



PHASE 3 — PRACTICUM

Week 26 of 36

# When Its Not Going Well

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Sessions 76–78

Tuesday • Wednesday • Thursday

FORGE — Facilitating Opportunities for Reentry, Growth & Empowerment

*Dooly State Prison*

# FORGE Curriculum

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## Phase 3: Practicum — "Lead and Serve"

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# Week 26: When It's Not Going Well

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## Week 26 Overview

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**Purpose:** The honeymoon is over. Week 25 was about beginnings — first meetings, first impressions, first attempts. Week 26 is about what happens when reality doesn't match expectations. Mentees who don't show up. Facilitating a group where nobody participates. Feeling unprepared for a question you should know the answer to. This week's supervision session is built entirely around real cases from the field — because the best training material is what actually happened.

**Sessions This Week:** - Session 76 (Tuesday): Supervision — Case Presentations and Group Problem-Solving - Session 77 (Wednesday): Field Work — Co-Facilitation Continues - Session 78 (Thursday): Field Work — Mentee Meetings Continue

**Materials Needed:** - Case Presentation Worksheet (1 per participant) - Mentoring Logs from Week 25 (participants bring their own) - Journals/notebooks - Talking piece for circle - Whiteboard or easel paper (if available) for group problem-solving

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# SESSION 76: Case Presentations and Group Problem-Solving

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

## Learning Objectives

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By the end of this session, participants will be able to: 1. Present a mentoring challenge using the case presentation format 2. Identify common patterns in first-week mentoring difficulties 3. Apply group problem-solving to real situations from the field 4. Distinguish between problems they can solve and problems they need help with 5. Recognize boundary testing and respond without overreacting

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## Session Plan

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### Opening Circle (15 minutes)

**Facilitator:**

*"Welcome back. You've been out in the field for a week. Some of you had great first meetings. Some of you are wondering what you got yourself into. Either way — you're here, and you're doing it.*

*Before we get into case presentations, let's check in. Talking piece. Two questions: **How did your first week go in one sentence? And what's the one thing you most need to talk about today?**"*

**Send the talking piece.** Facilitator listens carefully and takes notes — the "one thing" responses will help prioritize which cases to spend the most time on.

**Facilitator (after the round):**

*"I heard some common themes. [Name 2-3 — e.g., 'several of you mentioned mentees not showing up,' 'a few of you felt unprepared for the questions you got,' 'some of you are dealing with resistance.'] Good. That's exactly what today is for."*

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## The Case Presentation Format (10 minutes)

**Purpose:** Teach participants how to present a challenge clearly and receive feedback constructively. This format will be used every Tuesday for the rest of Phase 3.

### Facilitator:

*"Every Tuesday, part of our supervision time will be case presentations. Here's how it works. Each presenter uses this format:"*

### Case Presentation Format (distribute worksheet):

*"1. **The Situation** (2 minutes max) What happened? Who was involved? When and where? Keep it factual — no interpretations yet.*

*2. **What I Did** (1 minute) How did you respond? What techniques did you use? What was the outcome?*

*3. **What I'm Stuck On** (1 minute) What's the question you can't answer? What are you unsure about? What do you need help with?*

*4. **Group Response** (5-8 minutes) The group asks clarifying questions, then offers suggestions. No judgment. No 'I would have done it better.' Just help.*

*5. **Presenter's Takeaway** (30 seconds) The presenter says what they're going to do next based on the feedback.*

*Total: about 12 minutes per case. We can cover 4-5 cases today. Everyone will get a turn over the next few weeks."*

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## Case Presentations (60 minutes)

**Purpose:** This is the core of the session. Real situations, real problem-solving.

### Facilitator:

*"Who wants to go first? Remember — bringing a problem to this group is not weakness. It's the smartest thing a mentor can do. The man who thinks he has all the answers is the most dangerous mentor in the building."*

**Facilitate 4-5 case presentations.** Prioritize based on the opening circle — start with the most common or most urgent issue.

**Facilitator's role during case presentations:** - Keep time — don't let one case eat the whole session - Make sure the group gives actionable suggestions, not vague advice - Name the skill or technique that applies: "What you're describing sounds like a boundary test. Remember B2 from simulation training?" - Connect individual cases to universal principles - Flag anything that needs referral or escalation

## Common Week 1 cases you'll likely hear:

### Case Type: "My mentee didn't show up"

#### Facilitator guidance:

*"This is the most common challenge in mentoring — period. It's not personal. Don't chase. Don't guilt-trip. Find them, check in casually: 'Hey, we were supposed to meet Thursday. Everything okay?' If there's a practical barrier (work assignment, visit, forgot), problem-solve. If they're avoiding, use MI: 'It sounds like you're not sure this is for you. Tell me what's going on.'*

*The key: one missed meeting is data, not a crisis. Two in a row is a pattern that needs a conversation. Three is a supervision issue."*

### Case Type: "My mentee is testing my boundaries"

#### Facilitator guidance:

*"Boundary testing is normal. It's actually a sign the mentee is engaged — he's figuring out what kind of person you are. The worst response is to be rigid and defensive. The second worst is to cave.*

