

MINDFUL FACILITATION GUIDE

PACE Pilot Cohort • 2021-22

Created by UPI

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## MINDFUL FACILITATION PRINCIPLES & FRAMEWORKS

### Principles for Whole Person Group Facilitation

**Right Space**

* **Opening and Closing the Space**Create activities that help bring people into the space or leave the space for the day. You also need to create the “container” around the whole experience; pay close attention to the opening and closing of the whole experience to create space.

**Right People**

* **Community Building**Create activities that help bring the group together as a community to create a space where everyone can be open, share, etc.; build cohesiveness; do these for several meetings.

**Right Activities**

* **Agenda Setting**Write your agenda for the day/class; share it with the group along with your timeline. As part of this, write in breaks (approx. every 1.5 hours people need a break)

**Right Timing**

* **Pay attention to the timing of things**Community building is good early on and at the beginning of a day session; after meals or longer breaks you will want something to bring everyone back into the space.

### Community and Democracy

**Minding All Our Relations**

As experience designers, trainers, and facilitators we can be so steeped in our own stories that we forget about all the rest of life, seen and unseen. As climate activists and planet stewards, we are called to move beyond human-centered design to life-centered design. As much as possible, create spaces in the agendas for lessons from and experiences of nature. Acknowledge ancestors. Zoom out to the global. Feel the work of the trees in the lungs. Tune in to the miracle of freshwater. Leave room for what is intangible to humans.

**Collective Intelligence and Creative Tension**

There are things that we know only when we put our knowledge and perspectives together. Designing experiences for collective intelligence first and foremost requires humility on the part of the designer. Tell/sell/yell methods can sometimes transfer information but collective intelligence can only gather with a spirit of curiosity and good design. Putting together a presentation is simpler compared to the complexity of designing interactions that lift up knowledge and make sense of disparate threads. Collective intelligence can only exist if the facilitator has the stamina for the emergent and skills to guide creative tension.

### Virtual Facilitation

[Here](https://docs.google.com/presentation/d/1BY68ZexQ2eMxwy011imN-t-aKEF78iA5fBZenv4DXPg/edit#slide=id.ga1ac0bbeb5_0_788) is a good resource for virtual facilitation.

**Key Principles**

* Build redundancy into the activities
* Consider the patterns for your group
* Take time to design your activities and allow the group to respond to
* Use onsite resource of the groups existing knowledge and experience
* Have extra activities ready if you need them
* Choose activities that serve multiple functions:
  + Name Games
  + Gallery Walk
  + Group Work
  + Partner Share
* Edge Effect- Always look for ways to bring groups (ideas, activities) together so you can create a stronger collaborative group

**Dynamic Steering**

There’s that saying that life is what happens while you’re busy making plans. This is quite true in leading interactions between human beings, especially when the topics are ones people are passionate about such as racial equity and climate strategy. In thought, dynamic steering is expecting the unexpected, being mentally prepared to make changes to the plan. In practice, it’s monitoring the interactions closely, minding the time, pulse checking with the vibe checker, editing the plan in coordination with the other facilitators. Sometimes the facilitator might need to step in to interrupt a dynamic that violates the group agreements by stopping a person mid-sentence. The consequence might be not covering a certain topic, The tradeoff is being in tune with the participants and modeling productive conflict engagement.

**Roles**

**Curriculum Designer**  
A person who thinks through interactions participants will have and creates agendas that guide the facilitation team

**Facilitator**

Helps to bring about an outcome (such as learning, productivity, or communication) by providing presentations, activities, worksheets, and other instructional methods

* ***Lead***: makes sure the agenda runs smoothly
* ***Small Group***: supports the small group discussion by making sure participants are clear about what they need to do, that they’re following the agreements, and can take notes as needed
* ***Participant***: all people interacting are facilitators in some way, even if they are not the official facilitator. Everyone is responsible for making sure the agreements are kept.

**Presenter**

Shares knowledge to meet the objectives of the convening

**Vibe Checker**

Looks and listens to see if the energy level and emotional states are supportive to the flow of the agenda

**DJ**  
Provides appropriate music as needed

**Chat Monitor**

Engage with comments in the chat and if needed, put in links

**Notetaker**

Takes high level notes in an organized manner to support debrief

**Tech Support**

## INTERACTIVE ACTIVITIES & ICEBREAKERS

### Ball of String

Start in circle, pass the ball of string or yarn with instructions to catch, answer question(s), grab onto a piece, and pass onto the next person who hasn’t received it

* + Example questions: name, skill, resource, need

### Sankofa

Show the Adinkra symbol from Akan (West African/Ghana) Share about resilience starting with the idea that we wouldn’t be here if our ancestors weren’t resilient. Share a story about an ancestor or mentor and invite participants to share in pairs or small groups about theirs.

### Other Possible Name Games

Use name games for a few days, or until everyone knows each other’s names.

* Name + rhyme name + dance
* After day 1: Who can say all the names in the room?

