



PHASE 2 — DEVELOPMENT

Week 20 of 36

Simulation Training Block 2b

Sessions 58–60

Tuesday • Wednesday • Thursday

FORGE — Facilitating Opportunities for Reentry, Growth & Empowerment

Dooly State Prison

FORGE Curriculum

Phase 2: Development — "Build Others"

Week 20: Simulation Training Block 2b — The Hardest Scenarios

Week 20 Overview

Purpose: Complete the simulation training with the three most complex scenarios in the FORGE library: a mental health crisis, a staff conflict, and gang pressure. These scenarios share a common thread — in all three, the mentor's primary job is NOT to solve the problem. It is to keep people safe, keep the dorm stable, and know the limits of their role. These are the scenarios where the wrong move has the worst consequences.

Sessions This Week: - Session 58 (Tuesday): Mental Health Crisis — Suicidal Statements - Session 59 (Wednesday): Staff Conflict — A CO Treating Someone Unfairly - Session 60 (Thursday): Gang Pressure & Block 2 Capstone Debrief

Materials Needed: - Simulation scenario cards (1 per scenario) - Observer feedback forms (2-3 per simulation) - Scoring rubrics (facilitator copy) - Facility mental health referral information — actual names, actual process (not generic) - Facility grievance procedure summary (for staff conflict scenario) - Easel paper or whiteboard for lessons learned - Talking piece - Journals/notebooks

Critical Note for Facilitators: The mental health crisis simulation is the most sensitive scenario in the entire program. Some participants will have personal experience with suicidal ideation — their own or someone they've lost. Before this session, remind the group that anyone who needs to step out can do so without explanation. Have a plan for individual check-ins after the session. This is not a drill — this is preparation for real situations that save real lives.

SESSION 58: Mental Health Crisis — Suicidal Statements

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

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Recognize warning signs of a mental health crisis, including suicidal statements 2. Respond to suicidal statements with presence and calm — not panic, not dismissal 3. Follow the facility's referral protocol for mental health emergencies 4. Stay with someone in crisis until appropriate help arrives 5. Understand the limits of peer mentoring in mental health situations 6. Process their own emotional response to a crisis situation

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Check-in. Before we begin, I want to say something about today's session.

Today's simulation is about a mental health crisis — specifically, someone making statements about wanting to hurt themselves. This is real. It happens in here. Some of you may have personal experience with this — your own, or someone you care about.

If at any point today you need to step out, do it. No explanation needed. No judgment. I'll check in with you after. Your wellbeing matters more than completing an exercise.

*Check-in question: **One word** — **how are you arriving today?**"*

Send the talking piece. Keep it brief. Read the room.

Mental Health Crisis Briefing (15 minutes)

Purpose: Ground the group in what they need to know BEFORE running the simulation. This is not optional content — it is life-saving information.

Facilitator:

"Let me share some facts. In the United States, people who are incarcerated die by suicide at a rate roughly three times the general population. In state prisons, suicide is the leading cause of death after illness. It happens in cells, in dorms, in showers, in recreation areas. And in many cases, someone knew something was wrong before it happened.

As a FORGE mentor, you are not a therapist. You are not a crisis counselor. But you are often the first person someone talks to. That means you need to know three things:

One — how to recognize the signs. Two — how to respond in the moment. Three — how to get help."

Warning Signs:

"Here are the signs you watch for. Not every person in crisis shows all of these, but any combination should get your attention:

- *Giving away personal property — especially items that have sentimental value*
- *Withdrawing from people they're normally connected to*
- *Sudden calm after a period of distress — this is counterintuitive, but when someone who's been agitated suddenly seems at peace, it can mean they've made a decision*
- *Saying things like 'It doesn't matter anymore,' 'Everyone would be better off,' 'I'm tired of fighting,' 'I can't do this'*
- *Talking about death, asking about what happens when someone dies*
- *Increased substance use*
- *Reckless behavior — provoking fights, taking risks they normally wouldn't*
- *Receiving devastating news — parole denial, death in the family, relationship ending"*

What to Do:

"If you see these signs, or if someone makes a direct statement about hurting themselves, here's what you do:

Step 1: Stay. *Do not leave them alone. This is the most important thing you can do. Your presence matters more than your words.*

Step 2: Ask directly. *This goes against what most people think. You might believe that asking about suicide 'gives someone the idea.' That is a myth. Research is clear: asking directly does not increase risk. It reduces it. You say something like: 'Are you thinking about hurting yourself?' or 'I need to ask you straight — are you thinking about ending your life?'*

