



PHASE 1 — FOUNDATION

Week 12 of 36

Phase 1 Assessment and Transition

Sessions 34–36

Tuesday • Wednesday • Thursday

FORGE — Facilitating Opportunities for Reentry, Growth & Empowerment

Dooly State Prison

FORGE Curriculum

Phase 1: Foundation — "Know Yourself"

Week 12: Phase 1 Assessment and Transition

Week 12 Overview

Purpose: This is the finish line for Phase 1. Everything over the past 11 weeks has led here. Participants demonstrate what they've learned through a written knowledge check, present their portfolios, and — if they've met the requirements — celebrate their completion of Phase 1 and prepare for Phase 2. This week should feel like a milestone, not an obstacle. The assessment is a verification of learning, not a gotcha. The portfolio is a presentation of growth, not a defense of perfection. And the celebration is earned — every man who's done the work deserves to be recognized for it.

Sessions This Week: - Session 34 (Tuesday): Phase 1 Knowledge Check - Session 35 (Wednesday): Portfolio Review - Session 36 (Thursday): Phase 1 Celebration and Phase 2 Preview

Materials Needed: - Phase 1 Knowledge Check — printed (1 per participant + 2 extras) - Answer key for Knowledge Check (facilitator only) - Pens/pencils (extras — pens die during tests) - Portfolio Review Checklist (1 per participant) - Portfolio Presentation Rubric (1 per panel member per participant) - Phase 1 Completion Certificates (pre-printed, 1 per completing participant) - Phase 2 overview handout (if available — otherwise verbal) - Recommitment forms (1 per participant) - Talking piece - Timer or watch

SESSION 34: Phase 1 Knowledge Check

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

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will have: 1. Demonstrated their knowledge of all Phase 1 concepts through a written assessment 2. Applied cognitive restructuring, emotional regulation, conflict resolution, communication, and problem-solving concepts to realistic scenarios 3. Articulated FORGE values, Code of Conduct principles, and the stakeholder model in their own words 4. Identified their score and understood what it means for Phase 2 advancement

Session Plan

Opening (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Today is the Phase 1 Knowledge Check. I know some of you are nervous. That's normal — it means you care. Let me put a few things on the table right now:

- 1. **This is not designed to trick you.** Every question on this test comes from material we've covered in sessions. If you've been doing the work — attending, journaling, completing your thinking reports, participating in exercises — you know this material.*
- 2. **You need 70% to advance.** That's 21 out of 30. It's a fair bar. I'm not looking for perfection. I'm looking for understanding.*
- 3. **If you don't pass today, it's not the end.** You can retake it. This is a knowledge check, not a character judgment. Some people test better than others. What matters is that you know the material.*
- 4. **The format:** There are multiple choice questions, short answer questions, and scenario-based questions. For short answer and scenario questions, I'm looking for substance, not length. A clear, specific answer in 2-3 sentences is better than a vague paragraph.*

You have 75 minutes for 30 questions. That's more than enough time. Don't rush. Read each question carefully. If you get stuck, move on and come back.

Any questions before we start?"

Answer questions. Then distribute the Knowledge Check.

"Pens up. Begin."

Knowledge Check Administration (75 minutes)

Facilitator and Senior Mentor: Proctor the test. Walk the room periodically. Don't hover over anyone. Be available if someone has a question about what a question is asking (clarify the question, don't give the answer). If someone finishes early, they can sit quietly or review their answers — no talking, no leaving until the 75 minutes are up or everyone is done.

FORGE Phase 1 Knowledge Check

Name: __ Date: __ Cohort: _____

Instructions: Answer all 30 questions. For multiple choice, circle the best answer. For short answer, write 2-3 clear sentences. For scenario questions, explain what you would do and why. You have 75 minutes. 70% (21/30) is required to advance to Phase 2.

Section 1: Thinking Errors and Cognitive Restructuring (Questions 1-8)

1. What are the three parts of the Think-Feel-Act cycle?

a) Situation → Response → Consequence b) Thought → Feeling → Action c) Problem → Solution → Outcome d) Trigger → Reaction → Regret

2. Match each thinking error to its correct description. Write the letter next to the number.

Thinking Error	Description
1. Closed thinking	___ A. "It's not that serious" — making harmful behavior seem less important
2. Victim stance	___ B. "I'll make them do what I want" — using force or intimidation to control
3. Minimizing	___ C. "I deserve special treatment" — believing rules don't apply to you

Thinking Error	Description
4. Power thrust	D. "I'm right, period" — refusing to consider any other viewpoint
5. Entitlement	E. "It's everyone else's fault" — refusing to accept responsibility

3. Read the following statement and identify which thinking error is present. Explain why.

"Yeah, I shoved him. But he disrespected me first. What was I supposed to do — just let him talk to me like that? Anyone would have done the same thing."

Thinking error(s): _____

Explanation: _____

4. What does STOP stand for in the STOP technique?

S: _____

T: _____

O: _____

P: _____

5. Rewrite the following thought using cognitive restructuring. Replace the thinking error with a more accurate, productive thought.

