, something you did to family, or to someone in this facility. It is private. You share it only if you choose to, and you can write it in your journal instead.

The rules. Name what you did, specifically. Name the harm and who it hurt. No excuses, no "but." No shame spiral: "I did this, and this is what it caused," not "I'm a terrible person." End with a commitment.

I ... ***(what I did, specifically)***

This caused ... ***(the specific harm, to specific people)***

I take full responsibility for this choice.

I am committed to ... ***(a specific change)***

Homework: does it hold up? Re-read it. Is there a "but" hiding in it, or an excuse? If so, rewrite it without the qualifier.

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Impact Awareness Letter

Use with: Session 21 (start it in session) and its homework (finish all five parts before next week). It goes in your Phase 1 portfolio.

Write it in your journal. The letter is not sent, not to a parole board, not to the person you harmed. It is for you. Don't write what anyone wants to read; write what's true. Check off each part when it's written.

- ☐ **Part 1 — What I did.** The action, the harm, in plain words. No minimizing, no legal language. "I [did this] to [this person]."
- ☐ **Part 2 — The impact on my primary victim(s).** What did it do to their life, safety, trust, body, mind? What did they lose? If you don't know, imagine it honestly. Don't make it better than it was.
- ☐ **Part 3 — The ripple: who else was affected?** Their family, their community, your family, your community. Name each one and the impact.
- ☐ **Part 4 — What I understand now that I didn't then.**
- ☐ **Part 5 — Who I am becoming.** Not who you wish you were: who you are working to become. What does living amends look like for you?

If it gets heavy, stop and breathe. Talk to the facilitator or a cohort member afterward.

WEEK 8

Social Skills and Perspective-Taking

This week: You turn the lens outward. You learn to see a situation through other people's eyes, to read what is happening in a room and what your own presence says, and to build relationships that make you stronger instead of pulling you back. This is how you live out the personal work you have done.
This week's worksheets: Perspective-Taking, page 61; Relationship Map, page 62

SESSION 22

Empathy Development

BIG IDEA *Empathy is not something you are born with or without; it is a skill you can rebuild, and it starts with seeing the other person as fully human.*

KEY POINTS

- **Accountability needs empathy.** You can't fully own the harm you caused until you can see it through the eyes of the people you harmed. Empathy is not a soft skill. It is a survival skill and a leadership skill.
- **Cognitive empathy is understanding what someone thinks.** Your bunkmate is angry about a write-up he says he didn't earn. You don't have to agree. You can still see why he's angry: he feels falsely accused, powerless, disrespected. This is the empathy that makes you a better mediator and mentor.
- **Emotional empathy is feeling some of what he feels.** A man tells you his mother just died, and your chest gets tight. Too little and you come across as cold. Too much and you drown in it. The goal is to feel it and stay grounded.
- **Compassionate empathy is being moved to help.** Understanding and feeling lead to action, not out of pity or to look good, but because you see his humanity. This is Service Over Self in action.
- **Empathy is a skill, not a personality trait.** Some of you had it trained out of you by your environment, by trauma, by survival. That doesn't mean it's gone. It means it needs rebuilding.
- **Most harm happens when someone stops seeing a person as human.** The other man becomes "an obstacle. A target. A means to an end." Empathy doesn't make you a pushover. It means you deal with people as people.
- **Seeing every side doesn't mean everyone is right.** In some situations someone clearly did wrong. But understanding why lets you respond instead of just react. "A man who can only see his own perspective is a man who will keep making the same mistakes."

TOOL: FOUR VIEWPOINTS

Take one situation and look at it through four sets of eyes: **the person who caused the harm, the person who was harmed, a bystander who saw it, and a family member** of someone involved. For each one, ask:

1. What is this person thinking?
2. What is this person feeling?
3. What does this person need?

HOMEWORK

1. **Write half a page from the perspective of someone you've harmed,** anyone, any time in your life. Not your view of what happened; theirs. What were they thinking? What were they feeling? What did they need that they didn't get from you? It will be uncomfortable. "That's how you know it's working."

Worksheet: Perspective-Taking, page 61

SESSION 23

Reading the Room

BIG IDEA *You already have radar for a room; now you learn to use it on purpose, to read other people and to check what your own presence is saying.*

KEY POINTS

- **You already read rooms.** Most men here know within seconds of walking into the dayroom when something is wrong. That radar is called social awareness. The goal is to make it conscious, so you respond with intention instead of reacting on instinct.
- **Watch the body, not just the words.** Eye contact, posture, hands, how close someone stands, quick flashes on the face, tone and pace, breathing. Watch for changes: "Someone who was open and then crosses their arms? Something just changed." In a conflict, always watch the hands.
- **Every group has a structure.** "In a dorm, there's no org chart on the wall." But everyone knows who has influence. Watch who people look at when a decision needs to be made. That is the real leader, whatever his title.
- **Notice who is not being heard.** The quiet ones may be observing, thinking, or feeling unsafe. Who sits with whom shows alliances and who is left out. How a group reacts when someone breaks an unwritten rule shows its real values.
- **Read before you act.** When you are a mentor in a dorm, your first job is not to fix anything. It is to read the room: who the players are, where the tension lives, what is said and what is not. Step in without that and you'll make things worse.
- **Your presence changes the room.** Some men walk in and people relax. Others walk in and conversations go quiet. A mentor must be the first kind, "not because you're soft — because you're safe." How you carry yourself, greet people, and acknowledge them are choices. "Your body language speaks before you do."
- **Practice dual awareness.** Be in the conversation and watch it at the same time. "You're training your eyes the way a musician trains their ears."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Social awareness** — noticing what is going on with the people around you: their moods, the tension, who has influence.

TOOL: THE OBSERVATION QUESTIONS

1. Who spoke the most? Who spoke the least? Who didn't speak at all?
2. Who did people look at when they wanted agreement or support?
3. What nonverbal cues did you notice: posture shifts, facial expressions, gestures?
4. Was there a moment when the group's energy shifted? What caused it?
5. Was anyone left out, on purpose or not?
6. What was the overall mood of the group? Did it change?

HOMEWORK

1. **Do a 15-minute silent observation** in a common area, like the dayroom or chow hall, before the next session. Don't interact. Just watch. In your journal, answer the six observation questions.

SESSION 24

Building Pro-Social Relationships

BIG IDEA *The right people hold you up and the wrong people pull you down; learn to tell the difference and have the courage to act on it.*

KEY POINTS

- **Relationships were a factor in what brought most of us here,** and they will be the biggest factor in staying on a different path.
- **Healthy or toxic?** Healthy relationships have mutual respect, honesty, support for your growth, accountability, boundaries, and safety. Toxic ones have control, one-way loyalty, enabling, keeping score, drama, and pushback when you try to change: "You think you're better than me now?"
- **You don't have to cut people off tomorrow,** but be honest about which kind each relationship is. "A man who is trying to change while surrounded by people who benefit from him staying the same is fighting with one hand tied behind his back."
- **A boundary is a line you draw** around what you will and won't accept, from others and from yourself. "It's not a wall. It's not a weapon." Having boundaries is strength. A mentor without them burns out.
- **Five kinds of boundaries:** physical ("Don't touch my stuff"), emotional ("I hear you, but I can't take that on right now"), behavioral ("I'm not going to be around that conversation"), time and energy ("I can talk to you about this tomorrow, but not right now"), and relational ("I'm your mentor, not your errand runner").
- **FORGE brotherhood is not "I've got your back no matter what."** That is "a pact to stay stuck together." FORGE brotherhood says: "I care about you enough to tell you the truth. I support your growth, not your comfort." In FORGE, we call people in, privately and with care. We don't call them out to shame them.
- **Map your relationships.** Draw three circles like a target: you in the center, your inner circle next, people at more distance in the outer ring. Mark each person **+** (supports your growth), **–** (works against it), or **?** (not sure yet). You can't always remove people in here, but you choose how much influence they get. Every man in the FORGE circle should be a plus sign for every other man.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Pro-social** — healthy; a pro-social relationship supports your growth instead of pulling you back.

TOOL: HOLDING SOMEONE ACCOUNTABLE WITHOUT LOSING HIM

1. **Lead with care,** not judgment.
2. **Be specific.** Not "you're messing up," but what you have actually seen.
3. **Ask before you tell.** "What's going on with you?"
4. **Own your perspective.** "I'm worried about you."
5. **Respect his choice.** You don't control him.
6. **Stay in the relationship.** Accountability is not rejection. Don't ice him out after the hard talk.

HOMEWORK

1. **Strengthen one pro-social relationship this week through intentional action.** Do what you committed to in the closing circle. Write about it in your journal.
2. **Review your relationship map.** Pick one person with a minus sign and write about what a healthy boundary with that person would look like. You don't have to act on it yet. Just get clear on what the boundary would be.
   Workbook: Relationship Map, page 62

Perspective-Taking

Use with: Session 22 (group exercise).

Your group gets one situation. Get inside the head of each of the four people and answer three questions for each one: What is this person thinking? What is this person feeling? What does this person need? This is not about who is right. It is about seeing the whole picture.

Circle your group's situation:

1. A man steals another man's commissary while he is at a visit. Confronted, he denies it. Witnesses saw it happen and say nothing.
2. A newer man sits in the chair of a man with status and changes the channel without asking. The man with status threatens him loudly in front of everyone.
3. A man three months into FORGE curses at a CO in front of the dorm. He gets written up and sent to the hole for 10 days.
4. A man learns from a letter that his wife is leaving him. He goes quiet for three days: stops eating, stops talking. His bunkmate tells everyone to leave him alone because "he just needs space."

Viewpoint	Thinking	Feeling	Needs
The person who caused the harm			
The person who was harmed			
A bystander who saw it			
A family member of someone involved			

Which viewpoint was hardest to get into? Why?

Homework (journal): think of someone you have harmed, anyone, any time in your life. Write half a page from *their* view. What were they thinking? What were they feeling? What did they need that they didn't get from you?

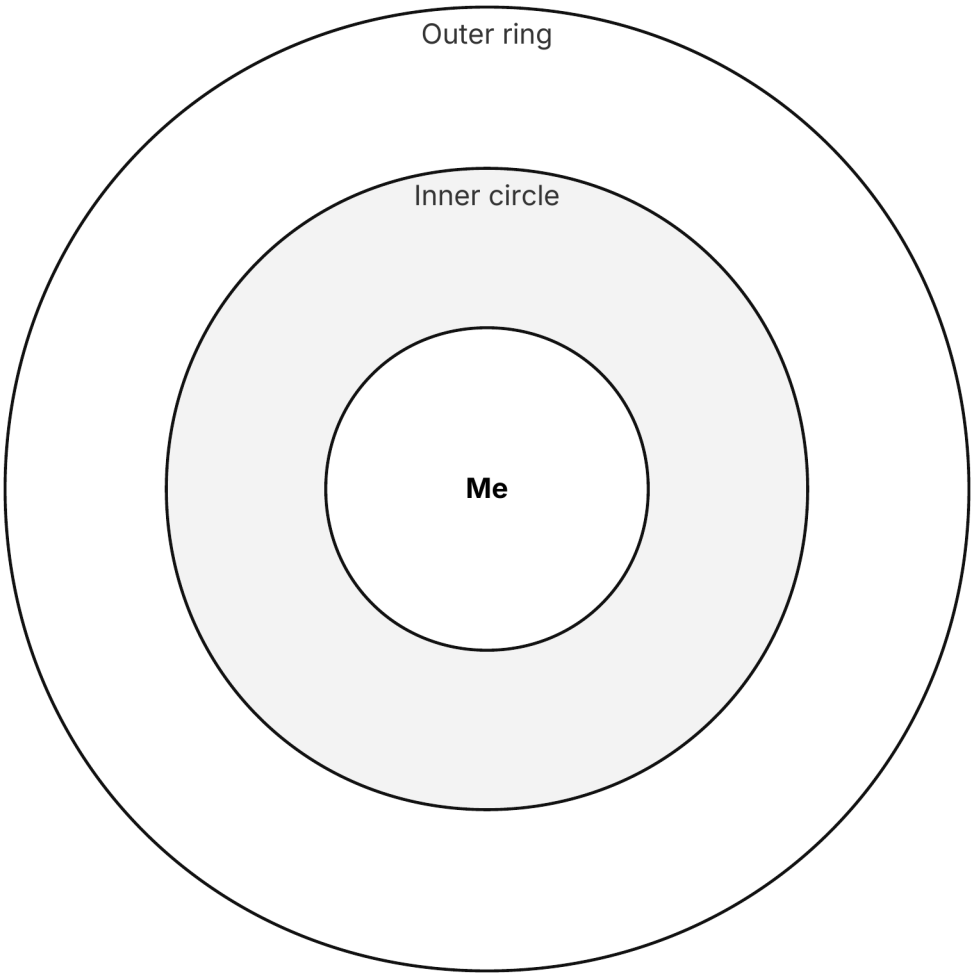
Relationship Map

Use with: Session 24 (in session) and its homework.

Put names where people really are, not where you wish they were: family, friends, cellmates, men in this program, men in the dorm, people from before you came in. The people closest to you go in the inner circle. People in your life at more distance go in the outer ring. Then mark each name:

+ supports your growth: challenges you, encourages you, holds you accountable. **–** works against your growth: enables your worst habits, pulls you toward old patterns. **?** not sure: it could go either way.

This is private. If you would rather keep names out of this book, draw the circles in your journal.



One relationship I will strengthen this week, and what I will do:

Homework: one person with a minus sign. A healthy boundary with that person would look like:

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WEEK 9

Problem Solving and Decision Making

This week: Most of the worst decisions in a man's life happen in a few seconds. This week you learn a step-by-step way to solve problems, how to make your decisions before the pressure hits, and how to see every consequence of a choice before you make it. These are the skills that prevent "the next fight, the next write-up, the next regret."

This week's worksheets: Problem-Solving Worksheet, page 67; My Personal Rules, page 68; Ripple Effect Map, page 69

SESSION 25

Problem-Solving Framework

BIG IDEA *Most bad decisions happen in seconds, so you need a system that slows you down, shows you the real problem, and finds more than one way out.*

KEY POINTS

- **The worst decisions usually happen fast.** We act before we think. "The problem wasn't that we didn't know better — it's that we didn't slow down long enough to access what we knew." The goal is not to freeze. It is to be deliberate.
- **Step 1 gives you a gap.** It is the same idea as STOP from Week 2. Breathe. Feel your feet on the floor. Give yourself 10 seconds. "Most of the worst decisions in this building were made in less than ten seconds."
- **Most people solve the wrong problem.** Your cellmate keeps leaving the cell a mess. "He's a slob" feels like the problem. The real problem may be that you feel disrespected, or that he ignores you every time you ask. If you solve the wrong problem, the real problem stays.
- **Always find at least 3 options.** Two options is usually a trap: fight or walk away. Forcing yourself to find a third breaks you out of it.
- **Pride is the costliest trap.** It picks the option that protects your image, not the one that solves the problem. "Pride is the most expensive thing in this building."
- **Practice slow so you can do it fast.** With practice, you can run all six steps in about 60 seconds. "But you have to practice it slowly before you can do it fast."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Impulsivity** — acting before thinking; treating every problem like a crisis.
- **Tunnel vision** — seeing only one solution.
- **Either/or thinking** — believing you have only two choices ("I can fight or I can be disrespected") when there are more.
- **Emotional reasoning** — "I feel disrespected, therefore I've been disrespected." Feelings are real, but not always accurate.

TOOL: THE 6-STEP PROBLEM-SOLVING MODEL

1. **Stop and think — don't react.** Create a gap between the problem and your response.
2. **Define the problem clearly.** What is the real issue, not just the surface issue?
3. **Gather information.** Facts, not stories. In here, a story goes through three people and picks up details that never happened.
4. **Generate options — at least 3.**
5. **Evaluate consequences of each option.** If I do this, what happens next? And then what? For everyone affected, not just you.
6. **Choose, act, and review.** Pick the option with the best outcome for the most people over the longest time. Commit to it. Then ask: Did it work? "Every decision is data."

HOMEWORK

1. **Go deeper on the problem you worked on in session.** For each option you came up with, write out all the consequences: short-term and long-term, for you and for everyone else involved. Bring it to the next session.
   Workbook: Problem-Solving Worksheet, page 67

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SESSION 26

Decision Making Under Pressure

BIG IDEA *Under pressure you won't have time to think it through, so decide now, while you are calm, how you will handle the moments you know are coming.*

KEY POINTS

- **Stress gives you tunnel vision.** The part of your brain that weighs options goes quiet, and the part that handles fear and anger takes over. You see one path, usually your default: fight, flex, shut down, or run. You beat it "not by being superhuman. By being prepared."
- **Pre-decide.** A firefighter doesn't decide how to fight a fire while the building is burning. He decided in training. You already know the situations you'll face in here: disrespect, someone taking your property, someone pulling you into drama, a CO pushing your buttons. Decide now. For example: "If someone disrespects me publicly, I will not respond in the moment. I will take a breath, look them in the eye, and say nothing. I will address it later, privately, when I'm calm."
- **Turn pre-decisions into personal rules.** They start with "I will always…" or "I will never…" Examples: "I will always walk away from a situation before I say something I can't take back." "I will always ask myself: is this worth my freedom?" No "unless," no "except when." Under pressure you need clarity, not nuance.
- **The 10-10-10 rule zooms you out.** Punching the man who disrespected you feels like justice in 10 minutes. In 10 months it's a write-up, lost privileges, maybe added time. Walking away feels terrible in 10 minutes. In 10 years, it was the best decision you ever made.
- **The hardest moments have an audience.** When people are watching, your rules get tested. "A personal rule that only applies when no one is watching isn't a rule. It's a preference."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Pre-deciding** — making a decision while you're calm, before the pressure hits, so in the moment you only have to follow through.
- **Personal rule** — a non-negotiable promise to yourself about how you will and won't act, whatever the situation.

TOOL: THE 10-10-10 RULE

When your emotions are pushing you to decide fast, ask:

1. How will I feel about this in **10 minutes**?
2. How will I feel about it in **10 months**?
3. How will I feel about it in **10 years**?

"Almost always, the right decision is the one that looks best at 10 months and 10 years — not 10 minutes."

HOMEWORK

1. **Keep your 5 personal rules where you can see them, and read them every morning this week.** (In session you wrote at least 5 in the front of your journal, next to your Week 1 commitment.)
   Workbook: My Personal Rules, page 68
2. **When a pressure moment comes, notice whether you follow your rules or not, and journal about it.** No judgment, just observation.

SESSION 27

Consequential Thinking

BIG IDEA *Every decision sends out ripples, and the choice that feels powerful in the moment is usually the one that costs the most over time.*

KEY POINTS

- **Decisions send out ripples.** Throw a rock into water and the impact spreads. Your mother, your children, your cellmate, the man you harmed, the community: they all feel it. Learn "to see the full ripple pattern before you throw the rock."
- **Every decision has four kinds of consequences.** Short-term positive, short-term negative, long-term positive, long-term negative. "Most bad decisions have strong short-term positives and devastating long-term negatives." The payoff is now. The price is later.
- **Map both choices.** Someone disrespects you in front of people. Escalate, and you feel powerful for a moment. Then comes the write-up, maybe added time, and your child asking "why isn't Daddy calling?" Walk away and handle it later, and your pride stings now. Later, the people who matter see a man with discipline.
- **One fight reaches everyone.** A FORGE participant fights in the dorm. He goes to the hole, his children lose calls and visits, his cohort's trust is damaged, COs tighten restrictions on the whole dorm, and the idea that "these men can't change" gets stronger.
- **This is not guilt-tripping; it is seeing clearly.** "The hard part isn't knowing what to do — it's caring enough about the ripples to choose differently."
- **Play the tape forward.** Before you act, keep asking, "And then what? And then what?" In session you mapped a real bad decision from your past this way, then rewrote it with the 6 steps. The rewrite isn't perfect, but fewer people get hurt.
- **Use the past to train for the future.** You can't change it. "Every bad decision is data if you're willing to learn from it."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Consequential thinking** — thinking through everything a choice will cause, for you and for everyone else, before you make it.
- **Playing the tape forward** — walking through, in your mind, the whole chain of what happens after a choice, before you act.

TOOL: RIPPLE EFFECT MAP

Put the decision in the center circle. Then fill in the rings:

1. **Immediate:** what happens right away to you and to the other person involved.
2. **Close relationships:** your family, your cellmate, your FORGE cohort.
3. **Community:** the dorm, the facility, your neighborhood back home.

HOMEWORK

1. **Use the 6-step model for one real decision before next week.** It doesn't have to be a crisis: how to handle a disagreement, whether to approach someone about a problem, how to spend your time. Write it up in your journal: What was the problem? What options did you come up with? What consequences did you weigh? What did you choose? What happened?
   Workbook: Problem-Solving Worksheet, page 67

Problem-Solving Worksheet

Use with: Session 25 (in session) and its homework; Session 27 homework (one real decision). For more problems, copy the six steps into your journal.

Pick something real: a conflict, a decision you're facing, a situation you've been avoiding.

Step 1 — Stop and think. Don't react. What would a 10-second pause look like here?

Step 2 — Define the problem clearly. What's the real issue, not just the surface one?

Step 3 — Gather information. Facts, not stories. What do I know for sure? What do I still need to find out?

Step 4 — Generate at least 3 options. Step 5 — Evaluate the consequences of each one. If I do this, what happens next? And then what? For me, and for everyone else involved. Look for the good and the bad, now and later.

Option	Short-term consequences	Long-term consequences
1.		
2.		
3.		

Step 6 — Choose, act, and review. Pick the best outcome for the most people over the longest time. I chose:

Review: Did it work? What happened? What would I do differently next time?

My Personal Rules

Use with: Session 26. Copy them into the front of your journal, next to your Week 1 commitment. Read them every morning.

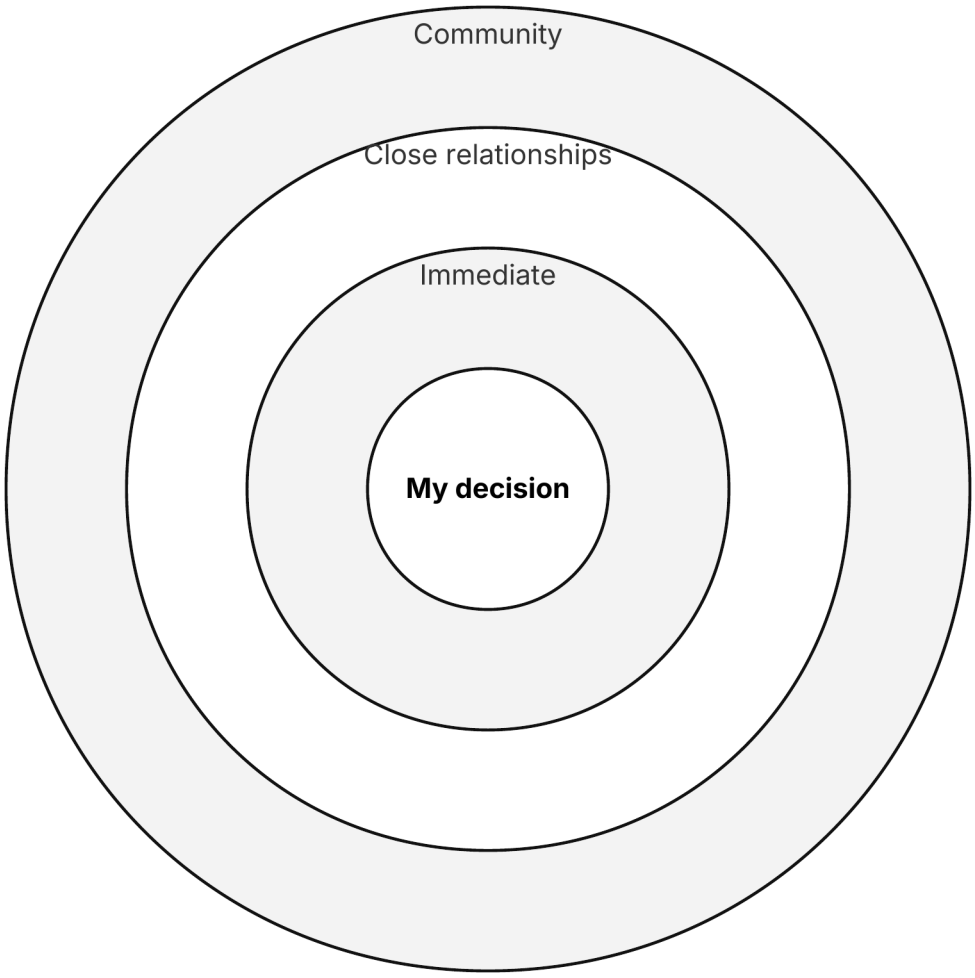
Decide now, while you're calm, how you will act under pressure. Start each rule with "I will always…" or "I will never…" No "unless," no "except when." Write at least 5.

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Ripple Effect Map

Use with: Session 27.

Put one decision in the center: a past decision of yours, or an option from your Problem-Solving Worksheet. Fill the rings from the inside out. Keep asking, “And then what?”



WEEK 10

Mindset and Purpose

This week: This is the last week of new material in Phase 1, and it ties everything together around one question: "Who are you becoming, and why does it matter?" A growth mindset keeps you growing when things get hard. Purpose gives you the reason to keep going, and the stakeholder identity gives you something bigger than yourself to live for.

This week's worksheets: Fixed vs. Growth Mindset, page 73; My Stakeholder Commitment, page 74; Letter From My Future Self, page 74

SESSION 28

Growth Mindset

BIG IDEA *What you believe about your ability to change decides whether you keep growing, and one word, "yet," can open a door you thought was shut.*

KEY POINTS

- **Fixed mindset: "I am who I am."** Challenges are threats. Effort is pointless. Feedback is an attack. Failure is permanent. "I'm not a school person." "That's just how I am — I've always had a temper." "People like me don't change." These feel like facts. They are stories, and they keep you stuck.
- **Growth mindset: "I'm not finished."** Challenges are chances to grow. Effort is the path. Feedback is information you can use. Other people's success is inspiring. "Failure is an event, not an identity."
- **The most important word is "yet."** "I can't control my temper" is fixed. "I can't control my temper YET" is growth. "It says: this is where I am, but it's not where I'm staying."
- **Failure is information.** It tells you what to adjust. Michael Jordan was cut from his high school basketball team. In FORGE you will fail too. "That's not evidence that you can't do this. That's evidence that you're doing something hard." What matters is what you do next.
- **Prison can be a crucible.** Nelson Mandela spent 27 years in prison and came out the leader of a nation. Malcolm X found his whole intellectual identity in prison. "Confinement does not determine growth. YOU determine growth." In here you can't run from yourself, so you can go deeper than most people ever do.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Fixed mindset** — believing your abilities and character are set and can't change.
- **Growth mindset** — believing your abilities can be developed with effort, strategy and help.
- **Crucible** — a place of heat and pressure that burns away what doesn't serve you and shows what does.

TOOL: REWRITING A FIXED-MINDSET BELIEF

Write the fixed belief on the left. Rewrite it on the right. Add "yet," "I'm learning to," or "I'm working on," whatever makes it true for you.

Fixed mindset	Growth mindset
I'll always have anger problems.	I'm learning to manage my anger. It's getting better.
I'm a bad father.	I've made mistakes as a father. I'm learning to be better.

"The fixed version keeps you where you are. The growth version gives you somewhere to go."

HOMEWORK

1. **Write in your journal about one failure in your life that taught you something valuable.** Not the failure itself, but what it taught you. What did you learn that you couldn't have learned any other way?
2. **Catch your fixed-mindset statements.** Every time you hear yourself say "I can't," "I'm not," or "I'll never," stop and add "yet."
   Workbook: Fixed vs. Growth Mindset, page 73

SESSION 29

Finding Purpose

BIG IDEA *Tools show you how to change, but purpose is the "why" that keeps you on the path when the old way is calling.*

KEY POINTS

- **Mindset gives you the how. Purpose gives you the why.** When you're exhausted and someone is pushing your buttons, tools and knowledge won't hold you. "It's not even discipline — discipline runs out." A reason bigger than the moment will.
- **Goals are not purpose.** Goals are things you achieve: a GED, parole, a job. You can reach one and still feel empty. Purpose is something you live. "Goals are destinations. Purpose is the direction." Under the goal "I want to be a good father" might be the purpose "I exist to break the cycle."
- **Viktor Frankl.** A psychiatrist sent to Auschwitz, a Nazi concentration camp. His wife, parents and brother were killed. He saw that the survivors were not always the strongest. They were the ones with a reason to live. He wrote: "Those who have a WHY to live can bear almost any HOW."
- **The last freedom.** Frankl said no one can take away your freedom to choose your attitude. You can let this time be the thing that defined you, or the thing that refined you. "You're not just doing time — you're using time."
- **Purpose protects you.** Research shows people with a sense of purpose are less likely to reoffend, use substances, or turn to violence. It works like an anchor that holds you when the current pulls. It gives you one question for every decision: "Does this serve my purpose, or does it undermine it?"

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Purpose** — the ongoing reason behind everything you do; your answer to "why does my life matter?"

TOOL: LETTER FROM MY FUTURE SELF

Picture the man you'll be 5 years from now. He writes to you, today. Start with "Dear [your name]..." and have him answer:

1. Where are you now, 5 years later? What does your life look like?
2. What did you have to let go of to get here?
3. What did you have to hold onto?
4. What do you wish you could tell your present self about the hard days?
5. What is your purpose — the reason you kept going?
6. What are you most proud of about the man you've become?

Write at least a full page. "Don't write what sounds good — write what's true." You never have to share it.

HOMEWORK

1. **Re-read your letter from your future self, then write a letter back.** The you sitting here today writes to the man you're becoming. Tell him what you commit to, what you're afraid of, and what you need from him.
   Workbook: Letter From My Future Self, page 74
2. **Keep the letter in the front of your journal,** next to your Week 1 commitment and your Week 9 personal rules. When the hard days come, read it.

SESSION 30

The Stakeholder Identity

BIG IDEA *A stakeholder says, "What happens here is partly my responsibility. And I'm going to act like it."*

KEY POINTS

- **Back to Session 1: "We are stakeholders in this system."** You were told then that you wouldn't believe it because someone said so; you'd believe it because you lived it. Everything so far was about knowing yourself. Today the shift is from "I" to "we."
- **A stakeholder has an investment in how things go for everyone.** He is not a passenger hoping things turn out okay, and not a victim waiting for someone else to fix it.
- **The prison default is the opposite.** "I have no power. Nothing I do matters." That's understandable, and it's a trap. When you believe you have no power, you give up the power you actually have.
- **What you control.** Not the sentence, the policies, or the COs. You do control how you respond, whether a conflict gets resolved or escalates, whether a new arrival gets tested or helped, and "whether the man sleeping ten feet from you feels safe tonight." When 10 or 15 men in a dorm choose this, the space changes.
- **What changes.** You stop saying "that's not my problem." You stop waiting to be saved: "The only people who can change the culture of a dorm are the people who live there."
- **You're responsible for what you can influence, not for everything.** "With tools comes responsibility — not to fix everything, but to use what you have." Every skill you learned has a community use: your calm becomes contagious when the dorm is heated.
- **Said out loud, commitments become real.** You read your 5 commitments to the circle. Those men are now your witnesses.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Stakeholder** — someone with a real investment in how things go for the whole community, who acts on it.
- **Bystander** — someone who watches things happen and says, "That's not my problem."

TOOL: MY STAKEHOLDER COMMITMENT

Write 5 specific actions you will take as a stakeholder in your dorm, starting now and continuing through the program and beyond. Each one should be:

1. **Specific** — not "be a good person." What will you actually do?
2. **Observable** — someone else could see you doing it.
3. **Consistent** — something you do regularly, not once.
4. **Connected to your skills** — use what you've learned in FORGE.
5. **Honest** — what you'll really do, not what sounds impressive.

For example: "I will welcome every new arrival personally and orient them to the dorm." "I will refuse to participate in gossip, and I'll redirect conversations that tear other people down."

HOMEWORK

1. **Start living your stakeholder commitment every day for the next two weeks, and journal about it daily,** even if it's just three sentences: What did I do today as a stakeholder? What was hard? What impact did it have?
   Workbook: My Stakeholder Commitment, page 74

Fixed vs. Growth Mindset

FORGE · WEEK 10 · SESSION 28 · GROWTH MINDSET

A **fixed mindset** says: my abilities, my intelligence, my character are set. I am who I am. A **growth mindset** says: my abilities can be developed. I'm not finished. I can get better at anything with effort, strategy, and help. Fixed-mindset beliefs feel like facts. They're not. They're stories. And they keep you stuck.

	Fixed mindset	Growth mindset
CHALLENGES	**Challenges are threats.** If I try something hard and fail, it proves I'm not good enough. So I avoid challenges.	**Challenges are opportunities.** Hard things are how I grow. I lean into them.
EFFORT	**Effort is pointless.** If I have to try hard, it means I don't have natural ability. Real talent shouldn't require effort.	**Effort is the path.** Trying hard isn't a sign of weakness; it's how mastery happens. Nobody gets good at anything without effort.
FEEDBACK	**Feedback is an attack.** When someone criticizes my work, they're criticizing me as a person. So I get defensive.	**Feedback is information.** When someone tells me what I can improve, they're giving me a tool. I don't have to like it, but I can use it.
OTHER PEOPLE'S SUCCESS	**Other people's success is a threat.** If you succeed, it makes me feel like a failure. So I tear you down or withdraw.	**Other people's success is inspiring.** If you can do it, maybe I can learn from you.
FAILURE	**Failure is permanent.** If I failed, I'm a failure. That's my identity now.	**Failure is data.** If I failed, I learned something. I adjust and try again. Failure is an event, not an identity.

YET The most important word in a growth mindset. "I can't control my temper." That's fixed. Add one word: "I can't control my temper **yet**." Now it's growth. It says: this is where I am, but it's not where I'm staying.

REWRITE THREE OF YOUR OWN

Write down 3 fixed-mindset beliefs you hold about yourself. Be honest. Then rewrite each one on the right as a growth-mindset statement. Add "yet." Add "I'm learning to." Add "I'm working on." Whatever language makes it true for you. Then read both versions to a partner, the fixed one first. Some examples:

I'm not an educated person.	→	*I haven't had the education I need yet, but I can learn.*
I'll always have anger problems.	→	*I'm learning to manage my anger. It's getting better.*
I'm not the kind of guy who talks about feelings.	→	*I'm not comfortable with it yet, but I'm building the skill.*
Nobody will hire me with my record.	→	*It will be harder, but people with records get hired every day. I need to prepare.*
I'm a bad father.	→	*I've made mistakes as a father. I'm learning to be better.*

FIXED: WHAT I TELL MYSELF	GROWTH: WHAT I'LL SAY INSTEAD
1	
2	
3	

Your challenge: every time you catch yourself saying "I can't," "I'm not," or "I'll never," stop yourself. Add "yet." The fixed version keeps you where you are. The growth version gives you somewhere to go.