### My Neighbor Is

**Community building, icebreaker**

* Setup a circle with designated spots marked with rocks, placemats, and one less than the total number of people in the group.
* One person starts in the middle and says, “My neighbor is….”
  + (e.g. wearing glasses, a single parent, bilingual, etc.)
* Everyone who fits the description moves to a new spot; the person left is in the middle and says, “My neighbor is…”

### Step In Activity

**Community building, illustrating diversity and commonality, icebreaker**

Form a circle. Answer the question “How many of you are “x”? Or “I am X” and then others who are X also step in.

**Alternative**: Walk across the room: Take a step if you X.

### Telling Our Stories

**Community building, connecting the generations, we tell the stories not only of ourselves but our ancestors, listening practice, slowing down.**

1. Pair up participants with someone new / someone they haven’t yet interacted with
2. Interview each other for 5 minutes.
   1. Two questions:
      1. What is your story/experience in XXX?
      2. What are your goals for the course?
   2. Share a struggle that you had in your life, the values you have because of that and how that informs your work in the world.
3. Each person has 2 minutes to introduce each other.

### Tiny Teach

**Warm up game.**

Find a partner. You have two minutes to teach your partner anything, then switch. Share out.

### Closing

One word that summarizes the day.

### Revisioning

Use this technique to remember where you’ve been (good at a mid-way point or even near the end of the day/course). A facilitator asks students to close their eyes, and walks them through the curriculum, remembering where we were, where we have come, etc.

### Gallery Walk

Prior to the activity: Prepare posters (four is a good number) with key questions at the top of each (e.g. what is collaborative design?)

1. Set the stage by explaining the activity.
2. Timing: You can use class time for the gallery walk; play some music to set the mood; or, have them do the gallery walk on a break or over some other extended period of time.
3. Each participant gets a marker, walks to each of the stations, reads what is there, and adds something. Participants are encouraged to visit each station twice, reading what others wrote, and responding.
4. Participants report back as a group; you can use the stations in other ways, such as a part of explaining concepts, gauging interest from the beginning to the end of the course, etc.

## GROUP MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES

**Managing groups**

Groups often go through four phases: forming, storming, norming, and performing. Helping them be functional includes setting roles: who wants to do what? Also, having them check in regularly on their progress.

### Class Activity / Discussion Management

* **Silence for Reflection**: You can use a “pause” at various points for reflection and integration. Also useful for heated conversations and the ability to cool off a bit.
* **Discussion Stacking**: When a group of people all want to speak; you can write their names down and then allow them all to speak, like a stack of cards or boxes, one after another.
* **Thumbometer (aka strawpoll)**: Use to quickly gauge understanding/agreement in a group. Thumbs up = agree; thumbs at the side = confused/unclear/maybe; Thumbs down = disagree
* **Pattern of the day (daily agenda)**: Offer a daily agenda (with times) to help you and students stick to the agenda.

### Attention Getters

* **Gong/Bell/Ringing Stick:** Brings people back to attention after group work; this way, you don’t have to shout.
* **Clapping Hands:** You can use this to bring people back to attention. Say, “If you can hear me, clap your hands once.” Let people clap. Then, “If you can hear me, clap your hands twice.” Let people clap. Typically you need three claps to get everyone back to attention.

### Group Norms Activity aka “Touchstone Practices”

Setup group norms at the beginning of every class ensures that the class is a positive space for everyone to learn effectively. It also reinforces the People Care ethic.

**One method:**

1. Use a think-pair-share activity where people pair up, talk about group norms, and share out.
2. Large group discussion; facilitators can share their own norms as part of the discussion
3. After we create a set of norms, ask everyone to agree to them using the thumbometer (see this handout)
4. Place the norms up in the classroom somewhere so participants can review them

**Alternative:**  Facilitator shares norms and discussion happens.

### Activities and Workshop Design

**5 Cs Framework**

1. **Convene**

This component sets a tone of invitation. Convening intentionally shows care as well as support people to transition from what they were doing prior to the space they are arriving in. Examples included warm welcome chatter, As-you-arrive prompts or activities, and music

1. **Compost/Compose**

PACE Leaders collectively created virtual Compose / Compost Altars. Compost refers to the waste products that no longer serve us, that we want to transform into something else that can be beneficial to us once again. Examples are community pain we want to transform, hurtful habits, or a historical legacy of oppression. Compose is what we want to create with the fertile soil we have cultivated, including the dreams our communities have, a program we want to see, or a prideful accomplishment we want to sustain. The altars represent a commitment to mend our connection with the planet, with history, with all our relations, and with our communities. By reviewing the altars at the beginning of sessions, we take a minute to witness the presence of the people, the stories, the hurts, and the hopes - a collective acknowledgement of our respective barriers and assets.

1. **Connect**

This component is a double lens that looks at the peer connections that support social learners as well as knowledge or skill builds that are anchored in what leaders already know. At times, the Connect component was integrated through pair share debriefs or about familiar topics. At others, there were longer activities. An example activity from the program was the Barriers to Partnerships exercise, in which the leaders worked in small groups to identify barriers to partnerships (something they already know) and then generate/inventory methods to overcome barriers. Such activities honor participants’ knowledge, support peer connections, and build practical knowledge.