Original thought: "This CO has it out for me. He's always targeting me. There's no point trying to follow the rules because he's going to write me up no matter what."

Restructured thought: _____

6. A thinking report has five parts. List them in order.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

7. What is "cognitive indolence" and how does it show up in daily life? Give one example.

8. What is the difference between a thinking error and a negative emotion? (Short answer)

Section 2: Emotional Regulation (Questions 9-13)

9. Put the five stages of the escalation curve in the correct order:

___ Crisis ___ Calm ___ Recovery ___ Flooded ___ Agitated

10. Name two physical body signals that tell you anger is building (before you say or do anything).

- 1.
- 2.

11. Describe the 4-4-4 breathing technique. When should you use it?

12. SCENARIO: You just found out that your family member didn't show up for a scheduled visit. No call, no explanation. You're sitting on your bunk and you can feel the anger rising — your chest is tight, your jaw is clenched, you want to hit something.

What would you do in the next 5 minutes? Be specific about which regulation techniques you would use and why.

13. Explain what it means to say "anger is a secondary emotion." What emotions typically lie beneath anger? Name at least three.

Section 3: Conflict Resolution (Questions 14-18)

14. List the 5 steps of the FORGE Conflict Resolution Model in order.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

15. What does "tactical empathy" mean in de-escalation?

- a) Pretending to agree with someone so they calm down b) Acknowledging what someone is feeling without necessarily agreeing with their position c) Manipulating someone's emotions to get the outcome you want d) Telling someone you understand even when you don't

16. Name three things you should do with your body language when trying to de-escalate a tense situation.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

17. SCENARIO: Two men in the dorm are arguing about who was supposed to clean the bathroom. The argument started calm but is getting louder. One of them just said, "If you call me lazy one more time, we're going to have a real problem." Other dorm members are starting to watch.

Walk through how you would intervene using the FORGE Conflict Resolution Model. Address each step specifically.

Step 1 (Pause & Posture): _____

Step 2 (Name the Heat): _____

Step 3 (Facts > Stories): _____

Step 4 (Needs & Options): _____

Step 5 (Agreement & Check-Back): _____

18. List three "red line" situations where a FORGE participant should step back and refer to staff rather than trying to handle it themselves.

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Section 4: Communication Skills (Questions 19-22)

19. What are the five components of active listening?

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.
- 4.
- 5.

20. Rewrite each aggressive statement as an assertive "I" statement.

a) "You never listen to me. You always just do whatever you want."

Rewrite: _____

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

Rewrite: _____

21. What does SBI stand for in the feedback model? Briefly explain each part.

S: _____

B: _____

I: _____

22. What is the difference between aggressive communication and assertive communication? (Short answer — 2-3 sentences)

Section 5: Problem Solving and Decision Making (Questions 23-26)

23. List the 6 steps of the FORGE problem-solving model in order.

1. _____

2. _____

3. _____

4. _____

5. _____

6. _____

24. What is the 10-10-10 rule? How does it help with decision making?

25. SCENARIO: You've been saving commissary items to send a package to your family. You find out that a man in your dorm — someone you're friendly with — has been taking items from your shelf when you're not around. You're angry. You want to confront him right now.

Apply the 6-step problem-solving model to this situation.

Step 1 (Stop and think): _____

Step 2 (Define the problem): _____

Step 3 (Gather information): _____

Step 4 (Generate options — list at least 3):

Option A: _____

Option B: _____

Option C: _____

Step 5 (Evaluate consequences): _____

Step 6 (Choose, act, review): _____

26. What does "playing the tape forward" mean? Give a brief example of how you would use it.

Section 6: FORGE Values and Code of Conduct (Questions 27-30)

27. In your own words, explain what "Service Over Self" means. Give one specific example of what it looks like in the dorm. (3-4 sentences)

28. What does it mean to be a "stakeholder" in the FORGE model? How is it different from being a bystander?

29. SCENARIO: A man you've become friends with in the FORGE program tells you confidentially that he's been carrying a sharpened piece of metal "just for protection." He says he feels threatened by someone in another dorm and he'll get rid of it soon. He asks you not to tell anyone.

What do you do? Explain your reasoning. Reference the Code of Conduct in your answer.

30. The FORGE accountability spectrum goes from denial to full accountability. Put these five levels in order from least accountable to most accountable:

___ Full accountability ___ Blame-shifting ___ Denial ___ Partial ownership ___ Minimization

Now write one sentence explaining the difference between "partial ownership" and "full accountability."

End of Knowledge Check

Answer Key (Facilitator Only)

1. b) Thought → Feeling → Action

2. 1-D, 2-E, 3-A, 4-B, 5-C

3. Multiple thinking errors present: **Victim stance** ("he disrespected me first" — blaming the other person), **Minimizing** ("I shoved him" — downplaying the aggression), and **Cognitive indolence / Closed thinking** ("What was I supposed to do?" — refusing to consider alternatives, acting as if there was no other option). Accept any two correctly identified and explained.