Step 3: Listen. *If they say yes, or if they don't deny it, don't argue. Don't say 'You have so much to live for.' Don't say 'Think about your kids.' Don't try to talk them out of it. Just say: 'I hear you. I'm here. I'm not going anywhere.'*

Step 4: Get help. *This is a red-line referral. You are not equipped to handle this alone, and you shouldn't try. At this facility, here is the process:"*

Facility-specific referral process — Adapt this section to reflect actual procedures at Dooly State Prison:

"Here's how you get help: - During the day: [Specific contact — counselor name, office location, how to reach them] - After hours: [Specific contact — which CO to notify, how to initiate a mental health emergency response] - If you cannot reach anyone immediately: Stay with the person. Send someone else to find a CO. Do not leave.

What you say when you refer: *'I have someone here who's in crisis and needs to talk to mental health staff right away.' You don't need to share details. You don't need to explain the whole story. You just need to get the right people there.*

Step 5: After. *After mental health staff takes over, take care of yourself. Talk to the program lead or a senior mentor. What you just experienced is heavy. You don't carry it alone."*

Pause.

"Questions before we simulate this?"

Answer any questions thoroughly. Do not rush this section.

Simulation 10: Mental Health Crisis (45 minutes)

Scene Set (2 minutes):

Facilitator:

"I need one mentor and one role-player. This scenario requires emotional range from the role-player — not performance, not drama. Quiet desperation.

The scene: It's evening. The dorm is winding down. You notice a man sitting on his bunk, not doing anything. He's been quieter than usual for the past few days. You've noticed he gave his radio to someone else yesterday. You sit down near him. He looks at you and says, 'You don't need to check on me. I'm fine.' But he clearly is not fine.

After a few minutes, if the mentor stays and shows patience, he says: 'I'm just tired, man. Tired of all of it. Sometimes I think everyone would be better off if I just... wasn't here anymore.'

Role-player — you are not dramatic. You are quiet. Flat. Exhausted. You're not asking for attention. If anything, you're embarrassed that someone noticed. If the mentor panics, shut down. If the mentor dismisses you, say 'Forget it, I'm fine.' If the mentor stays calm and present, open up slightly more. Maybe mention the parole denial. Maybe mention that your girl stopped answering the phone. If the mentor says they need to get help, resist at first — 'Don't tell anyone. I don't want to be on watch. Please.' But don't fight it hard. Part of you wants help.

Observers — watch for everything. Does the mentor stay? Does the mentor ask directly? Does the mentor panic? Does the mentor listen or try to fix? Does the mentor follow through on the referral? This is the most important simulation in the program."

First Attempt (7 minutes):

Give this one more time than usual. The scenario needs space to develop. Do not freeze too early.

Common mistakes: - Panicking and immediately running for help (leaving the person alone) - Dismissing it: "Come on, man, you'll be alright" - Trying to fix it: "Think about your kids, you've got so much going for you" - Freezing and not knowing what to say - Agreeing not to tell anyone - Getting uncomfortable and changing the subject

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Stop at the referral decision point — when the person has disclosed and the mentor has to decide what to do next.

Facilitator:

"[Mentor's name] — freeze. What's happening inside you right now? Not what you think I want to hear. What are you actually feeling?"

This is a moment for honesty. Many mentors will admit they were scared, uncomfortable, or didn't know what to say. That's the right answer.

Turn to observers:

"What did you see? What worked? What would you change?"

Coach specifically: - If the mentor panicked: "Your instinct was to fix it fast. That makes sense. But when you jumped up, what did the person on the bunk see? They saw you scared. What do they need to see? Calm. Presence. Someone who can handle hearing the truth." - If the mentor dismissed: "You said 'You'll be alright.' How do you know that? He doesn't think he will be. What he needs is not reassurance — it's someone who will take him seriously." - If the mentor stayed and listened: "What allowed you to do that? Where did you find the calm?"

Replay (5 minutes):

Run the full sequence: approach, listen, ask directly, stay present, make the referral.

Coach the mentor to use these words or their own version:

"I hear you. What you're feeling is real, and I'm not going to pretend it isn't. I'm going to sit right here with you. And I need you to know — I'm going to make sure someone who can really help you knows about this. Not to get you in trouble. Because your life matters and I'm not going to act like it doesn't."