WEEK 10 WORKSHEET

My Stakeholder Commitment

Use with: Session 30, then every day for the next two weeks. It goes in your Phase 1 portfolio.

Five specific actions you will take as a stakeholder in your dorm, starting now and continuing through the program and beyond. Make each one **specific** (what will you actually do?), **observable** (someone else could see you do it), **consistent** (something you do regularly, not once), **connected to your skills**, and **honest** (what you'll really do, not what sounds impressive).

I will…	How often	The FORGE skill I'll use
I will check in with one man in my dorm who seems to be having a hard time.	*Every day*	*Active listening*
1.		
2.		
3.		
4.		
5.		

Every day for two weeks, journal about it, even if it's just three sentences: What did I do today as a stakeholder? What was hard? What impact did it have?

WEEK 10 WORKSHEET

Letter From My Future Self

Use with: Session 29 (in session) and its homework. Write both letters in your journal. Keep them in the front, next to your Week 1 commitment and your Week 9 personal rules, and read them on the hard days. You never have to share them.

His letter to you (in session). Picture the man you will be **5 years** from now. Not what you hope happens to you: who you have become. He writes to you, the man sitting here today. Start with "Dear [your name]…" and have him answer:

1. Where are you now, 5 years later? What does your life look like?
2. What did you have to let go of to get here?
3. What did you have to hold onto?
4. What do you wish you could tell your present self about the hard days?
5. What is your purpose — the reason you kept going?
6. What are you most proud of about the man you've become?

Write at least a full page. Don't write what sounds good. Write what's true.

Your letter back (homework). Re-read his letter. Then write back to the man you're becoming. Tell him what you commit to, what you're afraid of, and what you need from him.

WEEK 11

Integration and Review

This week: Real life doesn't hand you one problem at a time. This week you practice using all your Phase 1 skills at once, look back honestly at how far you've come, and trade honest feedback with your cohort; the self-assessment work you do here goes into your Phase 1 portfolio. Keep living your stakeholder commitment and journaling about it every day: that assignment from Session 30 runs through Weeks 11 and 12.

This week's worksheets: Phase 1 Study Guide, page 78; Phase 1 Skills Self-Assessment, page 80; Who I Was When I Started and Who I Am Now, page 81

SESSION 31

Skills Integration Practice

BIG IDEA *A situation in the dorm doesn't come with a label; you have to read what it needs and use several skills at the same time.*

KEY POINTS

- **Real situations don't come labeled.** Nothing tells you "This is a conflict resolution problem." It comes at you all at once, and you figure out what it needs in real time.
- **How the practice worked.** In small groups you worked through three layered scenarios: what's happening, what skills it needs, what the risks are. Then you role-played the FORGE response, and every man took the lead at least once. "No spectators."
- **Scenario 1, The Domino Effect.** Marcus comes back from a visit upset. DeShawn accidentally knocks a photo off his shelf, Marcus explodes, and DeShawn gets defensive. Someone tells you Marcus's mother is sick, and a bystander is egging it on. Marcus isn't angry about a photo; he's in pain and flooded. Ignoring it, jumping in aggressively, and taking sides are all wrong.
- **Scenario 2, The Slow Burn.** Tension has built for two weeks between two sides of the dorm. James, respected because he's been down a long time, tells you privately that something is going to pop off. Stop, gather information, find real options, and know what is beyond your scope. "Being a stakeholder doesn't mean handling everything alone. It means making sure something gets handled."
- **Scenario 3, The Mirror.** Kevin, 22 and locked up for the first time, is angry all the time. His girl just left him. He wanted to hurt somebody, but didn't. He asks you, "Do you actually think I can change?" This is what being a mentor looks like: someone coming to you at his lowest and trusting you with it.
- **Three wrong moves when someone opens up.** Lecturing. Minimizing ("You'll be fine, bro, just hang in there"). Making it about you. Instead, listen, reflect back what you hear, and validate the pain without excusing the behavior. Then answer his question honestly, "Not with a speech. With your own truth."
- **That is integration.** Listening, emotional awareness, cognitive restructuring, empathy and honest talk, all in one conversation. "That's what 10 weeks of work looks like when it comes together."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Integration** — using all your skills together, at the same time, in one real situation.

HOMEWORK

1. **Bring your journal to the next session,** with every entry from Week 1 through now.
2. **Start thinking about this question:** "Who was I when I started FORGE, and who am I now?" You will write about it next session.
   Workbook: Who I Was When I Started and Who I Am Now, page 81

SESSION 32

Self-Assessment and Reflection

BIG IDEA *This session is for looking honestly at what has changed in you, and what hasn't, with no performing.*

KEY POINTS

- **Today is about honesty, not new material.** "No performing. No telling me what you think I want to hear. This is for you."
- **Read your journal from the start.** Move forward slowly from your first entry. Notice how your thinking and your struggles have changed, the moments something shifted, and the patterns that keep coming up.
- **Mark your 5 most important entries.** Pick the 5 that best show your journey. They go in your Phase 1 portfolio.
- **Rate yourself honestly on every skill.** The questionnaire covers every Phase 1 area: cognitive skills, emotional regulation, communication, conflict resolution, problem solving and decision making, and accountability, empathy and values. A low rating is fine. Nobody is at the top on everything after 10 weeks; rating yourself that way only shows you're not being honest.
- **Answer the three open questions in 3 to 5 sentences each.** What is the biggest change in how you think or behave? What is your biggest remaining challenge? What specific evidence (a situation, a conversation, a decision) proves you've grown?
- **The essay is the most important writing you'll do in Phase 1.** Two pages, minimum, and it goes in your portfolio. Your writing is not graded. The essay makes you put into words what has changed, and face it if nothing has.
- **Tell the truth about progress and struggle.** "FORGE changed my life and I'm a completely different person" will get pushback, "because growth is never that clean." If you're stuck, start with Day 1: what was on your mind when you walked into that first session?

TOOL: THE SELF-ASSESSMENT ESSAY

Title: **"Who I was when I started FORGE and who I am now."** Cover four things:

1. **Who were you on Day 1?** How were you thinking, handling conflict, managing your emotions?
2. **What happened over these 10 weeks?** Pick the moments that mattered: breakthroughs, hard days, times you almost quit, times something clicked.
3. **Who are you now?** Be specific. Give real examples from your life in the dorm.
4. **What's still unfinished?** Where are you still falling short?

HOMEWORK

1. **Finish your self-assessment essay** if you didn't finish it in session. Bring the finished version to Session 35 for your portfolio.
   Workbook: Who I Was When I Started and Who I Am Now, page 81
2. **Think about each person in your cohort.** Next session you give specific, honest feedback to three of your peers. Think about what you've seen in them: their growth, their strengths, and one area where they can keep growing.

Worksheet: Phase 1 Skills Self-Assessment, page 80

SESSION 33

Peer Evaluation and Feedback

BIG IDEA *Honest feedback from men who have watched you up close is rare; it takes courage to give, and even more to receive.*

KEY POINTS

- **Today is not about tearing anyone down.** In most of our lives nobody tells us the truth. People avoid us, talk behind our backs, or sugarcoat. Today you look each other in the eye: "Here's what I've seen in you. Here's what's strong. Here's where you can grow."
- **Each man gives feedback to 3 peers and receives it from 3.** For each peer: one strength and one growth area, both in SBI form.
- **In the feedback seat, you listen.** You may say thank you, ask a clarifying question, or share what landed. You may not argue, defend, or explain away. "You don't have to accept every piece of feedback as gospel truth. But you do have to hear it."
- **Four ground rules.** Be honest. Be respectful: this is feedback, not an attack. Be specific. The rest of the group listens in silence.
- **Growth feedback is not optional.** "If you only give someone praise, you're not serving them. You're making yourself comfortable." And a character judgment is not SBI.
- **The facilitator shares what he has seen too.** For each man: one strength, one growth area, and his honest view of your readiness for Phase 2.
- **What's coming in Week 12.** Session 34 is the Knowledge Check, a written test on all of Phase 1. Session 35 is the Portfolio Review, where you present your portfolio to a panel. Session 36 is the Phase 1 Celebration and Phase 2 Preview. If you don't pass the test, you retake it. "Nobody gets left behind permanently — but nobody gets pushed forward before they're ready, either."

TOOL: SBI FEEDBACK (FROM WEEK 5)

1. **S — Situation.** When and where? Not "in class," but "during the conflict resolution role-play two weeks ago."
2. **B — Behavior.** What did he actually do? Not "You were being disrespectful," but "You raised your voice and talked over the other person."
3. **I — Impact.** What effect did it have, on you, the group, or the situation?

HOMEWORK

1. **Study for the Knowledge Check.** Review your journal, your handbook, and especially: the 8 thinking errors, the escalation curve, the 5-step conflict resolution model, the 6-step problem-solving model, communication styles, and FORGE values. The test in Session 34 covers all of it.
   Workbook: Phase 1 Study Guide, page 78
2. **Complete your portfolio.** Make sure you have at least 15 thinking reports, your emotion logs, your impact awareness letter, your self-assessment essay, your stakeholder commitment, and 5 selected journal entries. You present it in Session 35.
   Workbook: Phase 1 Portfolio Checklist, page 86
3. **Finish your self-assessment essay** if you haven't already.

Phase 1 Study Guide

FORGE · WEEKS 1–11 · FOR THE PHASE 1 KNOWLEDGE CHECK (SESSION 34)

The Knowledge Check is not designed to trick you. Every question comes from material you covered in the sessions. If you've been doing the work (attending, journaling, writing your thinking reports, taking part in the exercises), you know this material. This guide is your map: the key ideas of each week and where to review them. The details are on your session pages, your workbook pages and in your journal.

THE TEST HAS SIX SECTIONS

1. Thinking Errors and Cognitive Restructuring
2. Emotional Regulation
3. Conflict Resolution
4. Communication Skills
5. Problem Solving and Decision Making
6. FORGE Values and Code of Conduct

★ STUDY THESE ESPECIALLY (SESSION 33)

- the 8 thinking errors
- the escalation curve
- the 5-step conflict resolution model
- the 6-step problem-solving model
- communication styles
- FORGE values

And be ready to explain **FORGE values, the Code of Conduct and the stakeholder model in your own words**.

WEEK	KEY IDEAS AND TOOLS (★ = STUDY ESPECIALLY)	WHERE TO REVIEW
Week 1 **Orientation and Community Building**	Sessions 1 Welcome to FORGE · 2 Building the Container · 3 Service Over Self Why FORGE exists and its three phases · "We are stakeholders in this system" · ★ **the Code of Conduct** and your Participant Commitment · the circle process and the group agreements · ★ **Service Over Self**: what service is and what it is not; servant leadership · the FORGE elevator speech	Session pages 1–3 · FORGE Handbook: Code of Conduct, Participant Commitment
Week 2 **How Thinking Works**	Sessions 4 Thinking Controls Behavior · 5 Thinking Errors · 6 Cognitive Restructuring The Think-Feel-Act cycle · automatic thoughts: stories that feel like facts · the thinking report and its five parts · ★ **the 8 thinking errors**: what each sounds like, and its challenge · cognitive restructuring: the questions to ask about any thought · STOP, the tool you use in the moment · alternative thoughts	Session pages 4–6 · Thinking Report · Alternative Thought Bank · your thinking reports
Week 3 **Emotional Literacy**	Sessions 7 Understanding Emotions · 8 Emotional Regulation · 9 The Anger Beneath the Anger The emotion wheel: more words, more choices · anger as a secondary emotion · your body knows first: body signals · tracking your emotions · ★ **the escalation curve**: its five stages, and where to intervene · 4-4-4 breathing, 5-4-3-2-1 grounding, and when to use what · the feelings beneath the anger	Session pages 7–9 · Emotion Wheel · Body Map · Emotion Tracking Log · Beneath My Anger · your emotion logs
Week 4 **Trauma Awareness**	Sessions 10 Understanding Trauma · 11 Trauma Responses in the Dorm · 12 Coping and Safety Trauma is not weakness · ACEs · the Three E's · the four survival responses, and your default · triggers; reacting vs. responding · safe vs. unsafe coping · your Safe Coping Card · FORGE is trauma-aware, not therapy · as a mentor: listen, validate, refer	Session pages 10–12 · Safe vs. Unsafe Coping Strategies · My Safe Coping Card
Week 5 **Active Listening and Communication**	Sessions 13 Active Listening · 14 Communication Styles · 15 Giving and Receiving Feedback Hearing vs. listening · the 5 components of active listening · barriers to listening · ★ **communication styles**: aggressive, passive, passive-aggressive, assertive · "you" statements vs. "I" statements · SBI feedback · how to receive feedback	Session pages 13–15 · "I" Statement Practice Sheet · SBI Practice Sheet
Week 6 **Conflict Resolution Deep Dive**	Sessions 16 The FORGE Conflict Resolution Model · 17 De-escalation Techniques · 18 Mediation Skills ★ **the FORGE conflict resolution model**: all 5 steps, in order · the heat scale: match your response to the heat · de-escalation: your body, your voice, tactical empathy, the redirect · the red lines: knowing your limits · mediation: staying neutral, the ground rules, not getting triangulated	Session pages 16–18: Heat Scale, Tactical Empathy Phrases, Mediation Ground Rules

WEEK	KEY IDEAS AND TOOLS (★ = STUDY ESPECIALLY)	WHERE TO REVIEW
Week 7 **Accountability and Integrity**	Sessions 19 Personal Accountability · 20 Integrity Under Pressure · 21 Making Amends What accountability is and is not · the accountability spectrum · guilt vs. shame · integrity: your values, words and actions lined up · the 4 tests of integrity · restorative accountability · how harm ripples out · apology vs. amends; living amends · the impact awareness letter	Session pages 19–21 · My Accountability Statement · Impact Awareness Letter
Week 8 **Social Skills and Perspective-Taking**	Sessions 22 Empathy Development · 23 Reading the Room · 24 Building Pro-Social Relationships Three kinds of empathy: cognitive, emotional, compassionate · four viewpoints · reading the room; dual awareness · healthy vs. toxic relationships · boundaries · holding someone accountable without losing him	Session pages 22–24 · Perspective-Taking Exercise · Relationship Map
Week 9 **Problem Solving and Decision Making**	Sessions 25 Problem-Solving Framework · 26 Decision Making Under Pressure · 27 Consequential Thinking ★ **the 6-step problem-solving model** · always find at least 3 options · tunnel vision under stress · pre-deciding and personal rules · the 10-10-10 rule · four kinds of consequences; the ripple effect · playing the tape forward	Session pages 25–27 · Problem-Solving Worksheet · My Personal Rules · Ripple Effect Map
Week 10 **Mindset and Purpose**	Sessions 28 Growth Mindset · 29 Finding Purpose · 30 The Stakeholder Identity Fixed vs. growth mindset; the word "yet" · failure as information · goals vs. purpose · Frankl and the last freedom · ★ **the stakeholder identity**: stakeholder vs. bystander, and what you control	Session pages 28–30 · Fixed vs. Growth Mindset · Letter From My Future Self · My Stakeholder Commitment
Week 11 **Integration and Review**	Sessions 31 Skills Integration Practice · 32 Self-Assessment · 33 Peer Evaluation and Feedback Integration: reading what a situation needs and using several skills at once · three wrong moves when someone opens up · knowing your limits, and bringing in the right resources · an honest self-assessment · SBI feedback, given and received	Session pages 31–33 · Phase 1 Skills Self-Assessment · your essay

HOW TO STUDY

- **Go week by week.** For each idea, ask yourself three things. Can I name it? Can I explain it in my own words? Can I give a real example from my life in the dorm?
- **Say the starred ones out loud,** from memory, then check yourself against your session pages. Where a model has steps or stages, know them in order.
- **Use your own work.** Your journal, your thinking reports and your emotion logs show you using these tools. Reread a few.
- **Explain one to another man in your cohort.** If you can teach it, you know it.
- **Stuck on something?** Ask your facilitator before Session 34.

ON TEST DAY

- 30 questions: multiple choice, short answer and scenarios. You have 75 minutes, more than enough time.
- Short answers: a clear, specific answer in 2 to 3 sentences is better than a vague paragraph. Scenarios: explain what you would do and why.
- Read each question carefully. Don't rush. If you get stuck, move on and come back.
- If you can't tell what a question is asking, you may ask. If reading or writing is hard for you, tell the facilitator before the test, and the questions can be read to you one-on-one.
- "This is a knowledge check, not a character judgment."

WHAT I NEED TO REVIEW MOST

Phase 1 Skills Self-Assessment

Use with: Session 32. It goes in your Phase 1 portfolio.

Rate yourself honestly, 1 to 5. A low number is fine; an accurate one is what counts. **1** I'm still struggling with this. **2** I understand it but don't apply it consistently. **3** I can usually do this when I'm thinking about it. **4** This is natural for me most of the time. **5** This is now part of who I am.

Skill or statement	1	2	3	4	5
COGNITIVE SKILLS					
I can identify my own thinking errors when they happen					
I can complete a thinking report accurately, with all five parts					
I can challenge and replace a thinking error with a more accurate thought					
I use the STOP technique (Stop, Think, Options, Plan) before reacting					
I recognize closed thinking, victim stance and other errors in real time					
EMOTIONAL REGULATION					
I can name what I feel with specific words (not just "mad" or "fine")					
I know where I am on the escalation curve (calm, agitated, flooded, crisis)					
I use breathing or grounding techniques to regulate before I respond					
I can identify the emotions beneath my anger (shame, fear, hurt, grief)					
I track my emotional patterns and know my triggers					
COMMUNICATION					
I practice active listening: I hear people out without planning my response					
I use "I" statements instead of "you" accusations					
I can give feedback using the SBI model (Situation, Behavior, Impact)					
I can receive feedback without getting defensive					
I communicate assertively: not aggressively, not passively					
CONFLICT RESOLUTION					
I know and can apply the 5-step FORGE conflict resolution model					
I can de-escalate a tense situation using body language and tone					
I can stay neutral when mediating between two people					
I know when a situation is beyond my scope and needs referral					
I can rate a situation on the heat scale and match my response to it					
PROBLEM SOLVING AND DECISION MAKING					
I use the 6-step problem-solving model instead of reacting on impulse					
I come up with at least 3 options before choosing what to do					
I think through consequences before I act (short-term and long-term)					

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Skill or statement	1	2	3	4	5
I have personal rules that guide my decisions under pressure					
I can “play the tape forward” to see where a decision leads					
ACCOUNTABILITY, EMPATHY AND VALUES					
I take full accountability for my actions without excuses or minimizing					
I can see a situation from another person’s perspective					
I act with integrity even when no one is watching					
I practice Service Over Self: I look for ways to help others every day					
I see myself as a stakeholder, not a bystander, in my environment					

Answer in full sentences, 3 to 5 for each.

1. What is the single biggest change in how you think or behave since starting FORGE?

2. What is your biggest remaining challenge, the area where you still struggle the most?

3. What specific evidence (a situation, a conversation, a decision) shows that you’ve grown?

WEEK 11 WORKSHEET

Who I Was When I Started and Who I Am Now

Use with: Session 31 homework, Session 32 and its homework. The essay goes in your Phase 1 portfolio.

First, read your journal from the first entry on. Notice how your thinking and your struggles have changed, the moments something shifted, and the patterns that keep coming up. Mark the 5 entries that best show your journey for your portfolio.

My 5 entries (dates or page numbers):

Then write the essay in your journal, two pages minimum. Cover four things. **Who were you on Day 1?** How were you thinking, handling conflict, managing your emotions? **What happened over these 10 weeks?** The moments that mattered: breakthroughs, hard days, times you almost quit, times something clicked. **Who are you now?** Be specific. Give real examples from your life in the dorm. **What’s still unfinished?** Where are you still falling short? Tell the truth about the progress and the struggle. Stuck? Start with what was on your mind when you walked into that first session.

WEEK 12

Phase 1 Assessment and Transition

This week: This is the finish line for Phase 1. You show what you've learned in a written knowledge check, present your portfolio to a panel, and, if you've met the requirements, celebrate finishing Phase 1 and look ahead to Phase 2. The test is a check on what you've learned, not a trap, and the portfolio shows your growth, not perfection.

This week's worksheets: Phase 2 Overview, page 85; Phase 1 Portfolio Checklist, page 86

SESSION 34

Phase 1 Knowledge Check

BIG IDEA *The knowledge check is not designed to trick you; every question comes from material you covered in the sessions.*

KEY POINTS

- **It is not designed to trick you.** Every question comes from the sessions. If you've been doing the work (attending, journaling, writing your thinking reports, taking part in the exercises), you know this material.
- **How it is set up.** 30 questions in three kinds: multiple choice, short answer, and scenarios. For short answers, write 2 to 3 clear sentences: "A clear, specific answer in 2-3 sentences is better than a vague paragraph." For a scenario, explain what you would do and why. You have 75 minutes, "more than enough time."
- **What it covers.** Six sections:
    1. Thinking Errors and Cognitive Restructuring
    2. Emotional Regulation
    3. Conflict Resolution
    4. Communication Skills
    5. Problem Solving and Decision Making
    6. FORGE Values and Code of Conduct
- **How to prepare.** Use the study list from Session 33: your journal, your handbook, and especially the 8 thinking errors, the escalation curve, the 5-step conflict resolution model, the 6-step problem-solving model, communication styles, and FORGE values. Be ready to explain FORGE values, the Code of Conduct, and the stakeholder model in your own words. The Phase 1 Study Guide in your workbook lists the key ideas week by week.
- **During the test.** Read each question carefully. Don't rush. If you get stuck, move on and come back. If you can't tell what a question is asking, you may ask; the facilitator will explain the question, not give you the answer. No talking. If reading or writing is hard for you, tell the facilitator before the test, and the questions can be read to you one-on-one. That is not weakness.
- **If you don't pass, it's not the end.** You can retake it. "This is a knowledge check, not a character judgment. Some people test better than others."
- **It is one part of the Phase 1 gate.** Your portfolio, your attendance, your peer evaluations and your conduct all count too. You get your result before the portfolio review. If you didn't pass, the facilitator talks with you one-on-one about next steps.

HOMEWORK

1. **Bring everything to the next session for your Portfolio Review:** your thinking reports, your emotion logs, your impact awareness letter, your self-assessment essay, your stakeholder commitment, and your 5 selected journal entries.
   Workbook: Phase 1 Portfolio Checklist, page 86

SESSION 35

Portfolio Review

BIG IDEA *Your portfolio is the evidence of your growth; you present it to show your journey, not to defend a perfect record.*

KEY POINTS

- **Results first.** You learn your knowledge check result at the start. If you need to retake it, you and the facilitator work out a plan.
- **The completeness check.** Before the presentations, everyone's portfolio is checked against the list below. If you're missing anything, note it. You must complete any missing items before you can be cleared for Phase 2.
- **You present to a panel.** The panel is the facilitator, the senior mentor, and sometimes a third member, such as a certified FORGE mentor or a staff observer. You have about 8 minutes:
  1. Walk the panel through your portfolio and show that everything is complete.
  2. Tell your growth story in your own words. Speak from your essay; don't read it. What changed? What was the hardest part? What moment meant the most?
  3. Answer 1 or 2 questions from the panel.
- **It is a conversation, not an interrogation.** The panel is not looking for perfection. It is looking for honesty, self-awareness, and real examples of what has changed in you.
- **When someone else presents, listen with respect.** "This is their moment." While you wait your turn, review your materials.
- **What comes after.** You receive your portfolio score and the panel's feedback before the next session. If items are missing, you will know exactly what to finish. "That portfolio is evidence of 11 weeks of growth. It belongs to you."

TOOL: WHAT YOUR PORTFOLIO MUST HOLD

1. **Thinking reports** — at least 15, each with all five parts (Situation, Thought, Feeling, Action, Consequence).
2. **Emotion tracking logs** — at least 3 weeks of daily tracking (time, emotion, body signal, trigger).
3. **Impact awareness letter** (Week 7) — the harm caused, the ripple effect, and your accountability.
4. **Self-assessment essay** (Week 11) — 2 pages minimum: "Who I was when I started FORGE and who I am now."
5. **Stakeholder commitment** (Week 10) — 5 specific actions.
6. **Journal highlights** — 5 entries you chose as most representative of your journey.
7. **Personal coping strategy card** (Week 4) — 5 strategies for managing distress.
8. **Self-assessment questionnaire** (Week 11) — honest ratings and your answers to the open questions.

HOMEWORK

1. **Complete any missing portfolio items.** You can't be cleared for Phase 2 until they are done.
   Workbook: Phase 1 Portfolio Checklist, page 86
2. **Come to Session 36 with a clear head and an open heart.** "Show up present. Don't sleepwalk through this."

SESSION 36

Phase 1 Celebration and Phase 2 Preview

BIG IDEA *Phase 1 was about knowing yourself; Phase 2 is about building others, and it is harder.*

KEY POINTS

- **It's a ceremony, not a normal session.** You came in as strangers. Who makes it through Phase 1? "It's not the ones who never struggled. It's the ones who struggled and stayed." Thinking reports, the impact awareness letter, the essay, peer feedback: "That's not a class you took. That's work you did on yourself."
- **Receiving your certificate.** When your name is called, you come forward and answer one question in one sentence: "What is the most important thing you learned about yourself in Phase 1?" Then you take your certificate and your cohort acknowledges you.
- **Not finished yet? You're still in the room.** A man who hasn't met every requirement is still part of the cohort and still at the ceremony. He and the facilitator already have a plan for him to finish.
- **Phase 2, "Build Others," is harder.** It runs 12 weeks on the same schedule. You learn to use your skills to help someone else, and "other people don't always want your help." "A mentor shows up — even when it's hard. Especially when it's hard." Phase 2 covers:
    1. The mentor identity: what makes a good mentor, mentor boundaries, and the parallel process (your own self-work doesn't stop).
    2. Teaching and facilitation: designing a lesson, leading a discussion, managing a group. You deliver practice lessons and get feedback.
    3. Motivational interviewing: talking with someone who doesn't want to change, without pushing, lecturing, or giving up on him.
    4. Simulation training: realistic scenarios like dorm conflicts, mentee crises and boundary tests, frozen, coached and replayed.
    5. Restorative practices and life skills: how to run a circle, hold an accountability conversation, and teach life skills topics.
    6. Simulation assessments, co-facilitation practice, and the Phase 2 gate.
- **Mentees come later.** Phase 2 is preparation. In Phase 3 you are assigned real mentees and facilitate real sessions.
- **You recommit.** In Week 1 you signed a Participant Commitment. Now you recommit "with full knowledge." The statement commits you to continued self-work, Service Over Self, honesty and integrity, the men in this circle, becoming a mentor worthy of trust, and the FORGE mission: "to build a culture of peace, responsibility, and service — modeling the change I want to see in every community." Then you stand, state your name, add one personal commitment for Phase 2, and sign.
- **"Leadership is not granted. It is forged."** Phase 2 starts on the date announced, same time, same room.

HOMEWORK

No homework from this session.

Phase 2: Build Others

FORGE · WEEK 12 · SESSION 36 · WHAT COMES NEXT · WEEKS 13–24

Phase 1 was about knowing yourself. Phase 2 is about building others. And Phase 2 is harder.

In Phase 1, the only person you had to be honest with was yourself. In Phase 2, you take everything you've learned and figure out how to teach it, how to facilitate it, how to use it to help someone else. Other people don't always want your help. They will test you, resist you, question you, push your buttons, and then ask you to still show up for them. That's what a mentor does. **A mentor shows up, even when it's hard. Especially when it's hard.** Phase 2 runs for 12 weeks, same schedule.

WEEK 13	WEEKS 14–15	WEEK 16	WEEKS 17–20	WEEKS 21–22	WEEKS 23–24
The Mentor Identity	Teaching and Facilitation Skills	Motivational Interviewing	Simulation Training	Restorative Practices and Life Skills Facilitation	Assessments and the Phase 2 Gate
13	14 15	16	17 18 19 20	21 22	23 24

Week 13	**The Mentor Identity.** What makes a good mentor. Mentor boundaries: what you do and don't do. The parallel process: you can't give what you don't have, so your self-work doesn't stop.
Weeks 14–15	**Teaching and Facilitation Skills.** How to design a lesson. How to facilitate a discussion. How to manage a group. You'll each deliver practice lessons and get feedback.
Week 16	**Motivational Interviewing.** How to talk to someone who doesn't want to change, without pushing, without lecturing, without giving up on them.
Weeks 17–20	**Simulation Training.** This is what makes FORGE different. You'll walk into realistic scenarios (dorm conflicts, mentee crises, boundary tests, safety situations) and respond in real time. We'll freeze the scene, coach you, and replay.
Weeks 21–22	**Restorative Practices and Life Skills Facilitation.** How to run a circle. How to have an accountability conversation. How to teach life skills topics you'll use with mentees.
Weeks 23–24	**Assessments and the Phase 2 Gate.** Simulation assessments, co-facilitation practice, and the Phase 2 gate.

> Phase 2 is where you become someone who doesn't just manage your own life: you become someone who can change another person's life. That's what you're training for.

QUESTIONS MEN ASK

"Is it harder than Phase 1?"
Differently hard. Phase 1 was emotionally hard because you had to face yourself. Phase 2 is skill-hard: you're learning to teach, facilitate, and mentor. Both are challenging. You're ready for it.

"When do we get actual mentees?"
Phase 3. Phase 2 is preparation. Phase 3 is where you're assigned real mentees and facilitate real sessions.

"What if I'm not a good teacher?"
Nobody is when they start. That's why we practice. You'll deliver lessons, get feedback, and improve. By Week 15, you'll be teaching in front of the group.

"Phase 2 sounds too hard."
Phase 1 sounded too hard 12 weeks ago. You did it anyway. Phase 2 will push you in new ways, but you're not starting from zero anymore: you're starting with a foundation.

Phase 2 starts _____ *Same time, same room.*

Phase 1 Portfolio Checklist

Use with: Sessions 33–35. Check each item when it is complete and in your portfolio. You can't be cleared for Phase 2 until every item is done.

- ☐ **Thinking Reports** — at least **15**, each with all five parts: Situation, Thought, Feeling, Action, Consequence. *(Week 2 worksheet and your journal)*
- ☐ **Emotion Tracking Logs** — at least 3 weeks of daily tracking. *(Week 3 log and your journal)*
- ☐ **Impact Awareness Letter** — all five parts. *(Week 7, in your journal)*
- ☐ **Self-Assessment Essay** — 2 pages minimum: "Who I was when I started FORGE and who I am now." *(Week 11, in your journal)*
- ☐ **Stakeholder Commitment** — 5 specific actions. *(Week 10 worksheet)*
- ☐ **Journal Highlights** — the 5 entries you chose as most representative of your journey. *(Week 11)*
- ☐ **Safe Coping Card** — your personal coping strategy card, all five parts. *(Week 4 worksheet)*
- ☐ **Self-Assessment Questionnaire** — honest ratings and your answers to the three open questions. *(Week 11 worksheet)*

Anything missing, and when I will finish it:

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PHASE 2

Development

Build Others

Weeks 13–24

Phase 2 turns from yourself to other people. Over these twelve weeks you learn what makes a good mentor, how to teach and lead a group, how to help someone find his own reasons to change, how to step into a conflict in the dorm, how to keep a restorative circle, and how to teach life skills. You practice it in simulations: real situations, played out and coached. The phase ends with the simulation assessment, the Phase 2 assessment, and your move into Phase 3.

Week 13 — The Mentor Identity 88
Week 14 — Teaching and Facilitation Skills 94
Week 15 — Facilitation Practice 103
Week 16 — Motivational Interviewing Basics 108
Week 17 — Simulation Training Block 1a 116
Week 18 — Simulation Training Block 1b 122
Week 19 — Simulation Training Block 2a — Complex Situations 125
Week 20 — Simulation Training Block 2b — The Hardest Scenarios 128
Week 21 — Restorative Practices 131
Week 22 — Life Skills Facilitation 137
Week 23 — Integration and Simulation Assessment 144
Week 24 — Phase 2 Assessment and Transition 148

WEEK 13

The Mentor Identity

This week: Phase 2 begins, and the question changes from "How do I grow?" to "How do I help someone else grow?" You learn what makes a good mentor, where a mentor's boundaries are, and why your own self-work never stops. By the end of the week you have a mentor wellness plan and the names of at least 2 support people.

This week's worksheets: Elements of Effective Mentoring, page 91; Mentor Boundaries Quick Reference, page 92; Mentor Wellness Plan, page 93

SESSION 37

What Makes a Good Mentor

BIG IDEA *Phase 1 was about you; Phase 2 is about everyone else, and the past you have worked to transform is now your greatest asset.*

KEY POINTS

- **"Phase 1 was about you. Phase 2 is about everyone else."** Mentoring is harder than your own work. You have to manage yourself AND hold space for another man's struggle.
- **Mentoring has been studied.** A group called MENTOR, the National Mentoring Partnership, found what makes it work. The relationship is the program: if he doesn't trust you, nothing happens. Have a plan, but if your mentee just got bad news from home, you don't barrel through a lesson. You sit with him.
- **Good intentions are not enough.** Untrained mentors can do harm. The mentee's needs come first. When your need to feel helpful wins, "you've stopped mentoring and started performing."
- **You are a credible messenger.** When an outside volunteer says "I understand how you feel," a man in the dorm thinks, "No you don't." A mentor who has lived it can say, "I've been there. And I found a way through it." "Your past is not a disqualification. It's a credential." But only if you've done the work to change. That is why Phase 1 came first.
- **The mentor you needed.** When the group wrote about the mentor they needed, nobody said "they had all the answers." They described someone present, honest, consistent, and real.
- **A mentor is not a friend and not a boss.** A friend takes your side no matter what. An authority figure gives orders and you comply. A mentor cares but holds you accountable, and shares his experience but lets you make your own decisions.
- **The line blurs in here.** Your mentee might be your bunkmate. Be his friend first and you can't say the hard thing. Be his boss and he complies only when you're watching. The mentor lives in between: "close enough to be trusted, far enough to be honest."
- **The paradox of mentoring.** "You will grow more from mentoring than your mentee will." Teaching something makes you understand it deeper. You give in order to grow.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Credible messenger** — a mentor whose own lived experience, including prison and mistakes, makes him believable to the men he serves.
- **Paradox** — something that sounds backwards but turns out to be true.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write a journal entry of 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. **Come ready to think about where your limits are** as a mentor. If your handbook has a section on mentor boundaries, read it.
3. **Think about the paradox of mentoring this week** (you give in order to grow), and journal on it tonight.