4. S = Stop, T = Think, O = Options, P = Plan

5. Acceptable restructured thoughts should: remove the assumption of persecution ("has it out for me"), acknowledge what the participant can control, and recognize that following rules has value regardless of the CO's behavior. Example: "This CO has been strict with me. I don't know his reasons. What I can control is my own behavior. Following the rules is for me and my future — not for him."

6. 1. Situation, 2. Thought, 3. Feeling, 4. Action, 5. Consequence

7. Cognitive indolence is the thinking error of not wanting to think something through — taking mental shortcuts, refusing to consider consequences, or being too lazy to think before acting. Example: "I didn't really think about it, I just did it" or not planning ahead because thinking about it is uncomfortable.

8. A thinking error is a distorted or inaccurate way of interpreting a situation (faulty thinking). A negative emotion is a feeling (like anger, sadness, fear). Thinking errors lead to or intensify negative emotions, but they are not the

same thing. You can feel a negative emotion without a thinking error (grief over a real loss), but thinking errors often make emotions worse or create emotions that don't fit the situation.

9. 4-Crisis, 1-Calm, 5-Recovery, 3-Flooded, 2-Agitated. Correct order: Calm → Agitated → Flooded → Crisis → Recovery

10. Accept any two: jaw clenching, fists tightening, chest tightness, face getting hot, muscles tensing, heart racing, stomach tightening, shallow breathing, etc.

11. Breathe in for 4 seconds, hold for 4 seconds, breathe out for 4 seconds. Use it when you feel yourself escalating — when you notice body signals of anger or stress — before you respond to a situation. It activates the body's calming response.

12. Look for: identification of body signals (chest tight, jaw clenched), use of a specific regulation technique (4-4-4 breathing, 5-4-3-2-1 grounding, or another technique taught in class), and a decision to delay any action until regulated. Award full credit for any answer that names a specific technique, describes how they'd use it, and demonstrates awareness that acting while flooded leads to bad outcomes.

13. Anger is called a secondary emotion because it usually covers up a deeper, more vulnerable feeling. Beneath anger are typically: shame, fear, hurt, sadness, grief, rejection, powerlessness, humiliation, or feeling disrespected. Accept any three.

14. 1. Pause & Posture, 2. Name the Heat, 3. Facts > Stories, 4. Needs & Options, 5. Agreement & Check-Back

15. b) Acknowledging what someone is feeling without necessarily agreeing with their position

16. Accept any three: keep hands visible and open, maintain a non-threatening stance (slightly angled, not squared up), keep a safe distance (arm's length+), lower your posture slightly (don't tower over them), slow your movements, keep eye contact without staring, relax your shoulders, uncross your arms.

17. Award up to full credit based on how specifically and accurately the participant applies each step. Key elements: - Step 1: Approach calmly, check own body language, breathe, position yourself at an angle not between them - Step 2: Acknowledge the tension ("I can see this is getting heated" or similar) - Step 3: Give each person a chance to state facts without insults or blame — "What happened?" to each, with time limits - Step 4: Identify what each person actually needs (a clean bathroom, respect, fairness) and generate options (a schedule, splitting the task, etc.) - Step 5: Get a specific agreement and commit to checking back the next day

18. Accept any three: weapons present/mentioned, threats of serious violence, suicidal or self-harm statements, gang-related conflict, active mental health crisis, medical emergency, staff safety concerns.

19. 1. Attending (giving full attention), 2. Reflecting (mirroring back what you heard), 3. Clarifying (asking questions to make sure you understand), 4. Summarizing (capturing the key points), 5. Validating (acknowledging the person's feelings/experience)

20. Accept rewrites that: use "I" as the subject, describe the speaker's feeling or experience, avoid blame language ("you always," "you never"), and make a specific request. Examples: a) "I feel unheard when decisions get made without my input. I need us to talk things through together." b) "I feel hurt when I hear that things are being said about me. I'd rather you come to me directly."

21. S = Situation (when and where the behavior happened), B = Behavior (what the person specifically did — observable, not interpreted), I = Impact (the effect the behavior had — on you, others, or the situation)

22. Aggressive communication violates others' rights — it uses threats, blame, intimidation, or disrespect to force an outcome. Assertive communication respects both your own rights and the other person's — it's direct and honest without being hostile. Aggressive communication damages relationships; assertive communication builds them.

23. 1. Stop and think, 2. Define the problem clearly, 3. Gather information, 4. Generate options (at least 3), 5. Evaluate consequences of each option, 6. Choose, act, and review

24. Ask yourself: How will I feel about this decision in 10 minutes? In 10 months? In 10 years? It helps by forcing you to think beyond the immediate impulse and consider long-term consequences. A decision that feels satisfying in 10 minutes (like punching someone) can look very different at 10 months (a DR, loss of privileges) or 10 years (a pattern of violence that's cost you relationships and freedom).