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Facilitator:

"Let's debrief. I'm going to ask some hard questions."

Discussion questions: 1. "When he said 'Don't tell anyone' — what do you say?" 2. "What if mental health staff isn't available? It's 10 PM. What do you do?" 3. "What if other dorm members see you sitting with him and start asking questions? How do you protect his dignity?" 4. "What if he gets angry at you for referring? How do you handle that?" 5. "How do you take care of yourself after something like this?"

Key teaching points:

Facilitator:

"I want to land three things.

First: **Presence is the intervention.** Before any referral, before any protocol, the most powerful thing you can do is stay. Sit down. Be there. You don't need the perfect words. You need to not leave.

Second: **Asking directly saves lives.** 'Are you thinking about hurting yourself?' That question is not rude. It is not invasive. It is the most respectful thing you can say, because it tells the person: I see you. I'm not afraid of your pain. I can handle hearing the truth.

Third: **You are not enough, and that's okay.** You are a peer mentor, not a therapist. Your job is to be the bridge between crisis and help. You hold the person. You get the help. You don't try to be the help. Knowing that limit is not weakness — it's wisdom.

One more thing. If you ever find yourself in this situation for real, and you feel like you failed because you didn't say the right thing — hear me on this: **you showed up. You stayed. That alone may be the reason someone makes it through the night.**"

Pause. Let the room breathe.

Document lessons learned.

Decompression (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"That was heavy. I'm not going to pretend it wasn't.

Before we close, I want to do a round. No talking piece — just open. **What's one thing you're feeling right now?** One word or one sentence. Whatever's true."

Let people share freely. Don't analyze or coach. Just receive.

"If this brought up something personal for you — if you've been in that place yourself, or if you've lost someone — I want you to know that I'm available after this session, and so is [senior mentor's name]. You don't have to carry it alone. That's what we say to our mentees. It applies to us too.

Journal tonight if you need to. Tomorrow we shift gears to staff conflict and gang pressure. Different energy. But still hard.

Take care of yourselves tonight."

Session 58 Checklist

- Safety statement delivered at opening (permission to step out)
- Opening circle completed
- Mental health crisis briefing delivered thoroughly
- Warning signs reviewed
- Five-step response model taught (Stay, Ask, Listen, Get Help, Take Care of Yourself)
- Facility-specific referral process reviewed with actual contacts
- Simulation 10 (Mental Health Crisis) — full cycle completed
- Key teaching points delivered (Presence, Direct question, Know your limits)
- Lessons learned documented
- Decompression round completed
- Facilitator available for individual check-ins after session

SESSION 59: Staff Conflict — A CO Treating Someone Unfairly

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

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Navigate a situation where staff behavior is inappropriate without escalating 2. De-escalate the dorm response to a staff conflict — managing the crowd, not the CO 3. Articulate FORGE's position on staff authority and the grievance process 4. Distinguish between standing up for someone and making a situation worse 5. Support a dorm member who has been mistreated without undermining institutional processes

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Check-in. Yesterday was one of the most important sessions in this entire program. Before we move on: **Is there anything from yesterday that you need to say before we start today?**"*

Send the talking piece. If someone shares something personal, acknowledge it. Don't rush past it.

Staff Conflict Context (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Today's scenario is different from everything we've done so far. In every other simulation, the conflict was between inmates — between people at your level. Today, the conflict involves a CO.

This is the hardest scenario for most men in this environment. And here's why: you're going to watch someone get treated unfairly by someone who has authority over you. Every instinct you have will say 'Do something.' And your job — as a mentor — is going to feel wrong.

Let me explain FORGE's position on this, because if you don't understand it before we simulate it, you'll reject it.

FORGE does not override staff authority. Period. Even when staff is wrong. Even when what they're doing is clearly unfair. And here's why:

It's not because COs are always right. They're not. Some are excellent. Some are terrible. Most are somewhere in between. It's because the moment an inmate challenges a CO's authority in front of a dorm full of people, the situation becomes infinitely more dangerous. For the CO. For the person being mistreated. For you. For everyone in that dorm.

Your job as a mentor is not to confront the CO. Your job is to **de-escalate the dorm**. The CO's behavior is above your pay grade. The dorm's response to the CO's behavior — that IS your pay grade.

After the situation passes, there are legitimate channels. Grievance procedures exist. The program lead can escalate through administrative channels. FORGE mentors can document and report. Justice doesn't require you to be a hero in the moment. It requires you to be smart."