SESSION 38

Mentor Boundaries

BIG IDEA *"I can care about you without being responsible for you."*

KEY POINTS

- **Boundaries are not walls.** Walls keep people out. Boundaries keep you healthy so you can keep showing up. Every mentor who flamed out started with a boundary failure.
- **What mentors do.** Listen without judging. Share your story when it helps, not to show off. Hold him to his own goals. Model what you teach. Show up consistently. Refer when it's beyond you. Take care of yourself.
- **What mentors don't do.** No legal advice (you're not a lawyer), no diagnosing (you're not a therapist), no medical advice (you're not a doctor). Don't hold his property, contraband, or secrets that involve safety. Stay out of gang dynamics, "always." Don't take sides. Don't promise what you can't deliver, like "I'll talk to the warden."
- **Caring without carrying.** A man is drowning. Jump in after him and you both drown. Yell from the shore and you're just lecturing. Stay on solid ground and throw a rope. "A mentor who drowns in his mentee's pain can't mentor anyone."
- **Put it down when you walk away.** His mother is dying and he can't get a compassionate transfer. You sit with him and listen, then you don't carry his grief into your own night. "You can't want someone's growth more than they want it." Write the big idea in the front of your journal.
- **What he tells you stays between you.** It doesn't become chow-hall talk. But there are four times you must break confidentiality (see the tool below), and "there are no exceptions to the exceptions."
- **Snitching is not saving a life.** Snitching is giving up information to get yourself an advantage. Reporting a safety concern gains you nothing and risks a lot. "That's not snitching. That's service." When in doubt, choose safety and talk to program leadership.
- **Practice before it's real.** In pairs you worked through 10 boundary scenarios. If a mentee wants you available day and night, set regular check-in times; you need downtime to keep showing up. "Uncertainty is where learning lives."

TOOL: WHEN YOU MUST BREAK CONFIDENTIALITY

1. **Someone has a weapon or plans to get one.** A zero-tolerance red line. Report it to staff or program leadership.
2. **Someone talks about harming himself.** Don't handle it alone. Stay with him and get help.
3. **Someone talks about harming another person.** Engage him, try to calm it down, and involve staff or program leadership. Don't go tell the target.
4. **A child or vulnerable person is being harmed.** This gets reported. Period.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write a journal entry of at least half a page:** "What does 'caring without carrying' mean to you? Where in your life have you struggled with this?"
2. **Name your support system.** When mentoring gets heavy, who do you go to? Have at least 2 names ready for next session.

SESSION 39

The Parallel Process

BIG IDEA *You can't give what you don't have, so your own work is never finished.*

KEY POINTS

- **Whatever is happening inside the mentor shows up in the mentoring.** If you're angry and unresolved, you bring it into the session. If you haven't dealt with your own trauma, his trauma will overwhelm you or shut you down.
- **You are a well.** Your mentees come to you for water. Never refill it and the well runs dry, and a dry well is useless to everyone, including you.
- **You don't graduate from self-awareness.** The thinking errors from Week 2 are still in there. One mentor stopped his own work after he was certified. When a mentee told a story almost like his own, he fell apart, and both went backward. Ongoing self-work is required, not optional.
- **The cost of caring is real.** Taking in other men's pain over and over wears you down. "I'm not saying you might. I'm saying you will."
- **Know the warning signs.** You feel numb. Small things set you off. You avoid your mentees. You get cynical: "Nobody's going to change." You resent the men you're helping. You stop journaling. You break small boundaries, then bigger ones. This is not weakness. The strongest mentors catch it early.
- **Self-care that works in here.** Not bubble baths. Exercise is the best stress tool you have. No heavy conversations right before lights out. Keep journaling. Reread your commitment statement from Week 1.
- **You need a support system.** If you ask mentees to open up but won't let anyone do the same for you, you're a hypocrite, "a well-meaning one. But still." Build it with a peer in the program, someone who will be honest ("You're slipping and here's what I see"), and the facilitator or program lead.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Parallel process** — what is going on inside you shows up in the people you help.
- **Compassion fatigue** — being worn out and numb from taking in other people's pain.

TOOL: MY MENTOR WELLNESS PLAN

1. **Ongoing self-work.** Example: "At least 2 thinking reports per week and journal every night."
2. **Physical health.** Exercise and a sleep routine.
3. **Emotional regulation tools.** Example: 4-4-4 breathing.
4. **Support system.** At least 2 names, and what each one does for you.
5. **Warning signs.** Your own early signals, like "I stop journaling."
6. **Reset plan.** What you do when you see them, like talking to a support person within 24 hours.

HOMEWORK

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. Not "I'll take care of myself." *Workbook: Mentor Wellness Plan,* page 93
2. **Write a journal entry of at least half a page:** "What scares me most about being a mentor — and what gives me the most hope?"
3. **Read ahead in the handbook on facilitation and teaching,** if that material is available.

Elements of Effective Mentoring

Use with: Session 37.

MENTOR, the National Mentoring Partnership, has 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.

1 · 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.

2 · 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.

3 · TRAINING AND ONGOING SUPPORT MATTER

The research is clear: untrained mentors can actually do harm. Good intentions are not enough.

4 · 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.

5 · 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.

Notes:

Mentor Boundaries Quick Reference

Use with: Session 38.

What Mentors DO	What Mentors DON'T Do
Listen without judgment	Give advice on legal matters (you're not a lawyer)
Share their own experience when it's helpful (not to show off, not to take over the conversation)	Diagnose mental health conditions (you're not a therapist)
Ask questions that help the mentee think, not questions that lead to the answer you want	Provide medical advice (you're not a doctor)
Hold mentees accountable to their own goals and commitments	Hold onto a mentee's property, contraband, or secrets that involve safety
Model the behavior they're teaching	Intervene in gang dynamics (this is above your scope, always)
Show up consistently: be someone the mentee can count on	Take sides in a mentee's conflicts
Maintain confidentiality within appropriate limits	Try to "fix" people: you facilitate growth, you don't engineer it
Celebrate growth, even small progress	Share a mentee's private information with others (outside of safety exceptions)
Refer when the situation is beyond their scope	Make promises you can't keep ("I'll make sure you get moved" or "I'll talk to the warden")
Take care of themselves so they can keep doing this work	Put yourself in physical danger to prove a point
	Carry a mentee's emotional weight as your own

CARING WITHOUT CARRYING

I can care about you without being responsible for you.

Imagine a man is drowning. **Jump in after him,** and now you're both drowning: that's what happens when you carry someone's problems. **Stand on the shore and yell instructions,** and that's lecturing. It doesn't help. **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.

CONFIDENTIALITY AND ITS LIMITS

What your mentee shares with you stays between you and him. Here are the exceptions. 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.
2. **Someone expresses intent to harm themselves.** You don't handle this alone. You stay with him and you get help.
3. **Someone expresses intent to harm someone else.** You engage the person, try to de-escalate, and involve staff or program leadership.
4. **A child or vulnerable person is being harmed.** This gets reported. Period.

There is a difference between snitching and saving a life. Snitching is giving up information to get yourself an advantage. Reporting a safety concern is the exact opposite: you're doing it

because someone's life or safety is at stake. **When in doubt, err on the side of safety. Talk to program leadership.**

WEEK 13 WORKSHEET

Mentor Wellness Plan

Use with: Session 39 (built in class, finished for homework). Session 38's support-system homework goes in part 4.

This plan keeps you on solid ground when you mentor in Phase 3. Be specific enough that someone could read it and know exactly what you committed to. Not "I'll take care of myself."

1. My ongoing self-work. What will I do to keep working on myself, and how often? *Example: "At least 2 thinking reports a week. Journal every night."*

2. My physical health. What will I do every week, without fail? *Example: "Exercise at least 4 times a week. Keep a sleep routine."*

3. My emotional regulation tools. What will I use when stress builds? *Example: "4-4-4 breathing. Walk the yard before I react."*

4. My support system. Name at least 2 people, and what each one does for you.

Who	Name	What I need from him
A peer in the program who understands the work		
Someone who will be honest with me: "You're slipping, and here's what I see."		
The facilitator or program lead		

5. My warning signs. What are my own early signals that I'm burning out? *Example: "I stop journaling. I snap at people over small things."*

6. My reset plan. When I see those signs, what will I do? *Example: "Talk to my support person within 24 hours. Do a full thinking report. Talk to the facilitator."*

WEEK 14

Teaching and Facilitation Skills

This week: Knowing something and being able to teach it are two different skills. This week you learn the second one: how adults learn, how to lead a group instead of lecturing at it, and how to build a lesson. By the end of the week you have written the 30-minute lesson you will teach next week.

This week's worksheets: 4 Adult Learning Principles, page 98; Learning Styles Reference, page 99; Phase 1 Topics for Practicum Lessons, page 100; Lesson Plan Template, page 101

SESSION 40

How Adults Learn

BIG IDEA *When a room checks out, the problem usually isn't the audience, it's the delivery.*

KEY POINTS

- **Knowing it is not the same as teaching it.** A man who has done great personal work stands up and lectures for an hour. Eyes glaze over. He walks away saying, "They just don't care." "The problem isn't the audience. The problem is the delivery."
- **Adults learn differently from children.** A child learns something because the teacher says so. A grown man won't. A researcher named Malcolm Knowles found four principles of how adults learn (see the tool below).
- **Give the WHY before the WHAT.** Week 2 did not start with "Here are the 8 thinking errors, memorize them." It started with how thinking controls behavior.
- **Practice, a real problem, and a use for it today.** Don't just describe a breathing technique; have the group do it. "Experience is the teacher. You're just the guide." Start with a dorm problem, not a textbook problem. End with something to DO this week.
- **People learn in four main ways.** The visual learner asks, "Can you write that down?" The auditory learner lights up when you tell a story. The kinesthetic learner was bored in the lecture but came alive in the role-play; his brain needs his body involved. The reading/writing learner fills his journal.
- **All four are in every room.** Give each session "something to see, something to hear, something to do, and something to write." You don't have to be perfect, just intentional.
- **Teaching makes you learn deeper.** Planning one concept three ways forced you to understand it better than when you only knew it for yourself.
- **Be the teacher you needed.** 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 one who doesn't make that mistake for someone else.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Learning style** — the way a person takes in information best: seeing, hearing, doing, or reading and writing.

TOOL: KNOWLES' 4 PRINCIPLES OF ADULT LEARNING

1. **Adults need to know WHY they're learning something.** If you can't answer "Why should I care?" in one sentence, you're not ready to teach it.
2. **Adults learn best from experience, not lectures.** Every session needs practice.
3. **Adults approach learning as problem-solving.** Frame the lesson around a problem they actually have.
4. **Adults learn best when they can use it right away.** "I can use this tonight" is remembered. "I'll need this someday" is forgotten.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write a journal entry: pick a Phase 1 concept you want to teach, and write down how you'd explain it to three different types of learners.** This is pre-work for your lesson plan later this week.
   Workbook: Learning Styles Reference, page 99
2. **Start choosing your practicum topic.** Next week you teach a 30-minute lesson on a Phase 1 topic. Pick something you know well and care about.

SESSION 41

Facilitation vs. Lecturing

BIG IDEA *A facilitator's job is not to pour knowledge into heads; it is to ask the questions that help people find it for themselves.*

KEY POINTS

- **You don't have to be the smartest man in the room.** "Lecturers are usually the only person in the room who thinks the session went well." The word facilitate comes from a Latin word that means "to make easy."
- **Lecturer or facilitator?** A lecturer says, "Here's what you need to know." A facilitator asks, "What do you already know about this?" A lecturer fills silence; a facilitator uses it. A lecturer gets uncomfortable when someone disagrees; a facilitator gets curious.
- **Let them find the answer.** If you explain it, they hear your answer. If you guide them to it, they own it. "Ownership is what creates change."
- **Three kinds of questions.** Closed: "Does that make sense?" Everyone nods and nobody learned anything. Open: "What stood out to you about that?" Powerful: "What's the cost of NOT changing this pattern?" "Closed questions get information. Open questions get thinking. Powerful questions get transformation." Ask, then be quiet and let the room work.
- **The quiet one.** Don't force him to talk. Give him safe ways in: pair work, writing, a go-around. Check in with him privately. Thank him when he speaks.
- **The dominator.** "Let's hear from someone else on this." Use time limits. Talk to him privately, and give his energy a job: timekeeper or note-taker.
- **The disruptor.** Address the behavior, not the man. Move closer. Pause and wait. "Silence is loud." If it keeps up, talk privately, then use SBI from Phase 1.
- **The skeptic.** Welcome the challenge: "That's a fair challenge. Tell me more." If he has a point, own it. Argue with a skeptic in front of the group and you've lost the room.
- **First practice.** Four men each led a 5-minute discussion: open with an open or powerful question, get at least 3 people talking, close with a debrief. "The gap between knowing how to facilitate and actually facilitating is enormous."

TOOL: THE DEBRIEF — WHAT? SO WHAT? NOW WHAT?

An exercise is the experience. The debrief is where the learning happens.

1. **What happened?** Get the facts on the table. "What did you notice?"
2. **So what?** Draw out the meaning. "Why does that matter?"
3. **Now what?** Connect it to action. "What will you do differently?"

HOMEWORK

1. **Write 5 powerful questions in your journal** that you could use to lead a discussion on your practicum topic. No closed questions. Make them open or powerful.
2. **Watch a conversation or interaction before next session the way a facilitator would.** Who talks? Who's quiet? Who dominates? Who disrupts? Write down what you see.

SESSION 42

Lesson Planning

BIG IDEA *Every good lesson has four parts, Hook, Content, Practice, and Debrief, and the practice is where the learning happens.*

KEY POINTS

- **The hook grabs attention.** It answers "Why should I care?" before anyone checks out. Use a question, a scenario ("two men are arguing about a missing item, and it's getting loud"), or a personal story. "Today we're going to learn about…" is "a syllabus, not a hook."
- **The content is taught, not dumped.** Break it into chunks. Use examples from the dorm and the yard. Ask questions as you go. Glazed eyes mean you've talked too long.
- **The practice is the lesson.** Pairs, role-play, a journal prompt, or a case study. Set it up clearly, then step back. "The practice IS the lesson. Everything else is setup."
- **The debrief makes it stick.** What happened? So what? Now what? End with one clear takeaway and something to DO before next time.
- **Start with what they'll be able to DO.** A learning objective begins, "By the end of this session, participants will be able to…" You can't see "understand." You can see "identify at least 3 thinking errors in a written scenario." Use action words: identify, describe, demonstrate, practice, explain, apply.
- **You are the most important material.** No printer, maybe no whiteboard. Tape key points on paper to the wall. Use volunteers and your voice. Write your plan and your questions out ahead of time. "A well-prepared facilitator with no materials beats an unprepared facilitator with a full supply closet every time."
- **Adapt on the fly.** Read the room. Hold the plan loosely. Protect the practice: if you must cut, cut content, never practice or debrief. If you go off plan, say so. "No one expects perfection. They expect presence."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Learning objective** — a sentence that says what people will be able to DO after the lesson.

TOOL: THE 30-MINUTE LESSON

Part	Time	Job
Hook	3–4 min	Grab attention. Answer "Why should I care?"
Content	8–10 min	Teach the concept, with the group involved
Practice	10–12 min	They DO something with it
Debrief	5–6 min	What happened? So what? Now what? Plus an action step

Your plan also needs 1–2 learning objectives and a backup plan: what you'll do if the exercise falls flat, what you'll cut if you run short, and what you'll add if you have extra time.

HOMEWORK

1. **Finalize your lesson plan.** It must be complete and ready to teach by the first session next week. "Don't wing it."
   Workbook: Lesson Plan Template, page 101
2. **Practice your lesson out loud at least twice before next week.** 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.** It is what your peers and the facilitator will use to give you feedback next week.
   Workbook: Facilitation Observation Rubric, page 106

4 Adult Learning Principles

Use with: Session 40.

In the 1970s, a researcher named Malcolm Knowles studied how adults learn differently from children. He found four key principles.

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, he checks out.

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.

PRINCIPLE 2 · ADULTS LEARN BEST FROM EXPERIENCE, NOT LECTURES

Adults don't learn by sitting and listening. They learn by doing.

What this means for you: every session you facilitate needs to include practice. Not "talk about it." DO it. 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.

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.

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. Immediate application cements learning. Everything else evaporates.

Notes:

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Learning Styles Reference

Use with: Session 40.

Not everyone takes in information the same way. There are four main learning styles. Most people have a dominant one, but everyone uses a mix.

Style	How they learn	What it looks like in here
Visual	By seeing: diagrams, charts, written lists, demonstrations. When you only talk, they struggle.	The man who asks "Can you write that down?" or draws out the conflict resolution steps so he can see them.
Auditory	By hearing: discussion, explanation, stories. They process by talking it through.	The man who gets it in the group discussion but can't remember the handout. A story or an example lights him up.
Kinesthetic	By doing: role-play, hands-on activities, movement. Their brain needs their body involved.	The man who was bored in the lecture and came alive in the role-play. He learns conflict resolution by doing it.
Reading/writing	By reading and writing: handouts, journal exercises, written reflections.	The man who takes notes every session and whose journal is full.

When you facilitate, you will have all four in the room. 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.

My dominant style _____

When did I learn best in Phase 1? What does that tell me about how I'll teach?

Phase 1 Topics for Practicum Lessons

Use with: Session 40.

Pick something you know well and care about. These are the Phase 1 sessions, by week. You will teach one for your practicum lesson (Sessions 43–44), you and your partner choose one for your co-facilitation (Session 68), and you are assigned one for your teaching demonstration (Session 69).

Week	Phase 1 sessions
Week 1 Orientation and Community Building	2 Building the Container · 3 Service Over Self
Week 2 How Thinking Works	4 Thinking Controls Behavior · 5 Thinking Errors · 6 Cognitive Restructuring
Week 3 Emotional Literacy	7 Understanding Emotions · 8 Emotional Regulation · 9 The Anger Beneath the Anger
Week 4 Trauma Awareness	10 Understanding Trauma · 11 Trauma Responses in the Dorm · 12 Coping and Safety
Week 5 Active Listening and Communication	13 Active Listening · 14 Communication Styles · 15 Giving and Receiving Feedback
Week 6 Conflict Resolution Deep Dive	16 The FORGE Conflict Resolution Model · 17 De-escalation Techniques · 18 Mediation Skills
Week 7 Accountability and Integrity	19 Personal Accountability · 20 Integrity Under Pressure · 21 Making Amends and Moving Forward
Week 8 Social Skills and Perspective-Taking	22 Empathy Development · 23 Reading the Room · 24 Building Pro-Social Relationships
Week 9 Problem Solving and Decision Making	25 Problem-Solving Framework · 26 Decision Making Under Pressure · 27 Consequential Thinking
Week 10 Mindset and Purpose	28 Growth Mindset · 29 Finding Purpose · 30 The Stakeholder Identity

My topics	Phase 1 topic	Why it matters ("Why should I care?" in one sentence)
Practicum lesson (Session 43 or 44)		
Co-facilitation, with my partner (Session 68)		
Teaching demonstration, assigned (Session 69)		

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Lesson Plan Template

Use with: Sessions 42–45, and Week 23 (co-facilitation and teaching demo). For more plans, copy this form into your journal.

Be specific: the objective ("participants will be able to…"), the exact exercise and your instructions, your debrief questions (What? So what? Now what?), and a backup plan. Times are for 30 minutes.

Topic _____ **Minutes** _____ **Date** _____

Part	What I will say and do
Objective	
Hook (3–4 min)	
Content (8–10 min)	
Practice (10–12 min)	
Debrief (5–6 min)	
Backup plan	
Materials	

LESSON PLAN — COPY 2

Topic _____ **Minutes** _____ **Date** _____

Part	What I will say and do
Objective	
Hook (3–4 min)	
Content (8–10 min)	
Practice (10–12 min)	
Debrief (5–6 min)	
Backup plan	
Materials	

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WEEK 15

Facilitation Practice

This week: This is where talk becomes practice. You teach your 30-minute lesson to the cohort, get honest feedback, and learn from watching every other man teach his. Then you practice the five moments that can knock a session off course, so that when they happen for real, you have already been there.

This week's worksheets: Facilitation Observation Rubric, page 106; Self-Reflection After Teaching, page 107

SESSION 43

Teaching Practicum 1

BIG IDEA *Nervousness means you care; use it, and treat this as training, not a performance.*

KEY POINTS

- **Half the group teaches today, the other half next session.** If you're nervous, that's normal. "Every facilitator in the world was nervous their first time. Use it. Nervousness means you care."
- **If you're in the group, your job matters just as much.** Side-talk and checking out make the presenter's job harder. Honest participation makes him better. Your cohort is the easiest audience you'll ever have. In a few months you'll be teaching men in the dorms who didn't sign up and may not want to be there.
- **How a practicum runs.** Each presenter gets 30 minutes. The facilitator signals at 25 and stops you at 30, because "time management is part of facilitation." He does not step in or rescue you while you teach.
- **The feedback round.** Three peers speak first: one thing that worked well, one thing to improve. Then the facilitator gives a real strength and a growth area. Then the presenter says how it felt and what he would do differently.
- **The observation rubric.** Everyone fills one out for each presenter. It rates five areas from 1 to 4: Preparation, Engagement, Clarity, Adaptability, and Debrief Quality. Then you write one strength, one area for improvement, and one question for the presenter.
- **Rate honestly.** "A 2 is not an insult — it means 'developing.'" That is exactly where a first-timer should be. Nobody gets all 4s the first time. "The feedback is the learning."
- **Be specific.** "Good job" tells nobody anything. Say what worked: "Your opening question got everyone's attention immediately." Say what to fix: "You talked for 6 minutes straight during the content section — break it up with a question next time."
- **Trust them to do it.** One example of feedback: the presenter set up the exercise well, then jumped back in and started explaining while the group was supposed to be practicing. "Trust them to do it. Step back."
- **Watching is preparation.** If you teach next session, use what you saw today to tighten your lesson.

HOMEWORK

1. **If you teach next session: finalize your lesson and practice it out loud at least one more time.**
   Workbook: Lesson Plan Template, page 101
2. **If you taught today: write a self-assessment in your journal.** What worked? What didn't? What would you do differently next time? Be specific.
   Workbook: Self-Reflection After Teaching, page 107
3. **Everyone: keep your observation rubrics.** You will use the patterns later this week.
   Workbook: Facilitation Observation Rubric, page 106

SESSION 44

Teaching Practicum 2

BIG IDEA *The mistakes you saw these two days are normal for first-time facilitators; the goal is to recognize them and handle them better each time.*

KEY POINTS

- **The second half teaches, same rules.** Thirty minutes each, then the feedback round. Rubrics out, participate fully, give honest feedback.
- **Advice from the men who went first.** "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."
- **Let it register.** Every man in the room has now planned a lesson, stood up in front of a group, led the learning, and received honest feedback. Most people never do that. Two weeks ago you were learning about the mentor identity. Today you taught a session.
- **Talking too much was the most common challenge.** Almost everyone lectured longer than planned. If you catch yourself going on and on, stop mid-sentence and say, "Let me check in with you — what's landing so far?"
- **Time pressure hit hardest at the end.** Several presenters rushed or skipped the debrief. "Better to teach less and process it deeply than to cover everything and process nothing."
- **These are normal.** Every challenge in the tool below is what first-time facilitators face. By Phase 3 you will have practiced enough that most of them feel manageable.

TOOL: SIX COMMON FACILITATION CHALLENGES

Challenge	The fix
Talking too much during content	No more than 3 minutes of talking before a question or an activity
Weak or missing hook	"Today we're going to talk about..." is an announcement. Would a skeptical dorm member lean in or check out?
Unclear practice instructions	Say who does what, how long they have, and what the outcome should be. Check for real understanding, not nods
Rushed or skipped debrief	If you're short on time, cut content, never the debrief
Reading from notes	Notes are a safety net, not a script. The group needs your eyes and your energy
Not managing the room	See the whole room, not just the man talking

HOMEWORK

1. **Write a final self-assessment in your journal, at least half a page.** What worked? What didn't? What is the one thing you'll focus on improving as a facilitator?
   Workbook: Self-Reflection After Teaching, page 107
2. **Review your observation rubrics from both days.** Pick out the top 3 strengths you saw across all presenters and the top 3 challenges. Bring them to next session.
   Workbook: Facilitation Observation Rubric, page 106
3. **Come ready to role-play** the moments that test a facilitator: someone shuts down, the group goes off track, someone gets emotional, someone challenges you, or a conflict breaks out. "Come ready to be uncomfortable."

SESSION 45

Group Dynamics and Difficult Moments

BIG IDEA *Sooner or later a session goes sideways, and how you hold yourself in that moment is the lesson the room remembers.*

KEY POINTS

- **It will go sideways.** Not because you're a bad facilitator, "because you're facilitating for human beings." Practice here means "your body and your brain have already been there."
- **Practice, freeze, coach, replay.** One man led while others played the moment. The action froze: "What are you thinking right now?" The group coached him, and he tried again.
- **Off track is not the enemy.** In the role-play, the group got fired up about a CO who shook down a bunk unfairly. Bridge it to your lesson if you can: how do you bring this up with staff in a way that's assertive, not aggressive? "Redirect, don't resist."
- **When someone breaks down, don't rush to fix it.** "Don't cry, bro" tells him his feelings are a problem. Be present. Let the silence sit. "Thank you for sharing that." If someone jokes, stop it: "That's not how we do this."
- **When you're challenged, get curious, not defensive.** The challenger said thinking errors just blame us for what the system did. Don't defend the material. "Both things can be true. The question is: which one can you actually control?" Your composure IS the lesson.
- **In a conflict, safety comes first. Always.** Then use the FORGE conflict resolution model from Phase 1, and stay neutral in front of the group.
- **Silence is a tool.** After a powerful question, count to 10 in your head before you speak. "Don't fear the silence. Use it."

TOOL: THE 5 DIFFICULT MOMENTS

Moment	What to do	The worst response
Someone shuts down	Don't put him on the spot. "You don't have to share right now." Keep going. Check in with him privately after	Ignoring it completely
Group goes off track	Say it matters. Bridge it to your topic, park it for the last 10 minutes, or give it a time limit	Fighting the group's energy
Someone gets emotional	Be present. Validate. "Do you need a minute? Do you want to keep going? It's your call."	Freezing, looking away, changing the subject
Someone challenges you	"Tell me more about what you mean." Admit what's true in it. Ask the group. Don't take it personally	Defending, sarcasm, pulling rank
Conflict between participants	Stop it and separate them. One at a time, no insults. Too heated? Take a break, then follow up with both men	Ignoring it and hoping it dies down

HOMEWORK

1. **Write a final journal reflection of at least half a page:** "What kind of facilitator am I becoming? What's my biggest strength and my biggest growth area?"
2. **Revise your lesson plan** based on your practicum and the feedback you received. The revised plan goes in your Phase 2 portfolio.
   Workbook: Lesson Plan Template, page 101
3. **If your lesson plan was one of the stronger ones, start thinking about a second topic.** You need 3 complete lesson plans in your portfolio by the end of Phase 2.
   Workbook: Phase 2 Portfolio Checklist, page 152

Facilitation Observation Rubric

Use with: Session 42 homework (study it); Sessions 43–44, where you get a fresh copy for each presenter; Session 44 homework. The Week 23 teaching demonstration is scored on the same five things.

Circle one box in each row. Rate honestly: a 2 is not an insult, it means "developing." Then be specific. Not "good job," but what he actually did: "Your opening question got everyone's attention."

Presenter _____ **Topic** _____ **Observer** _____

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 the 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 the group's needs	Seamless adaptation
Debrief quality	No debrief, or rushed	Surface-level debrief	Drew out the key learning	Deep, lasting insight

One strength. One specific thing he did well:

One area for improvement. One specific thing he can do next time:

One question for the presenter about his facilitation:

Session 44 homework: patterns. Look back over all your rubrics from both days.

Top 3 strengths I saw across all presenters	Top 3 challenges I saw

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Self-Reflection After Teaching

Use with: Sessions 43–44 homework (after you teach), and again after your Week 23 teaching demo. For the full half page, keep writing in your journal.

Topic _____ **Date** _____

What worked?

What didn't?

What would I do differently next time?

The one thing I will focus on improving as a facilitator:

Topic _____ **Date** _____

What worked?

What didn't?

What would I do differently next time?

The one thing I will focus on improving as a facilitator:

WEEK 16

Motivational Interviewing Basics

This week: What do you do when the man you're trying to help doesn't want help? You learn Motivational Interviewing (MI), a way of talking with people that helps them find their own reasons to change. You learn the spirit behind it, the four OARS skills, and the readiness ruler, and you practice them on real FORGE situations to get ready for simulation training next week.
This week's worksheets: Stages of Change, page 112; OARS Reference Card, page 113; Readiness Ruler, page 114; MI Practice Log, page 115

SESSION 46

The Spirit of MI

BIG IDEA *"You cannot argue someone into wanting to change"; you can only help him find his own reasons.*

KEY POINTS

- **When someone pushed, you pushed back.** When someone argued with you, you dug in harder. That is the starting point for this whole week.
- **MI helps people find their own reasons for change.** Two psychologists, William Miller and Stephen Rollnick, developed it in the 1980s. "Not your reasons. Their reasons. That's the whole game." Telling someone to change almost never works. Helping him talk himself into change does. MI is not a trick, manipulation, or reverse psychology.
- **Partnership and acceptance.** MI is something you do WITH someone, not TO him. People in here get told what to do all day. "I'm here with you, not above you." Acceptance doesn't mean you approve. It means you see the person, not just the behavior.
- **Compassion and evocation.** His well-being comes first, not your ego. Ask yourself, "Is what I'm about to say for his benefit or mine?" Evocation is a big word for a simple idea: the motivation is already inside him, in his kids, his future, his self-respect. Your job is to draw it out.
- **Roll with resistance.** He says, "Programs don't work. I've been in three and nothing changed." Argue and he digs in. Instead: "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?"
- **Listen for change talk.** "I want to be a better father." "My kids deserve better." "I'm done living like this." When you hear it, reflect it back and ask for more.
- **Don't argue with sustain talk.** "It's too late." "This is just who I am." Acknowledge it and gently ask, "Is there another part that's not so sure?"
- **Change happens in stages.** Push someone from stage 1 to stage 5 in one sitting and you lose him. The stage tells you what support he needs, and what not to do.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Change talk** — anything a person says that moves toward change.
- **Sustain talk** — anything a person says that keeps things the same.

TOOL: THE STAGES OF CHANGE

Stage	He says	What he needs from you
1. Precontemplation	"I don't have a problem."	A relationship, not a lecture. Plant a seed: "I'm around if you ever want to talk about it."
2. Contemplation	"Maybe I have a problem, but..."	Help him weigh the pros and cons himself. Don't rush him.
3. Preparation	"I'm going to do something about this."	Help him make the plan concrete. This stage is fragile.
4. Action	"I'm doing it."	Encouragement. Affirm his effort. Help with obstacles.
5. Maintenance	"I'm keeping it going."	Remind him how far he's come. Relapse is possible under stress.

HOMEWORK

1. **Have one conversation 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 he says something you disagree with, try acknowledging it instead of arguing. See what happens.
2. **Journal about that conversation** before next session.

SESSION 47

MI Skills for Mentors

BIG IDEA *With OARS you row alongside him; you don't drag him to shore.*

KEY POINTS

- **OARS are the four core skills of MI.** Think of a rowboat: "You're not dragging someone to shore. You're rowing alongside them."
- **Open questions open doors.** "Are you okay?" gets "fine." "What's going on with you today?" gets a story. If he can answer in one word, it's closed. Change talk lives in the details. Open doesn't mean vague: "How's life?" is open but useless.
- **An affirmation is not flattery.** "You're doing great, man" is flattery. "You walked away from that argument yesterday. That took discipline — especially because everyone was watching" is an affirmation. The men you mentor have heard what's wrong with them their whole lives. A true affirmation can change how a man sees himself.
- **Three rules for affirmations.** Be specific: name what he did. Be genuine: "A fake affirmation does more damage than no affirmation." Focus on effort and choice, not personality: "You chose to walk away," not "You're such a peaceful person."
- **Reflections are the workhorse.** "If you only master one skill, make it this one." He says, "I'm tired of being in trouble all the time." Simple: "You're exhausted from the constant cycle of getting in trouble." Complex, naming what's underneath: "Part of you is starting to wonder if there's a different way to live."
- **Three reflection mistakes.** Parroting his exact words. Turning it into a question ("So you're tired of being in trouble?"), which puts him on the defensive. Adding judgment ("well, yeah, you should be").
- **Summaries pull it all together.** Mirror the whole conversation, and put his change talk in it so he hears his own motivation. Always end with, "Did I get that right?"
- **The hardest part is not giving advice.** Your mentee says, "I want to quit," and everything in you wants to say, "Don't quit!" Use OARS instead. He starts finding his own reasons to stay, "which are always more powerful than yours."

TOOL: OARS

Skill	What it is	Example
Open questions	Questions that can't be answered in one word	"What would you want your life to look like when you leave here?"
Affirmations	Specific, genuine recognition of his strengths, effort, or values	"You've been showing up to every session for six weeks, even after that setback with your family."
Reflections	Saying back what you heard, or what's underneath it	"You've been away from your kids for a long time."
Summaries	Pulling the whole conversation together, then checking	"...Did I get that right?"

HOMEWORK

1. **Have one real conversation in the dorm using all four OARS 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.
2. **Write about it in your journal:** What did you say? How did the other person respond? What would you do differently?
   Workbook: MI Practice Log, page 115

SESSION 48

MI in FORGE Context

BIG IDEA *"MI opens doors. Everything else you've learned walks through them."*

KEY POINTS

- **The readiness ruler is one simple question** (see the tool below). If he says he's a 4, most mentors hear "low" and start convincing. Wrong. Ask why he isn't lower, and he becomes the one arguing for change. "The distance from 4 to 5 is manageable. The distance from 4 to 10 is overwhelming."
- **The dorm member who doesn't want to change.** Marcus runs a gambling operation in the dorm, and two weeks ago a near-fight broke out over a debt. He says gambling isn't hurting anyone. You are not trying to make him stop today. You're starting a conversation that might lead somewhere, and keeping the door open.
- **The man thinking about leaving FORGE.** Terrence is doing good work, but his cellie called him soft for being in the program. "Maybe this isn't worth the hassle." Part of him wants to stay and part wants to leave. Don't argue him into staying. Help him look at both sides.
- **MI before conflict resolution.** Ray and Deon have been in a cold war for a week over a seat at the day room table. You talk to Ray alone before any mediation. On the surface it's about a seat. Underneath it's about respect. MI gets a man willing to sit down. The 5-step conflict model gives him the structure to settle it. MI doesn't replace your other skills; it makes them possible.
- **The MI mentor mindset.** "I don't have to fix anyone." "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."
- **It will feel unnatural at first.** MI asks you to be patient. You'll slip into advice. That's fine. "MI is a practice, not a performance."
- **Simulation training starts next week.** It is the hardest part of Phase 2 and the most valuable. "Better to make mistakes here, with coaching, than out there for real."

TOOL: THE READINESS RULER

1. **Ask:** "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?"
2. **Ask why not lower:** "What makes you a 4 and not a 1?" What he says next is change talk. Reflect it back.
3. **If it's going well, ask:** "What would it take to move from a 4 to a 5 or 6?" Now he is building his own plan.

