



PHASE 2 — DEVELOPMENT

Week 15 of 36

# Facilitation Practice

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Sessions 43–45

Tuesday • Wednesday • Thursday

FORGE — Facilitating Opportunities for Reentry, Growth & Empowerment

*Dooly State Prison*

# FORGE Curriculum

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## **Phase 2: Development — "Build Others"**

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# Week 15: Facilitation Practice

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## Week 15 Overview

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

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

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

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# SESSION 43: Teaching Practicum 1

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

## Learning Objectives

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

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## Session Plan

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### Opening (10 minutes)

**Facilitator:**

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

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

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

### Distribute observation rubrics.

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

### Walk through the observation rubric:

## Observation Rubric — Teaching Practicum

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

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

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

### Facilitator:

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

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

## Teaching Practica — First Group (90 minutes)

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

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

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

**Before the first presenter:**

**Facilitator:**

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

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

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

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

**Feedback round after each presenter:**

**Facilitator:**

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

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

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

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

**Facilitator feedback:**

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

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

**Presenter responds (1 minute):**

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

**Move to next presenter.** Keep the pace moving.

### Between presenters, brief transition:

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

**Repeat for all presenters in the first group.**

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### Closing (10 minutes)

#### **Facilitator:**

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

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

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

### Talking piece.

#### **Facilitator:**

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

*See you tomorrow."*

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### Session 43 Checklist

- Room arranged for presentations
- Observation rubrics distributed
- Rubric format explained and walked through
- Expectations set for presenters and observers
- All scheduled presenters delivered 30-minute lessons
- Timer used — presenters signaled at 25 min, cut at 30
- Feedback rounds completed after each presenter (3 peers + facilitator)
- Presenter self-reflection invited after each feedback round
- Observation rubrics collected (or participants keep for reference)

- Closing round completed
- Homework assigned (self-assessment journal for presenters, final prep for remaining presenters)

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# SESSION 44: Teaching Practicum 2

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

## Learning Objectives

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

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## Session Plan

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### Opening (10 minutes)

**Facilitator:**

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

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

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

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

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### Teaching Practica — Second Group (80 minutes)

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

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

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

**After the final presenter and feedback round:**

**Facilitator:**

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

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## **Debrief: Common Facilitation Challenges and Solutions (20 minutes)**

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

**Facilitator:**

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

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

**Challenge 1: Talking too much during the content section.**

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

**Challenge 2: Weak or missing hooks.**

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

**Challenge 3: Practice instructions that were unclear.**

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

**Challenge 4: Rushed or skipped debriefs.**

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

**Challenge 5: Reading from notes instead of connecting.**

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

**Challenge 6: Not managing the room.**

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

**Facilitator:**

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

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

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

## Closing Circle (10 minutes)

### Facilitator:

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

### Talking piece.

### Facilitator (closing):

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

*See you Thursday."*

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## Session 44 Checklist

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

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# SESSION 45: Group Dynamics and Difficult Moments

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

## Learning Objectives

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

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## Session Plan

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### Opening Circle (10 minutes)

**Facilitator:**

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

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

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## Why This Session Matters (5 minutes)

### **Facilitator:**

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

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

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

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## The 5 Difficult Moments (15 minutes)

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

**Facilitator:**

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

**Moment 1: Someone Shuts Down**

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

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

**Moment 2: The Group Goes Off Track**

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

**Moment 3: Someone Gets Emotional**

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

**Moment 4: Someone Challenges You**

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

**Moment 5: Conflict Erupts Between Participants**

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

**Facilitator:**

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

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## **Role-Play Block (70 minutes)**

**Format for each scenario:** 1. Setup (2 min): Facilitator describes the scene, assigns roles 2. First attempt (5-7 min): The designated facilitator responds in real time 3. Freeze (1 min): Stop the action, ask the facilitator "What are you thinking right now?" 4. Group coaching (3-4 min): Group offers suggestions, alternative approaches 5. Replay (4-5 min): Facilitator tries again with coaching incorporated 6. Debrief (3-4 min): What worked? What would you do differently? Key takeaway

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

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

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### **SCENARIO 1: Someone Shuts Down**

**Facilitator:**

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

**Let it play for 5-7 minutes. Freeze.**

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

**Allow the facilitator to respond honestly.**

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

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

**Replay with coaching incorporated.**

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

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### **SCENARIO 2: The Group Goes Off Track**

**Facilitator:**

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

**Let it play. Freeze.**

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

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

**Replay. Brief debrief.**

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**SCENARIO 3: Someone Gets Emotional**

**Facilitator:**

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

**Let it play. Freeze.**

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

**Key coaching points:** - Do NOT rush to fix it. "Don't cry, bro" or "It's okay" or "Stay strong" — all of these communicate that his emotion is a problem. It's not. - Be present. Sometimes the most powerful thing you can do is nothing. Let there be silence. Let him feel it. - Validate: "Thank you for sharing that. What you're feeling right now

is real, and it takes courage to let the room see it." - Manage the room: If others are uncomfortable, normalize it: "This is what happens when someone is honest. This is the kind of space we're building." - If someone makes a joke or dismissive comment, address it immediately: "That's not how we do this. When someone is being real, we show respect." - Offer practical support: "Do you need a minute? Do you want to keep going? It's your call." Give them agency. - Don't ignore the room: After the emotional moment passes, debrief briefly: "What you just witnessed is what happens when people trust the space. That's the culture you're building as a facilitator." - The worst response: freezing, looking away, or changing the subject like it didn't happen. That teaches the room that emotions aren't safe here.

**Replay. Brief debrief.**

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#### SCENARIO 4: Someone Challenges You

**Facilitator:**

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

**Let it play. Freeze.**

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

**Key coaching points:** - First instinct is usually to defend the material. Don't. Defending puts you in an argument, and the room takes sides. - Get curious: "That's a real question. Tell me more about what you mean." Let the challenger feel heard. - Acknowledge truth in the challenge: "You're right — the system plays a role. External factors are real. AND — thinking errors are also real. Both things can be true. The question is: which one can you actually control?" - Involve the group: "Who agrees with [name]? Who sees it differently? Let's hear from both sides." - Don't take it personally. Even if the challenge feels personal — "Who made you the expert?" — it usually isn't about you. It's about what you represent: authority, structure, someone who seems to have it figured out. - Stay grounded. Don't get defensive, don't get sarcastic, don't pull rank. Your composure IS the lesson. The room is watching how you handle being challenged. If you handle it well, they learn that challenge doesn't have to become conflict. - If the challenge becomes disrespectful: "I hear your disagreement and I welcome it. The disrespect I don't welcome. You can push back on the content all day — that makes us better. Attacking the person doesn't." Then move on.

**Replay. Brief debrief.**

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## SCENARIO 5: Conflict Erupts Between Participants

### Facilitator:

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

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

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

**Answer should be: safety.**

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

**Replay. Brief debrief.**

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## The Power of Silence (10 minutes)

### Facilitator:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

*Don't fear the silence. Use it."*

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## Closing Circle (10 minutes)

### Facilitator:

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

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

**Talking piece goes around.**

**Facilitator (closing):**

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

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

*Service Over Self. See you Tuesday."*

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**Session 45 Checklist**

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

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# FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 15

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## What to Watch For

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

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

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

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

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

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

## Common Week 15 Challenges

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

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

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

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

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

## Preparation for Week 16

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