25. Award credit based on clear application of each step: - Step 1: Don't confront immediately; calm down first - Step 2: Define it clearly — someone is taking my property; I need to address it without violence - Step 3: Confirm the facts — is it really him? How do I know? Have I seen it or is it assumption? - Step 4: At least 3 real options (e.g., talk to him directly and calmly, ask a trusted person to help mediate, move my items to a more secure location, report it, talk to a FORGE mentor) - Step 5: Weigh consequences of each — confrontation could escalate; mediation preserves the relationship; doing nothing lets it continue - Step 6: Choose the option with the best long-term outcome and plan to revisit how it went

26. "Playing the tape forward" means mentally walking through the full chain of consequences of a decision before you make it — seeing where it leads, step by step, all the way to the end. Example: "If I get in this fight → I get a DR → I lose my good time → my release date gets pushed back → my kids wait longer → is that worth it?"

27. Look for: a clear definition that goes beyond "helping people" — should include the idea of choosing to use your time, energy, or influence for others' benefit, even when it costs you something. The example should be specific and realistic — not vague. Award full credit for authenticity and specificity.

28. A stakeholder is someone who accepts personal responsibility for the shared environment — the dorm, the facility, the community. A bystander watches things happen and says "not my problem." A stakeholder sees the same situation and says "I have a role in how this goes." The difference is ownership: stakeholders don't wait for someone else to fix things.

29. This is a zero-tolerance situation under the Code of Conduct. The participant must report it — weapons are a red-line issue regardless of the reason. The correct answer acknowledges: the Code of Conduct's zero-tolerance

weapons policy, the safety of everyone in the dorm, the reality that "just for protection" doesn't change the risk, and the duty to report even though the person is a friend. Partial credit for answers that show awareness but hesitate on the duty to act. No credit for answers that say they'd keep the secret.

30. Order: 3-Full accountability, 4-Blame-shifting, 1-Denial, 5-Partial ownership, 2-Minimization. Wait — correct order from least to most: 1-Denial, 2-Minimization, 3-Blame-shifting, 4-Partial ownership, 5-Full accountability.

The difference: Partial ownership admits some responsibility but still holds back ("I did it, but..." — there's always a 'but' that shifts some blame). Full accountability owns it completely — no excuses, no qualifiers, no "but." It says: "I did this. It was wrong. Here's who it hurt. Here's what I'll do differently."

Scoring: - Questions 1, 4, 9, 15: 1 point each (straightforward recall) - Questions 2, 30 (ordering): 1 point each (all correct to earn the point) - Questions 3, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 24, 26, 27, 28: 1 point each (substance and accuracy) - Questions 6, 14, 23: 1 point each (must be in correct order with correct terms) - Questions 12, 17, 25, 29: 1 point each (scenario-based — scored on application quality)

Total: 30 points. Passing: 21/30 (70%).

Facilitator note on grading: Be fair but not rigid. On short answer and scenario questions, look for demonstrated understanding, not perfect wording. If a participant clearly understands the concept but uses different language than the manual, give credit. The goal is to verify learning, not penalize vocabulary.

Post-Test (25 minutes)

Collect all tests. If time allows, do a brief, informal review:

Facilitator:

"Tests are done. Take a breath. Before tomorrow, let me walk through a few of the concepts that tend to trip people up — not giving you answers, but reinforcing the learning."

Review 3-4 key concepts briefly — the ones you know participants struggled with based on questions you got during the test or based on the past 11 weeks of observation. Keep it conversational, not lecture-style.

Facilitator:

"I'll have your scores by tomorrow. If you passed, you'll know before the portfolio review. If you didn't, I'll talk to you individually about next steps. Either way — the knowledge check is one part of the Phase 1 gate. Your portfolio, your attendance, your peer evaluations, and your conduct all factor in.

Tomorrow: Portfolio Review. Bring everything. Your thinking reports, your emotion logs, your impact awareness letter, your self-assessment essay, your stakeholder commitment, and your 5 selected journal entries. You'll present your portfolio to a panel. It's not a trial — it's a chance to show your journey.

See you tomorrow."

Session 34 Checklist

- Room set up with individual desks/writing surfaces (not circle formation — testing setup)
- Knowledge Checks printed and distributed
- Pens/pencils available (extras on hand)
- 75 minutes of quiet testing time provided
- Test proctored — questions about clarity answered without giving away content
- All tests collected
- Post-test concept review completed
- Tomorrow's portfolio requirements communicated clearly
- Plan in place to grade tests before Session 35

SESSION 35: Portfolio Review

Day: Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor (if available) + additional panel member (certified FORGE mentor or staff observer)

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will have: 1. Presented their complete Phase 1 portfolio to a review panel 2. Articulated their personal growth journey in their own words 3. Demonstrated the ability to reflect on their learning honestly and specifically 4. Received feedback on their portfolio from the panel 5. Understood their readiness status for Phase 2

Session Plan

Opening (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Today is Portfolio Review. Before we start, let me share your Knowledge Check results."

Share scores individually. You can do this in one of two ways depending on your group: - Option A: Call each person's name and say "You passed" or "Come see me after the session." (Public but minimal.) - Option B: Hand back the tests with scores written on top. (Private.)

Choose based on what serves your group best. Don't publicly announce failing scores.