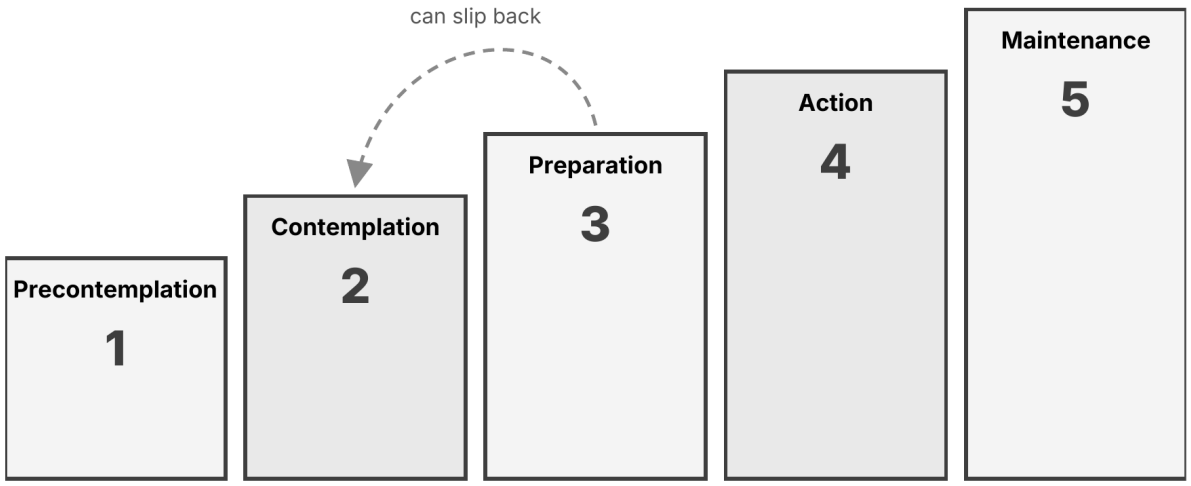
HOMEWORK

1. **Practice MI in at least 2 real conversations before next week.** Use OARS, and use the readiness ruler if the chance comes up. Journal about each one: what you said, what they said, what you'd do differently.
   Workbook: MI Practice Log, page 115
2. **Review your MI Quick Reference card until you know it cold.** You will use these skills in simulations starting next week.
   Workbook: OARS Reference Card, page 113
3. **Review the FORGE conflict resolution model** (the 5 steps in your handbook). Next week you will use MI and conflict resolution together in simulated scenarios.

Stages of Change

Use with: Session 46.

Where he is tells you what kind of support he needs. Push from 1 to 5 in one sitting and you lose him.



STAGE	HE SAYS	WHAT HE NEEDS FROM YOU
1. Precontemplation	*"I don't have a problem."*	A relationship, not a lecture. Plant a seed: "I'm around if you ever want to talk about it."
2. Contemplation	*"Maybe I have a problem, but..."*	Help him weigh it himself: "What would be different if you stopped?"
3. Preparation	*"I'm going to do something about this."*	Help him make the plan concrete. Fragile: he can slip back.
4. Action	*"I'm doing it."*	Encouragement, credit for the effort, help with obstacles.
5. Maintenance	*"I'm keeping it going."*	Remind him how far he's come. Relapse is possible, especially under stress.

Notes:

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OARS Reference Card

Use with: Session 47.

MI QUICK REFERENCE (OARS)

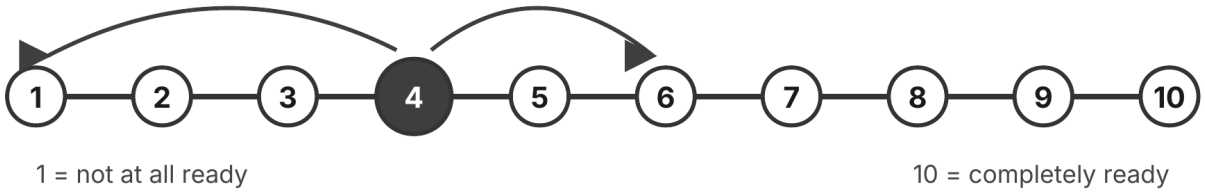
- **O**pen questions — "What's going on?" not "Are you okay?"
- **A**ffirmations — "You showed real discipline by walking away"
- **R**eflections — "It sounds like you're feeling disrespected"
- **S**ummaries — "So what I'm hearing is..."

Readiness Ruler

Use with: Session 48.

"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]?"

"What makes you a 4 and not a 1?" **"What would it take to move to a 5 or 6?"**



His answer to the first question is change talk: reflect it back. *A 4 is real. The distance from 4 to 5 is manageable. The distance from 4 to 10 is overwhelming.*

The readiness ruler works because it gives people permission to not be at a 10. It meets them where they are. When he says a 4, most mentors would hear "4" and think: low. He's not ready. I need to convince him. Wrong. Ask "What makes you a 4 and not a 1?" Now he's telling you his reasons for change. You didn't have to make the argument. He's making it himself.

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

The change _____ **His number** _____

Why not a 1? What he said (reflect it back):

_____

_____

_____

What would it take to go up one number?

_____

_____

_____

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MI Practice Log

Use with: Sessions 47 and 48 homework, then Weeks 17–18. Five entries go in your Phase 2 portfolio. For more, copy the columns into your journal.

Log real conversations, not class practice. No names: write "a man in my dorm." Circle each OARS skill you used (**O**pen questions, **A**ffirmations, **R**eflections, **S**ummaries). If you used the readiness ruler, write the number he gave.

Date	Context: who, and what about	OARS used	Ruler	What happened: what I said, how he responded	What I'd do differently
	A man in my dorm. His family hasn't visited in months.	*O, R, S*	—	*Asked what's been weighing on him. Reflected: "Sounds like you feel forgotten." He opened up about his mom.*	*I jumped to advice at the end. Should have summarized and asked what he wants to do.*
		O A R S			
		O A R S			
		O A R S			
		O A R S			
		O A R S			
		O A R S			
		O A R S			

WEEK 17

Simulation Training Block 1a

This week: You start simulation training, the part of FORGE where you stop talking about what to do and practice doing it. You learn how a simulation runs, how freeze and coach works, and what observers watch for. Then you run your first two dorm scenarios: an argument over a stolen radio and a man who has been labeled a snitch.

This week's worksheets: Simulation Lessons Log, page 120; Simulation Scoring Rubric, page 121; Red Lines — Immediate Referral Required, page 121

SESSION 49

Introduction to Simulations

BIG IDEA *Every mistake you make in a simulation is a mistake you don't make in real life.*

KEY POINTS

- **Most programs talk about what to do. FORGE makes you do it.** A firefighter doesn't read about fire for six months and then walk into a burning building. He practices until his body knows what to do. Under pressure, you go to what you've practiced, not what you've read. "We're training your reflexes."
- **Simulations are uncomfortable, and that is the point.** You will freeze, make mistakes, and say the wrong thing in front of the group. "In real life, the stakes are someone's safety. In here, the stakes are your pride."
- **Freeze and coach.** In real life you can't stop the clock, think, get advice, and try again. In here you can. Feedback must be specific. Not "You should have done better." Instead: "When he raised his voice, your body tensed up. Try dropping your shoulders and slowing your voice."
- **Observers have a job.** When you're not in the hot seat, you watch one or two of the six rubric categories: de-escalation, communication, boundaries, resolution, composure, and referral judgment. Observers often learn the most.
- **The rubric scores each category from 1 to 4:** Needs Work, Developing, Competent, Exemplary. Competent is the target. These first simulations are practice, not scored. Graded simulation assessments begin in Week 23, and passing them is how you move on to Phase 3.
- **The simulation agreements.** What happens in simulation stays in simulation; it never becomes a joke in the dorm. Feedback is coaching, not attacking. Role-players stay in character. Everyone takes a turn in the hot seat. When a scene is running, the room is quiet.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Hot seat** — being the mentor in the scene while everyone watches.
- **Referral judgment** — knowing when something is beyond your role and staff needs to be involved.

TOOL: HOW EVERY SIMULATION RUNS

1. **Scene set.** The facilitator describes the situation. You get no time to write a script. Real life doesn't give you one.
2. **First attempt.** You respond on your own. This shows your natural instincts under pressure.
3. **Freeze and feedback.** The facilitator calls "Freeze" and asks, "What are you thinking right now? What's your plan? What do you need?" Then the group coaches you.
4. **Replay.** Same scene, same characters, new approach. This is where the real learning happens.
5. **Group debrief.** What worked and why? What was the hardest moment? What applies to real life?
6. **Lessons learned.** Everyone writes a short entry in his journal. These become part of your Phase 2 portfolio.

HOMEWORK

1. **Think about the first simulation.** 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. 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.
2. **Journal anything that comes to mind** about that scenario.

SESSION 50

Simulation 1 — Property Dispute Escalating to Threats

BIG IDEA *A property dispute is never really about the stuff; it is about respect, so bring the temperature down first and sort out the facts later.*

KEY POINTS

- **The scenario.** It's mid-afternoon and you hear raised voices in the bunk area. 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 says, "If I don't get it back by tonight, we're going to have a problem." Five or six men are watching. One says, "Handle your business, Williams." You live in this dorm. You walk up.
- **Skills practiced.** De-escalation in real time, the FORGE conflict resolution model under pressure, handling two men in conflict plus a crowd, and staying composed when someone challenges your authority.
- **De-escalate first. Resolve later.** The first goal is to bring the temperature down. Figuring out what really happened to the radio comes later, when emotions are down.
- **Manage the crowd, too.** The men watching add pressure. Part of your job is handling the bystanders while you deal with the two in conflict.
- **Answer a threat directly.** When a man says he'll handle it himself, that is a threat. Say something like: "I hear you. And I want to make sure this gets resolved without anyone catching a charge. Let's figure this out together."
- **Know when staff comes in.** If a threat becomes specific and about to happen, or a weapon is mentioned, it is time to involve staff.
- **It's about respect.** "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."
- **Same scene, two mentors.** The scenario ran twice with different mentors. There is no single right answer, but some approaches work better than others, again and again.

TOOL: THE LESSONS LEARNED ENTRY

After every simulation, write in your journal:

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?

HOMEWORK

1. **Think about the next scenario before next session.** A man has been labeled a snitch, and he comes to you. This one is different from a property dispute. The threat isn't physical yet, but it could become that fast.

SESSION 51

Simulation 2 — Gossip and Reputation Damage

BIG IDEA *In here a label like "snitch" can get a man hurt, so listen first, size up the danger, and help him without becoming his enforcer.*

KEY POINTS

- **Gossip in here is different.** On the outside, gossip is annoying. In here, labels like "snitch" or "rat" can get someone hurt. You can't make the dorm stop talking, but you can't ignore a situation that could turn violent.
- **The scenario.** Thomas pulls you aside, upset. Someone is telling people he gave staff information about last week's cell search. He says it isn't true. Men stop talking when he walks up, and Jackson told him to his face, "Be careful, people are watching you." Thomas is scared, but it is coming out as anger. He wants to confront whoever started the rumor, and maybe Jackson too. He wants your help.
- **Skills practiced.** Sizing up the danger, using OARS and active listening with a man who is worked up, and holding your boundaries.
- **Validation first.** Before you solve anything, he needs to know you hear him: "This is serious — being labeled like that in here is dangerous, and I understand why you're scared."
- **Is it gossip or a real threat?** "People are watching you" could be a warning from a friend or a threat from an enemy. Get more information before you decide. "Tell me exactly what's happened, from the beginning" gets you the facts and gives him room to organize his thoughts.
- **You are not his enforcer.** You can listen, help him think through options, watch the dorm, and involve staff if the danger is high enough. You cannot investigate who started the rumor, confront Jackson, or promise he is safe. If you confront Jackson, his conflict becomes your conflict. And if someone asks what you two talked about, keep it private.
- **Safety comes before secrecy, but tell him to his face.** If you believe he is in danger, you can't stay quiet, even if he doesn't want staff involved. Don't go behind his back. "If I believe your safety is at risk, I can't stay quiet. That's not about snitching — that's about keeping you alive."
- **Composure is the foundation.** Every scenario tests different skills, but all of them ask one thing: "Can you stay composed under pressure and respond with skill instead of instinct?"

HOMEWORK

1. **Review your lessons learned entries** from this week. What patterns do you see?
   Workbook: Simulation Reflection, page 120
2. **Practice OARS in at least one real conversation** before next week. Journal about it.
   Workbook: MI Practice Log, page 115
3. **Read the FORGE conflict resolution model one more time.** You should be able to recite the five steps without thinking.
4. **Think about next week's scenarios.** 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.

Simulation Lessons Log

Use with: Sessions 50–60 (all 12 practice simulations). Session 51 and 54 homework: look for patterns.

After each simulation, write your lessons-learned entry in your journal. Then put the short version here, so all 12 sit on one page. Block 1 simulations run twice; use one row for both runs.

Simulation	What did I observe that worked?	What would I do in the hot seat?	One thing I want to remember for real life
1 Property dispute escalating to threats			
2 Gossip and reputation damage			
3 New arrival being tested and pressured			
4 Gambling debt creating tension			
5 Racial tension in shared space			
6 A mentee confides he has a weapon			
7 A mentee relapses into substance use			
8 Two FORGE members in conflict			
9 A mentor being manipulated and tested			
10 Mental health crisis: suicidal statements			
11 Staff conflict: a CO treating someone unfairly			
12 Gang pressure on a FORGE participant			

After Simulation 5 (Session 54 homework): read rows 1–5 and write a half-page summary in your journal. What are my strengths? What needs work? What surprised me?

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WEEK 17 WORKSHEET

Simulation Scoring Rubric

Use with: Weeks 17–20 when you observe, Session 66 homework, and the Week 23 graded simulations.

Every simulation is scored on these six skills, each at one of four levels: Needs Work, Developing, Competent, Exemplary. When you observe, you are given one or two skills to watch. Write what you saw, specifically: "When the volume went up, he stepped back and lowered his voice."

Skill	What "competent" looks like	My notes as an observer
De-escalation	Brought the tension down on purpose, with real technique: body language, tone, distance, pace.	
Communication	Clear, assertive and respectful. The person felt heard.	
Boundaries	Stayed in the mentor role the whole time. Not a CO, not just a friend.	
Resolution	Reached a workable agreement, with dignity kept.	
Composure	Stayed composed the whole time, even under pressure.	
Referral judgment	Saw when it was beyond a mentor, and referred in time, the right way.	

WEEK 17 WORKSHEET

Red Lines — Immediate Referral Required

Use with: Session 55, Weeks 19–20, and all of Phase 3.

Where "handle it" becomes "refer it." Stay calm, make no promise you can't keep, and get it to the right person without creating more danger. Ask your facilitator how this facility handles each one, and write it in.

Red line	Who I tell here, and how
Weapons mentioned or discovered. Zero tolerance.	
Threats of serious violence that are credible and specific	
Suicidal or self-harm statements	
Gang-related conflict	
Staff safety concerns	
If I can't reach anyone right away	

What I will say when he begs me not to tell:

WEEK 18

Simulation Training Block 1b

This week: You finish the first block of simulations with three harder dorm scenarios: a new arrival being pressured, a gambling debt, and racial tension over a shared TV. These test your boundaries and your judgment about when to refer, not just your de-escalation. The week ends with a look back at all five Block 1 simulations and an honest rating of yourself.

SESSION 52

Simulation 3 — New Arrival Being Tested/Pressured

BIG IDEA *You can't force help on a man, but you can protect him, leave the door open, and hold your own people accountable.*

KEY POINTS

- **Remember your own first week.** A new place, not knowing the rules, being watched, being tested. Some of you were helped. Most of you weren't.
- **The scenario.** Peterson came to the dorm three days ago and got a lower bunk near the back. Davis, Franklin, and Mitchell have been pressuring him to give it up. Davis has had an upper bunk for months and claims seniority. You overhear Davis: "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 says quietly, "I'm good right here." Franklin adds, "He said he's good. For now." Mitchell is a FORGE participant. He's standing with the group but hasn't said anything.
- **Skills practiced.** Stepping in for a vulnerable man without starting a new conflict, dealing with a group that has seniority, and addressing a FORGE participant who is part of the problem.
- **This is a power problem, not just a conflict.** The group has seniority and standing. The new man has neither. He may not want your help, because taking help could make him look weaker than he already feels.
- **Don't make it a public showdown.** If you stand against Davis in front of his group, he can't back down without losing face. Pull him aside: "Hey, Davis, can I talk to you for a second?"
- **Leave the door open.** Don't force help on someone. Respect his answer in the moment, then check back later, in private: "If you need anything or if things get uncomfortable, I'm around." You can't always tell right away if a man is handling it or covering fear. That's why you check back.
- **Mitchell needs his own conversation.** Not in front of the group. Not in anger. But it must happen: "Is that who you want to be in this dorm? Because that's not what FORGE is about." A FORGE member taking part in intimidation, even quietly, undermines the whole program. This is accountability, not punishment.
- **What a win looks like.** Davis stops pressuring Peterson, at least openly. Peterson keeps his bunk. Mitchell gets an accountability talk. Nobody catches a charge or gets hurt. Bring in staff if there are clear threats of violence, if the group is targeting more than one new arrival, or if Peterson is physically kept from his bunk.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Protecting** — making sure no one gets harmed.
- **Rescuing** — taking over a situation in a way that makes the person more dependent on you, not less.

HOMEWORK

1. **Think about the next scenario before next session.** A gambling debt. The danger isn't in the room with you; it's coming from another dorm. And the man in trouble is begging you not to tell anyone.

SESSION 53

Simulation 4 — Gambling Debt Creating Tension

BIG IDEA *Confidentiality matters, but safety always outranks it, and you tell the man that honestly instead of going behind his back.*

KEY POINTS

- **Gambling is real. Danger is your business.** When debts lead to threats, extortion, or violence, it's a safety issue, and safety is always within a mentor's scope.
- **The scenario.** Harris, usually talkative, sits down next to you in the day room, looking over his shoulder: "I need to talk to you. But you can't say anything to anyone." He lost on sports bets and owes Cortez in C-Dorm. The debt started at 10 soups and has grown to 5 books of stamps and commissary worth about $200. Cortez sent word that payment is due soon "or we'll come collect." Harris can't pay. He won't go to staff because he's afraid of being labeled and of being written up for gambling. He wants your help getting the commissary together.
- **Skills practiced.** Judging the risk, using MI with a man who is frightened and defensive, and weighing a secret against his safety.
- **When a debt becomes a safety problem.** When threats are made, when someone outside the dorm is sending messages, or when the man is afraid for his physical safety. "We'll come collect" is a threat.
- **Never promise blanket confidentiality.** Say: "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."
- **What you do next.** If the threat is real and close, staff gets involved, with his knowledge if possible. If not, make a plan with him and watch closely. Either way, write down the conversation and check in daily.
- **Never go to Cortez.** A FORGE mentor does not step into a debt between dorms. And if someone warns you to stay out of it, the situation is bigger than peer mentoring. That needs staff.
- **"You cannot help someone if they're not alive and safe."** When confidentiality and safety conflict, safety wins.

TOOL: THREE OPTIONS WHEN SOMEONE ASKS YOU TO KEEP A DANGEROUS SECRET

1. **Keep the secret and try to fix it privately.** Risk: he gets hurt because you underestimated the danger, and now you're part of hiding it.
2. **Go straight to staff.** Risk: he gets written up, gets labeled as someone who talks, Cortez retaliates, and he loses trust in FORGE.
3. **Be honest with him.** "I'm not going to go behind your back. But 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." This third option is the FORGE way.

HOMEWORK

1. **Come to the next session ready to be honest and to listen.** The next scenario, racial tension in a shared space, is the most sensitive one in Block 1. "Come prepared to be honest and to listen to perspectives different from yours."

SESSION 54

Simulation 5 — Racial Tension in Shared Space + Block 1 Review

BIG IDEA *Don't pretend race doesn't matter, and don't make it worse: solve tonight's problem and save the deeper talk for when things are calm.*

KEY POINTS

- **Honesty and respect.** Racial tension is real in here. "FORGE mentors don't pretend race doesn't matter. They also don't accept that racial division is inevitable."
- **The scenario.** By unwritten rule, one TV belonged to the Black dorm members and the other to the white dorm members. One broke last week, and taking turns is breaking down. Tonight Black dorm members are watching a basketball game. Reeves, who is white, wants to switch when it ends in 20 minutes. Cooper, who is Black, says it has 45 minutes left. Reeves says, "It's always the same — you all take the TV every night and we get whatever's left." Someone from Cooper's group says, "If you got a problem with it, take it up with the CO." Reeves answers, "I don't need a CO to handle this." You're in the doorway.
- **Skills practiced.** Stepping into a racially charged situation without dismissing it, taking sides, or making it worse.
- **The TV is the trigger, not the real issue.** The real issue is a sense of unfairness, and racial tension that was managed by keeping people apart. Now the separation is gone.
- **Name it, then start with the practical problem.** "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." Give both men equal respect, time, and attention. If either side thinks you're siding with the other, trust is gone.
- **Solve tonight. Talk later.** A schedule, a rotation, a coin flip: something fair and open. "Let's solve tonight and talk about the rest when things are calm."
- **Know your limits.** You can't fix racial tension decades in the making. You can show respect across racial lines, build relationships one man at a time, and refuse to take part in division.
- **Block 1 review.** Five scenarios, one through-line: composure, listening, boundaries, and judgment. The mentor who listened first did better than the one who acted first. "You are further along than you think." In your journal you rated yourself 1 to 4 in each rubric category and named the area you most need to develop.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Colorblind** — "I don't see race." It 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."

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?
   Workbook: Simulation Reflection, page 120
2. **Keep practicing MI in real conversations.** You should be using OARS daily by now. It should be becoming a habit, not an exercise.
   Workbook: MI Practice Log, page 115
3. **Read ahead in your handbook about restorative practices,** if it is available. After Simulation Block 2 in Weeks 19 and 20, you move into restorative circles and accountability conversations.

WEEK 19

Simulation Training Block 2a — Complex Situations

This week: Block 2 begins, and the scenarios get harder. You practice what to do when a man tells you he has a weapon, when a mentee relapses, when two FORGE members are in conflict, and when someone tries to use you. The real skill this week is knowing when you can handle something and when you must step back and refer.

SESSION 55

Red Line — The Weapon

BIG IDEA *A weapon is a red line: stay calm, make no promise you can't keep, and make sure the right people know, even when he begs you not to.*

KEY POINTS

- **Block 2 is different.** In Block 1 you could usually reach some kind of resolution. In Block 2, some situations go past what a mentor can handle alone. "A mentor who doesn't know the difference is dangerous."
- **A red line is where "handle it" becomes "refer it."** When you hit one, three things happen. First, you stay calm; panic makes everything worse. Second, you make no promises you can't keep. If he says "Don't tell anyone," you do not say "I won't." You say, "I hear you, and I care about you, and I need to make sure you're safe." Third, you follow the referral protocol: get the information to the right person (a staff member, a counselor, the program lead) without creating more danger.
- **The scenario.** A man you've been mentoring, who has been doing well and whom you genuinely like, pulls you aside. He's nervous. "I need to tell you something, but you have to promise not to say anything." Then: "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."
- **Skills practiced.** Recognizing a red line and holding a boundary under emotional pressure without making things more dangerous.
- **There is no gray area with weapons.** FORGE has zero tolerance. You have one job: make sure the right people know, so no one gets hurt, including the man holding it. Never take the weapon yourself. Then you are the one in possession.
- **What you say.** "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." No threats, no lecture. Acknowledge the fear, hold the boundary, follow through.
- **The relationship may take a hit.** He may feel betrayed. That's a cost you accept. "A mentor who ignores a weapon to protect a friendship is not a mentor. He's an accomplice to whatever happens next."
- **The journal question.** What would make it hard for you to refer in a situation like this? What would you tell yourself to follow through anyway?

TOOL: THE FIVE RED LINES

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, it goes up.

HOMEWORK

No homework from this session.

SESSION 56

Substance Use Relapse & Internal FORGE Conflict

BIG IDEA *Whether a mentee relapses or two brothers are at odds, you are not the judge: hold the relationship, be honest, and connect people to help.*

KEY POINTS

- **Your role when a mentee relapses.** You are not a substance abuse counselor or a CO. You are a peer mentor. Hold the relationship, be honest, and connect him to help. "Not to fix it. Not to ignore it. Not to punish it."
- **Scenario 7.** You've mentored a man for about two months, and he's been doing well. Today something is off. He won't make eye contact, and he missed the last session without saying why. He admits he got high two days ago. He says it was a one-time thing and won't happen again. He asks you not to tell anyone because he'll get kicked out of FORGE.
- **Skills practiced.** In Scenario 7, MI and OARS with a man who is ashamed. In Scenario 8, mediating between two FORGE members while staying neutral.
- **Relapse is information, not failure.** For most people in recovery, relapse is part of the process, not the end of it. That doesn't mean you excuse it or pretend it didn't happen.
- **Your three jobs.** Don't make it worse; he's already drowning in shame. Be honest: "I care about you, and I'm concerned." Connect him to help: you're not a counselor, but you can walk with him to someone who is. "Can I help you make that connection?" Use OARS, and affirm what's real: "It took courage to tell me this." Never promise to hide it, act like it's no big deal, or decide the consequences yourself. "You're a mentor, not a judge."
- **Scenario 8.** Two men in your cohort are in conflict. It started small, with something borrowed without asking or a comment taken as disrespect. It's been building for a week, and the dorm feels it. Each one comes to you separately and wants you on his side. One says, "If you don't handle this, I'm going to handle it myself." The other says, "I expected more from a FORGE brother." You probably like one more than the other. Your job is to stay neutral, mediate, and bring them together.
- **FORGE-on-FORGE conflict does real damage.** Every skeptic in the dorm says, "See? They're no different." When you mediate between brothers, three things are true. You are a facilitator, not a judge. You hold a higher standard, and you remind them of their commitments "Not as a weapon. As a mirror." And if you can't resolve it, bring in the program lead or a senior mentor. Don't let it fester because you're embarrassed you couldn't fix it.
- **Don't get caught in triangulation.** Take a side and you lose the other man. You can't mediate after you've chosen.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Triangulation** — getting pulled into the middle of someone else's conflict, with each side trying to use you against the other.

TOOL: 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**

HOMEWORK

1. **Journal 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.

SESSION 57

Manipulation and Boundary Testing

BIG IDEA *The best answer to manipulation is not anger but clarity: "I see what's happening. I'm not going to go along with it. And I'm still here for you."*

KEY POINTS

- **Not every request is manipulation.** But some people will try to use the mentor relationship for their own advantage, not because they're evil, but because working angles is how people survive in here. "You've all done it."
- **The key question.** When you feel unsure, ask: "Would I be comfortable if the program lead saw exactly what I'm doing right now?" If the answer is no, stop.
- **The scenario.** A newer FORGE participant, about a month in, is charming and says all the right things in sessions. But you've noticed he drops the program's name to gain status, follows the code only when it helps him, and quietly undermines another participant he sees as competition. He comes to you with flattery about how much he respects you. Then the ask: talk to the program lead about giving him more responsibility as a peer facilitator. He hints that the other participant "isn't really committed."
- **Skills practiced.** Recognizing manipulation and holding a firm boundary without losing compassion.
- **Flattery works because it feels good.** There's no shame in being taken in. Look for the first sign that this wasn't a straight conversation.
- **Name the behavior, not the person.** Not "You're a manipulator." Instead: "I'm noticing that you're asking me to take sides against another participant, and I'm not going to do that."
- **A response that works.** Acknowledge the positive: "I see your energy in the program, and that's real." Name the pattern. Hold the boundary: "That's not how FORGE works." Point him toward real growth: "If you want more responsibility, here's what that actually looks like."
- **Manipulation is an adaptation, not a personality defect.** You don't have to hate him for it, but you do have to name it. Clear boundary, continued care: you hold both.
- **What this week's scenarios share.** Each asked you to hold two things at once. "Compassion AND boundaries. Love AND truth." The one that was hardest for you is your growing edge.

TOOL: FIVE COMMON FORMS OF MANIPULATION

1. **Flattery** — "You're the only one who understands me." When someone makes you feel special, ask what he wants.
2. **Guilt** — "I thought we were brothers." Using your commitment to service against you.
3. **Urgency** — "I need this right now, there's no time to think about it." Pressure to act before you can think it through.
4. **Victim positioning** — "Everyone is against me. You're the only one I can trust." Cutting you off from other views.
5. **Testing the fence** — small asks that slowly grow. Each one seems reasonable, until you realize you've crossed a line.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write down what you said in the closing round:** "The hardest part of being a mentor will be..."
2. **Journal 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?

WEEK 20

Simulation Training Block 2b — The Hardest Scenarios

This week: You finish simulation training with the three hardest scenarios in FORGE: a man who talks about not wanting to be here anymore, a CO treating someone unfairly, and gang pressure on a FORGE brother. In all three, your main job is not to solve the problem. It is to keep people safe, keep the dorm steady, and know the limits of your role.

SESSION 58

Mental Health Crisis — Suicidal Statements

BIG IDEA *Presence is the intervention: stay with him, ask him straight, listen, and get help, because you are the bridge to help, not the help itself.*

KEY POINTS

- **You may be the first person he talks to.** You are not a therapist or a crisis counselor. But you need to know the signs, how to respond, and how to get help. Anyone who needs to step out of this session can, no explanation needed.
- **The warning signs.** Any combination should get your attention: giving away property, especially things with sentimental value; pulling away from people; sudden calm after a stretch of distress, which can mean he has made a decision; saying things like "It doesn't matter anymore," "Everyone would be better off," or "I can't do this"; talking about death; more drug use; reckless behavior; and devastating news, like a parole denial, a death in the family, or a relationship ending.
- **The scenario.** Evening, and the dorm is winding down. A man sits on his bunk, doing nothing. He's been quieter than usual for days, and yesterday he gave his radio away. You sit down near him. "You don't need to check on me. I'm fine," he says. He clearly is not. Later 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."
- **Skills practiced.** Staying calm and present, asking directly, and listening instead of fixing. If you jump up scared, he sees you scared. And "You'll be alright" doesn't help; he needs someone who takes him seriously.
- **What you say.** "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."
- **You are not enough, and that's okay.** You hold the person and you get the help. You don't try to be the help. Knowing that limit is wisdom, not weakness. And if it ever happens for real: "You showed up. You stayed. That alone may be the reason someone makes it through the night."

TOOL: FIVE STEPS IN A MENTAL HEALTH CRISIS

1. **Stay.** Do not leave him alone. Your presence matters more than your words.
2. **Ask directly.** "Are you thinking about hurting yourself?" Asking does not give someone the idea; that is a myth. It reduces the risk.
3. **Listen.** Don't argue or try to talk him out of it. Don't say "Think about your kids." Say: "I hear you. I'm here. I'm not going anywhere."
4. **Get help.** This is a red-line referral. Use this facility's process to reach mental health staff, day or night. If you can't reach anyone, stay with him and send someone else to find a CO. Say: "I have someone here who's in crisis and needs to talk to mental health staff right away."
5. **Take care of yourself.** After mental health staff takes over, talk to the program lead or a senior mentor. You don't carry it alone.

HOMEWORK

1. **Journal tonight if you need to.**
2. **Take care of yourself.** If this session brought up something personal, the facilitator and the senior mentor are available to talk. "You don't have to carry it alone."

SESSION 59

Staff Conflict — A CO Treating Someone Unfairly

BIG IDEA *The CO's behavior is above your pay grade; the dorm's response to it is your job, so keep the peace now and fight smart afterward.*

KEY POINTS

- **FORGE does not override staff authority. Period.** Even when staff is wrong. Not because COs are always right: "Some are excellent. Some are terrible. Most are somewhere in between." It's because the moment an inmate challenges a CO in front of a full dorm, it gets far more dangerous for the CO, for the man being mistreated, for you, and for everyone there.
- **Manage the dorm, not the CO.** Your job is to de-escalate the dorm. Afterward there are proper channels: grievance procedures, the program lead raising it through the administration, and mentors writing down and reporting what happened. "Justice doesn't require you to be a hero in the moment. It requires you to be smart."
- **The scenario.** A CO is searching the dorm and being rough with one man: tossing his belongings, making disrespectful comments, using excessive force during a pat-down. The man is trying to stay compliant, but he's humiliated. The room's energy is shifting. A FORGE participant steps toward it and says loudly, "This isn't right. Somebody needs to do something about this." The CO is still in the room. One of your own FORGE brothers is about to make it worse.
- **Skills practiced.** Calming the dorm's reaction, handling an angry FORGE member with respect, and supporting the man who was mistreated without confronting authority.
- **Handle it in order.** First, the agitated FORGE member; he is the biggest risk. "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, and nothing gets better for anyone. Stand down. We handle this the right way." Second, once the tension passes, check on the man who was searched. Third, write down what happened and report it through proper channels.
- **Two outcomes.** If a FORGE member confronts the CO, the CO escalates, backup comes, the dorm goes on lockdown, people catch charges, the searched man gets it worse, and FORGE loses credibility. If a mentor manages the dorm and then files a proper grievance with documentation, nobody catches a charge, the man knows someone had his back, and there is a paper trail. "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."
- **His anger wasn't wrong.** The angry FORGE member's anger was righteous. Your job is not to tell him it's wrong but to turn it into action that brings results instead of consequences.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Grievance** — a formal complaint made through the facility's official process.

HOMEWORK

1. **Journal tonight.** Think about a time when you chose the strategic response instead of the emotional one. What made you choose strategy? What was the result?

SESSION 60

Gang Pressure & Block 2 Capstone Debrief

BIG IDEA *Sometimes you can't fix it, and a great mentor stays anyway: take the threat seriously, be honest about your limits, and refer when pressure becomes a threat.*

KEY POINTS

- **FORGE mentors do not engage with gang dynamics directly.** "This is not a limitation — it's wisdom." Gangs have their own authority, rules, and consequences. A mentor who steps in puts himself, his mentee, and the whole program at risk.
- **What you CAN do.** Keep gang identity out of FORGE sessions. Support a man privately and help him see his options. Refer when pressure becomes a threat. Model a different identity, one bigger than affiliation.
- **What you do NOT do.** Confront gang members, investigate who is pressuring whom, mediate between gangs, take sides, or use FORGE as a shield or a rival affiliation.
- **The scenario.** A FORGE participant who has shown real growth since Phase 1 comes to you stressed. People he used to run with are telling him he's gone soft and needs to "prove he's still solid." He hasn't done anything yet, but the pressure is growing. Yesterday someone told him, "You need to decide whose side you're on." He doesn't want to go back to that life, but he knows what happens to men who walk away from their set without permission.
- **Skills practiced.** Taking a threat seriously, refusing to give false comfort, and helping a man think without trying to solve what you can't solve. Tell a man facing real threats that it will be fine, and he has no reason to trust your judgment.
- **A response that holds up.** Take it seriously: "I hear you. This is real, and I'm not going to pretend it's simple." Explore his options, "even the bad ones." Be honest about limits: "I can't make this go away. But I can sit here and think it through with you." Plant the seed that his safety may someday require talking to someone with more authority. Affirm who he is: coming to you instead of going along "tells me who you are. Don't lose that."
- **Being there anyway.** For a man told his whole life that he's alone, someone sitting with him in the hard place "is revolutionary." If it turns into direct threats of violence, it goes to staff. Over time, the best defense against gang pressure is the FORGE culture itself.
- **Block 2 capstone.** In your journal you made two lists: scenarios you feel ready to handle, and scenarios that still scare you. "A mentor who thinks they're ready for everything is a mentor who hasn't been paying attention."