1. **Capacity**

Capacity is the delivery of the main topics in the syllabus, accomplished by more common ways of sharing knowledge such as slide show presentations, guest speakers, and participatory learning.

1. **Close**

Just as we convene intentionally, we also close the time together intentionally. We summarize, share gratitude, highlight next steps, make space for everyone to participate in wrapping up, and get people excited for what follows.

**Session Rhythm**

Think about the rituals or rhythm of agendas. What are ways people can ease into the main topic? How can people share their questions before you give them answers? When do people tend to get lower in energy(ex: post lunch)?

**Example Rhythm from PACE**

***Convene***

* As you arrive question or prompt
* Music
* Manage chat

***Compose/Compost***

* Healing Centered Engagement
* Altar
* Embodied Activities

***Connect***

* A Group Builder relevant to the main topic

***Capacity***

* Presentation
* Discussions
* Experiential Learning
* Lifting up examples of what works

***Close***

* Summarize. Share gratitude. Highlight next steps. Make space for everyone to participate in wrapping up. Get people excited for what follows. Whatever you do, always end intentionally.

### Sample Group Agreements

* **Explore your edge.**An edge is where you are at the edge of your comfort zone or knowledge base, or just beyond it. You need to find your own edges and push them; potent learning happens at our edges.
* **Take space. Make space.**Some people are very comfortable speaking in groups (so they may need to “step up”) while others are quieter (so they need to “step up”). Challenge yourself to participate along your “edge” that is, where you are less comfortable (being more silent and/or speaking up more). Be aware of your identities, the privilege they hold and use that to balance your participation.
* **Expect and accept a lack of closure.**   
  Understand that you won’t always have closure, and that’s ok. Discussions are living entities.
* **Honor diversity.**  
  We are all a set of diverse experiences, and “diversity” can mean many things. Note the concept of intersectionality: you can also live at the intersections of race/class/gender/other differences (Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw).
* **Mistakes are part of learning / Safe to fail.**   
  Potent learning happens when we are able to use mistakes and see them as a positive thing (Dana’s note: See Carol Dweck’s Mindsets for more on this topic—it is well worth the read).
* **Assume good intentions.**   
  Assume that everyone in the room has good intentions, and take comments in that spirit.
* **Both/and thinking.**   
  Resist binary thinking (either/or) and instead embrace either/or. (another principle to break out of the binary is the tertiary; suggest there is always a third perspective).
* **Everyone is a learner.** (including you!)
* **Respect everyone’s experience.**   
  Each of us has walked a unique path and those experiences are relevant and meaningful.
* **Conflict is information**.  
  When conflict happens, it shares vital information—use it as such.
* **Take it seriously and not personally.**
* **Speak from personal experience.**   
  Share what you feel and know. Stay curious and humble about everything else.
* **Vegas Rule.**   
  What’s said here stays here, what’s learned here leaves here. Confidentiality. When in doubt, seek consent.
* **One Mic.**   
  Listen as passionately as you speak. If intervention is needed, do it with respect for the facilitator, the group, and yourself.
* **Be curious, not furious.**   
  Listen with active curiosity. Pause and get curious when you are feeling triggered about what is going on inside you that needs attention.
* **Move toward understanding the difference between intent and impact.**Your positive intent from your lived experience in your body-racially, gender wise, etc. may not have the same intended impact with others that have not shared those experiences.
* **Respect.**   
  Others and yourself. We aim to have a space that is free from blame, shame and attack.
* **Take care of your body.**  
  Tune in and do what you need to stay present.
* **Take a beat.**If you get approaching that zone between discomfort and panic, reground yourself and take responsibility for your state. Take some breaths. Drink water and count the sips. Look outside. Do a body scan. Check to see if you’re shrinking or puffing. Ask for a pause and help.

### Conflict Transformation Principles

* Agree to disagree
* Expect and accept non-closure
* Deep listening
* Speaking from experience / “I” statements (Non-violent communication – is ideal but people have to be trained in it and practice)
* Take everyone’s experiences seriously
* Calling out vs. calling in – not about shaming a person but instead about bringing that person into the fold; we are all affected
* Don’t take it personally but take it seriously
* Remember that issues are like mushrooms: the fungal hyphae networks are underneath and they pop up. Best to address the fungal hyphae to begin with.

### Conflict Resolution Strategies

You can use a group decision on how to deal with a particular issue. Conflict might arise for hot button/social issues.

* **Mediation**Allowing someone else to come and help resolve issues can be beneficial. None of us can do this alone!
* **Spectrogram**  
  Here is a link to one version of this activity <http://www.kstoolkit.org/Human+Spectrogram>
* I would encourage you to design it to meet your needs. In our activity, I asked the following questions:
  + Stand on the far right if you think you need to work within the system for change. Other side if you feel we need to work from without the system
  + Stand on the one side, if you feel that change needs to happen now and stand on the other side if you feel we have time