Facilitator (after scores are shared):

"For those who passed — congratulations. For those who need to retake — we'll work out a plan. The knowledge check is important, but it's one piece. Today's portfolio review is where you show the real evidence of your growth.

Here's how today works: Each of you will present your portfolio to a panel — that's me, [Senior Mentor name], and [third panel member if present]. You'll have approximately 8 minutes. In those 8 minutes, you'll walk us through:

- 1. Your portfolio contents — showing us that everything is complete*
- 2. Your highlights — what entries or documents best represent your journey*
- 3. Your self-assessment — who you were, who you are, what's still unfinished*

After you present, we may ask you 1-2 questions. This is not an interrogation. It's a conversation about your growth.

While you're waiting for your turn, review your materials. When someone else is presenting, you listen with respect. This is their moment."

Portfolio Completeness Check (10 minutes)

Before presentations begin, do a quick completeness check. Go around the room and verify each participant has the required items. Use the checklist:

Phase 1 Portfolio Checklist:

- **Thinking Reports** — Minimum 15 completed, each with all five parts (Situation, Thought, Feeling, Action, Consequence)
- **Emotion Tracking Logs** — At least 3 weeks of daily emotion tracking (time, emotion, body signal, trigger)
- **Impact Awareness Letter** — Completed letter addressing the harm caused, the ripple effect, and personal accountability (from Week 7)
- **Self-Assessment Essay** — 2-page minimum: "Who I was when I started FORGE and who I am now" (from Week 11)
- **Stakeholder Commitment** — 5 specific actions the participant commits to as a stakeholder (from Week 10)
- **Journal Highlights** — 5 journal entries selected by the participant as most representative of their journey
- **Personal Coping Strategy Card** — 5 strategies for managing distress (from Week 4)
- **Self-Assessment Questionnaire** — Completed with honest ratings and open-ended responses (from Week 11)

Facilitator:

"If you're missing anything, note it. You'll need to complete any missing items before you can be cleared for Phase 2. Let's begin."

Portfolio Presentations (80 minutes)

For a cohort of 12-15, budget approximately 8 minutes per person. Adjust timing if needed — you may not get through everyone in 80 minutes with a full cohort. If so, extend into the pre-celebration time in Session 36, or split presentations across Sessions 35 and 36.

Presentation structure for each participant:

- 1. Portfolio walk-through (3 minutes):** Show each item on the checklist. The panel verifies completeness.
- 2. Personal reflection (3 minutes):** The participant shares their growth story in their own words. Not reading the essay — speaking from it. What changed? What was the hardest part? What moment meant the most?
- 3. Panel questions (2 minutes):** 1-2 questions from the panel.

Panel instructions (review with panel members before the session):

Facilitator (to panel):

"Our job is to verify completeness, assess the quality of self-reflection, and affirm genuine growth. We're not looking for perfection. We're looking for honesty, self-awareness, and evidence that this person has internalized — not just memorized — the material. Ask questions that draw out depth. Don't grill anyone."

Portfolio Presentation Rubric:

Criteria	1 (Incomplete)	2 (Developing)	3 (Competent)	4 (Exemplary)
Completeness	Multiple items missing or incomplete	1-2 items missing or significantly incomplete	All items present and substantially complete	All items present, thorough, and detailed
Quality of Thinking Reports	Surface-level, vague, or formulaic	Some depth but inconsistent	Demonstrates genuine self-analysis in most reports	Deep, honest, specific — shows real cognitive work
Self-Assessment Honesty	Inflated or deflated — doesn't match observed behavior	Somewhat honest but avoids hard truths	Honest about strengths and weaknesses	Deeply honest — names specific struggles and specific growth

Criteria	1 (Incomplete)	2 (Developing)	3 (Competent)	4 (Exemplary)
Articulation of Growth	Cannot describe what's changed	Vague — "I've grown a lot" without specifics	Can name specific changes with examples	Compelling, specific, connects skills to real life
Engagement with Process	Disengaged — presenting because required	Compliant but surface-level	Engaged and invested in the reflection	Deeply invested — this clearly matters to them

Scoring: Each criterion scored 1-4. Total: 20 points. Minimum to pass: 12/20.

Sample panel questions (choose 1-2 per participant):

- "Looking at your thinking reports — which one was the hardest to write? Why?"
- "You rated yourself a [number] on [skill]. Can you give me a real example of a time you used that skill this week?"
- "What's the thinking error you still catch yourself in most often?"
- "Read us one sentence from your impact awareness letter — a sentence that was hard to write."
- "Your self-assessment essay says [reference something specific]. Tell me more about that moment."
- "If a new cohort member asked you, 'Is FORGE worth it?' — what would you tell him?"
- "What's one skill you learned that you've actually used outside this room?"
- "Where do you still struggle the most? What's the work that's not done yet?"

Individual Feedback (10 minutes)

After all presentations, briefly share the panel's overall feedback:

Facilitator:

"I want to acknowledge what just happened in this room. Each of you stood up and shared your journey — your real journey, not a cleaned-up version. That takes courage. I've been in enough programs to know the difference between someone going through the motions and someone who's done the work. Today, I saw men who've done the work.