Pause.

"I know some of you are already pushing back in your heads. That's fine. Let's run the scenario and then talk about it."

Simulation 11: Staff Conflict (45 minutes)

Scene Set (2 minutes):

Facilitator:

"I need one mentor and two role-players — one playing the person being mistreated by the CO, and one playing a dorm member who's getting agitated about it. I'll play the CO's actions through narration — no one needs to role-play the officer.

The scene: A CO is conducting a search of the dorm. He's being rough with one person in particular — tossing his belongings, making disrespectful comments, using excessive force during a pat-down. The dorm member being searched is trying to stay compliant, but he's humiliated. Other dorm members are watching. The energy in the room is shifting.

One dorm member — a FORGE participant — steps toward the situation and says loudly, 'This isn't right. Somebody needs to do something about this.'

Mentor — you need to manage this. The CO is still in the room. The dorm is getting heated. The person being searched is on the edge. And one of your own FORGE brothers is about to make it worse.

Role-player 1 (the searched person) — you are trying to be compliant but you're about to break. If the mentor comes to you, accept the support quietly.

Role-player 2 (the agitated FORGE member) — you are angry. You think the CO is wrong. You think FORGE should stand for something. If the mentor tells you to back down, push back: 'So we're just going to let this happen? What's the point of FORGE if we don't stand up?' If the mentor talks about grievance procedures, be dismissive: 'A grievance? That's a joke. Nothing ever happens.'

Observers — watch for: Does the mentor focus on the CO or on the dorm? How does the mentor handle the FORGE member who wants to act? Does the mentor protect the person being searched without escalating?"

First Attempt (5-7 minutes):

This scenario is chaotic by design. The mentor has multiple people to manage and a tense atmosphere. Let it play.

Common mistakes: - Confronting the CO (even indirectly) - Ignoring the agitated FORGE member - Getting pulled into the anger - Doing nothing and hoping it passes - Giving a speech about FORGE values instead of managing the immediate situation

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Stop mid-scene — ideally when the agitated FORGE member is pushing the mentor to act.

Facilitator:

"[Mentor's name] — freeze. You've got two people who need different things from you right now. What are you prioritizing?"

Turn to observers. Key feedback areas: - Did the mentor manage the dorm's energy or get caught up in the injustice? - Did the mentor address the FORGE member's anger with respect? - Did the mentor protect the searched person without confronting authority?

Replay (5 minutes):

Coach the mentor to manage in sequence: 1. Address the agitated FORGE member first — he's the biggest risk for escalation 2. Use calm, direct language: "I see it too. I'm angry too. But if you step to that CO right now, you catch a charge, he catches a charge [pointing to the searched person], and nothing gets better for anyone. Stand down. We handle this the right way." 3. After the immediate tension passes, check on the person who was searched 4. Document what happened. Report through proper channels

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Discussion questions: 1. "How does it feel to watch someone get mistreated and not confront the person doing it?" 2. "What's the difference between being passive and being strategic?" 3. "The FORGE member said, 'What's the point of FORGE if we don't stand up?' — What's the answer to that?" 4. "What do you do AFTER the CO leaves? What's the action plan?" 5. "How do you support someone who's been mistreated without undermining the institution?"

Key teaching points:

Facilitator:

"I'm going to say something that might be hard to hear. Your job in that scenario was not to fix the injustice. Your job was to prevent a catastrophe.

If a FORGE member confronts that CO, here's what happens: the CO escalates, backup gets called, the dorm goes on lockdown, people catch charges, the man being searched gets it worse, and FORGE loses credibility with the administration. Everyone loses.

If a FORGE mentor manages the dorm — keeps the temperature down, keeps people from doing something they'll regret, supports the person who was mistreated, and then files a proper grievance with documentation — here's what happens: nobody catches a charge, the person being mistreated knows someone had his back, and there's a paper trail that creates accountability.

Which one of those outcomes actually serves the person who was wronged?

Standing up doesn't always look like standing up. Sometimes it looks like keeping the peace in the moment and fighting smart afterward. That's not weakness. That's discipline. That's what makes a FORGE mentor different from everyone else in that dorm."

"And let me say one more thing. The FORGE member who was angry? He wasn't wrong to be angry. His anger was righteous. Your job wasn't to tell him his anger was wrong. Your job was to redirect that anger into action that actually produces results instead of consequences."

Document lessons learned.