*The right response is calm, clear, and kind: 'I hear what you're asking, and here's why I can't do that. But here's what I can do.' Hold the boundary, but offer an alternative. Every time you hold a boundary without being harsh, you build trust. Every single time."*

### Case Type: "I felt unprepared / didn't know what to say"

#### Facilitator guidance:

*"Welcome to mentoring. The honest truth is you will never feel fully prepared. The question isn't 'Do I know enough?' The question is 'Am I present enough?' You don't need to have all the answers. You need to have the willingness to sit with someone in their uncertainty. That's mentoring.*

*When you don't know what to say, try: 'Tell me more about that.' It buys you time, it shows you're listening, and most of the time, the person just needs to keep talking."*

### Case Type: "My mentee is resistant / doesn't want to be there"

#### Facilitator guidance:

*"Remember the stages of change from MI training. Your mentee might be in precontemplation — he doesn't even think he has a problem, let alone want your help. That's okay. Your job is not to convince him. Your job is to be the kind of person who makes him curious about change.*

*Use OARS. Roll with the resistance. Don't argue. Don't prove. Just be present. Some of the best mentoring relationships start with a mentee who didn't want to be there."*

## Case Type: "I got emotionally activated"

### Facilitator guidance:

*"We're going to go deeper on this next week — managing your own reactions. For now: if you got activated, that's information, not failure. What triggered you? What did it remind you of? Did you catch it in time, or did it spill into the interaction?"*

*The goal isn't to never get activated. The goal is to notice it, regulate it, and not let it hijack the meeting. You have the skills for that."*

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## Patterns and Principles (15 minutes)

**Purpose:** After the individual cases, zoom out and identify common threads.

### Facilitator:

*"Let's step back from the individual cases. What patterns do you see? What's coming up for the group as a whole?"*

**Facilitate a brief discussion.** Then offer these principles:

*"Here are five truths about mentoring that your first week just taught you:*

**One: It's slower than you think.** *You want to help. You want to see progress. You want your mentee to have the breakthrough you had in Phase 1. It doesn't work that way. Change is slow. Trust is slow. Your job is to be patient enough to stay in it.*

**Two: It's more about you than you expected.** *Mentoring holds up a mirror. Every frustration with your mentee is telling you something about yourself. Every reaction is data. Phase 1 work doesn't stop just because you're in Phase 3.*

**Three: The relationship IS the intervention.** *You don't need a technique for every moment. Sometimes just showing up consistently, being honest, and caring — that's the whole thing. That's what most of these men have never had.*

**Four: You're going to make mistakes.** *You'll say the wrong thing. You'll miss a cue. You'll handle a situation badly. When that happens, own it, bring it to supervision, and do better next time. The only unforgivable mistake is pretending you don't make them.*

**Five: You're not alone.** *This group right here — these men who are going through the same thing you are — they're your lifeline. Use them. Check in with each other between Tuesdays. Talk about what's happening. That's what a cohort is for."*

## Closing Circle (10 minutes)

### Facilitator:

*"Before Wednesday, review your session plan with your co-facilitator. Before Thursday, review your mentoring logs from last week and set a specific goal for each mentee meeting: 'This week, I want to focus on \_\_\_\_.'*

*Closing round. Talking piece: **What's one thing you heard today from another presenter that you can use in your own mentoring?**"*

Send the talking piece.

### Facilitator (closing):

*"You survived your first week. You brought your struggles to this room instead of pretending everything was fine. That's what strong mentors do. Keep going.*

*Service Over Self. See you in the field."*

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## Session 76 Checklist

- Opening circle completed — one-sentence week review and needs identified
- Case presentation format taught and distributed
- 4-5 case presentations completed with group feedback
- Common themes identified and discussed
- Five mentoring truths shared
- Mentoring logs reviewed (spot-check during session or after)
- Closing circle completed
- Participants reminded to prep for Wednesday co-facilitation and Thursday mentee meetings

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# SESSION 77: Field Work — Co-Facilitation

## Continues

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**Day:** Wednesday **Duration:** 2 hours (session) + preparation and debrief time **Structure:** Co-facilitation with experienced FORGE mentor observing (same structure as Week 25)

## Field Work Objectives

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By the end of this session, participants will have: 1. Co-facilitated their second real session 2. Applied at least one improvement from last week's feedback 3. Demonstrated greater comfort with the facilitator role 4. Continued building relationship with the group they're facilitating

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## Pre-Session Preparation Checklist

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- Reviewed observer feedback from last week — identified one specific area to improve
  - Reviewed session plan with co-facilitator (at least 30 minutes before)
  - Discussed roles and transitions
  - Materials prepared
  - Identified your improvement goal for today: "This week I'm working on \_\_\_\_"
  - Shared your goal with your observer so they can watch for it
  - 4-4-4 breathing completed
  - Grounding word identified
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## Post-Session Debrief (with observer)

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Same SBI format as Week 25. Additional focus this week:

**Observer specifically addresses:** 1. Did the participant improve in the area they identified? 2. How did the participant handle unexpected moments compared to last week? 3. What's the next growth edge for Week 27?