TOOL: LESSONS FROM BLOCK 2

1. Some situations require referral, not resolution.
2. You can be caring and firm at the same time.
3. Presence is sometimes the most powerful intervention.
4. Knowing your limits is a strength, not a weakness.
5. Manipulation works when you want to be needed.
6. The dorm's response is your responsibility, even when the problem isn't.
7. Not every situation has a clean answer.
8. Your own emotional reactions are data. Pay attention to them.

HOMEWORK

1. **Journal before next week.** Write a letter to a future FORGE participant who is about to start simulation training. What do you wish someone had told you before you began?
2. **Keep the group's Block 2 lessons list.** These are the principles that will guide your mentoring in Phase 3.

WEEK 21

Restorative Practices

This week: The last two weeks trained you for the worst crises. This week you learn the tools that stop many crises before they start: keeping a circle, holding a man accountable without punishing him, and building a dorm where those things are normal. The week answers one question: what does a FORGE dorm look like when it's working well?

This week's worksheets: Circle Process Reference Card, page 134; Accountability Conversation Model, page 135; Community Circle Planning Template, page 136

SESSION 61

Circle Keeping

BIG IDEA *A circle keeper does not run the conversation; he holds the space so every man can speak and be heard.*

KEY POINTS

- **You have sat in circles since Week 1. Now you learn to keep one.** Circles are thousands of years old. In a circle "no one is at the head. No one is in the back row." The shape says: we are equal here.
- **Restorative justice asks different questions.** The usual system asks what law was broken, who broke it, and what punishment he deserves. Restorative justice asks: Who was harmed? What do they need? Whose job is it to make it right?
- **The talking piece makes the circle work.** When you hold it, the room belongs to you. When you don't, your only job is to listen, "to understand, not to respond." "When a man holds that piece, he's holding the group's trust."
- **There are four types of circles.** Community-building circles are the most important: they build connection before a problem, weekly if you can. Problem-solving circles deal with a growing tension: "The keeper doesn't solve the problem. The circle solves the problem." Healing circles come after something hard, never while it is still dangerous. Reintegration circles help a man rejoin the group after a setback like disciplinary action or time in segregation.
- **The keeper holds space; he does not direct.** He asks good questions, protects the guidelines, stays neutral, and holds silence instead of filling it; silence is often where the deepest thinking happens. He does not give advice, take sides, force anyone to talk, or pick apart what people share.
- **You build this skill by doing it.** "The first one always feels awkward. That's normal. The tenth one will feel natural."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Circle keeper** — the man who runs a circle by holding the space, not by leading the talk.

TOOL: THE CIRCLE PROCESS

1. **Opening.** A reading, a moment of silence, a deep breath, or a statement of purpose, to slow people down. Then bring out the talking piece and state the guidelines, every time.
2. **Rounds.** A round is one trip of the talking piece with one question. Most circles have 2 to 4: start easy ("What's one word for how you're feeling?"), go deeper, then close ("What are you leaving with today?"). "The art of circle keeping is in the questions."
3. **Closing.** A short summary without naming anyone, a moment of silence, or "Thank you for your honesty. This circle is closed."

The guidelines: Speak only when holding the talking piece. Speak from the heart. Listen from the heart. Say just enough. You may pass.

HOMEWORK

1. **In your journal, design 3 circle questions** you could use for a community-building circle in your dorm: one warm-up question, one deeper question, and one closing question.
2. **Think about what talking piece you would use in your dorm,** and why.

SESSION 62

Accountability Conversations

BIG IDEA *Punishment says "You're bad"; accountability says "You did something that caused harm, and I believe you're capable of doing better."*

KEY POINTS

- **Punishment and accountability teach different things.** Think of the worst punishment you ever got, and what it taught you. Then think of someone who cared enough to look you in the eye and say, "What you did hurt people, and I expect more from you." Hear the difference?
- **Punishment looks back. Accountability looks forward.** Punishment asks how much someone deserves to suffer. Accountability asks what happened, who was hurt, what needs to change, and how to move forward. "One destroys. The other builds."
- **Your mentees will fall short.** Your job is not to punish them; "there are enough people in their lives doing that." Hold them accountable in a way that keeps the relationship. Most people can either care about someone or tell him the truth. FORGE mentors do both.
- **Start with facts, not judgments.** "You missed the last three sessions," not "You obviously don't care about FORGE." "Facts open doors. Judgments close them."
- **The repair comes from him, not from you.** If his answer is weak, push: "What would a real apology look like?" If he says he owes nothing, slow down, use MI, and reflect his words back.
- **The follow-up IS the accountability.** "If you don't follow up, the conversation didn't happen."
- **Skipping the conversation is worse.** Either the behavior grows, or resentment builds and the relationship "dies quietly." Done with care, an accountability conversation "is an act of love."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Accountability** — taking responsibility for harm you caused and working to make it right.

TOOL: THE 4-STEP ACCOUNTABILITY CONVERSATION

1. **What happened?** Facts only. If he denies or twists them: "I'm not asking why yet. I'm asking: did this happen?"
2. **Who was affected and how?** Ask; don't tell. When a man sees the harm on his own, it sticks deeper than a lecture.
3. **What needs to happen to make it right?** Let him name the repair: an apology, a changed behavior, a talk with the man he hurt.
4. **How do we move forward?** "What can I count on from you going forward?" Then set a check-in: "Not to hover. Because I care enough to follow through."

What is not in this model: shame, threats, punishment, power plays.

HOMEWORK

1. **Plan a real accountability conversation in your journal.** Think of someone in your life you need to have one with, in here or 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.
   Workbook: Accountability Conversation Model, page 135

SESSION 63

Building a Restorative Dorm Culture

BIG IDEA *A dorm changes slowly, when mentors keep doing small things like circles, conversations and check-ins week after week.*

KEY POINTS

- **Two dorms, same everything, different culture.** In Dorm A, the reactive dorm, problems get handled after they blow up, trust is low, and "the mood of the dorm is set by whoever is having the worst day." In Dorm B, the restorative dorm, there is a short check-in circle every week, someone steps in early when conflict starts, and mistakes get accountability, not punishment. "The mood of the dorm is set by the men who've decided to lead."
- **Dorm B is not a fantasy, but it is slow.** It takes 6 to 12 months of mentors showing up day after day. Your job is "not to fix the dorm in a week. To start a process that changes it over time."
- **A regular check-in circle is your strongest prevention tool.** It is an early warning system. It builds trust a little at a time. It makes saying "I'm struggling" normal. Over time it stops being "the FORGE mentor's thing" and becomes "what we do here."
- **Keep the weekly circle simple and steady.** Same time every week, in the common area, 15 to 30 minutes, open to anyone, no pressure, simple questions ("What's on your mind?"). If only two men come, you still show up. "The consistency is the message."
- **You are responsible for effort, not outcomes.** Some circles will feel pointless. Keep going. You can't control whether someone changes. You can control whether you show up, stay consistent, and treat people with dignity.
- **You planned a 30-minute circle for your own housing unit:** purpose, who and when, talking piece, opening, three round questions, closing, and the resistance you expect. Keep your plan. In Phase 3 you will actually run it.
- **The week ended with your vision:** "The dorm culture I want to build is one where..." Every circle you keep and every time you choose patience over reaction serves that vision.

TOOL: STARTING CIRCLES IN A SKEPTICAL DORM

Say "I want to start a circle" and expect laughter and suspicion. Five ways through it:

1. **Don't use program words.** Say "I want to get a few guys together once a week just to check in... No program stuff. Just real talk."
2. **Start with the willing.** Begin with 3 or 4 men who are open to it. Curiosity will bring the others.
3. **Lead by example, not by lecture.** Live it. When someone asks, "How do you do that?", that's your opening.
4. **Use natural moments.** After a fight, a lockdown, or bad news: "That was intense. Anyone want to talk about it?"
5. **Expect resistance and don't take it personally.** "Culture is set by the committed few, not the entire population." Go for depth, not numbers.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write down your vision sentence and tape it inside your journal:** "The dorm culture I want to build is one where..."
2. **Before next week, write out your plan for your first month as a FORGE mentor in a dorm.** What would you do in Week 1? Week 2? Week 3? Week 4? Be specific.

Circle Process Reference Card

Use with: Session 61.

THE CIRCLE PROCESS · OPENING, ROUNDS, CLOSING

Opening (1–3 minutes). It signals that this is different from a regular conversation. 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…"). Then introduce the talking piece and review the circle guidelines.

Circle guidelines

1. **Speak only when holding the talking piece.** No exceptions.
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.** Say what's true and pass it on.
5. **You may pass.** No one is forced to speak. Passing is always respected.

Rounds. One trip of the talking piece around the circle, one question. Most circles have 2–4 rounds. The first is low-stakes, a check-in: "How are you arriving today?" The second and third go deeper. The final round is a closing question: "What are you leaving with today?"

Closing. It mirrors the opening. 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 · "Thank you for your honesty. This circle is closed."

THE KEEPER'S ROLE · FOUR TYPES OF CIRCLES

The keeper does: prepare the space · open with intention · ask the questions · hold silence · protect the process · not take sides · close with care.

The keeper does NOT: give advice during the circle · share his own opinion on the issue (unless it's a community-building circle and he's participating too) · side with anyone · force someone to speak · analyze what people share · try to reach a conclusion that hasn't emerged naturally.

1. **Community-building:** building connection before a problem happens. Run these regularly, weekly if possible. "What's something good that happened this week?"
2. **Problem-solving:** a growing issue, not a crisis. "What's the issue as you see it?" · "How is this affecting people?" · "What options do we have?" · "What can we agree to?"
3. **Healing:** after something hard happens. Slower, gentler questions. Never about something that's still actively dangerous.
4. **Reintegration:** someone coming back from a setback. "What happened?" · "How has it affected the group?" · "What does the person need to rejoin?" · "What does the group need from them?"

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Accountability Conversation Model

Use with: Session 62.

Punishment says: "You're bad." Accountability says: "You did something that caused harm, and I believe you're capable of doing better."

1. **What happened?**
   Facts, not accusations or interpretations. "I'm not asking why yet. I'm asking: did this happen?"
2. **Who was affected, and how?**
   Ask; don't tell.
3. **What needs to happen to make it right?**
   The repair comes from him, not from you.
4. **How do we move forward?**
   "What can I count on from you going forward?" Then follow up next session: the follow-up IS the accountability.

Not in this model: shame, threats, punishment, power plays.

Four questions. In order. Every time. The person takes ownership of the repair: you don't impose it. If you don't follow up, the conversation didn't happen.

PRACTICE IN TRIADS

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. Each round takes about 8 minutes: 5 for the conversation, 3 for observer feedback. Then rotate.

Observer, 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?

Notes:

Community Circle Planning Template

Use with: Session 63 (built in class). Your Session 61 questions and talking piece can go in parts 4 and 6–8. Keep this plan: in Phase 3 you run it.

Design a 30-minute circle you could really run in your dorm. Write out your opening and closing word for word.

Part	My plan
1. Purpose. What is this circle for? Building community, or something specific?	
2. Who. Who will you invite? How will you invite them?	
3. When and where.	
4. Talking piece. What will you use, and why?	
5. Opening. A reading, silence, grounding, or a statement of purpose.	
6. Round 1 question (warm-up)	
7. Round 2 question (deeper)	
8. Round 3 question (closing, takeaway)	
9. Closing. How will you close?	
10. Expected challenges. What resistance might you face? How will you handle it?	

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WEEK 22

Life Skills Facilitation

This week: You practice teaching practical life skills: money, getting ready for release, and health and relationships. The point is not only to know the material but to teach it well and lead a group through it. By the end of the week you have taught a mini-lesson, helped build a reentry checklist, and practiced leading a discussion on a hard topic.

This week's worksheets: Financial Literacy Reference Sheet, page 141; Life Skills Lesson Prep Worksheet, page 142; Reentry Checklist Template, page 143

SESSION 64

Financial Literacy — Teaching Others

BIG IDEA *You don't need to be a financial advisor; you need to know the basics well enough to teach them and point people in the right direction.*

KEY POINTS

- **Men will bring you money problems.** Some will walk "straight into a payday loan trap because nobody ever showed them another way." This session was about learning the content and learning to teach it.
- **Budgeting.** A budget is a plan for your money: income minus expenses. The simplest is the 50/30/20 rule: 50% to needs, 30% to wants, 20% to savings and paying down debt. Inside it looks different, but the idea holds: make your choices on purpose, not by accident. Teach it with real numbers.
- **Banking.** Without an account you pay fees to cash checks, can't save safely, and carry cash, "which makes you a target." Be honest about the barriers, like distrust or missing ID, and show that it's possible and worth it.
- **Debt traps.** Payday loans, rent-to-own, buy-here-pay-here car lots, high-interest credit cards. They are built to keep you in debt and aimed at people with no other options, "which is exactly who walks out of prison." Don't just say "avoid payday loans." Show the math: one loan you can't repay, a second to cover the first, and six months later you owe $5,000 on a $500 loan.
- **Saving.** It starts with believing your future self matters. Pay yourself first: save before you spend. For an emergency fund, 3 months of expenses is the goal, but start with $500. Start small: "Tell them to save $5 this week." Build the habit first, then the amount.
- **Give feedback that helps.** "'Good job' doesn't help anyone grow." Say exactly what worked and why.
- **Your own life is your best teaching tool.** You've made mistakes with money and seen what happens without it. "Don't hide from it — use it."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Budget** — a plan for your money: what comes in, minus what goes out.
- **Debt trap** — a loan or deal built so you keep owing more than you can pay back.

TOOL: A MINI-LESSON IN THREE PARTS

Every man teaches a 15-minute mini-lesson on one of the four topics.

1. **A hook.** Something that grabs attention in the first 30 seconds: a question, a surprising fact, a personal story.
2. **The content.** The key ideas, taught clearly, with examples and real numbers.
3. **An activity or question.** Get the group doing or thinking, not just listening.

Use notes, but don't read a script. "Teach like you're talking to someone who needs this information to survive out there."

HOMEWORK

1. **If you haven't presented yet, finish your 15-minute mini-lesson.** You will teach it at the start of next session. Come prepared.
   Workbook: Life Skills Lesson Prep Worksheet, page 142
2. **Journal:** "What financial mistake have I made that I could teach someone else to avoid? How would I teach that lesson?"

SESSION 65

Reentry Preparation

BIG IDEA *Your job is not to crush a man's hope about going home but to help him build a plan "so that hope has a foundation."*

KEY POINTS

- **Everyone has now taught.** The last mini-lessons opened the session. "You're building the muscle."
- **The reentry reality.** The facilitator said that within 3 years of release, more than two-thirds of people released from state prisons are rearrested. The biggest reasons are practical: no housing, no ID, no job, no health care, no support. Men walk out "with a bus ticket and maybe $50."
- **Mentees near release need different things.** The terrified ones need a plan. The overconfident ones need a reality check, "delivered with respect, not condescension," because "Everything will go back to normal" is a myth.
- **Housing is the foundation.** Start planning at least 6 months before release, learn the transitional housing programs, and have a backup. Family housing is not always safe or stable. "Where someone sleeps that first night matters."
- **ID opens every other door.** A man needs a state ID or driver's license, a Social Security card, and a birth certificate. In Georgia the process can start before release. Start now, "not the week before you leave."
- **Work and health care.** A record closes some doors, not all. Practice talking about it "honestly, briefly, forward-looking." Leave with a 30-day supply of any medication and a plan for refills; a gap in psych medication can be dangerous.
- **Family has changed while you were gone.** "Love doesn't erase hurt." Trust has to be rebuilt, not demanded.
- **You built the tool.** In groups you made a reentry checklist for the 6 months before release: specific actions, a timeline, resources, and room for notes. The facilitator will combine the best parts into one master checklist for everyone. "The people closest to the problem create the solution."

TOOL: QUESTIONS TO ASK A MENTEE NEAR RELEASE

Area	Ask him
Housing	Where will you stay your first night out? Your first week? Your first month? If that falls through, what's your backup?
ID documents	Do you have a valid state ID? A Social Security card? A birth certificate?
Employment	What skills do you have? What kind of work are you willing to do? Have you practiced talking about your record?
Health care	Are you on any medication? Do you have a plan for continuing it? Do you know where the nearest community health center is?
Family	Who are you going home to? What do they expect from you? What if it doesn't go the way you're imagining?

HOMEWORK

1. **Review your reentry checklist and add anything you think is missing.**
   Workbook: Reentry Checklist Template, page 143
2. **Journal:** "What's one conversation about reentry that I need to have — with myself, my family, or someone I care about?"

SESSION 66

Health, Wellness, and Relationships

BIG IDEA *You are not a therapist, but you can make a room safe enough for men to talk honestly about health, family and loss, and know when to get help.*

KEY POINTS

- **This session is personal.** A man will talk about budgeting all day; ask about his kids and "the walls go up." Your job is to hold space, ask the right questions, and keep the room safe.
- **Physical health.** Know the basics of food, exercise, chronic conditions and sleep. Don't diagnose, but don't ignore symptoms. Model honesty: "I've been sleeping badly this week and I notice it's making me short-tempered."
- **Mental health: "you are not a therapist."** You don't diagnose, treat, or prescribe. You normalize ("It doesn't make you weak. It makes you human."), you listen, and you ask directly when you're worried: "Are you having thoughts of hurting yourself?" Asking does not plant the idea; that's a myth. If someone is in crisis, stay with him and get help.
- **Addiction is a chronic condition, not a moral failure.** With a mentee near release, ask without judgment about his triggers, his support, and what he'll do in the first 48 hours if he feels the pull.
- **Relationships have to be rebuilt, not resumed.** That takes humility, patience and honest talk. And don't tell a man how to be a father. Ask: "What kind of father do you want to be? What can you start doing now — from in here?"
- **Grief needs a place to go.** Men inside lose people with no funeral to attend. Sometimes the most important thing you do is say, "I know you lost your mother last month. I'm sorry. How are you doing with that — honestly?" Then listen.
- **The practice discussions "got real fast."** "You needed courage, a good question, and the skill to hold the space."

TOOL: FIVE RULES FOR FACILITATING SENSITIVE TOPICS

1. **Set the container.** Remind the group of the agreements: confidentiality, no judgment, speak from your own experience, you can pass.
2. **Go first.** Share something real. When you are open, the group gets permission.
3. **Use questions, not lectures.** "What's been your experience with…" opens space. "Let me tell you about…" closes it.
4. **Watch the room.** If someone goes quiet, check in. If someone gets emotional, don't rush past it. "I notice it got quiet. That probably means we touched something real."
5. **Know when to stop.** If a man starts sharing an active trauma or crisis, it becomes a private talk, maybe a referral: "Thank you for trusting us with that… can we talk after the session?"

HOMEWORK

1. **Journal:** "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.
   Workbook: Simulation Scoring Rubric, page 121
3. **Review your facilitation notes from Weeks 14–15.** Next week is assessment week, and you will co-facilitate a session with a partner.
4. **Prepare the way you've trained:** review your simulation notes, your de-escalation steps, and your boundaries.

Financial Literacy Reference Sheet

Use with: Session 64.

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. Pick the area that connects with you most: that's the one you're going to teach.

1 · BUDGETING

A budget is a plan for your money. Income minus expenses. **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. A budget is making those choices on purpose instead of by accident. **Teaching it:** 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.

Income _____ **Needs (50%)** _____ **Wants (30%)** _____ **Savings, debt (20%)** _____

2 · BANKING

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. **Teaching it:** the biggest barrier is distrust. Some men have had accounts closed or garnished. Some don't have the ID required to open one. Acknowledge the barriers honestly. Show them it's possible and worth doing.

3 · DEBT TRAPS

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, if it runs a year, pay back $2,500. **Teaching it:** don't just say "avoid payday loans." Explain why. Show the math: 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.

4 · SAVING

It starts with the mindset that your future self matters. Even $20 a month is $240 a year. **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. **Teaching it:** start with the small wins. Tell them to save $5 this week. Build the habit first, then build the amount.

Your 15-minute mini-lesson needs three things: a **hook** that grabs attention in the first 30 seconds; the **content**, with examples and real numbers; an **activity or question** that gets the group doing something.

Life Skills Lesson Prep Worksheet

Use with: Session 64 (15 minutes to prepare a 15-minute mini-lesson), and its homework if you teach next session.

Use notes, but don't read a script. Teach like you're talking to someone who needs this to survive out there.

My topic (circle one): Budgeting · Banking · Debt traps · Saving

Part	My notes
1. Hook (the first 30 seconds). A question, a surprising fact, or a personal story.	
2. Content. The key ideas, with examples and real numbers.	
3. Activity or question. What will the group do, or think about?	

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Reentry Checklist Template

Use with: Session 65 (your group builds it; the facilitator combines the best into one master copy) and its homework (add what's missing).

A roadmap for the 6 months before release, to work through with a mentee item by item. Write specific action items: “Apply for state ID,” not “Get your documents together.” Say when to start each one and where to get help. The last column tracks his progress.

Area	Action item	Start when	Resource or contact	Status or notes
Housing				
ID documents				
Employment				
Health care				
Family				

WEEK 23

Integration and Simulation Assessment

This week: This is assessment week. You show the skills you've built over 10 weeks of Phase 2: 5 graded simulations, a session you co-facilitate with a partner, and a 20-minute teaching demonstration. These count toward moving on to Phase 3. As the facilitator put it, this week is not designed to trip you up; it is designed to show you what you can do under pressure.

This week's worksheets: Co-Facilitation Observation Form, page 147

SESSION 67

Simulation Assessment 1

BIG IDEA *"You don't need to be perfect. You need to be effective."*

KEY POINTS

- **Nerves mean you care.** "Today is not designed to make you fail. Today is designed to show you — and me — what you can do under pressure." You have trained for 10 weeks, practiced these kinds of situations, and gotten feedback.
- **What it covers.** 3 graded simulations in this session and 2 more in the third session of the week, 5 in all. Each one is scored on the same six skills (see the tool below). The rubric is not a secret; you have seen it.
- **You won't know the scenario until it starts, "just like real life."** You can't prepare for the exact situation. You prepare by building the skills.
- **How each simulation runs.** The facilitator sets the scene and assigns roles. If you play a part, like an upset dorm member or a resistant mentee, you get a role card. Then the scene runs live for 7 to 10 minutes, with no pauses and no coaching. That is the graded part. Two scorers score you separately, then you get a short headline: what went well and what to work on.
- **If you're not in the scene, you're an observer.** Watch closely. "You'll learn as much from watching as from doing."
- **Your full scores come later.** You get your complete results in the first session of Week 24. No one is asked to share scores with the group.
- **One rough simulation is not the end.** You have more chances. And if you need work on something, "that's what this process is for — to show you where to focus."
- **Co-facilitation is next session.** "The best co-facilitation looks seamless — like two people thinking with one mind. That doesn't happen by accident. It happens by preparation."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Graded simulation** — a practice scene that is scored and counts toward finishing Phase 2.
- **Rubric** — a scoring sheet that lists what is being judged and what each level looks like.

TOOL: THE SIX SKILLS EVERY SIMULATION SCORES

1. **De-escalation** — bringing the tension down.
2. **Communication** — clear, assertive and respectful.
3. **Boundaries** — staying in your mentor role.
4. **Resolution** — working toward an agreement that deals with the real issue.
5. **Composure** — keeping your own calm.
6. **Referral judgment** — seeing when a situation needs a referral, and acting on it in time.

HOMEWORK

1. **Meet with your co-facilitation partner and finish your session plan.** Decide who leads which sections.
2. **Review the teaching demonstration rubric.** Your 20-minute teaching demo is in the third session this week. Know what's being scored and prepare for it.
   Workbook: Facilitation Observation Rubric, page 106

SESSION 68

Co-Facilitation Practice

BIG IDEA *Two facilitators who talk before the session and during it can lead as one.*

KEY POINTS

- **In Phase 3 you won't always facilitate alone.** You'll co-facilitate with other FORGE mentors. That takes its own skills: communicate, share the space, support each other, and stay united "even when things go sideways."
- **What it covers.** Each pair delivers a 45-minute session to the group on a Phase 1 topic the group has already covered. Pairs choose different topics. Two pairs go in this session; any other pairs go at the start of the next session. Every participant completes one co-facilitation.
- **Observers watch six things.** See the tool below.
- **Feedback comes three ways.** First the group: what the pair did well as a team, the strongest moment, and one thing to improve. Then the facilitator, who looks at the partnership, not just each man. Then your partner.
- **Partner to partner.** Tell your partner one thing he did that made your job easier, and one thing you'd want to do differently next time.
- **Co-facilitation is harder than it looks.** You manage the group, the content, your own performance and your partner's experience, all at once. The pairs who did well "communicated. Before the session and during it. That's the skill."
- **The final assessment session is next:** 2 more graded simulations and your 20-minute teaching demonstration.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Co-facilitation** — leading a session with a partner, taking turns leading and supporting.

TOOL: WHAT OBSERVERS WATCH IN CO-FACILITATION

Area	What to look for
Coordination	Do they work together smoothly? Are hand-offs clear? Do they seem prepared?
Shared leadership	Does one man take over, or do both lead and support?
Content delivery	Is the material clear and organized? Do they use activities, not just lecture?
Group management	How do they handle participation, energy and disruptions? Do they read the room?
Mutual support	Do they build on each other's points and step in when the other struggles?
Adaptability	When something unexpected happens, do they adjust together?

HOMEWORK

1. **Finish your teaching demo.** You know your topic and the rubric. Prepare your hook, your content, and your activity. Time yourself: "20 minutes goes faster than you think." *Workbook: Lesson Plan Template,* page 101
2. **Get some rest.** You've been under pressure all week. Take care of yourself so you can bring your best to the last assessment session.

SESSION 69

Simulation Assessment 2 + Teaching Demonstration

BIG IDEA *You don't get to prepare for the exact situation; you prepare by building the skills, and this week showed you have built them.*

KEY POINTS

- **Same standards, same rubric, same expectation: "be effective, not perfect."**
- **Your last 2 graded simulations** bring your total to 5. Same format and the same six skills, in scenarios you didn't see coming.
- **What the teaching demonstration covers.** A 20-minute lesson on an assigned Phase 1 topic, scored on five things (see the tool below). Time is called at 20 minutes.
- **You've done this before,** in Week 15 and in your financial literacy mini-lessons. "This is the same skill. Trust it."
- **Feedback starts with you.** After your demo you say what went well first. Then you hear one strength and one area to grow.
- **If time runs short,** some demos move to the start of the next session. Every participant finishes the teaching demo before the portfolio is put together.
- **Results come next session:** all 5 simulation scores, your teaching demo score, and your co-facilitation feedback. "You'll know exactly where you stand."
- **What the facilitator saw this week:** "men who have genuinely developed the skills to help other people. Not perfectly — nobody's perfect at Week 23. But effectively. Authentically. With heart."

TOOL: THE TEACHING DEMONSTRATION

Your lesson needs a hook, clear content, an activity or engagement piece, and a closing. It is scored on five things:

1. **Preparation** — a clear structure, objectives and materials.
2. **Engagement** — getting the group involved, not lecturing at them.
3. **Clarity** — ideas explained clearly and correctly.
4. **Adaptability** — adjusting when something isn't working.
5. **Debrief quality** — drawing out what the group learned and tying it to real life.

HOMEWORK

1. **Begin gathering your portfolio materials:** your 3 lesson plans, simulation reflections, co-facilitation notes, MI practice logs, self-reflection, and peer evaluations. You put everything together next session, but start pulling it together now.
   Workbook: Phase 2 Portfolio Checklist, page 152
2. **Journal:** "What kind of mentor am I becoming? What's my greatest strength? What's the area I still need to develop most?"

Co-Facilitation Observation Form

Use with: Sessions 68–69, while you watch another pair. For more pairs, copy the form into your journal.

Write specific moments, not "good job." The group gives its feedback first.

Pair _____ **Topic** _____ **Date** _____

Area	What I saw (a specific moment)
Coordination	
Shared leadership	
Content delivery	
Group management	
Mutual support	
Adaptability	

What they did well as a team	Their strongest moment	One thing to improve as a pair

Pair _____ **Topic** _____ **Date** _____

Area	What I saw (a specific moment)
Coordination	
Shared leadership	
Content delivery	
Group management	
Mutual support	
Adaptability	

What they did well as a team	Their strongest moment	One thing to improve as a pair

Your own pair: what your partner told you. This goes in your portfolio.

How I made his job easier	What he'd want to do differently next time

WEEK 24

Phase 2 Assessment and Transition

This week: This is the last week of Phase 2. You get your assessment results, put together your Phase 2 portfolio, present yourself to a review panel, and celebrate. It marks the shift from learning to do the work to doing it for real.

This week's worksheets: Phase 2 Portfolio Checklist, page 152; Why I'm Ready to Be a FORGE Mentor, page 152; Peer Evaluation Form, page 153

SESSION 70

Portfolio Assembly

BIG IDEA *Your portfolio is evidence: it backs up what you tell the panel about how you've grown.*

KEY POINTS

- **Your results are yours.** You get your own summary: all 5 simulation scores, your teaching demo score, and your co-facilitation feedback. No one is asked to share scores. "Every score on that sheet is a snapshot of one moment... It's real data... But it doesn't define you."
- **Passed everything? "Don't coast." Fell short on something? "That's information, not a verdict."** If something needs more work, the facilitator talks with you privately about a plan. "Nobody gets left behind in FORGE because of a bad day."
- **The portfolio tells the story of your growth over 12 weeks.** "It's not busywork — it's evidence." Every item in the tool below is required.
- **Missing something? Write it now,** in this session. "This is your last chance to get it done."
- **Peer evaluations.** If they aren't done yet, you write them in this session for 3 peers. Rate each man 1 to 5 on integrity, service orientation, growth, composure and accountability, then write 2 to 3 sentences explaining your rating. "Be honest and specific — this is a service to them, not a popularity contest."
- **Get ready for the panel.** Outline your opening statement in bullet points, not a script, and practice it out loud. Don't just say "I've changed." Say how. Don't just say "I'm ready." Say what prepared you.
- **Name your change.** The closing round: "The man who started Phase 2 twelve weeks ago would not believe that I can now..." Hold onto your answer. "That's your evidence... That's what the panel needs to hear."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Portfolio** — a folder of your own work that shows what you've learned and done.

TOOL: YOUR PHASE 2 PORTFOLIO, IN ORDER

1. **Lesson plans.** 3 complete lesson plans, each with learning objectives, activities, a materials list, and debrief questions.
2. **Simulation records.** The summary of your 5 graded simulation scores, plus a self-reflection on each of the 5: What went well? What would I do differently?
3. **Co-facilitation.** Your session plan, the facilitator's observation notes, your partner's feedback, and a self-reflection: What did I learn about shared leadership?
4. **MI practice logs.** 5 entries, each with the date, the context, the OARS techniques you used, and the outcome.
5. **Self-reflection on mentor readiness.** 1 to 2 pages: "Am I ready to be a FORGE mentor? Why or why not?" Cover your greatest strength, your area of growth, what you learned about yourself in Phase 2, and the kind of mentor you want to be.
6. **Peer evaluations** from at least 3 cohort members.
7. **Teaching demonstration.** Your score sheet and the lesson plan you used.

HOMEWORK

1. **Practice your opening statement out loud at least 3 times tonight.**
   Workbook: Why I'm Ready to Be a FORGE Mentor, page 152
2. **Review your portfolio one more time.** Come to the panel ready to show what you've built.

SESSION 71

Panel Review

BIG IDEA *The panel is there to answer one question, whether you are ready to mentor others, and your job is to show them honestly.*

KEY POINTS

- **The panel's job is not to judge you.** It answers 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?"
- **It should feel serious, and it should feel supportive.** It is "a group of people who believe in you, asking you to show them what you've got."
- **Who sits on the panel.** Usually Phase 3 mentors or graduates, Senior Mentors, the facilitator, and a staff observer if one is available. They have your assessment summary and your portfolio.
- **Each man presents one at a time** in three parts. See the tool below.
- **When it's not your turn, you're an observer.** Listen, learn, and support your brother silently. No reactions during a presentation. Save your support for after.
- **There are three possible outcomes.** You advance to Phase 3. You advance with a condition: one area to keep working on early in Phase 3, with a timeline. Or you get more time to develop, with a specific plan made "with dignity and support."
- **Decisions come to you privately** before the next session. If you're advancing, you get your Phase 3 assignment. If there's more work to do, you get a specific plan. "Either way, you're still part of this cohort and you're still part of FORGE."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Panel** — a small group of people who hear you present and decide whether you are ready for the next step.

TOOL: THE PANEL REVIEW

1. **Opening statement (3 to 5 minutes).** Tell the panel why you are ready to be a FORGE mentor. Speak from the heart, but be specific. The panel listens without interrupting.
2. **Skill demonstration (5 to 7 minutes).** The panel asks you to show one 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 until they ask. "This isn't about being perfect. It's about showing you can do it under pressure."
3. **Questions (5 to 10 minutes).** They might ask about a simulation score, a situation you'd handle differently now, or what you'll do when things get hard in Phase 3. Answer honestly.

HOMEWORK

No homework from this session.

SESSION 72

Phase 2 Celebration and Phase 3 Preview

BIG IDEA *You earned this milestone, and now it gets real: Phase 3 means real mentees, and this cohort is your lifeline.*

KEY POINTS

- **Back to Week 1.** The opening round asked two things: What did you say you wanted to be different back in Week 1? And what is actually different now?
- **Recognition and certificates.** Phase 1 was your own work. Phase 2 turned it outward: teaching, facilitating, listening, boundaries, staying calm. Each man heard one specific thing the facilitator saw in his growth, then received his Phase 2 Completion Certificate. On the hard days in Phase 3, look at it and remember: "I did the work. I earned this. And I'm going to keep going."
- **Phase 3 is "Lead and Serve," and the structure changes.** One session each week becomes supervision, where the group reviews cases and keeps learning; it is not optional. The other two days you are in the field, co-facilitating sessions and meeting mentees in your assigned dorm.
- **You step up in stages.** You start with 2 to 3 mentees, growing to 3 to 5 as you show readiness. For the first 4 weeks you co-facilitate with an experienced FORGE mentor or Senior Mentor: they lead, you support. Then you lead while they watch. Then you lead on your own. Your sessions will be observed, and 4 of the sessions you deliver on your own are formally assessed. You will also run community circles in your dorm.
- **The hard truths.** Your mentee will test you. You will fail sometimes: "The measure of a mentor isn't perfection — it's recovery." You will be tired, so self-care is a survival skill. Someone in this circle will want to quit; lean on each other. And you will make a difference.
- **Your Phase 3 assignment.** Your dorm, your co-facilitator partner for Weeks 25 to 28, and your first 2 to 3 mentees. You get it at this session, or before the first supervision session if it isn't ready yet. Your first contact with your mentees happens in Week 25.
- **The recommitment.** You committed to Service Over Self, integrity, your mentees, this cohort, your own growth, safety, and the mission, and answered "I commit." It ends: "Leadership is not granted. It is forged."
- **The last circle of Phase 2.** Each man looked at the man across from him, said his name, and told him one thing he respects about who he's become.