I'll share individual portfolio scores and panel feedback with each of you before tomorrow's session. If there are missing items, you'll know exactly what needs to be completed. For now — be proud of what you put together. That portfolio is evidence of 11 weeks of growth. It belongs to you."

Facilitator note: After this session, review each portfolio score, combine it with the knowledge check score, attendance record, peer evaluations, and your observations. Determine each participant's advancement status

before Session 36. If anyone is not advancing, meet with them individually BEFORE the celebration to discuss the plan.

Closing (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Tomorrow is Session 36 — our final session of Phase 1. I want you to come with two things:

- 1. A clear head. Show up present. Don't sleepwalk through this.*
- 2. An open heart. Tomorrow we celebrate what you've accomplished, and we look ahead at what's coming.*

*One-word closing round: **What's one word for how you feel right now?**"*

Send the talking piece.

"See you tomorrow."

Session 35 Checklist

- Knowledge check scores shared with participants
 - Portfolio completeness check completed for every participant
 - Panel assembled (facilitator + senior mentor + additional member if available)
 - Presentation rubric used for each participant
 - Each participant presented (approximately 8 minutes each)
 - Panel questions asked — drawing out depth, not grilling
 - Overall feedback given to the group
 - Individual scores and advancement decisions prepared for Session 36
 - Any non-advancing participants notified privately before Session 36
 - Closing circle completed
-

SESSION 36: Phase 1 Celebration and Phase 2

Preview

Day: Thursday **Duration:** 2 hours **Facilitator(s):** Program Lead + Senior Mentor + any available certified FORGE mentors or staff supporters

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will: 1. Be formally recognized for completing Phase 1 of the FORGE program 2. Receive their Phase 1 Completion Certificate 3. Understand what Phase 2 requires and what it will demand of them 4. Recommit to the FORGE mission through a formal recommitment ceremony 5. Transition from "Know Yourself" to "Build Others" with clarity and conviction

Session Plan

Setup (Before participants arrive)

Set the room differently today. This is a ceremony — treat it like one. Suggestions (adapt based on what's possible in your facility): - Chairs in a circle or semicircle, not classroom-style - Certificates laid out on a table at the front — visible, organized, facing the group - Talking piece placed in the center with intention - If you can get a tablecloth, a clean surface, any small touch that makes the space feel set apart from a normal session — do it. It doesn't need to be elaborate. It needs to feel intentional. - If any guests are attending (staff, certified mentors, administration), have their seats arranged

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Come in. Sit down. Look around this circle.

Twelve weeks ago, you walked into this room as strangers. Some of you didn't want to be here. Some of you came because someone told you to check it out. Some of you came because something inside you said, 'I need something different.'

Today, you're not strangers anymore. You've sat in this circle and heard things from each other that most people never share. You've been honest when it would have been easier to lie. You've stayed when it would have been easier to quit.

*Before we do anything else — check-in round. The question: **What does it feel like to be sitting here, at the end of Phase 1?**"*

Send the talking piece. Let this round breathe. Don't rush it.

Reflection: The Journey (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"I want to take you back. Week 1. You walked in and I said, 'This program is not easy. It's not a check-the-box program. You won't get through this by just showing up and sitting quietly.'

How many of you, honestly, thought about quitting at some point?"

Pause. Let hands go up. Acknowledge it.

"That's honest. Let me tell you something about the men who make it through Phase 1 — it's not the ones who never struggled. It's the ones who struggled and stayed.

Let me remind you of what you've done:

- *You learned the Think-Feel-Act cycle and started catching your own thinking errors — not because I asked you to, but because you started seeing them yourself.*
- *You learned to name your emotions with words more specific than 'angry' and 'fine.' You learned what's underneath the anger. You learned to breathe before you react.*
- *You practiced active listening — real listening, not waiting for your turn to talk.*
- *You worked through the FORGE conflict resolution model until it started to feel natural.*
- *You learned problem solving — the 6-step model, consequence thinking, playing the tape forward.*
- *You wrote thinking reports. Some of you dreaded them. Some of you found them. Most of you now understand why they matter.*
- *You wrote an impact awareness letter. That might have been the hardest thing you've ever written. Sitting with the real harm you've caused — not to punish yourself, but to see it clearly — takes more strength than most people ever show.*
- *You wrote a self-assessment essay that required you to be honest about who you are. Not who you pretend to be. Who you are.*
- *You gave and received peer feedback. You heard the truth from men who know you, and you sat with it.*

That's not a class you took. That's work you did on yourself. Nobody can take that from you."

Pause. Let it sit.

Phase 1 Completion Ceremony (25 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Now we recognize it formally.

When I call your name, I want you to stand and come forward. You'll receive your Phase 1 Completion Certificate. Before you take it, I'm going to ask you one question — the same question for everyone:

'What is the most important thing you learned about yourself in Phase 1?'

One sentence. From the heart. Then you take your certificate. Then this circle — your cohort — acknowledges you."