Transition (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Take 5 minutes. Stand up, stretch, use the restroom if you need to. We've got one more simulation — and it's the last one of Block 2."

Preview of Tomorrow's Final Simulation (5 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Tomorrow we close Block 2 with the gang pressure scenario. I'll say this now: gang dynamics are the most dangerous situations you'll encounter in a dorm. FORGE mentors do not confront gang leaders. FORGE mentors do not investigate gang activity. FORGE mentors do not position themselves as authorities in gang-related situations. What FORGE mentors DO is protect the FORGE culture, support individuals who are under pressure, and know when something is beyond their scope.

*Tonight, journal on this: **Think about a time when you chose the strategic response instead of the emotional one. What made you choose strategy? What was the result?***

See you tomorrow."

Session 59 Checklist

- Opening circle completed — space given for carryover from Session 58
 - Staff conflict context delivered — FORGE position on staff authority explained
 - Simulation 11 (Staff Conflict) — full cycle completed
 - Mentor coached on managing the dorm, not the CO
 - Grievance and documentation process discussed
 - Distinction between being passive and being strategic taught
 - Lessons learned documented
 - Journal prompt assigned
 - Preview of Session 60 given
-

SESSION 60: Gang Pressure & Block 2 Capstone Debrief

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

Learning Objectives

By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Recognize gang pressure tactics and understand the risks involved 2. Support a FORGE participant under gang pressure without putting themselves or the program at risk 3. Know when gang dynamics require referral to staff 4. Synthesize all lessons from Block 2 into a personal readiness assessment 5. Identify their own areas of strength and areas still needing growth

Session Plan

Opening Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Last day of simulation Block 2. Check-in: **What has this week taught you about the kind of mentor you're becoming?"***

Send the talking piece.

Gang Dynamics Briefing (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Let me be direct about this topic. I'm not going to pretend that gang dynamics don't exist in this facility. You know the landscape better than I do. You know who's who. You know where the lines are. I'm not going to insult your intelligence by acting like this is theoretical.

What I am going to tell you is what FORGE's position is, and why.

FORGE mentors do not engage with gang dynamics directly. *This is not a limitation — it's wisdom. Here's why: Gang dynamics are organized systems with their own authority structures, their own rules, and their own consequences for breaking those rules. A FORGE mentor who steps into that space — no matter how good their intentions — puts themselves, their mentee, and the entire program at risk.*

What FORGE mentors CAN do:

- 1. Protect the FORGE space.** *Gang identity does not come into FORGE sessions. That boundary has to be absolute.*
- 2. Support individuals.** *If a FORGE participant is being pressured, you can support them privately. Help them think through their options. Help them see a path.*
- 3. Refer when safety is at risk.** *If pressure becomes threat, that's a red line. It goes to staff.*
- 4. Model an alternative.** *The most powerful thing FORGE does against gang culture is offer a different identity. A man who sees himself as a FORGE mentor has something to protect that's bigger than affiliation.*

What FORGE mentors do NOT do:

- 1. Confront gang members*
- 2. Investigate who's pressuring whom*
- 3. Try to mediate between gangs*
- 4. Take sides in gang-related disputes*
- 5. Use FORGE identity as a shield or a counter-affiliation*

This is about survival and sustainability. FORGE can change culture over time. It cannot win a confrontation with organized gang structures. And it shouldn't try."

Simulation 12: Gang Pressure on a FORGE Participant (45 minutes)

Scene Set (2 minutes):

Facilitator:

"I need one mentor and one role-player.

The scene: A FORGE participant — someone who's been in the program since Phase 1 and has shown real growth — comes to you looking stressed. He's been distant for a few days. When you press him, he tells you that people he used to run with are pressuring him. They're telling him he's gone soft. They're telling him he needs to 'prove he's still solid.' He hasn't done anything yet, but the pressure is increasing. Yesterday someone said, 'You need to decide whose side you're on.'

He's scared. He doesn't want to go back to that life. But he also knows what happens to people who walk away from their set without permission.

Role-player — you are torn. You believe in FORGE, but you're also terrified. The people pressuring you are real threats. If the mentor gives you easy answers, push back: 'You don't understand — these aren't people you just say no to.' If the mentor suggests going to staff, resist: 'If I talk to staff, I'm dead. That's not an option.' If the mentor says FORGE will protect you, challenge: 'How? FORGE can't be there 24 hours a day.'