HOMEWORK

1. **Review your notes on establishing a mentoring relationship.** That is the topic of the first Phase 3 supervision session, and your first contact with your mentees comes in Week 25.

WEEK 24 WORKSHEET

Phase 2 Portfolio Checklist

Use with: Session 45 and Session 69 homework (start gathering), Session 70 (put it together).

Put your portfolio together in this order. Check each item as you find it, review it and put it in. Every item is required. If something is missing, work on it now.

- ☐ **Lesson plans:** plan 1, complete with learning objectives, activities, a materials list and debrief questions
- ☐ **Lesson plans:** plan 2, complete
- ☐ **Lesson plans:** plan 3, complete
- ☐ **Simulation records:** the summary of your results for all 5 graded simulations
- ☐ **Simulation records:** a self-reflection on each of the 5, in your journal. What went well? What would I do differently?
- ☐ **Co-facilitation:** the session plan you and your partner prepared
- ☐ **Co-facilitation:** the facilitator's observation notes
- ☐ **Co-facilitation:** your partner's feedback (bottom of the Co-Facilitation Observation Form)
- ☐ **Co-facilitation:** a self-reflection. What did I learn about shared leadership?
- ☐ **MI practice logs:** 5 entries, each with the date, context, OARS techniques used and outcome
- ☐ **Mentor readiness:** your self-reflection, 1 to 2 pages (prompts below)
- ☐ **Peer evaluations:** from at least 3 cohort members
- ☐ **Teaching demonstration:** your score sheet
- ☐ **Teaching demonstration:** the lesson plan you used

WEEK 24 WORKSHEET

Why I'm Ready to Be a FORGE Mentor

Use with: Session 70 (outline it), its homework (practice out loud at least 3 times), the Session 71 panel.

Your opening statement (3–5 minutes at the panel). Bullet points, not a script. Don't just say "I've changed." Say how. Don't just say "I'm ready." Say what prepared you.

How I have changed:

What prepared me:

The man who started Phase 2 would not believe that I can now...

Your readiness self-reflection (portfolio section 5). In your journal, write 1 to 2 pages: "Am I ready to be a FORGE mentor? Why or why not?" Cover your greatest strength as a mentor, your area of continued growth, what you have learned about yourself in Phase 2, and the kind of mentor you want to be.

Peer Evaluation Form

Use with: Session 70. Your portfolio needs evaluations from at least 3 cohort members, so hand your book to each of them to fill in one form. When you evaluate a peer, use the form in his book.

To the evaluator: under each quality, write a number from 1 (low) to 5 (high). Then write 2 to 3 sentences explaining your ratings. Be honest and specific: this is a service to him, not a popularity contest.

For _____ **From** _____ **Date** _____

Integrity	Service orientation	Growth	Composure	Accountability

Why I rated him this way:

For _____ **From** _____ **Date** _____

Integrity	Service orientation	Growth	Composure	Accountability

Why I rated him this way:

For _____ **From** _____ **Date** _____

Integrity	Service orientation	Growth	Composure	Accountability

Why I rated him this way:

PHASE 3

Practicum

Lead and Serve

Weeks 25–36

Phase 3 is real mentoring, under supervision. Over these twelve weeks you mentor and facilitate in your assigned dorm, first with close supervision and then with more independence, and you meet each week with the other Phase 3 participants for group supervision. The phase ends with your final simulation, your portfolio defense, and graduation as a FORGE Certified Mentor.

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WEEK 25

Launching Into the Field

This week: This is what the last 24 weeks were for. You meet your mentees for the first time, co-facilitate your first real session, and start learning the hardest lesson of all: real people are messier and harder to predict than any simulation. From now on, supervision is the one classroom session each week; the other two sessions are field work.

This week's worksheets: First Meeting Structure, page 159; Pre-Session Preparation Checklist, page 160; Mentoring Hours Log, page 161; FORGE Mentoring Log, page 163; Session Plan, page 166

SESSION 73

Preparing for First Mentee Meetings

BIG IDEA *Your first meeting has three goals, connection, clarity and commitment, and your mentee will judge you by one thing: whether you're real.*

KEY POINTS

- **You are a practitioner now.** "Not participants — practitioners." Each week you work in the field, then bring what happened to supervision to process it, get coached, and prepare. If you're nervous, good: it means you care. If you're confident, stay humble. Your mentee doesn't know about your simulations or your portfolio.
- **Three goals for the first meeting.** Connection: he leaves thinking, "Maybe this is worth my time." Clarity: he knows what mentoring is and isn't and what to expect. Commitment: you fill out a Mentoring Agreement together, "a handshake in writing."
- **What the first meeting is not.** Not therapy: you're a mentor, not a counselor. Not a lecture about how FORGE changed your life: "That's your ego talking." Not an evaluation.
- **Trust is earned, not assumed.** Your mentee does not trust you yet, and he shouldn't. Show up on time. Use his name. Listen more than you talk; aim for him talking 70% of the time. Don't fake it: "I don't know, but I'll find out." Don't promise what you can't deliver. Match his energy and respect his space.
- **What kills trust.** Talking about yourself too much, reciting FORGE ideas like a textbook, trying too hard to be liked, acting like an authority figure, looking around while he talks, making assumptions about his life or his crime, and "When I was where you are..." Save that for later.
- **Have a plan for your nerves.** Before: 2 minutes of 4-4-4 breathing, review your Pre-Session Preparation Checklist, and say, "I have the skills for this. I've practiced this. I'm ready." During: if you lose your train of thought, say, "Give me a second." If you don't know what to say, ask a question. Slow down. "Your body can calm your mind."

TOOL: THE FIRST MEETING

1. **Introduction.** Your humanity, not your resume. Say your job is to support him, "not tell you what to do, not judge you." Then give him the floor: "What do you know about this, and what questions do you have?"
2. **Get to know him.** Open questions, reflections, affirmations. "What's been the hardest part?" "What are you hoping to get out of having a mentor?"
3. **Set expectations.** How often and how long you'll meet (45 to 60 minutes is typical). Mentoring is conversations, goals, problem-solving and support, not therapy, favors or special access. What stays between you, and the limit: safety concerns get referred. You're not his boss, his CO or his parent.
4. **The Mentoring Agreement.** Read it together, answer his questions, and both sign.
5. **Close with a question.** "What's one thing you'd like to be different about your situation in 3 months?"

HOMEWORK

1. **Read through your Mentoring Agreement forms, your Mentoring Log template, and your Pre-Session Preparation Checklist** tonight. Make sure you have your assignment sheet with your mentees, their dorm and meeting times. If you don't, see the facilitator.
2. **Do the one thing you named in the closing round** to prepare for this week.
3. **Show up early, prepared and ready** for your first co-facilitation session.

SESSION 74

Field Work — First Co-Facilitation Session

BIG IDEA *"I don't need to be perfect. I need to be present." You will make mistakes; what matters is how you recover.*

KEY POINTS

- **What this is.** You co-facilitate a real session with a live group in your assigned area. An experienced FORGE mentor observes and gives you feedback.
- **Before: prepare with your co-facilitator.** Review the session plan together at least 30 minutes ahead. Decide who leads which section and who handles disruptions. Get the materials ready and agree on how to set up the room. Check with your observer: do they have the observation form, and where will they sit?
- **Before: get yourself steady.** Do at least 2 minutes of 4-4-4 breathing. Remind yourself: "I don't need to be perfect. I need to be present." Pick a grounding word, like "steady," "breathe" or "listen."
- **During: what your observer watches.** How you open (confidence, warmth, clarity). How you move between activities. How you handle unexpected moments. How you share the space with your co-facilitator: "collaboration, not competition." Whether people leave knowing what to do next.
- **During: remember.** Speak slowly; new facilitators always rush. Make eye contact with the group, not just your co-facilitator. If something goes off-script, "follow the energy of the room, not the lesson plan." If you freeze, your co-facilitator is there. "That's the whole point of co-facilitation."
- **After: debrief with your observer right away.** The observer gives feedback using SBI: Situation, Behavior, Impact. Then you reflect out loud: What went well? Be specific, not "it was good." What was harder than expected? What would you do differently? What did you learn about yourself as a facilitator?

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Co-facilitation** — leading a session together with a partner who shares the work.
- **Grounding word** — one word you say to yourself if you start spiraling, to bring yourself back.

HOMEWORK

1. **Answer these 5 questions in your journal** after the session, before your first mentee meetings:
2. Describe the moment you felt most confident during the session. What was happening? Why did it feel right?
3. Describe the moment you felt most uncertain. What triggered it? How did you respond?
4. What surprised you about facilitating a real group compared to the simulations?
5. What is one specific thing you want to improve for next week's co-facilitation?
6. Rate yourself on a scale of 1 to 10 for today's session. What would it take to move up one number?

SESSION 75

Field Work — First Mentee Meetings (1-on-1)

BIG IDEA *If all you get is a respectful introduction and his agreement to meet again, that's enough.*

KEY POINTS

- **What this is.** You meet each of your mentees alone for the first time, 45 to 60 minutes each. You aim to complete a Mentoring Agreement with each one, start building trust by listening, and log your first entry.
- **Before.** Review his basic information and any notes from his referral. Have one Mentoring Agreement form for each mentee and your log ready. Review the five steps of the first meeting. Have 3 or 4 open-ended questions ready. Do 4-4-4 breathing. Remind yourself of the three goals: Connection, Clarity, Commitment. Check that the spot is private and quiet enough to talk. Bring your journal.
- **During: follow the five steps.** Introduction, get to know him, set expectations, the Mentoring Agreement, close with a question.
- **If he is quiet or resistant.** Don't panic. "Silence is not failure." Try: "I know you didn't ask for this. I'm not here to push anything on you. I just want to meet you and see if this is something that could be useful for you." Don't take it personally. "Their resistance is almost never about you."
- **If he is overly eager.** Good, but keep your boundaries. Don't let the meeting run two hours. "I want to hear all of this — and we'll have time. For today, let's focus on getting set up so we have a strong foundation."
- **If you have more than one mentee.** Take a 10 to 15 minute break between meetings to breathe, jot notes, and reset. "Each mentee deserves your full presence — not the emotional residue from the last meeting."
- **After: fill out the Mentoring Log right away.** Not at the end of the day, not the next morning. "Your memory fades fast." Use it for every meeting through Phase 3. Write key themes and concerns, not a word-for-word record, and flag anything for supervision: safety, mental health, boundary problems, or a mentee pulling away.

HOMEWORK

1. **Fill out a Mentoring Log for each mentee right after each meeting,** and bring your completed logs to supervision.
   Workbook: Mentee Progress Note, page 163*; Mentoring Hours Log,* page 161
2. **After all your mentee meetings, answer these 5 questions in your journal:**
3. What was your first impression of each mentee? What surprised you?
4. Did the first meeting go the way you planned? What deviated from your plan, and how did you handle it?
5. What was the hardest moment? How did you respond, and how do you wish you had responded?
6. How did it feel to be on the other side, to be the mentor instead of the participant?
7. What do you need from next week's supervision session? What question do you want answered?

First Meeting Structure

Use with: Session 73.

GOALS: CONNECTION · CLARITY · COMMITMENT · ABOUT 45 MINUTES

1. **The Introduction** 5 min
   Who you are: not your resume, your humanity. Your job is to support him, not to tell him what to do or judge him. Then: "What questions do you have?"

2. **Get to Know Them** 10–15 min
   Open questions, reflections, affirmations. "What's been the hardest part?" "What are you hoping to get out of having a mentor?"

3. **Set Expectations** 10 min
   How often and how long. What mentoring is, and what it is not (therapy, favors, special access). Confidentiality and its limits. Your role: walk alongside.

4. **The Mentoring Agreement** 10 min
   Read each section together, answer questions, both sign: a handshake in writing.

5. **Close with a Question** 5 min
   "What's one thing you'd like to be different about your situation in 3 months?"

SOME GOOD FIRST-MEETING QUESTIONS

- "How long have you been here?"
- "What's been the hardest part?"
- "What are you hoping to get out of having a mentor?"
- "What's something you're good at that most people don't know about?"
- "Is there anything you want me to know about you right up front?"

You don't need to ask all of these. Follow the conversation. The goal is for them to feel heard.

Notes:

Pre-Session Preparation Checklist

Use with: Session 73–83.

Review your Pre-Session Preparation Checklist. When you've prepared, you feel more in control.

SESSION 74: FIRST CO-FACILITATION

Complete before arriving at your assigned area:

- ☐ Reviewed the session plan with your co-facilitator (at least 30 minutes before)
- ☐ Clarified roles: Who leads which sections? Who handles disruptions?
- ☐ Materials prepared (handouts, talking piece, whatever is needed)
- ☐ Room setup plan discussed (circle, desks, standing — whatever the session calls for)
- ☐ 4-4-4 breathing completed (2 minutes minimum)
- ☐ Reminded yourself: "I don't need to be perfect. I need to be present."
- ☐ Checked in with your observer: Do they have the observation form? Where will they sit?
- ☐ Identified your "grounding word" — one word you can say to yourself if you start spiraling (e.g., "steady," "breathe," "listen")

My grounding word _____

SESSION 75: FIRST MENTEE MEETINGS

Complete before your first meeting:

- ☐ Reviewed mentee's basic information (name, dorm, time served, any notes from referral)
- ☐ Mentoring Agreement forms ready (one per mentee)
- ☐ Mentoring Log template ready
- ☐ Reviewed the first meeting structure from Session 73
- ☐ Identified 3-4 open-ended questions to ask
- ☐ 4-4-4 breathing completed
- ☐ Reminded yourself of the three goals: Connection, Clarity, Commitment
- ☐ Checked meeting location — is it reasonably private? Quiet enough to talk?
- ☐ Brought your journal (for notes immediately after)

My 3–4 open-ended questions:

_____

_____

_____

_____

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Mentoring Hours Log

Use with: Sessions 74 to 105. Certification needs at least 60 hours of documented mentoring and facilitation.

Write one line for each field session. Under **Activity**, write one of these: **co-facilitation**, **independent session**, **mentee meetings** or **circle**. If you meet several mentees in one session, one line will do. Count parts of an hour (45 minutes = ¾). Keep a running total, and have your supervisor initial each line.

Date	Activity	Hours	Total so far	Supervisor's initials

Date	Activity	Hours	Total so far	Supervisor's initials

Your 60 hours must include at least:

Activity	At least	My total
Supervised co-facilitation	15 hours	
Observed independent sessions	15 hours	
Mentee meetings	20 hours	
Community circles	10 hours	
All activities	**60 hours**	

FORGE Mentoring Log

Use with: Session 75, then every mentee meeting through Session 105. Copy this form into your journal for more.

Fill it out **right after each meeting**: not at the end of the day, not the next morning. Write key themes, not a word-for-word record. **Write his first name or initials only, never his last name or GDC ID number.** Add the time to your Mentoring Hours Log, and bring your logs to supervision. They are reviewed every week.

Mentee (first name or initials)	Date	Meeting no.	Minutes	Location

About the meeting	About me
Focus of the meeting (2–3 sentences)	**Skills I used** (listening, MI, boundaries, conflict resolution)
What he shared: key themes, concerns, feelings	**What went well**
Concerns? None / Bring to supervision (circle one):	**What was challenging**
Plan for next meeting: what I will follow up on; my focus	**How did I show up today? What will I do differently?**

FORGE MENTORING LOG

Mentee (first name or initials)	Date	Meeting no.	Minutes	Location

About the meeting	About me
Focus of the meeting (2–3 sentences)	**Skills I used** (listening, MI, boundaries, conflict resolution)
What he shared: key themes, concerns, feelings	**What went well**
Concerns? None / Bring to supervision (circle one):	**What was challenging**
Plan for next meeting: what I will follow up on; my focus	**How did I show up today? What will I do differently?**

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Plan for next meeting: what I will follow up on; my focus	**How did I show up today? What will I do differently?**

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Mentee (first name or initials)	Date	Meeting no.	Minutes	Location

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What he shared: key themes, concerns, feelings	**What went well**
Concerns? None / Bring to supervision (circle one):	**What was challenging**
Plan for next meeting: what I will follow up on; my focus	**How did I show up today? What will I do differently?**

FORGE MENTORING LOG

Mentee (first name or initials)	Date	Meeting no.	Minutes	Location

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Focus of the meeting (2–3 sentences)	**Skills I used** (listening, MI, boundaries, conflict resolution)
What he shared: key themes, concerns, feelings	**What went well**
Concerns? None / Bring to supervision (circle one):	**What was challenging**
Plan for next meeting: what I will follow up on; my focus	**How did I show up today? What will I do differently?**

FORGE MENTORING LOG

Mentee (first name or initials)	Date	Meeting no.	Minutes	Location

About the meeting	About me
Focus of the meeting (2–3 sentences)	**Skills I used** (listening, MI, boundaries, conflict resolution)
What he shared: key themes, concerns, feelings	**What went well**
Concerns? None / Bring to supervision (circle one):	**What was challenging**
Plan for next meeting: what I will follow up on; my focus	**How did I show up today? What will I do differently?**

Session Plan

Use with: every session you co-facilitate or lead, Sessions 74 to 104. Two copies here; copy the headings into your journal for more.

Date _____ **Group or dorm** _____ **Topic** _____

I am leading: **on my own** / **with a co-facilitator** (circle one)

Objective: by the end of the session, the group will be able to...

Part	What I will do and say
Opening: welcome, set the tone, a question or story to start	
Content: key points; questions I will ask along the way	
Activity: what the group will do; the exact instructions I will give	
Closing: the takeaway; what they leave knowing to do next	

What if...	My plan
no one talks?	
someone gets emotional?	
there's a disruption?	
I run short of time, or have extra?	

Materials I need:

If co-facilitating: who leads which part? Who handles disruptions?

After the session, write in your journal: What went well? What would I change? What did I learn about facilitating today?

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SESSION PLAN

Date _____ **Group or dorm** _____ **Topic** _____

I am leading: **on my own** / **with a co-facilitator** (circle one)

Objective: by the end of the session, the group will be able to...

Part	What I will do and say
Opening: welcome, set the tone, a question or story to start	
Content: key points; questions I will ask along the way	
Activity: what the group will do; the exact instructions I will give	
Closing: the takeaway; what they leave knowing to do next	

What if...	My plan
no one talks?	
someone gets emotional?	
there's a disruption?	
I run short of time, or have extra?	

Materials I need:

If co-facilitating: who leads which part? Who handles disruptions?

After the session, write in your journal: What went well? What would I change? What did I learn about facilitating today?

WEEK 26

When It's Not Going Well

This week: The honeymoon is over. This week is about what happens when real life doesn't match what you expected: mentees who don't show up, a group where nobody talks, a question you feel you should know the answer to. Supervision is built around real cases from the field, because "the best training material is what actually happened."

This week's worksheets: Case Presentation Worksheet, page 172

SESSION 76

Case Presentations and Group Problem-Solving

BIG IDEA *Bringing a problem to the group is not weakness; "The man who thinks he has all the answers is the most dangerous mentor in the building."*

KEY POINTS

- **Case presentations are now part of every supervision session.** You bring a real challenge from the field, and the group helps you with it. Everyone gets a turn over the next few weeks.
- **"My mentee didn't show up."** The most common challenge in mentoring, and it's not personal. Don't chase him or guilt-trip him. Find him and check in casually: "Hey, we were supposed to meet. Everything okay?" If something got in the way, solve that. If he's avoiding you, use MI. "One missed meeting is data, not a crisis. Two in a row is a pattern that needs a conversation. Three is a supervision issue."
- **"My mentee is testing my boundaries."** That's normal. He's figuring out what kind of person you are. Don't get rigid, and don't cave. Be calm, clear and kind: "I hear what you're asking, and here's why I can't do that. But here's what I can do." Every time you hold a boundary without being harsh, you build trust.
- **"I didn't know what to say."** You will never feel fully prepared. The question isn't "Do I know enough?" It's "Am I present enough?" When you're stuck, try: "Tell me more about that."
- **"My mentee doesn't want to be there."** Your job is not to convince him. It's to be "the kind of person who makes him curious about change." Use OARS. Roll with the resistance. Don't argue.
- **"I got emotionally activated."** That's information, not failure. Notice it, calm it, and don't let it take over the meeting. Next week goes deeper on this.
- **Five truths your first week taught you.** It's slower than you think. It's more about you than you expected: "Mentoring holds up a mirror." "The relationship IS the intervention": showing up, being honest and caring is what most of these men have never had. You're going to make mistakes: "The only unforgivable mistake is pretending you don't make them." You're not alone: check in with each other between supervision sessions.

TOOL: THE CASE PRESENTATION

1. **The Situation.** What happened, who, when, where. Facts only, no interpretations yet.
2. **What I Did.** How you responded, what skills you used, how it turned out.
3. **What I'm Stuck On.** The question you can't answer. What you need help with.
4. **Group Response.** The group asks questions to understand, then offers suggestions. No judgment. No "I would have done it better." Just help.
5. **Presenter's Takeaway.** You say what you'll do next based on the feedback.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Boundary testing** — when a mentee pushes to see what you'll allow. It's normal; it's how he learns who you are.

HOMEWORK

1. **Review your session plan with your co-facilitator** before the co-facilitation session.
2. **Review your mentoring logs from last week and set a specific goal for each mentee meeting:** "This week, I want to focus on ___."
   Workbook: Mentee Progress Note, page 163

SESSION 77

Field Work — Co-Facilitation Continues

BIG IDEA *Pick one thing from last week's feedback and get better at it.*

KEY POINTS

- **What this is.** Your second real co-facilitation, set up the same way as last week, with an experienced FORGE mentor observing. You aim to apply at least one improvement from last week's feedback and grow more at ease in the role.
- **Before: choose one thing to improve.** Review last week's observer feedback and pick one specific area. Finish this sentence: "This week I'm working on ___." Tell your observer your goal so they can watch for it.
- **Before: prepare like last week.** Review the session plan with your co-facilitator at least 30 minutes ahead. Talk through roles and transitions. Get the materials ready. Do 4-4-4 breathing and have your grounding word ready.
- **After: debrief with your observer, using SBI again.** This time the observer looks at three things: whether you improved in the area you picked, how you handled unexpected moments compared to last week, and your next growth edge.
- **After: your own reflection.** What was different from last week? Did you reach your goal, and what's the evidence? What felt more natural? What's still uncomfortable?

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Growth edge** — the next skill you're ready to work on.

HOMEWORK

1. **Answer these 4 questions in your journal** after the session:
2. Compare this week's co-facilitation to last week's. What shifted? What felt easier? What's still hard?
3. Describe a moment where you had to make a real-time decision, something that wasn't in the plan. What did you do? Would you do it again?
4. What are you learning about the difference between knowing the material and teaching the material?
5. How is your relationship with your co-facilitator developing? Are you communicating well? What could be better?

SESSION 78

Field Work — Mentee Meetings Continue

BIG IDEA *"The first meeting was about introductions. The second meeting is about showing you meant it."*

KEY POINTS

- **What this is.** Your second meeting with each mentee, 45 to 60 minutes each. You follow up on the first meeting and start building a regular rhythm.
- **Before.** Review last week's log for each mentee. List your follow-up items: What did you talk about? What did you promise to come back to? Set a specific goal for each meeting. If he missed last week, plan how to bring him back in without guilt-tripping. If the Mentoring Agreement didn't get finished, bring the forms. Review your MI, listening and boundary skills. Do 4-4-4 breathing before each meeting.
- **Show him you remembered.** Show up on time. Bring back what he told you: "Last week you mentioned ___. How's that going?"
- **Start using a light structure.** See the tool below. It helps you go a little deeper than the first meeting.
- **Don't force it.** If the conversation flows on its own, follow it. "The structure is a safety net, not a cage."
- **After.** Log every meeting in your Mentoring Log, using the same template as last week.

TOOL: THE REGULAR MEETING

1. **Check-in.** "How's your week been? Anything on your mind?"
2. **Follow-up.** Come back to something from the last meeting.
3. **Today's focus.** A topic he raises, a FORGE idea, or just an honest conversation.
4. **Close.** "What's one thing you're taking away from today? What should we talk about next week?"

HOMEWORK

1. **Log every meeting in your Mentoring Log** right after it.
   Workbook: Mentee Progress Note, page 163*; Mentoring Hours Log,* page 161
2. **After all your mentee meetings, answer these 5 questions in your journal:**
3. Did your mentee remember you? Did he seem more or less comfortable than last week? What tells you that?
4. What did you follow up on from the first meeting? How did the mentee respond to you remembering?
5. Were there any boundary moments this week? How did you handle them?
6. What's one thing you're learning about each mentee that you didn't know after the first meeting?
7. What do you want to bring to supervision next week?

Case Presentation Worksheet

Use with: Session 76 and every supervision session after it. For your next case, copy the five headings into your journal.

Fill in parts 1 to 3 before supervision, so you can tell your case in about 4 minutes. Use first names or initials only. Fill in parts 4 and 5 while the group helps you. Bringing a problem to the group is not weakness: “It’s the smartest thing a mentor can do.”

Date _____ **My case in one line** _____

Part	My notes
1. The Situation. What happened? Who, when, where? Facts only, no interpretations yet.	
2. What I Did. How I responded, the skills I used, how it turned out.	
3. What I’m Stuck On. The question I can’t answer. What I need help with.	
4. Group Response. Their questions, and the suggestions I want to remember.	
5. My Takeaway. What I will do next.	

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WEEK 27

Managing Your Own Reactions

This week: Mentoring stirs up your own stuff. A mentee's story wakes up a memory. A resistant mentee makes you want to force him. A struggling one makes you want to rescue him. This week is about the hardest part of being a mentor, managing yourself while you help someone else, and in the field you take a big step: you lead a session on your own.

This week's worksheets: Trigger Mapping Exercise, page 177

SESSION 79

Triggers, Reactions, and Secondary Stress

BIG IDEA *You can't give what you don't have, so taking care of yourself is part of the job, not time off from it.*

KEY POINTS

- **This session is about you, not your mentees.** "How are YOU doing — not how your mentoring is going?" "If you can't answer that question honestly, you can't mentor effectively."
- **This work brings your own stuff to the surface.** You learned in Week 13 that you can't give what you don't have. Now you're living it. When you listen deeply to another man's pain, your own pain wakes up. Not because you're doing it wrong. Because you're doing it right.
- **A trigger is anything that hits you harder than the situation calls for.** In mentoring, triggers come in three kinds: the Mirror, the Opposite, and the Brick Wall. See the tool below.
- **The Savior Trap.** "I have to save this person. If I don't help him, nobody will." It's "ego wrapped in compassion." When he doesn't get "saved," you burn out or blame him. The answer: "You are not responsible for your mentee's choices. You are responsible for showing up consistently, being honest, and offering what you have."
- **The Fixer Trap.** "If he would just do what I'm telling him, everything would be fine." But "people are not engines." You can't fix another human being. The answer: "Ask, don't tell. Listen, don't lecture. Be curious, not certain." Try "What do you think would happen if you tried ***?" instead of "You should do*** ."
- **Secondary stress is the cost of caring.** Watch for 7 signs: sleep changes, irritability, feeling numb, always being on edge, avoiding your mentees, cynicism ("Nobody really changes"), and body symptoms like headaches or tension. Two or more, again and again, means "you're carrying too much."
- **Self-care is possible in here.** It isn't luxury. It's doing things on purpose that restore you. Physical: exercise, a steady bedtime. Mental: honest journaling, reading, learning something new. Relational: talk to someone about you, write letters home. Spiritual: prayer or meditation, quiet time, three things you're grateful for every night. Boundaries: say no when you're drained; no mentoring problems after 8 PM. "I am not my mentees' only resource. If I burn out, I help nobody."

TOOL: THE THREE MENTORING TRIGGERS

Trigger	What it is	What it can do to you
The Mirror	He reminds you of yourself: your story, your old thinking errors, your pain.	You push too hard, avoid a topic that's still raw, or lose the line between his journey and yours.
The Opposite	He does something against your values, or reminds you of people who hurt you.	Frustration, judgment, anger. "That's your own unfinished business talking."
The Brick Wall	He doesn't respond, doesn't change, doesn't seem to care.	"I'm not enough. I'm failing. I'm a fraud." The deepest trigger, because it touches your worth.

In the session you mapped your own triggers in your journal and rated your physical, mental, relational and spiritual self-care from 1 to 5. That stays private unless you choose to share.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Trigger** — anything that sets off an emotional reaction bigger than the situation calls for.
- **Secondary traumatic stress** — big words, simple idea: stress you pick up from being close to someone else's pain.

HOMEWORK

1. **Do the one self-care action you committed to** this week, for the area where you scored lowest. One thing, not five, and be specific.
   Workbook: Self-Care & Burnout Check, page 207

SESSION 80

Field Work — Leading with Observation

BIG IDEA *You lead alone now. You're ready, and you'll feel like you're not; both things can be true.*

KEY POINTS

- **What changes.** You lead the whole session as the only facilitator. An experienced FORGE mentor observes, for safety and feedback only. They will not step in unless there is a real safety concern. This is a big step toward independence.
- **Before: prepare fully.** There's no co-facilitator to cover gaps. Have all materials ready before you walk in. Review your session plan at least twice: "know the flow, not just the content." Plan for "what if": What if no one talks? What if someone gets emotional? What if there's a disruption? Do 4-4-4 breathing. Practice your self-care strategy at least once that day. Tell yourself: "I've been trained. I've practiced. I know how to do this."
- **During: own the room.** Your observer is "invisible." They won't help with transitions, rescue a quiet moment, or handle a difficult participant. That's all you. Stand tall, speak clearly, and make eye contact.
- **Use silence on purpose.** When no one answers a question, don't panic and fill the space. Count to ten in your head. Someone will speak.
- **If you lose your place, breathe.** Glance at your plan. Take a sip of water. "Nobody notices a 5-second pause as much as you think they do." If something goes sideways, trust your training. It will feel harder than co-facilitation. That's normal. You're growing.
- **After: debrief with your observer.** They look at how you managed the room alone, how you handled transitions, how you recovered when you struggled, your biggest strength, and the one thing that would most improve your leading. You reflect: How did it feel to lead alone? What moment are you most proud of? What moment would you redo? How confident are you, from 1 to 10, about leading again next week?

HOMEWORK

1. **Answer these 4 questions in your journal** after the session:
2. Describe the moment you realized you were on your own, that your co-facilitator wasn't going to step in. How did that feel? What did you do with that feeling?
3. What did you do well that you didn't know you could do until you had to?
4. Were there any moments where your own reactions (triggers, frustration, anxiety) affected how you facilitated? How did you manage them?
5. What's one thing you want to practice or prepare differently for next week's session?

SESSION 81

Field Work — Mentee Meetings

BIG IDEA *While you listen to him, keep noticing yourself: "Is this reaction about my mentee, or about me?"*

KEY POINTS

- **What this is.** Your third week of meetings with each mentee, 45 to 60 minutes each. This week you also practice noticing and managing your own reactions while you're in the room.
- **Before.** Review last week's log for each mentee, list your follow-up items, and set a goal for each meeting. Ask yourself honestly: Am I falling into the Savior Trap or the Fixer Trap with anyone? Think about where you might get triggered today and plan how to handle it. Do your self-care practice, and do 4-4-4 breathing before each meeting.
- **During: keep the regular structure.** Check-in, follow-up, today's focus, close.
- **Add one layer: notice yourself.** At least once in each meeting, check in with yourself:
  - What am I feeling right now?
  - Am I listening, or am I planning my response?
  - Is this reaction about my mentee, or about me?
  - Am I trying to fix something? Should I be asking instead of telling?
- **Keep the self-check to yourself.** You don't need to share it with your mentee. Just notice, and write about it in your log.
- **After.** Log every meeting. Then check how you're doing against the signs of secondary stress from supervision.

HOMEWORK

1. **Log every meeting in your Mentoring Log,** including what you noticed when you checked in with yourself.
   Workbook: Mentee Progress Note, page 163*; Mentoring Hours Log*, page 161
2. **After all your mentee meetings, answer these 5 questions in your journal:**
3. Did you notice any trigger moments during today's meetings? What triggered you? How did you handle it?
4. Were you in the Savior Trap or the Fixer Trap with any mentee today? What did that look like?
5. How are you feeling after today's meetings, physically, emotionally and mentally? Use the secondary stress checklist from Session 79.
6. What self-care will you do tonight?
7. What do you want to bring to next week's mid-point check-in?

Trigger Mapping Exercise

Use with: Session 79.

A trigger is anything that causes a disproportionate emotional reaction — something that hits you harder than the situation warrants. In mentoring, triggers usually fall into three categories. Map yours. Be specific.

1 · THE MIRROR

Your mentee reminds you of yourself. His story sounds like your story. His thinking errors look like your old thinking errors. His pain is familiar. You might push too hard because you know where his path leads. You might avoid a topic because it's still raw for you. You might over-identify — and lose the boundary between his journey and yours.

Mirror triggers: What in your mentees' stories or behaviors reminds you of your own past? Write at least two examples from the last two weeks.

2 · THE OPPOSITE

Your mentee does something that violates your values. He disrespects someone the way you used to. He makes excuses you've worked hard to stop making. He reminds you of people who hurt you. The reaction is frustration, judgment, sometimes anger. That's your own unfinished business talking.

Opposite triggers: What has a mentee done or said that made you feel frustrated, angry, or judgmental? What was really behind that reaction?

3 · THE BRICK WALL

Your mentee doesn't respond. Doesn't change. Doesn't seem to care. You pour energy into the relationship and get nothing back. And something inside you says: "I'm not enough. I'm failing. I'm a fraud." That's the deepest trigger of all — because it touches your worth, not just your skills.

Brick wall triggers: When have you felt ineffective, like you're not making a difference? What does that feeling connect to in your history?

Be honest. This isn't for sharing — unless you want to.

WEEK 28

Mid-Point Check-In

This week: You're halfway through Phase 3: four weeks done, eight to go. This week is an honest look at where you stand, not grades and not judgment. You rate yourself, hear the facilitator's feedback, set goals for the rest of the phase, and take on a new job: your first community circle in your own dorm.