The ceremony:

For each participant:

1. Facilitator calls the participant's name. They stand and come forward.

2. Facilitator faces them directly.

Facilitator:

*"[Name]. You started this program on [approximate start date]. Over 12 weeks, you completed [number] thinking reports, attended [number] sessions, and committed to the work of knowing yourself. Before I hand you this certificate — one sentence: **What is the most important thing you learned about yourself in Phase 1?**"*

1. Participant answers. One sentence.

2. Facilitator responds genuinely — not with a script but with a brief, personal acknowledgment. Examples:

"That took courage to say. Hold onto it."

"I've watched you live that out. It's real."

"When you walked in here 12 weeks ago, I don't think you could have said that. The fact that you can now — that's the work."

1. Hand the certificate. Firm handshake or whatever is natural and appropriate.

2. **Group acknowledgment:** The cohort claps or offers verbal affirmation. Let the room give the moment its weight.

Facilitator note: This will take time. Don't rush it. Each person gets their moment. If a participant gets emotional, give them space. If the group gets emotional, that's exactly right. This is what it feels like to be part of something that matters.

If a participant did not meet Phase 1 requirements: You should have spoken with them individually before this session. They can still be present for the ceremony — they're still part of the cohort. Their plan for completing requirements should already be in place. Do not exclude them from the room. Do not embarrass them. When their name would come up, you can acknowledge their journey:

"[Name], you've been part of this cohort from Day 1 and your presence has mattered. You and I have talked about your plan to complete the remaining requirements, and I'm confident you'll get there. This cohort has your back."

Phase 2 Preview: "Now the Real Work Begins" (20 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Certificates in hand. Phase 1 complete. I hope you're proud — you should be.

Now let me tell you what's coming. And I'm going to be straight with you, because that's what I've always been:

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

Here's why: In Phase 1, the only person you had to be honest with was yourself. In Phase 2, you have to take everything you've learned and figure out how to teach it, how to facilitate it, how to use it to help someone else.

And here's the hard truth — other people don't always want your help. Other people 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 overview:

"Phase 2 — 'Build Others' — runs for 12 weeks, same schedule. Here's what you'll learn:

Weeks 13-14: 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.*

Weeks 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. By the end, you'll have handled situations most people never practice before they face them for real.*

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: Simulation Assessments, Co-Facilitation Practice, and the Phase 2 gate.

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

Pause.

"Questions about Phase 2?"

Answer questions honestly. Common ones: - "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." - "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." - "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."

Recommitment Ceremony (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"In Week 1, you signed a Participant Commitment. You made a promise to this program and to each other. Today, I'm asking you to recommit — not because the first commitment wasn't real, but because you're a different person now than you were then. You know more. You've seen more. You understand what this program actually asks of you. So the commitment you make today carries more weight, because you make it with full knowledge.

I'm going to read the Recommitment Statement. When I'm done, I'll ask each of you to add one personal commitment — something specific to you, something you're committing to in Phase 2 that goes beyond the general pledge. Then you'll sign."

Recommitment Statement (read by facilitator — slowly, with weight):

"I, [name], having completed Phase 1 of the FORGE program, recommit to the following:

*I commit to **continued self-work** — knowing that the foundation I've built in Phase 1 requires daily maintenance. I will continue to examine my thinking, manage my emotions, and hold myself accountable.*

*I commit to **Service Over Self** — not as a slogan, but as a way of life. I will look for opportunities to serve others every day, without expectation of recognition or reward.*

*I commit to **honesty and integrity** — in this program and in every area of my life. I will speak the truth, keep my word, and align my actions with my values.*

*I commit to **the men in this circle** — my cohort. I will support their growth, hold them accountable with respect, and show up for them as I hope they will show up for me.*

*I commit to **becoming a mentor worthy of trust** — knowing that the men I will eventually mentor deserve someone who has done the work, not someone who has simply completed the program.*

*I commit to the FORGE mission: **to build a culture of peace, responsibility, and service — modeling the change I want to see in every community.**"*

Pause.

"Now — each of you, one at a time. Stand. State your name. Add one personal commitment — something specific to you and your journey. Then sign the recommitment form.

Who goes first?"

Each participant stands, states their name, adds their personal commitment, and signs. Facilitator (or Senior Mentor) signs as witness.

Examples of personal commitments participants might add: - "I commit to catching my victim stance thinking every time it comes up — because that's been my biggest pattern." - "I commit to being a father my kids can be proud of — and that starts with how I carry myself in here." - "I commit to using active listening with everyone, not just in FORGE sessions — especially with the men I don't get along with." - "I commit to never walking past a conflict I can help de-escalate."

Closing Circle (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Last round for Phase 1. I want you to do something specific. Look at the man sitting across from you. Really look at him. You've seen this person grow over 12 weeks. You've heard his story. You've given him feedback and received it from him.

The closing question — and take your time with it:

'What does FORGE mean to me now — not what I thought it would be, but what it actually is?'"

Send the talking piece. Facilitator goes last.

Facilitator (closing — after the talking piece returns):

"In Week 1, Session 1, I asked each of you to name one thing you want to be different about yourself in 9 months. I wrote down what you said."