Observers — this is the most complex scenario we've done. Watch for: Does the mentor take the threat seriously? Does the mentor give false reassurance? Does the mentor recognize the limits of what they can offer? Does the mentor help the person think without trying to solve an unsolvable problem?"

First Attempt (7 minutes):

Give this one extra time. The conversation needs room to develop. The role-player should be genuinely challenging — not hostile, but realistic about the danger.

Common mistakes: - Minimizing the threat: "Just tell them you're not interested anymore" - Giving false reassurance: "FORGE has your back, don't worry" - Trying to solve it: offering to talk to the gang members - Getting overwhelmed and not knowing what to say - Immediately jumping to "tell staff" without acknowledging why that's terrifying

Freeze and Feedback (5 minutes):

Stop the scene when the mentor is at a decision point.

Facilitator:

"[Mentor's name] — freeze. This man's safety is on the line. What options do you actually have?"

Turn to observers. This is a moment for honest group assessment of what's possible and what's not.

Coach: - If the mentor minimized: "You just told a man facing real threats that it'll be fine. Why would he trust your judgment now?" - If the mentor tried to solve it: "What are you solving? Do you have the power to stop gang pressure? What happens if your intervention backfires?" - If the mentor was honest about limits: "Good. What did it feel like to say 'I don't have a solution for this'? And what can you offer even without a solution?"

Replay (5 minutes):

Coach the mentor toward a response that includes: 1. Taking the threat seriously: "I hear you. This is real, and I'm not going to pretend it's simple." 2. Exploring options without prescribing: "Let's think through what you've got. What are the options — even the bad ones?" 3. Being honest about limits: "I can't make this go away. But I can sit here and think it through with you." 4. Planting the seed for referral: "There may come a point where your safety requires talking to someone with more authority than me. I know that's scary. But we might get there." 5. Affirming the person's identity: "The fact that you're sitting here talking to me about this instead of just going along — that tells me who you are. Don't lose that."

Group Debrief (10 minutes):

Discussion questions: 1. "What can a mentor actually do in this situation? Be honest about the limits." 2. "When does this become a red-line referral? Where is that line?" 3. "The person said going to staff means he's dead. How do you weigh that against the risk of doing nothing?" 4. "How does FORGE protect its participants without becoming a rival power structure?" 5. "What is the value of just being present with someone in a situation you can't fix?"

Key teaching points:

Facilitator:

"This is the hardest truth in mentoring: sometimes you can't fix it. Sometimes the situation is bigger than you, bigger than FORGE, bigger than anything one person can solve.

And here's what makes a great mentor: being there anyway. Sitting with someone in an impossible situation and saying, 'I'm not going to pretend this is easy. I'm not going to give you a bumper-sticker answer. I'm going to stay right here and help you think.'

That sounds small. It's not. For a man who's been told his whole life that he's alone — that nobody cares, that it's every man for himself — having someone sit with him in the hard place is revolutionary.

On the practical side: if this situation escalates to direct threats of violence, it's a red line. Full stop. That goes to staff. Yes, the person will resist. Yes, it's complicated. But a dead FORGE participant is not something any of us can live with.

And on the cultural side: the best long-term defense against gang pressure is the FORGE culture itself. When a man has a community, an identity, a purpose, and people who genuinely care about him — the pull of the old life gets weaker. Not overnight. Not in a week. But over time. That's the work."

Document lessons learned.

Block 2 Capstone Debrief (25 minutes)

Purpose: Integrate all seven simulations from Block 2 and help participants assess their readiness.

Facilitator:

"Block 2 is done. Seven simulations across two weeks. Let's look at what we covered:

- *The Weapon* — mandatory referral under pressure
- *Substance Relapse* — compassion without enabling
- *FORGE Members in Conflict* — neutrality and mediation within the family
- *Manipulation* — recognizing it, naming it, holding boundaries
- *Mental Health Crisis* — presence, direct questions, and knowing your limits
- *Staff Conflict* — managing the dorm, not the CO
- *Gang Pressure* — sitting with someone in an unsolvable situation

I want to do two things before we close."

Exercise 1: Personal Readiness Assessment (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

"In your journal, I want you to write two lists.

List 1: Scenarios I feel ready to handle. Which of these seven simulations do you feel confident about? Where do you trust your skills?

List 2: Scenarios that still scare me. Which ones exposed a gap? Which ones showed you something about yourself that you need to work on?