This week's worksheets: Mid-Point Self-Assessment, page 182; My Goals for the Last Eight Weeks, page 183; Community Circle Plan, page 184

SESSION 82

Mid-Point Review

BIG IDEA *Look clearly at where you are, take feedback without getting defensive, and turn it into goals you can measure.*

KEY POINTS

- **Take stock honestly.** "Not performing. Not pretending everything is great. Not catastrophizing everything that's hard. Just looking clearly at where you are."
- **You rate yourself first.** Before any feedback, you rate yourself from 1 to 5 on your mentee relationships, your facilitation skills, how you manage yourself, and the professional side of the work. Then you name your greatest strength, where you most need to grow, and what you need from supervision for the last eight weeks.
- **Your mentoring log is not busywork.** It proves you were there, paying attention and growing. At the certification review board in eight weeks, your logs are evidence. "'Meeting went fine' tells you nothing when you look back at it. Write like you're coaching yourself. Because you are."
- **Know where you stand on hours.** Certification requires 60 hours of documented mentoring and facilitation. If you're behind, talk with the facilitator about getting on track.
- **Feedback, one-on-one.** Strengths first, then where you need to grow, tied to what you did, not who you are. Then how the facilitator's ratings compare with yours. While you wait, lay your self-assessment next to your logs. Do they tell the same story?
- **Goals you can measure.** Not "be a better listener," but "Ask at least three open-ended questions per mentee meeting and note them in my log." Or: "Complete my mentoring logs within one hour of each meeting, not the next day." You'll come back to your goals at Week 32.
- **Your first community circle.** It isn't a class. It's a restorative practice: the men in your dorm sit in a circle, check in with each other, and build a culture that makes everyone safer. You learned circle keeping in Week 21. "Now you do it for real." Not everyone will come; even 5 or 6 people is a circle. Some will mock it; don't react. If someone breaks the talking piece rule: "I hear you — grab the piece when it comes around and share that."
- **From practitioner to mentor.** "A practitioner follows the plan. A mentor reads the room and does what's needed." You're crossing that line now.

TOOL: YOUR FIRST COMMUNITY CIRCLE

1. **Opening.** Welcome people, explain the circle, set the ground rules: only the person holding the talking piece speaks, speak from the heart, listen from the heart.
2. **Check-in round.** One easy question: "How's your week going?"
3. **Topic round.** One question that invites reflection: "What does respect look like in this space?"
4. **Closing round.** "One word for how you're feeling right now."

Keep it to 30 to 45 minutes. The goal for a first circle: "people show up, people speak, people listen, nobody gets hurt."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Circle keeper** — the man who runs a circle. He doesn't teach; he holds the space, the talking piece and the questions.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write down your 2 to 3 goals** for the rest of Phase 3, and go after them "like they matter." You'll revisit them at Week 32.
   Workbook: Weekly Supervision — Week 28, page 183
2. **Tonight, write down the sentence you finished in the closing round,** "The kind of mentor I'm becoming is...", next to the commitment you made in Week 1, Session 3. See how far you've come.
3. **Plan your first community circle** on the planning template.
   Workbook: Community Circle Plan, page 184

SESSION 83

Field Work — Leading with Observation

BIG IDEA *Take your mid-point feedback and your goals into the room and put them to work.*

KEY POINTS

- **What this is.** Your second session leading on your own, with an observer present but not co-facilitating. This time you bring your mid-point feedback and goals with you.
- **Before.** Prepare your session plan fully and review it at least twice. Get your materials ready. Look at your mid-point feedback and ask, "What's the one thing I'm working on today?" Look at your goals and decide how you'll practice one in this session.
- **Before: use your observer.** Tell your observer what to watch for, based on your goals. Do your self-care practice and 4-4-4 breathing. Run your "what if" situations through your head.
- **During.** Practice at least one of your goals. Make real choices as a facilitator about how to respond in the moment, not just follow the plan.
- **After: the debrief connects to your mid-point review.** The observer looks for progress in your growth area, evidence you're working on your goals, and what is still your top priority. You reflect: Which goal did I practice today, and how did it go? What felt different from last week? Where do I still feel uncertain? What do I want to work on next week?

HOMEWORK

1. **Answer these 4 questions in your journal** after the session:
2. How did the mid-point feedback show up in today's session? Were you more aware of your growth areas?
3. Describe a moment where you made a choice as a facilitator, not just followed the plan, but actually chose how to respond to something in the moment. What did you choose and why?
4. Are you starting to develop your own facilitation style? What does it look like? How is it different from how you were taught?
5. Rate your confidence as an independent facilitator on a scale of 1 to 10. What would move you up one point?

SESSION 84

Field Work — Mentee Meetings + First Community Circle

BIG IDEA *Your first circle is a win if people show up, people speak, and people listen.*

KEY POINTS

- **What this is.** Your regular mentee meetings, 45 to 60 minutes each, shaped by your mid-point review. Then your first community circle in your assigned dorm, 30 to 45 minutes.
- **Before the meetings.** Review last week's logs, list your follow-up items, and set a goal for each meeting based on your mid-point feedback. If a mentee relationship needs a change, plan how you'll handle it. Do 4-4-4 breathing before each meeting.
- **During the meetings: use your feedback.** By now you've met each mentee three times. If your feedback was about asking more questions, set a target for open-ended questions. If it was about boundaries, notice the boundary moments and hold them firmly. If it was about slowing down, pause on purpose and "let silence do its work."
- **Invite your mentees to the circle.** Tell them what a community circle is. Having them there builds their investment in the community you're creating.
- **Before the circle.** Finish your planning template. Find a spot with room for chairs in a circle. Let the dorm know when and where. Pick a talking piece the circle can respect: a book, a stone, anything meaningful. Prepare three questions: an easy opening question, a topic question that is reflective but not too heavy, and a closing question. Think through what you'll do if no one comes, if someone mocks it, or if it goes sideways.
- **Ground rules for the circle.** Only the person holding the talking piece speaks. Speak from the heart. Listen from the heart. Say just enough. What's shared here stays here, with safety exceptions. You can pass.
- **Remember the goal.** Not perfection. "People show up, people speak, people listen."

HOMEWORK

1. **Log your mentee meetings and your circle** in your Mentoring Log.
   Workbook: Mentee Progress Note, page 163*; Mentoring Hours Log*, page 161
2. **Fill in the "after the circle" reflection on your planning template** and bring it to supervision: how many came, how it went, what worked, what was hard, what you'd change, and how it felt to hold space for a group in your dorm as a circle keeper instead of a teacher.
   Workbook: Community Circle Plan, page 184
3. **After all your meetings and the circle, answer these 5 questions in your journal:**
4. How did the mid-point review change how you showed up for your mentee meetings today? Be specific.
5. Describe your first community circle. What happened? How did it feel? What surprised you?
6. How was circle keeping different from facilitating a session? What skills were the same? What was different?
7. You're now four weeks into Phase 3. Looking back at who you were on the first day of the program, Week 1, Session 1, what has changed? **Write at least half a page.**
8. What's one question you have that you haven't asked yet in supervision? Write it down and commit to bringing it to next week's supervision.

Mid-Point Self-Assessment

Use with: Session 82. You fill this in before you hear the facilitator's feedback.

Rate yourself honestly on each line: **1** = a real struggle, **3** = developing, **5** = strong. Then write a few words on why.

Area	1–5	Why I gave this rating
A. Mentee relationships		
Building trust with mentees		
Keeping appropriate boundaries		
Using active listening and MI skills consistently		
Following through on commitments to mentees		
B. Facilitation skills		
Confidence leading or co-leading sessions		
Managing group dynamics (quiet, disruptive, emotional)		
Adapting in the moment when the plan isn't working		
Closing clearly with takeaways and next steps		
C. Self-management		
Awareness of my own triggers while mentoring		
Managing my reactions so they don't spill over		
Practicing self-care consistently		
Avoiding the Savior Trap and the Fixer Trap		
D. Professional practice		
Keeping my mentoring logs complete and on time		
Using supervision well (cases, asking for help)		
Showing up prepared for every session and meeting		
Keeping FORGE standards in and out of sessions		

My greatest strength as a mentor right now	The area where I most need to grow
What has surprised me most about mentoring in the field	**What I need from supervision for the last 8 weeks**

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My Goals for the Last Eight Weeks

Use with: Session 82. You come back to these at Week 32.

Write 2 or 3 goals for the rest of Phase 3. Make each one concrete enough that someone could measure it. Not “be a better listener,” but “ask at least three open-ended questions in every mentee meeting.”

Goal	How I will know I’m doing it	Week 32 check-in: how am I doing?

Community Circle Plan

Use with: Sessions 82 and 84, then every circle you keep through Session 105. Copy this form into your journal for more.

Plan the left side before the circle. Fill in the right side right after it, and bring it to supervision. Write how many came, not their names, and themes, not who said what.

Date	Time	Location	Number expected	Number who came

Before the circle	After the circle
Welcome: how I will open and explain the circle; my talking piece	**How it went overall,** and the energy in the room
Ground rules (circle the ones you will set): talking piece only · speak from the heart · listen from the heart · say just enough · what's shared here stays here, with safety exceptions · you can pass	**Themes that came up** (not who said what)
Check-in round question	**What worked? What was hard?**
Topic round question	**What I would change; any follow-up needed**
Closing round question	**How it felt to hold space as a circle keeper, not a teacher**

COMMUNITY CIRCLE PLAN

Date	Time	Location	Number expected	Number who came

Before the circle	After the circle
Welcome: how I will open and explain the circle; my talking piece	**How it went overall,** and the energy in the room
Ground rules (circle the ones you will set): talking piece only · speak from the heart · listen from the heart · say just enough · what's shared here stays here, with safety exceptions · you can pass	**Themes that came up** (not who said what)
Check-in round question	**What worked? What was hard?**
Topic round question	**What I would change; any follow-up needed**
Closing round question	**How it felt to hold space as a circle keeper, not a teacher**

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WEEK 29

Facilitating Groups vs. Individual Mentoring

This week: You've been leading groups and meeting mentees one-on-one for weeks. This week puts a name on what you've been feeling: these are two different jobs, with different skills and different energy. By the end of the week you should be able to say how they differ, tell which one a situation calls for, and adjust your style.

This week's worksheets: Group Facilitation vs. Individual Mentoring, page 189

SESSION 85

Groups vs. Individual — Different Skills, Different Energy

BIG IDEA *In a group you manage the energy of the room; one-on-one you walk alongside one man, and a FORGE mentor has to know which job he's doing.*

KEY POINTS

- **In a group, you're the keeper, not the expert.** You manage the energy of the whole room: who's checked out, who's about to blow, who's taking over, who hasn't spoken. Set the conditions, then get out of the way. The biggest mistake is talking too much. "The less you talk, the more the group works."
- **One-on-one, there's nowhere to hide.** What matters most is listening, patience, and knowing when to push and when to just be present. The biggest mistake is trying to fix everything. Help him see his own thinking clearly enough to solve his problems himself.
- **How the two jobs differ.** A group needs a full plan; a one-on-one needs a direction you're ready to throw away. In a group, one man's mood spreads to everyone. Men share less in a group, and that's fine; one-on-one is where the real disclosures happen. "A facilitator manages process. A mentor walks alongside a person. Don't confuse the two."
- **Know the five common group dynamics.** Each needs a different response. See the tool below.
- **Use a group when** the topic is something everyone can relate to, you want men to commit in front of each other, or you're building community.
- **Use one-on-one when** the issue is personal or sensitive, someone needs to be confronted and doing it in public would shame him, a mentee is in crisis, or trust hasn't been built yet.
- **Rule of thumb: "praise in public, challenge in private."**

TOOL: FIVE GROUP DYNAMICS

Dynamic	What to do
The Dominator: fills every silence.	Don't shut him down in public. "Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken yet." If it keeps up, talk privately: "They need you to step back so they can step up."
The Silent One: never talks in group.	Don't force him, and don't ignore him. Check in privately. Respect it, but keep the door open.
Emotional contagion: someone shares something heavy and the room shifts.	Acknowledge it: "That's real. Thank you for sharing that." Then read the room: let the group sit with it, or offer to follow up with him after and bring the group back.
The Disruptor: side comments, jokes, testing you.	No power struggle in front of the group. Eye contact, use his name, ask him a question. If it continues, pull him aside: "Hey, what's going on?"
Conflict mid-session: two men go at each other.	Don't panic. Name it: "We're going to do it the way we do things in FORGE." Use the conflict resolution model. If it can't be settled, separate them and follow up with each one.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Emotional contagion** — when one person's feelings spread through the whole room and change everyone's energy.

HOMEWORK

1. **Do the one thing you named in the closing round** differently this week, in your group work or your one-on-one mentoring.
2. **If you're running a circle this week, plan it before you go:** your opening question and your rounds. "Don't wing it."
   Workbook: Community Circle Plan, page 184

SESSION 86

Field Work — Independent Facilitation

> **BIG IDEA** *Lead the same way whether or not anyone is watching, because that's who you really are as a facilitator.*

KEY POINTS

- **What this is.** You lead sessions on your own in your assigned dorm or unit. The Program Lead or a Senior Mentor will observe some of them: not every session, not every participant, and not always announced. "I want to see you when you think no one's watching, because that's who you really are as a facilitator."
- **Before.** Arrive early to set up the space. Have a session plan: opening, content, activity, closing.
- **During: what an observer looks for.** How you manage the group's energy. Whether you adjust to what the group needs. Whether you're talking too much or making space for the group. How you handle unexpected moments.
- **After.** Write a short self-reflection in your journal. If you were observed, you get feedback at the next supervision session or in a short one-on-one talk.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write a brief self-reflection in your journal** after the session. Answer: What went well? What would I change? What did I learn about facilitating groups today?

SESSION 87

Field Work — Mentoring and Community Circles

BIG IDEA *Notice how your energy and your approach change between sitting with one man and keeping a whole circle.*

KEY POINTS

- **What this is.** One-on-one meetings with your mentees and/or community circles in your assigned area.
- **Before a mentee meeting.** Review where each mentee is: what you discussed last time, any commitments made, any updates.
- **During a mentee meeting.** Use OARS the whole way through. If he missed the last meeting, find out why "without interrogating."
- **Before a circle.** Plan it: an opening question, a topic for discussion, a closing question. Arrive early, set up the chairs in a circle, and have the talking piece ready.
- **During a circle.** Keep it to 45 to 60 minutes. "Circles that run too long lose their power."
- **After.** Write up each mentee meeting in your log: date, topics, how he's doing now, any concerns, and follow-up needed. For a circle, note attendance, what was discussed (themes, not specifics), the energy level, and anything that needs follow-up.

HOMEWORK

1. **Document every mentee meeting in your mentoring log:** date, topics discussed, the mentee's current state, any concerns, follow-up needed.
   Workbook: Mentee Progress Note, page 163*; Mentoring Hours Log*, page 161
2. **Document each circle you run:** attendance, themes (not specifics), energy level, anything that needs follow-up.
   Workbook: Community Circle Plan, page 184
3. **Finish this sentence in your journal:** "Today I worked one-on-one with my mentee(s) and/or ran a community circle. What I noticed about my own energy and approach in the one-on-one vs. the group setting was…"

Group Facilitation vs. Individual Mentoring

Use with: Session 85.

	GROUP FACILITATION	INDIVIDUAL MENTORING
YOUR JOB	Manage the energy of the whole room: read 8, 10, 12 people at once	The energy is between two people: listen, be patient, know when to push and when to just be present
YOU ARE	Not the expert. The keeper: set the conditions, then let the group work	The one who goes deeper: sit with silence, follow where he needs to go
BIGGEST MISTAKE	Talking too much	Trying to fix everything
PREPARATION	A plan: opening, topic, activities, closing	Know his situation; be ready to throw the plan away
ENERGY	Contagious: one man's energy affects everyone	His energy, plus your own
CONFIDENTIALITY	Men share less, and that's appropriate	Where the real disclosures happen
ACCOUNTABILITY	A commitment made in front of 10 other men	Relational: he doesn't want to let you down
YOUR ROLE	Facilitator: manages the process	Mentor: walks alongside a person

Use a group when...	Use one-on-one when...
The topic is universal — everyone can relate and benefit	The issue is personal or sensitive
You want peer accountability — people committing in front of each other	Someone needs to be confronted and doing it publicly would shame them
You're building community and connection	A mentee is in crisis and needs focused attention
You want multiple perspectives on a problem	You need to go deep on someone's thinking or behavior patterns
You're teaching a skill that benefits from practice and observation	Trust hasn't been established yet — build it privately first

The rule of thumb: **praise in public, challenge in private.**

Notes:

WEEK 30

Working with Staff

This week: As a FORGE mentor you work inside a system you don't control. How well you do depends not only on your skills with your peers but on how you handle COs and other staff. This week covers how to build credibility with staff, how to help without overstepping, and what to do when staff are skeptical, hostile or just don't care.

SESSION 88

Working with Staff — Building Bridges in an Imperfect System

BIG IDEA *"We respect the role, even when we disagree with the person."*

KEY POINTS

- **This may be the hardest topic in the program,** not because the skills are hard but because the feelings are complicated. "You are doing transformative work inside a system that wasn't designed for transformation."
- **Three kinds of staff.** Some will support FORGE. Some won't care. Some will be skeptical, test you, or make your work harder. You have to be able to work with all three.
- **The FORGE position: respect the role.** A CO's authority is not up for debate. FORGE does not challenge or undermine staff. If a CO gives a directive, you follow it, even if you think it's wrong. If staff behavior is truly unjust, there are grievance procedures. "FORGE mentors don't become activists in the moment."
- **Why it matters.** FORGE exists here with the administration's cooperation. Every man you mentor and every circle you run depends on it. "That's not ideal. It's real."
- **When staff are skeptical.** Don't take it personally; they've seen a hundred programs come and go. Don't argue: "You will never win an argument with a CO, and you shouldn't try." Let your work speak; skeptical COs come around because they watch the dorm get calmer. And accept that some staff will never come around.
- **Real situations.** A CO tells you to stop your session: comply right away, without attitude, and follow up later, privately. A CO puts FORGE down in front of your mentees: don't react; your composure teaches them more than any lesson. Your mentee gets a DR (disciplinary report) you think was unfair: help him process it, own his part, and see what he can and can't control. A CO asks you to "handle" something: talking to someone is your job, enforcement is not. "I can try to talk to him, but I can't do anything beyond that." You see a CO do something wrong: don't confront him or organize a group response. Write down what you saw (date, time, what happened), help the person affected use the grievance process, and bring a pattern to the program lead.
- **Trust keeps the program alive.** Every staff situation you handle calmly proves that "FORGE produces men who can be trusted. That trust is the currency that keeps this program alive."

TOOL: FIVE WAYS TO BUILD CREDIBILITY WITH STAFF

1. **Be low-maintenance.** Be where you're supposed to be. Don't create paperwork. It may take months, "but it registers."
2. **Be useful without being asked.** If tension is building in the dorm, calm it down. You didn't do it for credit.
3. **Communicate respectfully and briefly.** "Officer, I'm about to run a group session in the dayroom — just wanted you to know."
4. **Never put staff on the spot.** Don't ask a CO for something in front of other inmates. Ask privately, with low stakes.
5. **When staff support you, say so.** "Appreciate you, Officer. That space helped us get some real work done."

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Credibility** — being someone others believe and trust, because of what they've seen you do.
- **Grievance procedure** — the official way to complain about unfair treatment.

HOMEWORK

1. **Keep in mind the one thing you named in the closing round** every time you deal with staff this week.
2. **If something comes up with staff this week, handle it the way you learned today, and write about it in your journal.** Bring it to next week's supervision.

SESSION 89

Field Work — Full Facilitation and Mentoring

BIG IDEA *How you handle staff in the field is part of your work as a facilitator.*

KEY POINTS

- **What this is.** You lead sessions on your own in your assigned area, now with a full mentoring caseload of 3 to 5 mentees. The Program Lead or a Senior Mentor observes some sessions.
- **Before.** Have your planned session ready for your assigned area.
- **During: staff are part of the picture.** If staff interact with you during the session, handle it the way supervision taught: respectful, brief, no attitude.
- **What an observer looks for.** Whether you're respectful and professional with staff. Whether you move smoothly when staff are present. How you bring the group back if a staff interaction interrupts your session.
- **After.** Write your self-reflection in your journal.

HOMEWORK

1. **Answer in your journal:** "How did I interact with staff today? What went well? What could I improve?"

SESSION 90

Field Work — Mentoring Meetings and Community Circles

> **BIG IDEA** *Every mentee gets a meeting this week, and a staff problem he brings you is a chance to show him what you learned.*

KEY POINTS

- **What this is.** One-on-one meetings with your full caseload and/or community circles in your assigned area.
- **Every mentee gets a meeting this week.** Keep using OARS in every conversation.
- **If a mentee raises a concern about staff,** use it as a real-time chance to model the approach from this week's supervision session.
- **Circles.** A suggested theme, if you want it (you may choose your own): "How do we handle situations we can't control?" Keep circles to 45 to 60 minutes.
- **After.** Write up every meeting in your log. For each circle, note attendance, themes and energy level.

HOMEWORK

1. **Document every mentee meeting** in your mentoring log.
   Workbook: Mentee Progress Note, page 163*; Mentoring Hours Log*, page 161
2. **Document each circle:** attendance, themes, energy level.
   Workbook: Community Circle Plan, page 184
3. **Finish this sentence in your journal:** "This week I thought about my relationship with staff differently. One thing I realized about how I've been approaching staff interactions is..."

WEEK 31

When Someone Fails

This week: By now most of you have had a mentee who struggled. He missed sessions, caught a disciplinary report, dropped out, or slid back into old patterns. This week you name what that does to you, learn the long view of change, and learn what to do next. Setbacks are part of change. They are not proof that the work doesn't matter.

SESSION 91

When Someone Fails — Holding Hope Without Breaking

BIG IDEA *You are responsible for your effort, not for his outcome, and that is what lets you keep caring and keep showing up when a mentee falls.*

KEY POINTS

- **"The hardest part of this work is not the skills. It's the heartbreak."** You invest in a man and watch him grow. Then he gets a DR or tells you he's done, and something in you cracks. "That crack is the price of caring."
- **It is not your fault.** Your mentee made choices, and they are his to own. The parallel process works both ways: he has to do his own work, just like you did. "You can hold the door open… But you cannot walk through it for him."
- **Most mentors go through five stages after a setback** (see the tool below). Work through them honestly and you reach resilience.
- **"One setback does not erase growth."** A man who catches a DR after six months of progress has not gone back to zero. The growth is still there, even if he can't see it right now. That's why he needs you.
- **Take the long view.** Most people who change their lives for good fail several times first. People don't move through the stages of change from Phase 2 in a straight line. They go forward, back, and forward again.
- **Carry this sentence: "I am responsible for my effort. I am not responsible for his outcome."** Make his outcome your job and you will burn out or shut down.
- **Know what to do.** After a DR, don't react right away. Go see him and lead with presence, not disappointment: "I heard what happened. I'm here. What's going on?" Walk through a thinking report with him. If he drops out, try to talk first: "I respect your decision. I just want to understand why." Leave the door open, then let him go. If he repeats the same mistake, remember that "Change isn't a switch." If you are losing hope, talk to someone. Don't carry it alone.
- **The men hardest to mentor need it most.** Each time someone gave up on them, it confirmed what they already believed: that they're not worth the effort. You break that cycle by being the person who doesn't leave. "That's the whole job some days. Just don't leave."

TOOL: THE FIVE STAGES OF MENTOR DISAPPOINTMENT

1. **Self-blame.** "What did I miss?" Maybe you could have done something differently. That doesn't mean the outcome would have changed. You influence the process. You don't control it.
2. **Anger.** "He threw it all away." Anger tells you that you cared, but it's not a place to live. Carried anger leaks into your work with every mentee.
3. **Doubt.** "What's the point?" This is the dangerous one. This is where mentors quit.
4. **Numbness.** "It is what it is." It feels like protection, but "a numb mentor is a useless mentor." The men can feel it.
5. **Resilience.** You hold the hurt and still show up. You can care about a man without needing him to succeed for your effort to matter.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **DR** — a disciplinary report.
- **Resilience** — being able to feel the hurt and still keep going.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write in your journal after this session,** even if it's just a few sentences about what came up.
2. **Write down "I am responsible for my effort. I am not responsible for his outcome."** Tape it inside your journal.
3. **Take care of yourself this week.** Use your coping strategies. Talk to each other. "That's what the brotherhood is for."
4. **If you have a mentee who is struggling, don't avoid him this week.** Go find him. Show up.

SESSION 92

Field Work — Independent Facilitation

> **BIG IDEA** *After a heavy week, the job is still to show up, and that includes the mentee who just stumbled.*

KEY POINTS

- **You facilitate on your own in your assigned area.** Periodic observation continues, so a facilitator or senior mentor may watch part of your session.
- **Before: check your own tank.** Session 91 was heavy. Ask yourself whether you are present or running on empty. Watch for signs that you are pulling back from the work or from your mentees.
- **During: facilitate the session you planned.** Bring your full attention, even if you are still carrying something from the week.
- **Make contact with any mentee who has had a setback.** Do it this week. Don't avoid the conversation. Use what Session 91 taught you: lead with presence, not disappointment.
- **After: write your reflection.** Put down what you are thinking and who you are worried about, while it is fresh.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write your journal reflection.** Finish these sentences: "After Session 91, I'm thinking about... The mentee I'm most worried about right now is... because..."
2. **If one of your mentees has had a setback, make contact with him this week.** Don't avoid the conversation.

SESSION 93

Field Work — Mentoring Meetings and Community Circles

BIG IDEA *The mentee who is struggling is the one who needs you most this week.*

KEY POINTS

- **You hold one-on-one mentoring meetings, run community circles, or both.**
- **Before: decide who you see first.** Put the mentees who are struggling at the top of your list. They need contact this week.
- **During a meeting: use OARS and the long view from Session 91.** If a mentee has had a recent setback, walk through a thinking report together.
- **During a circle: pick a theme if you want one.** This week's suggested themes (optional): "What keeps you going when things get hard?" or "Tell about a time you failed and what you learned from it." Keep circles to 45 to 60 minutes.
- **After: write it all down.** For every meeting, note the mentee's emotional state and your own. For every circle, write down attendance, themes, and energy level.

HOMEWORK

1. **Document every mentoring meeting.** Note the mentee's emotional state and your own. *Workbook: Mentoring Hours Log*, page 161*; Mentee Progress Note*, page 163
2. **Document each circle you ran:** attendance, themes, and energy level. *Workbook: Community Circle Plan*, page 184
3. **Write your journal reflection.** Finish these sentences: "The mentee relationship that's hardest for me right now is... What makes it hard is... What I'm going to keep doing anyway is..."
4. **Bring a real situation to Session 94.** Come with at least one real situation from your field work that you want the group's help with. "The harder, the better." No practice scenarios. No cleaned-up versions.

WEEK 32

Advanced Conflict Scenarios

This week: No more practice scenarios and no more "what ifs." You bring the real situations from your field work, the ones that kept you up at night, and the group works them together with every skill you've built. This week some of you also begin helping to train the next cohort's Phase 1 participants.

SESSION 94

Advanced Conflict Scenarios — The Real Thing

BIG IDEA *Hard situations rarely have a clean answer, but a group of trained men thinking together can find the next right move.*

KEY POINTS

- **This session was all about your real work.** No lesson and no new framework. You brought a real situation from the field, and the group used 32 weeks of skills on it, not on a simulation.
- **Five ground rules for the case work.** Honesty: don't clean up the story. If you handled it badly, say so. "That's where the learning is." Respect: the man presenting is being vulnerable, so don't make him regret it. Specificity. Humility: you weren't there, so ask before you assume. No competition: it's not about who has the hardest case or the best answer.
- **Feedback has to be specific.** "'You should try harder' is not helpful. 'What if you tried a reflection like…' — that's helpful."
- **Ask before you advise.** Clarifying questions come first. "When you say he got aggressive, what did that look like specifically?" "Have you talked to him about it directly?" "What's your gut telling you?"
- **Use every tool you have.** Look at a case through conflict resolution, MI, thinking reports, trauma awareness, and boundaries. Come up with options instead of jumping to one answer.
- **Know when it isn't yours to fix.** Some situations call for a referral, for taking it to staff or the program lead, or for acceptance instead of stepping in. Some have no perfect move at all: "What you're doing is managing an imperfect situation as well as it can be managed. That's the work."
- **Look how far you've come.** "Thirty-two weeks ago, most of you had never heard of a thinking report. Today you're coaching each other through situations that would challenge a trained social worker."
- **Now you pass it on.** Starting this week, some of you will co-facilitate the next cohort's Phase 1 sessions with the program lead or a senior mentor. Not solo yet. Your job is to support, share your experience when it's relevant, and model what a FORGE mentor looks like. Remember Week 1: you were skeptical and didn't trust the process. "The men in front of you are exactly where you were. Treat them accordingly."

TOOL: WORKING A CASE IN FIVE STEPS

1. **Presentation.** The presenter lays it out. What's happening? Who's involved? What have you tried? What's the result so far? Where are you stuck?
2. **Clarifying questions.** The group asks questions to get the full picture. Questions only, no advice yet.
3. **Group analysis and feedback.** Perspectives, other options, recommendations: "I had a similar situation with one of my mentees. What worked for me was…"
4. **Facilitator coaching.** The facilitator adds what the group missed, corrects anything that was off, and backs up what was strong.
5. **Presenter's takeaway.** The presenter says what he is going to do next.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Clarifying question** — a question asked only to understand the situation better, before anyone gives advice.
- **Servant leadership pipeline** — each group of mentors trains the next. You learned from mentors who came before you; now you pass it on.

HOMEWORK

1. **Keep your mentoring logs current.**
   Workbook: Mentoring Hours Log, page 161
2. **Keep your circles running and keep showing up for your mentees.** "We're in the final stretch." Everything you do from here on is part of your portfolio.
3. **If you are asked to sit in on or co-facilitate a Phase 1 session, take it seriously.** Be present, be honest, and remember what Week 1 felt like. "Those men are watching everything you do."

SESSION 95

Field Work — Independent Facilitation + Next Cohort Training

> **BIG IDEA** *Put the group's feedback to work, and if you're with the new cohort, teach by how you carry yourself.*

KEY POINTS

- **Most of you keep facilitating on your own** in your assigned area. Periodic observation continues.
- **Use what Session 94 gave you.** Try the group's feedback on the situation you brought, and on anything like it in your area.
- **Co-facilitating with the new cohort? Before: arrive early.** Meet with the program lead or senior mentor and go over the session plan together.
- **During: your role is support.** Follow the lead facilitator's direction. Share your own experience only when you are invited or when it is clearly relevant. Be patient and be real with the new men, and remember what it felt like to be new.
- **After: debrief with the lead facilitator.** What did you notice? What did you learn about teaching by doing it?

HOMEWORK

1. **If you co-facilitated, debrief with the lead facilitator.** Talk through what you noticed and what you learned about teaching by doing it.
2. **Write your journal reflection.** Finish these sentences: "Today I [facilitated / co-facilitated / mentored]. The situation I brought to the group in Session 94 — here's what I tried differently based on their feedback…"

SESSION 96

Field Work — Mentoring Meetings and Community Circles

BIG IDEA *Every mentee gets a meeting this week, and every meeting starts building your record for certification.*

KEY POINTS

- **Full caseload contact.** Every mentee gets a one-on-one meeting this week. You may also run community circles.
- **During meetings: keep using what you know.** MI, conflict resolution, and a trauma-aware approach.
- **Start building your portfolio now.** Begin noting each mentee's progress. You will need mentee progress notes for your certification review.
- **During a circle: pick a theme if you want one.** This week's suggested themes (optional): "What does it mean to lead by example?" or "Who taught you something important, and how did they teach it?" Keep circles to 45 to 60 minutes.
- **If new cohort participants are in your area,** think about inviting them to watch a circle, with the group's permission.
- **After: write it all down.** Document every meeting. For circles, write down attendance, themes, and energy level.

HOMEWORK

1. **Document every mentoring meeting.**
   Workbook: Mentoring Hours Log, page 161
2. **Begin your mentee progress notes** for your certification portfolio, one for each mentee.
   Workbook: Mentee Progress Note, page 163
3. **Document each circle you ran:** attendance, themes, and energy level.
   Workbook: Community Circle Plan, page 184
4. **Write your journal reflection.** Finish these sentences: "I'm 4 weeks from certification. The mentor I am today compared to the man who walked into Week 1 is different in these ways... The areas I still need to grow are..."

WEEK 33

Sustainability and Self-Care

This week: Mentoring is not a sprint. It is a way of life, and serving others costs something. This week you learn to spot burnout in yourself, build self-care into every day, lean on your support network, and keep your boundaries from wearing away. You write a Personal Sustainability Plan for your portfolio.

This week's worksheets: My Support Network Map, page 206; Self-Care & Burnout Check, page 207; My Personal Sustainability Plan, page 208

SESSION 97

Sustainability and Self-Care

BIG IDEA *Self-care is protecting your capacity to serve, so it is part of the job, not a break from it.*

KEY POINTS

- **"Serving other people will exhaust you if you let it."** Each time you sit with a man who is hurting, you absorb some of that hurt. That is compassion fatigue. Ignore it and it turns into burnout, and burnout hurts everyone who depends on you.
- **Burnout creeps in.** You go through the motions. You get irritable with people who used to bring out your patience. You avoid supervision, your mentees, or your journal. You think, "These guys aren't going to change." You stop doing the things that bring you peace. "The question isn't whether it will happen. The question is whether you'll recognize it when it does."
- **The Burnout Self-Assessment is for you alone.** You rated 10 statements from 1 (never) to 5 (almost always). No one else sees it. A high number doesn't make you a bad mentor. "The problem isn't that you're tired. The problem is if you ignore it."
- **Self-care is a practice, not an event.** It doesn't take freedom or money. It is a daily discipline in four dimensions (see the tool below), and none of it needs anyone's permission. "It's not selfish. It's not soft. It's strategic."
- **The most important piece is having people.** On your support network map you put yourself in the center, then your go-to person, 2 or 3 fellow mentors, and the men who come to you. Then you looked for the gap. "Not lone wolves. A pack."
- **Boundaries erode slowly.** Checking on a mentee at all hours. Letting him bring you every problem because it feels good to be needed. Taking his bad choice personally. Bending rules: "It's okay this one time." Skipping supervision because you think you've got it figured out is the most dangerous of all.
- **"Service Over Self does not mean self-destruction."** It means giving from a place of health, not emptiness. "The people you serve need you whole."

TOOL: THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF SELF-CARE

Dimension	What it means	Ideas that work in here
Physical	What your body needs	Push-ups or running in the yard, the same bedtime every night, stretching
Emotional	Processing what you carry	Journaling, one trusted person, music, prayer or meditation, feeling without judging the feeling
Mental	Guarding what goes into your mind	Reading that feeds you, studying, walking away from toxic talk, a few minutes of quiet, one thing that isn't mentoring
Relational	Your connections	Check-ins with fellow mentors, one person you can be 100% honest with, supervision, letters to family

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Compassion fatigue** — the wear that builds up from taking in other people's pain, again and again.
- **Boundary erosion** — your lines wearing away a little at a time, without you noticing.