If you kept notes from Session 1, read back what each person said. If not, reference the general themes.

"Look at how far you've come. Some of you said you wanted to control your temper. Some said you wanted to be a better father. Some said you wanted to stop making the same mistakes.

You're not there yet. Nine months isn't over. But you've built the foundation. You know yourself better now than you did 12 weeks ago. That's not a small thing — that's the hardest work most people never do.

Phase 2 starts [date]. Same time, same room. New work. Harder work. But you don't walk in as strangers anymore. You walk in as men who've earned each other's trust and earned the right to learn how to build others.

There's a saying in FORGE: 'Leadership is not granted. It is forged.' You've started the forging. Phase 2 is where it intensifies.

I'm proud of every one of you. Not because you're perfect — but because you're honest. And honesty is where everything real begins.

Service Over Self. See you in Phase 2."

Session 36 Checklist

- Room set up intentionally for ceremony (not standard classroom)
 - Certificates prepared and displayed
 - Guests/supporters seated (if attending)
 - Opening circle completed — "What does it feel like to be here?"
 - Reflection on the Phase 1 journey delivered
 - Each participant recognized individually — stood, answered the question, received certificate
 - Any non-advancing participants acknowledged with dignity and a clear plan
 - Phase 2 overview presented — clear, honest, motivating
 - Recommitment Statement read aloud
 - Each participant added personal commitment and signed
 - Recommitment forms collected and filed
 - Closing circle completed — "What does FORGE mean to me now?"
 - Week 1 goals referenced or read back
 - Phase 2 start date announced
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FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 12

What to Watch For

Test anxiety: Some participants will be visibly nervous about the knowledge check. This is normal and sometimes reflects past negative experiences with testing — school, GED programs, or previous programs where they felt set up to fail. Reassure them without being dismissive. The test is fair. If they've done the work, they'll pass. If they struggle with reading or writing, offer to read questions aloud to them individually (accommodations are appropriate and not weakness).

Portfolio gaps: Some participants will arrive at Session 35 with incomplete portfolios. This is where your preparation matters — if you've been tracking assignments throughout Phase 1, you know who's likely to be short. Reach out to these participants before Session 35 if possible. Give them a clear list of what's missing and a deadline to complete it.

Emotional intensity during the ceremony: Session 36 is designed to be emotional. Some participants may cry. Some may get quiet. Some may deflect with humor. Let it happen. Don't redirect emotion — make space for it. Many of these men have never been recognized for anything positive. For some, this certificate may be the first tangible evidence of achievement they've held in years. Honor that.

Non-advancing participants: Handle this with extreme care. If someone didn't pass the knowledge check or has an incomplete portfolio, they should know BEFORE Session 36. Meet with them privately. Be honest and specific: "Here's what's incomplete. Here's your plan to finish. You're not being removed — you're being given more time." Do not let them be surprised during the ceremony.

Common Week 12 Challenges

"The test wasn't fair." Response: "Tell me specifically which questions you think were unfair, and we'll look at them together. If you didn't know the material, that's different from the test being unfair. Either way, you can retake it, and I'll help you prepare."

"My portfolio is missing stuff because I didn't know we'd need it." Response: "The portfolio requirements have been clear since Week 1, and I've reminded the group multiple times. But I'm not interested in blame — I'm interested in helping you finish. Here's what you need. Here's the deadline. Let's get it done."

"Phase 2 sounds too hard." Response: "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. Trust the process. Trust yourself."

Participants who are emotional about the ceremony and resist showing it. Don't push. Don't say "It's okay to cry." Just be present. Some men will process this later, in their bunks, alone. That's fine. The moment still matters even if the emotion shows up later.

Grading the Knowledge Check

- Grade all tests the same evening if possible — participants should know their scores before Session 35
- For short answer questions, use the answer key as a guide, not a rigid rubric. The question is: does this person understand the concept? If yes, give credit, even if the wording isn't textbook.
- For scenario questions, look for: correct identification of the relevant skill/model, specific application (not just "I would use conflict resolution" but HOW they would use it), and awareness of complexity (acknowledging that situations aren't simple)
- Keep a record of which questions were most commonly missed — this tells you where the curriculum may need strengthening for the next cohort
- Any participant scoring 17-20 (close to passing) should be given targeted review and a retake opportunity within one week

Preparation for Phase 2

- Review Phase 2 curriculum (Weeks 13-24) in detail
- Prepare materials for Week 13: The Mentor Identity
- If Phase 3 mentors or certified FORGE mentors are available, coordinate their involvement in Phase 2 sessions (especially simulation training)
- File all Phase 1 portfolios, knowledge checks, peer evaluations, and facilitator observations in participant files
- Update attendance records — confirm each participant meets the 85% minimum
- Complete the Phase 1 cohort summary: how many started, how many completed, average knowledge check score, common strengths and gaps
- Schedule any retakes or portfolio completion deadlines for participants who need them
- Celebrate yourself. You just facilitated 36 sessions of intensive personal development work. That's not nothing.