Be honest. This is for you, not for me. A mentor who thinks they're ready for everything is a mentor who hasn't been paying attention."

Give them 7-8 minutes to write.

Exercise 2: Group Lessons Learned (15 minutes)

Facilitator:

"Let's build a master list. As a group, what are the biggest lessons from Block 2? I'll write them down. Call them out."

Capture on easel paper. Prompt if needed. Lessons that should emerge:

- Some situations require referral, not resolution
- You can be caring and firm at the same time
- Presence is sometimes the most powerful intervention
- Knowing your limits is a strength, not a weakness
- Manipulation works when you want to be needed

- The dorm's response is your responsibility, even when the problem isn't
- Not every situation has a clean answer
- Your own emotional reactions are data — pay attention to them

Facilitator (closing this section):

"Keep this list. These aren't just simulation lessons. These are the principles that will guide your mentoring. Every one of these will come up in Phase 3 — in real situations, with real consequences. You've practiced. You've stumbled. You've gotten better. That's the process."

Closing Circle (10 minutes)

Facilitator:

*"Final round for Block 2. Complete this sentence: **After these simulations, the one thing I know about myself as a mentor is...**"*

Send the talking piece. Facilitator goes last.

Facilitator (after the round):

"Block 2 is behind you. You've faced the hardest scenarios in the FORGE library. Some of you surprised yourselves. Some of you found edges you didn't know you had. Both of those are exactly right.

Next week — Week 21 — we shift from crisis response to culture building. Restorative practices. Circle keeping. Accountability conversations. Building a dorm culture that prevents half of what we just simulated.

It's a different energy. But it's just as important. Because the best mentor isn't the one who handles every crisis perfectly — it's the one who builds an environment where fewer crises happen in the first place.

*Journal this weekend: **Write a letter to a future FORGE participant who's about to start simulation training. What do you wish someone had told you before you began?***

See you Tuesday."

Session 60 Checklist

- Opening circle completed
- Gang dynamics briefing delivered — FORGE position clearly stated
- Simulation 12 (Gang Pressure) — full cycle completed
- Honest conversation about limits of mentoring in gang situations
- Lessons learned documented

- Block 2 capstone debrief conducted
- Personal readiness assessment completed (journal)
- Master lessons-learned list created with group
- Closing circle completed
- Weekend journal prompt assigned

FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 20

What to Watch For

Session 58 (Mental Health Crisis) — emotional fallout: This is the most likely session to trigger personal responses. Have a plan for after-session check-ins. Know who on your team (senior mentors, staff) is available if a participant needs support. Do not skip the decompression round at the end of Session 58.

Session 59 (Staff Conflict) — pushback on FORGE's position: Many participants will resist the idea that they shouldn't confront a CO who is mistreating someone. This resistance is healthy and should be honored. Do not shut it down. Let the debate happen in the debrief. The goal is not blind compliance — the goal is strategic thinking. Validate the anger. Redirect the energy.

Session 60 (Gang Pressure) — personal exposure: Some participants have direct experience with gang pressure. They may reveal more than they intended. Be careful about what gets shared in the group. Remind participants that what's shared in the circle stays in the circle — but also be aware of safety implications if someone discloses current gang-related threats.

Fatigue: Block 2 is emotionally exhausting. By Thursday, participants will be drained. The capstone debrief should feel like an exhale, not another climb. Keep the energy steady and the tone warm.

The "Snitching" Conversation

It will come up this week if it hasn't already. Every referral scenario bumps against the cultural prohibition on talking to staff. Here is how to navigate it:

Do not dismiss the concern. The no-snitching norm exists because it has real consequences in this environment. Acknowledge that.

Reframe: "There's a difference between snitching and saving someone's life. Snitching is giving information to hurt someone or to benefit yourself. Referring is getting help because someone is in danger. A mentor who stays silent while someone dies is not loyal. He's complicit."

Let the group wrestle with it. This is one of the most important conversations they'll have.

Preparation for Week 21

- Review restorative justice circle keeping practices — Kay Pranis's "The Little Book of Circle Processes" is an excellent reference
- Prepare a talking piece for practice circles (or let the group choose one)
- Prepare accountability conversation scenario cards for Session 62
- Draft a sample community circle plan that participants can use as a template in Session 63
- Review the FORGE Conflict Resolution model — Session 62 builds directly on it
- Shift your own energy. Week 21 is proactive, constructive, and hopeful. After two weeks of crisis scenarios, the group needs to build something.