HOMEWORK

1. **Keep your Personal Sustainability Plan and follow it.** You wrote and signed it in session: your 3 warning signs, 2 daily and 2 weekly practices, your go-to person and a backup, the 2 boundaries most at risk, and what you will do when you notice a warning sign. Bring it to your field sessions this week. It goes in your portfolio and is required for certification.
   Workbook: Self-Care & Burnout Check, page 207
2. **Fill the gaps in your support network.** If your name sat alone on your map, "Fix that. This week."
3. **Do the one specific thing you named in the closing circle** to take care of yourself this week. Not "I'll try to relax more." Something concrete.

SESSION 98

Field Work — Independent Sessions

BIG IDEA *Check in, ground yourself, deliver your session, then look at yourself honestly afterward.*

KEY POINTS

- **One of your last independent sessions before the certification assessment.** You deliver your planned session on your own in your assigned dorm or unit.
- **Before: review your session plan,** the one you prepared ahead of time.
- **Before: check in briefly** with your support person or a fellow mentor before you head out.
- **Before: ground yourself** with a regulation technique.
- **During: deliver your session on your own.** A facilitator or senior mentor may observe you for assessment.
- **After: look at yourself through the burnout self-assessment lens.** How you feel after a session tells you something. So does whether you held your boundaries.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write your session reflection in your journal.** Answer: What went well? What would I do differently? How am I feeling after this session? Did I maintain my boundaries?
2. **Note any situation you need to bring to next week's supervision session.**

SESSION 99

Field Work — Mentoring, Community Circles, and Training Next Cohort

> **BIG IDEA** *Don't just talk about self-care; let your mentees and the new cohort see what a healthy mentor looks like.*

KEY POINTS

- **Mentoring meetings: check in on each mentee's progress and challenges.** Meet one-on-one or in a small group.
- **Practice sustainability conversations.** Talk about self-care openly with your mentees, so you model it, not just teach it.
- **Community circles, if you are scheduled for one.** This week's suggested prompt: "What does it look like to take care of yourself in here — honestly? Not what you think I want to hear. What do you actually do?"
- **Training the next cohort, if you are assigned.** Co-facilitate their Phase 1 session. This week, model the sustainability principles you just learned. "Don't just teach the curriculum — show the next cohort what a healthy mentor looks like."
- **After: bring your records up to date** before the day is over.

HOMEWORK

1. **Document every mentoring contact and update your mentoring hours log.**
   Workbook: Mentoring Hours Log, page 161
2. **Update your mentee progress notes.**
   Workbook: Mentee Progress Note, page 163
3. **Note any concerns or situations to bring to next week's supervision session.**

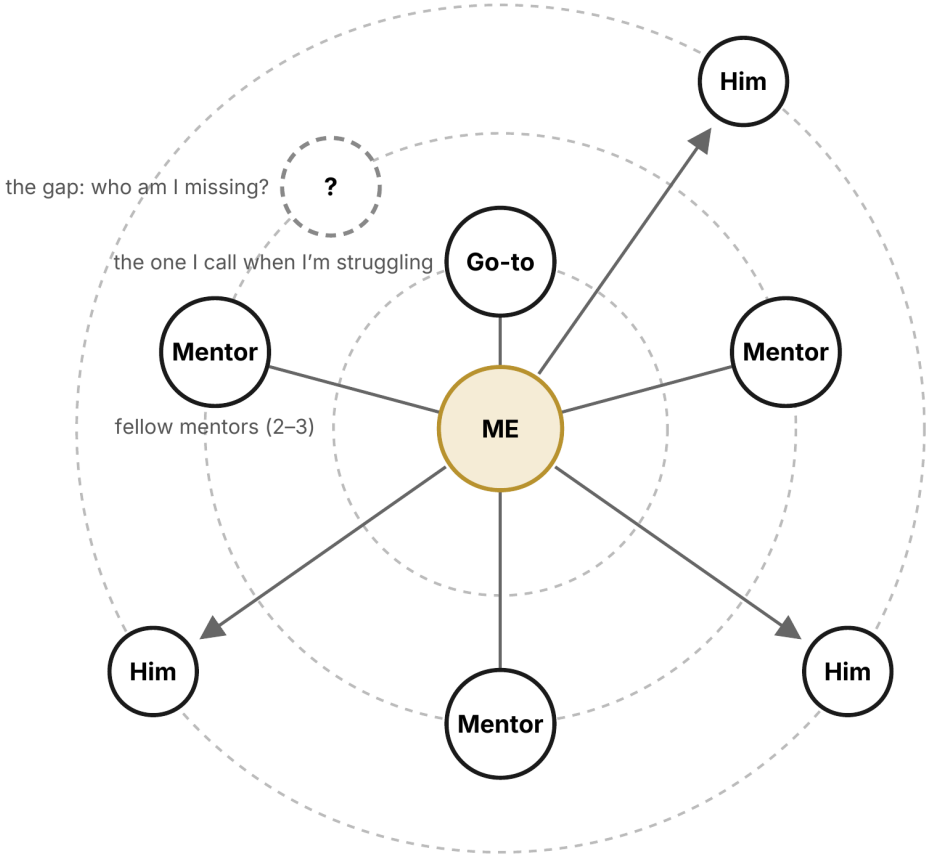
My Support Network Map

Use with: Session 97.

In your journal, draw a simple map. Put yourself in the center. Then answer these questions:

1. **Who is your go-to person?** The one person you can call on when you're struggling. Write their name closest to yours.
2. **Who are your 2-3 fellow mentors** who understand this work and can support you? Write their names.
3. **Who do you support?** Who comes to you? Write their names.
4. **Where is the gap?** Is there a type of support you're missing? A person you need but don't have?

Drawn in the journal. Real names go in the circles.



Closer to the center = closer to me · lines = support I get · arrows out = the men who come to me

If you looked at your map and your name is sitting alone with nobody around it — that's the most important thing you learn today. Fix that. This week.

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Self-Care & Burnout Check

Use with: Session 79 (Week 27) and Session 97. This page is for you alone. No one else needs to see it.

WEEK 27: MY ONE SELF-CARE ACTION

Area where I scored lowest (physical, mental, relational or spiritual)	The one thing I will do about it this week

BURNOUT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Rate each statement from **1** (never) to **5** (almost always). There are no wrong answers and no passing number. A high number doesn't make you a bad mentor: "The problem isn't that you're tired. The problem is if you ignore it."

Skill or statement	1	2	3	4	5
I feel emotionally drained at the end of the day.					
I dread interactions that I used to find meaningful.					
I feel like my efforts as a mentor don't make a difference.					
I am more impatient or irritable than I used to be.					
I have trouble sleeping, or my mind races at night.					
I avoid thinking about the problems my mentees are facing.					
I feel resentful of the demands placed on me.					
I have stopped doing things that used to bring me peace or joy.					
I feel isolated, even when I'm around other people.					
I carry other people's pain with me long after the conversation ends.					

THE FOUR DIMENSIONS OF SELF-CARE

Dimension	What already works for me in here	What I will do more of
Physical: what your body needs		
Emotional: processing what you carry		
Mental: guarding what goes into your mind		
Relational: your connections		

Then write your plan on the next page.

My Personal Sustainability Plan

Use with: Session 97. A portfolio item: certification requires it.

Write it in the session and sign it. Then keep it, follow it, and look at it again whenever you notice a warning sign.

My warning signs: how I know I'm getting close to burnout

My daily practices: what I do every day to stay healthy

My weekly practices: what I do each week

My go-to person: who I talk to when I'm struggling

My backup: if my go-to person isn't available

My boundaries most at risk of wearing away

What I will do when I notice a warning sign

My commitment: I understand that self-care is not optional. It is part of my service. I commit to following this plan and to asking for help when I need it.

Signature

Date

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WEEK 34

Leading Leaders

This week: You shift from being a mentor to being a builder of mentors. The highest form of FORGE leadership is not what you do. It is what you build in others. You learn what to look for in a future mentor, how to give feedback that grows people, and your place in the servant leadership pipeline.

This week's worksheets: Mentor Identification Checklist, page 213

SESSION 100

Leading Leaders

BIG IDEA *Your goal is to become unnecessary, by raising up men who can do what you do.*

KEY POINTS

- **Someone saw something in you before you saw it yourself.** If nobody ever did, "that absence is exactly why this session matters." Now you become that person for someone else.
- **"Your goal is to become unnecessary."** Not unimportant. Unnecessary, because the men you developed can do what you do. If that bothers you, ask why: "anything in you that resists that idea is ego talking."
- **There are three levels of impact** (see the tool below). Most of you are at Level 1 or 2 for now. Start thinking at Level 3. After certification the question won't be "Are you a good mentor?" It will be "Are you building good mentors?"
- **Identify, don't recruit.** Recruiting is selling someone on the program. Identifying is seeing the makings of a mentor in a man who may not see it yet. Look for a man who serves without being asked, is honest about his struggles, and handles conflict without escalating. Look for one people trust, who is teachable (the most important one), and who has a reason that will carry him when it gets hard.
- **Be careful with things that look good but prove nothing.** Charisma: "Charm without character is manipulation." Seniority: "Time served doesn't equal wisdom earned." Eagerness: is he drawn to service or to status? And don't just look for men like you.
- **Most of us have known only two kinds of feedback:** criticism, which tears you down, and silence, which tells you nothing. To grow a future mentor, use G.R.O.W. (see the tool below).
- **"FORGE cannot depend on any one person."** Your main job as a certified mentor is to find the next you and develop him. Then he finds the next him.
- **The day a man you developed leads a session better than you could,** "that's not a threat to you. That's your greatest achievement." Service Over Self means "it was never about you."

TOOL: THREE LEVELS OF IMPACT

1. **Level 1 — I do the work.** You mentor, facilitate, and de-escalate. But if you get transferred tomorrow, it all stops.
2. **Level 2 — I help others do the work.** You teach, coach, and give feedback. The work goes on without you in the room. That's multiplication.
3. **Level 3 — I develop people who develop others.** The work grows and outlives you. That's legacy, and it's how FORGE is built.

TOOL: G.R.O.W. FEEDBACK

1. **G — Ground it in what you observed.** Be specific. Not "You did good." Say exactly what he did: "You lowered your voice."
2. **R — Recognize the effort, not just the result.** "I know that was a hard conversation. The fact that you had it at all shows growth."
3. **O — Open a question.** "What would you do differently next time?" "Questions develop thinking. Answers just give directions."
4. **W — What's next?** End with one clear step he can work on. Not a lecture.

HOMEWORK

1. **Identify one person who has mentor potential and start investing in him on purpose.** Use the questions from your journal exercise: What do I see in him? Does he see it in himself? What would he need to develop? What's one thing I could do this week to invest in his growth?
2. **Give at least one piece of G.R.O.W. feedback** to someone you're developing.
3. **Keep up your self-care plan from last week.** Don't let it slide.
   Workbook: Self-Care & Burnout Check, page 207

SESSION 101

Field Work — Independent Sessions

BIG IDEA *While you lead your session, watch for the next mentor in the room.*

KEY POINTS

- **One of your final sessions before the certification assessment.** You deliver your planned session on your own. If you are observed, it counts toward your assessment.
- **Before: review your session plan.**
- **Before: pick your G.R.O.W. moment.** Find one chance during the session to practice G.R.O.W. feedback with a participant who shows potential.
- **Before: ground yourself** with a regulation technique.
- **During: deliver your session.** Keep an eye out for the signs from Session 100: the man who serves without being asked, who is honest, who stays calm, who is teachable.
- **After: reflect and write down** anything you need to take to supervision.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write your session reflection in your journal.** Include: Did I identify any potential future mentors during today's session? What did I see?
2. **Write down any situations to bring to next week's supervision session.**

SESSION 102

Field Work — Mentoring and Community Circles

BIG IDEA *Practice growing people with your own mentees, and start asking who could be next.*

KEY POINTS

- **Mentoring meetings: practice developmental feedback.** Use G.R.O.W. with your mentees.
- **Start spotting mentor potential** among your mentees and the men in your dorm. If the time is right, have the conversation: "Have you ever thought about FORGE?"
- **Community circles: a prompt for this week.** "Who is someone in your life who invested in you? What did they do that made a difference? And who are you investing in now?"
- **Document every interaction** in your mentoring logs.
- **After: check your hours.** You need a minimum of 60 mentoring hours for certification. Make sure you are on track.

HOMEWORK

1. **Update your mentoring hours log** and check that your total is on track for the 60-hour minimum.
   Workbook: Mentoring Hours Log, page 161
2. **Update your mentee progress notes.**
   Workbook: Mentee Progress Note, page 163
3. **Start getting ready for your Mentor Philosophy Statement next week.** Start thinking about what kind of mentor you are.
   Workbook: My Mentor Philosophy, page 221

Mentor Identification Checklist

Use with: Session 100.

Identifying is recognizing the raw material of a mentor in someone who might not see it in himself yet. Someone saw something in you before you saw it in yourself. Now it's your turn to do that for someone else.

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A POTENTIAL MENTOR

- ☐ **He's already serving — without being asked.** He helps the new arrival before anyone tells him to. He checks on the quiet guy. He does the unglamorous work. Not for credit.
- ☐ **He's honest about his own struggles.** Look for the one who says, "I'm working on it." Real humility, not performed humility.
- ☐ **He handles conflict without escalating.** When tension rises, his instinct is to de-escalate — even imperfectly.
- ☐ **People trust him.** Not because he's powerful. Not because he's popular. Because he keeps his word, he doesn't gossip, and what you tell him stays between you.
- ☐ **He's teachable.** The most important one. He listens when corrected: "You're right — let me try again." He treats mistakes as learning, not humiliation.
- ☐ **He has a reason.** A child he wants to be better for, a debt he feels to his community, a version of himself he's committed to becoming. Purpose sustains a mentor when the work gets hard.

WHAT TO BE CAUTIOUS ABOUT

- **Charisma.** Charm without character is manipulation. Don't confuse influence with integrity.
- **Seniority.** Time served doesn't equal wisdom earned. Look at growth, not tenure.
- **Eagerness.** Is he drawn to service or to status? The right motivation matters as much as the right skills.
- **Your own reflection.** Don't just look for people like you. The best mentors come in all temperaments.

Mentor identification. Think about the men you've been working with — in your dorm, in the next cohort, in your community circles. Write down the name of one person you think has the potential to become a FORGE mentor.

His name _____

What do I see in him that makes me think he could be a mentor?

_____

_____

Does he see it in himself?

_____

What would he need to develop?

_____

_____

What's one thing I could do this week to invest in his growth?

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WEEK 35

Your Legacy

This week: This is the last supervision session before certification week. You look at the culture you are building and how far your impact reaches. You write your Mentor Philosophy Statement, check your portfolio item by item, and learn exactly what happens next week. Then you finish the last two field sessions of the program.

This week's worksheets: Certification Week Schedule, page 219; Final Portfolio, page 220; My FORGE Journey — Personal Growth Narrative, page 221; My Mentor Philosophy, page 221

SESSION 103

Your Legacy

BIG IDEA *Your legacy is not a certificate on a wall; it is the real difference in how people treat each other because you chose to serve.*

KEY POINTS

- **"Why are you still here?"** In Session 1 you answered "Why are you here today?" Now you answered again. "That difference is called growth."
- **Every dorm has a culture.** Usually nobody chooses it. The loudest, the most aggressive, or the most connected set it. FORGE doesn't fight that head-on. It builds something better alongside it, something men are drawn to because they can see it works.
- **You build culture every day.** Every conflict you calm, every time you listen instead of judging, every circle where men say things they've never said out loud. "What kind of culture are you building?"
- **The ripple effect.** When a mentee changes how he handles conflict, it reaches his bunkmate, his children, and the CO on his unit. "Somewhere, years from now, a man you've never met will make a better decision because of something you taught someone today."
- **Your Mentor Philosophy Statement answers one question: "What kind of mentor am I?"** "This isn't an essay for a grade. This is a declaration." It is your anchor, and a required portfolio piece.
- **No surprises next week:** a final simulation assessment before a 3-person panel, a portfolio defense, then graduation. "Dress sharp. Show respect for the process." It is not a formality. "Prepare like it matters. Because it does."
- **Look how far you've come.** In Session 1 you finished "The kind of man I'm committed to becoming through FORGE is..." This time it was "The kind of man I have become through FORGE is..."

TOOL: YOUR MENTOR PHILOSOPHY STATEMENT

One page, at least a paragraph on each part, in your own words.

1. **Why I mentor.** The real reason, not the surface one. Why did you stay when it got hard?
2. **What I believe about people.** Do you believe people can change? Really?
3. **How I show up.** Your style. How you build trust and handle conflict.
4. **My commitments.** What you will always do and never do. Your non-negotiables and boundaries.
5. **What I'm still working on.** Your growing edge. This is the most important part: "It proves you're still a learner."

TOOL: PORTFOLIO CHECKLIST

- **Phase 1:** at least 15 thinking reports · emotion tracking logs (at least 3 weeks) · impact awareness letter · self-assessment essay · stakeholder commitment (5 specific actions) · 5 selected journal entries · personal coping strategy card · Phase 1 knowledge check · peer evaluations
- **Phase 2:** 3 complete lesson plans · simulation performance records · co-facilitation observation notes · MI practice logs (at least 5 interactions using OARS) · teaching demonstration score · self-reflection on mentor readiness (1–2 pages) · peer evaluations
- **Phase 3:** mentoring hours log, at least 60 hours (supervised co-facilitation 15+, observed independent sessions 15+, mentee meetings 20+, community circles 10+) · 4 session plans you delivered, with observation scores · a progress note for each mentee · circle plans and reflections (at least 2 run on your own) · personal growth narrative (3–5 pages) · mentor philosophy statement (1 page) · Personal Sustainability Plan · peer evaluations

HOMEWORK

1. **Finish your Mentor Philosophy Statement by the end of this week.** The review board will see it. "Make it real. Make it yours."
   Workbook: My Mentor Philosophy, page 221
2. **Close every gap in your portfolio.** Check off what you have and circle what's missing. Finish every missing item by Session 104, or by Session 105 at the absolute latest. "An incomplete portfolio cannot go to the review board."
   Workbook: Final Portfolio, page 220
3. **Prepare for the simulations. Rest. Take care of yourself.**

SESSION 104

Final Field Work — Independent Session

BIG IDEA *This is your last session as a practitioner, so bring everything you've become to it.*

KEY POINTS

- **Your last independent facilitation of the practicum.** Treat it with the seriousness it deserves. Any final observation assessments happen in this session.
- **Before: prepare a strong session plan.** This is your final session as a practitioner.
- **Before: review your Mentor Philosophy Statement draft,** and bring it into how you facilitate.
- **Before: finish any remaining portfolio items.**
- **During: deliver your session on your own.** Let the mentor you described in your statement be the one who shows up in the room.
- **After: write a final reflection** and record your final field work hours.

HOMEWORK

1. **Write your final session reflection in your journal.** Answer: What have I learned about facilitation over these 12 weeks? What is my greatest strength as a facilitator? What would I tell someone who is about to start Phase 3? How do I feel about certification week?
2. **Document your final field work hours.**
   Workbook: Mentoring Hours Log, page 161
3. **Finish any portfolio items you still have open.**
   Workbook: Final Portfolio, page 220

SESSION 105

Final Field Work — Mentoring, Community Circles, and Closure

BIG IDEA *Close the practicum well: honor your mentees, finish your records, and hand in a complete portfolio.*

KEY POINTS

- **The final field session of the whole program.** You meet your mentees for the last time as a practitioner. After certification the relationship goes on, but it shifts from "practitioner being assessed" to "certified mentor."
- **In each final meeting, acknowledge the relationship.** What has this mentoring partnership meant?
- **Tell him what comes next.** You will still be available after certification.
- **Affirm his growth with G.R.O.W. feedback,** and thank him for his trust. Mean it.
- **The final community circle,** if one is scheduled. Suggested prompt: "What is one thing that's different about this dorm — about this community — compared to when we started? And what do you want to carry forward?"
- **Your portfolio is due by the end of the day.** Everything compiled and ready to present. "There will be no additional time before the certification assessment."

HOMEWORK

1. **Finalize your mentoring hours log.** Make sure you meet the 60-hour minimum.
   Workbook: Mentoring Hours Log, page 161
2. **Complete all your mentee progress notes.**
   Workbook: Mentee Progress Note, page 163
3. **Finalize your community circle records.**
   Workbook: Community Circle Plan, page 184
4. **Assemble your complete FORGE Mentor Portfolio** by the end of the day: all your Phase 1, Phase 2 and Phase 3 materials, plus the final versions of your Personal Growth Narrative (3–5 pages), your Mentor Philosophy Statement (1 page), and your Personal Sustainability Plan.
   Workbook: Final Portfolio, page 220*; My FORGE Journey — Personal Growth Narrative*, page 221

Certification Week Schedule

Use with: Session 103.

SESSION 106: FINAL SIMULATION ASSESSMENT

- 2 complex simulations per person, back to back
- 3-person panel: experienced mentor, facilitator, staff member (if available)
- Scenarios drawn from Category B or C — the hardest ones
- Scored on the 6-category rubric: de-escalation, communication, boundaries, resolution, composure, referral judgment
- **Minimum passing score: 16/24 per simulation** — higher bar than Phase 2
- Each simulation: 7 minutes of live response, followed by 5 minutes of panel questions
- Dress sharp. Show respect for the process. This is your assessment.

SESSION 107: PORTFOLIO DEFENSE

- Present your complete FORGE Mentor Portfolio to the review panel
- 15-minute presentation per person:
  - Walk through each phase: what you learned, how you grew, key experiences
  - Present your Mentor Philosophy Statement
  - Present your Personal Growth Narrative
  - Highlight your mentoring impact — specific examples
- 10-minute Q&A from the panel
- The panel is evaluating completeness, quality, authenticity, and readiness

SESSION 108: GRADUATION AND COMMISSIONING

- Full ceremony
- Details to follow — but know this: Session 108 is a day you will remember for the rest of your life. Show up ready.

This is not a formality. You have to earn certification. The bar is high because the stakes are high. When you walk out of that room with a FORGE Mentor Certificate, it means something. It means you were tested and you passed. **Prepare like it matters. Because it does.**

My questions about certification week:

Final Portfolio

Use with: Sessions 103 to 105. Your portfolio is due by the end of Session 105.

Check off what you have. Circle anything missing, and finish it by Session 104, or Session 105 at the absolute latest. “An incomplete portfolio cannot go to the review board.”

PHASE 1

- ☐ At least 15 thinking reports
- ☐ Emotion tracking logs (at least 3 weeks)
- ☐ Impact awareness letter
- ☐ Self-assessment essay: “Who I was and who I am becoming”
- ☐ Stakeholder commitment (5 specific actions)
- ☐ 5 selected journal entries
- ☐ Personal coping strategy card
- ☐ Phase 1 knowledge check
- ☐ Peer evaluations from Phase 1

PHASE 2

- ☐ 3 complete lesson plans (objectives, activities, materials, debrief questions)
- ☐ Simulation performance records
- ☐ Co-facilitation observation notes (from your partner and the facilitator)
- ☐ MI practice logs (at least 5 interactions using OARS)
- ☐ Teaching demonstration score
- ☐ Self-reflection on mentor readiness (1–2 pages)
- ☐ Peer evaluations from Phase 2

PHASE 3

- ☐ Mentoring hours log, at least 60 hours: supervised co-facilitation 15+, observed independent sessions 15+, mentee meetings 20+, community circles 10+
- ☐ 4 session plans you delivered, with observation scores
- ☐ Progress notes (FORGE Mentoring Logs) for each mentee
- ☐ Community circle plans and reflections (at least 2 circles run on your own)
- ☐ Personal growth narrative: “My FORGE Journey” (3–5 pages)
- ☐ Mentor philosophy statement: “What kind of mentor I am” (1 page)
- ☐ Personal Sustainability Plan (Week 33)
- ☐ Peer evaluations from Phase 3

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WEEK 35 WORKSHEET

My FORGE Journey — Personal Growth Narrative

Use with: Sessions 103 to 105. A portfolio item, 3 to 5 pages. Write it in your journal.

Tell the thread that runs from Week 1 to Week 36: who you were then, who you are now, what changed, and why. Show the growth; don't just claim it. Use real moments.

- **Where I started.** Who was I when I walked into Week 1? What did I believe about myself and other people?
- **Phase 1, Foundation.** What did I learn about myself? Which lesson hit hardest? Where did I resist, and where did I break through?
- **Phase 2, Development.** What skills did I build? What was my hardest simulation, and what did it teach me?
- **Phase 3, Practicum.** A moment in the field when everything came together. A moment when it didn't, and what I would do differently.
- **Who I am now.** What changed, and why? What am I most proud of? Who am I committed to being?

WEEK 35 WORKSHEET

My Mentor Philosophy

Use with: Sessions 102 and 103. A portfolio item, 1 page. Finish it by the end of Week 35.

It answers one question: **What kind of mentor am I?** Jot your ideas here first. Then write the statement in your journal, at least a paragraph on each part, in your own words.

Part	My ideas
1. Why I mentor: the real reason	
2. What I believe about people	
3. How I show up	
4. My commitments: what I will always do and never do	
5. What I'm still working on	

WEEK 36

Certification — The Final Week

This week: This is it: 36 weeks and 108 sessions come down to three. The first session tests your skills under pressure. The second tests how deeply you learned and how ready you are. The third honors your journey and sends you out as a FORGE Mentor.

This week's worksheets: Post-Certification Expectations, page 226

SESSION 106

Final Simulation Assessment

BIG IDEA *The panel is answering one question: are you ready to represent FORGE on your own?*

KEY POINTS

- **This is the final skills check.** The panel wants to know: "Is this person ready to represent FORGE independently?" The bar is higher than in Phase 2 "because the work you're about to do is real, and the people you serve deserve mentors who are ready."
- **You face two scenarios, back to back.** A 3-person panel watches: an experienced FORGE mentor, a facilitator, and a staff member if one is available. Senior mentors or trained volunteers play the people in the scenario.
- **You won't know the scenarios until they begin.** They come from the hardest kinds of situations a FORGE mentor can face: mentor challenges and safety situations.
- **You get 7 minutes per scenario.** There is no freeze-and-coach and no replay. "This is your final performance. Show us what you've learned."
- **The ground rules.** No notes, no portfolio, no help from other participants. Respond the way you would for real: do it, don't narrate what you would do. If the situation needs a referral for safety, act as if you are in the dorm. Who would you contact, and how? Observers stay silent.
- **After each scenario, the panel asks questions for 5 minutes.** "These questions are not trick questions." They want to understand your thinking: why you did what you did, what you were weighing, what you would do differently. Answer honestly.
- **Scores are not shared that day.** The panel scores privately. You hear the result as part of the certification decision at graduation.

TOOL: WHAT THE PANEL SCORES

Area	What it looks like
De-escalation	Bringing the tension down and keeping it down: voice, posture, space, empathy.
Communication	Clear, assertive and respectful. Active listening, reflections, open questions.
Boundaries	Staying in your role. Not therapist, not CO. Holding the line without being harsh.
Resolution	Reaching a workable agreement or next step, and checking that he agrees.
Composure	Staying regulated under pressure, so your own emotions don't drive the interaction.
Referral judgment	Knowing when it is beyond a mentor, who to contact and how, and staying present until the hand-off.

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Panel** — the small group of people who watch, ask questions, and score.
- **Referral judgment** — knowing when a situation is beyond what a mentor should handle, and passing it to the right person in time.

HOMEWORK

1. **Prepare to tell your story at the portfolio defense.** "Not just what's in the binder. The story of who you were, who you became, and who you're committed to being."
2. **Rest after this session.** "You've earned it."

SESSION 107

Portfolio Defense

BIG IDEA *Don't read your portfolio to the panel; tell them the true story of who you were, who you became, and who you are committed to being.*

KEY POINTS

- **This is the full review of your FORGE journey.** It is not a presentation of facts. It shows your growth, your self-awareness, and your readiness. The panel wants to know: Do you understand what you learned? Can you tell your growth honestly? Do you have the depth and humility to mentor others?
- **"This is not a book report."** Don't read your documents to the panel. Tell your story.
- **You have 15 minutes to present,** then 10 minutes of panel questions. The tool below shows what to cover.
- **Be honest about what didn't work.** "The panel can tell the difference between performance and truth."
- **The questions test depth.** "Surface answers will not be sufficient. Answer from your experience, not from the textbook." Expect questions about your self-awareness, your mentoring, your commitment and character, how you will keep from burning out, and the legacy you are building.
- **What the panel weighs:** whether your portfolio is complete, your self-awareness and honesty, how clearly you tell your growth, your mentor philosophy, and how you answer their questions.
- **The certification decision looks at everything:** both simulations, this defense, your 4 observed field sessions, your mentoring hours (at least 60), peer evaluations from all three phases, the facilitator's view of your character, growth and readiness, and your Code of Conduct record.
- **There are three possible decisions.** Certified. Conditional: a written plan, a timeline, a chance to be reassessed, and continued supervision, with "No shame — this is a growth timeline, not a failure." Or Not Yet Ready: specific feedback and an invitation to re-enter Phase 3 with the next cohort, not to start over from Phase 1. You stay part of the FORGE community either way.

TOOL: WHAT TO COVER IN YOUR PRESENTATION

1. **Phase 1 — Who were you?** What did you learn about yourself? Which lessons hit hardest? Where did you resist, and where did you break through? Show the growth. Don't just claim it.
2. **Phase 2 — What did you build?** Your skills. Your hardest simulation and what it taught you. How you learned to teach, facilitate, and give feedback.
3. **Phase 3 — What did you do?** Your mentees. A moment in the field when everything came together, and a moment when it didn't. What you would do differently.
4. **Your Mentor Philosophy Statement.** Read it or summarize it. "But own it."
5. **Your Growth Narrative.** The thread from Week 1 to Week 36. Who were you then? Who are you now? What changed, and why?

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Portfolio defense** — presenting your portfolio to a panel and answering their questions about it.
- **Conditional** — certification that waits on a plan: you work on the areas the panel names, then get reassessed.

HOMEWORK

No homework from this session.

SESSION 108

Graduation and Commissioning

BIG IDEA *Certification is not the finish line; it is a commissioning, a sending forth into service.*

KEY POINTS

- **A commissioning, not a formality.** Graduates gather in a circle with the panel, senior mentors, and any staff, chaplain, or administrators who choose to come.
- **Your journey is honored.** The ceremony recalls your answer from Session 1 to "Name one thing you want to be different about yourself in 9 months." Then it walks back through all three phases: Phase 1 tore down the walls, Phase 2 made you a builder of other people, and Phase 3 proved you can do it in the real world.
- **Each graduate is called forward by name.** The facilitator speaks about who you are, "not what's on your record, not what label this system gave you," and presents your certificate.
- **You make a public Commitment to Service.** Each graduate stands, states his name, and commits in front of witnesses to 6 months of active service. Then you sign a Commitment to Service form. "This is a covenant with the men who will come after you."
- **The FORGE charge.** Everyone stands for the words every certified mentor carries: "Leadership is not granted. It is forged."
- **Welcome into the mentor community.** Senior mentors from earlier cohorts welcome you. If yours is the first cohort, there are none yet. You are the foundation. "You are no longer alone."
- **The last circle asks one question: "What is different?"** Not what you learned or did, but what is different about who you are. Then there is time for fellowship, and you receive the Post-Certification Expectations handout.
- **Hard days will come.** A mentee relapses. The system is unjust. "On those days, remember this room." If you are struggling, ask for help early. Losing certification "is not punishment. It is protection."

TOOL: YOUR 6-MONTH ACTIVE SERVICE COMMITMENT

Requirement	How often	Minimum
Mentoring caseload	Ongoing	3–5 mentees
Session facilitation	Monthly	2 sessions a month
Community circles	Monthly	1 circle a month
Supervision	Monthly	1 session a month
Mentoring log	Monthly	Turned in by the last day of the month
Self-assessment	Every 3 months	Written reflection on your strengths and growth areas
Self-care plan	Ongoing	Follow your Personal Sustainability Plan

WORDS TO KNOW

- **Commissioning** — being formally sent out to serve.
- **Covenant** — a serious promise made in front of witnesses.
- **Recertification** — renewing your certification each year by showing you still meet the standard.

HOMEWORK

1. **Keep your 6-month service commitment** (see the table). Keep growing through journaling, self-assessment and learning, and uphold the Code of Conduct at all times.
   Workbook: Self-Care & Burnout Check, page 207
2. **Keep developing.** Attend the monthly mentor meetings. Read at least 1 book from the recommended reading list every 3 months. Identify and begin developing at least 1 future mentor. Help train the next FORGE cohort when Phase 1 begins. Ask for feedback from mentees, fellow mentors, and facilitators.
3. **Recertify every year.** That means a 4-hour refresher training, a performance review with the facilitator, an updated self-assessment, a review of your mentoring hours log, a peer evaluation, and continued compliance with the Code of Conduct.
4. **Know what can cost you your certification:** Code of Conduct violations, 3 or more months without meeting your service commitment, not keeping the standards expected of a FORGE mentor, or refusing supervision and ongoing development.

Post-Certification Expectations

Use with: Session 108.

FORGE CERTIFIED MENTOR — ONGOING REQUIREMENTS

Your 6-Month Active Service Commitment:

Requirement	Frequency	Minimum
Mentoring caseload	Ongoing	3-5 mentees
Session facilitation	Monthly	2 sessions per month
Community circles	Monthly	1 circle per month
Supervision attendance	Monthly	1 session per month
Mentoring log updates	Monthly	Submitted by last day of month
Self-assessment	Quarterly	Written reflection on strengths and growth areas
Self-care plan compliance	Ongoing	Follow your Personal Sustainability Plan

Ongoing Development:

- Attend monthly mentor meetings (fellowship, planning, continued learning)
- Read at least 1 book from the recommended reading list per quarter
- Identify and begin developing at least 1 potential future mentor
- Participate in training the next FORGE cohort when Phase 1 begins
- Seek feedback regularly — from mentees, fellow mentors, and facilitators

Annual Recertification:

- Refresher training session (4 hours)
- Performance review with facilitator
- Updated self-assessment
- Mentoring hours log review
- Peer evaluation
- Continued compliance with Code of Conduct

Decertification: Certification may be revoked for:

- Code of Conduct violations (per existing policy)
- Sustained inactivity (3+ months without fulfilling service commitment)
- Failure to maintain standards of conduct expected of a FORGE mentor
- Refusal to participate in supervision or ongoing development

Important: Decertification is not punishment. It is protection — for you and for the people you serve. If you're struggling, ask for help before it reaches that point. That's what the community is for.

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