**Participant reflects:** 1. What was different about this week compared to last week? 2. Did you achieve your improvement goal? What evidence? 3. What felt more natural this time? 4. What's still uncomfortable?

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## Field Work Reflection Prompts

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Complete in your journal after the session:

1. **Compare this week's co-facilitation to last week's. What shifted? What felt easier? What's still hard?**
  2. **Describe a moment where you had to make a real-time decision — something that wasn't in the plan. What did you do? Would you do it again?**
  3. **What are you learning about the difference between knowing the material and teaching the material?**
  4. **How is your relationship with your co-facilitator developing? Are you communicating well? What could be better?**
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# SESSION 78: Field Work — Mentee Meetings

## Continue

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**Day:** Thursday **Duration:** 45-60 minutes per mentee **Structure:** Continued 1-on-1 meetings with assigned mentees

### Field Work Objectives

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By the end of this session, participants will have: 1. Conducted second meetings with each assigned mentee 2. Followed up on items from the first meeting 3. Begun building toward regular meeting structure and rhythm 4. Logged all meetings in the Mentoring Log (use template from Week 25)

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### Pre-Session Preparation Checklist

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- Reviewed Mentoring Log from last week's meeting with this mentee
  - Identified follow-up items: What did you talk about? What did you promise to come back to?
  - Set a specific goal for today's meeting with each mentee
  - If mentee missed last week: plan for how to re-engage without guilt-tripping
  - If Mentoring Agreement wasn't completed last week: bring forms to finish today
  - Reviewed relevant skills: MI, active listening, boundary maintenance
  - 4-4-4 breathing completed before each meeting
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### Meeting Guidance for Week 2

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**This week's focus:** Building rhythm and going slightly deeper.

*The first meeting was about introductions. The second meeting is about showing you meant it. Show up on time. Remember what they told you last week. Reference it: "Last week you mentioned \_\_\_\_\_. How's that going?"*

*Begin introducing light structure to the meetings:*

1. **Check-in** (5 min): "How's your week been? Anything on your mind?"
2. **Follow-up** (10 min): Revisit something from last meeting
3. **Today's focus** (20-30 min): Could be a topic they raise, a FORGE concept, or just an honest conversation
4. **Close** (5 min): "What's one thing you're taking away from today? What should we talk about next week?"

*Don't force it. If the conversation flows naturally, follow it. The structure is a safety net, not a cage.*

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## Field Work Reflection Prompts

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Complete in your journal after all mentee meetings:

1. **Did your mentee remember you? Did they seem more or less comfortable than last week? What tells you that?**
2. **What did you follow up on from the first meeting? How did the mentee respond to you remembering?**
3. **Were there any boundary moments this week? How did you handle them?**
4. **What's one thing you're learning about each mentee that you didn't know after the first meeting?**
5. **What do you want to bring to supervision on Tuesday?**

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# FACILITATOR NOTES FOR WEEK 26

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## What to Watch For

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**Case presentation dynamics:** Watch who presents and who doesn't. The participants who are silent may be the ones struggling most. After the session, check in individually: "I noticed you didn't present today. Everything good, or is there something you'd rather talk about one-on-one?"

**Comparison and competition:** Some participants will compare their mentoring to others' — "His mentee is way easier than mine." Address this if it surfaces: "Every mentoring relationship is different. Comparing your chapter 2 to someone else's chapter 2 is pointless. The only comparison that matters is you today versus you last week."

**Discouragement:** Some participants will be discouraged after Week 1. They expected it to feel rewarding and it felt awkward or frustrating. Normalize this aggressively. "The most meaningful work in the world doesn't feel good every day. It feels hard most days and meaningful when you look back."

**Mentoring log quality:** Review logs carefully. Participants who write one-word answers are either disengaged or struggling to reflect. Coach them: "Your log is for you as much as it is for me. The more honestly you fill it out, the more useful supervision becomes."

## Common Week 26 Challenges

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**"I don't have anything to present."** Either everything is going perfectly (unlikely) or they're not reflecting deeply enough. Push gently: "Tell me about your Thursday meeting. Walk me through it minute by minute." Something will surface.

**"My mentee likes me too much."** Attachment can be a good sign but also a boundary issue. Coach: "Liking you is fine. Depending on you is a concern. You're building their capacity, not their reliance on you."

**"I'm second-guessing everything I say."** Normal at this stage. The cure is practice, not reassurance. "The overthinking will fade. Keep doing the work. Your instincts are better than you think — you just don't trust them yet."

## Preparation for Week 27

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- Prepare Session 79 materials on managing reactions and secondary stress

- Review all mentoring logs from Weeks 25-26 — look for patterns in what's triggering participants
- Consider whether any mentee reassignments are needed based on Week 25-26 experiences
- Have self-care resources ready: what's actually available in this facility?