

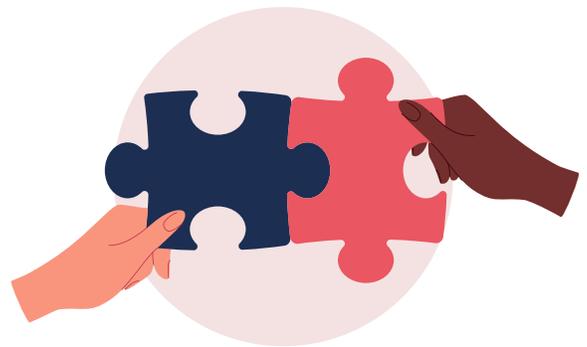
TRAUMA INFORMED WORKSHOP FACILITATION TIPS

In-person & Virtual Workshops

- Ensure workshop invites, flyers, reminder emails and other pre-workshop communication are empathic, supportive and reinforce self-care.** For example, avoiding the term 'mandatory', avoiding the term 'training' when possible (alternatives for the noun: workshop; alternatives for the verb: resourcing, learning); conveying a sense of warmth in communications, consistent with the content in the workshop.
- Name racial bias** (and other related stigma and negative judgment processes) early in the workshop; this can be in an introduction around the importance of standardizing empathic communication (if not purposeful, we tend to be warmer and more empathic in our affinity groups, for example), through a self-disclosure of some kind, or just a direct statement that it needs to be named. This demonstrates the workshop is a space where participants can also name this, in their comments, questions or practice sessions.
- Arrive early or be on the video platform early** in order to be available to connect with participants as they begin to come in. Attempt to connect with each participant as they arrive to welcome them, modeling smiling, eye contact and connecting statements. This creates a friendly environment that is essential to successful workshops. It allows a 'warm start' to the workshop. This also means arriving extra early to set up visual/audio/tech equipment, so you are free to connect when participants begin arriving.
- Mitigate power differentials:** Unfortunately 'trainings' imply power and authority differentials, so we may not always be able to fully mitigate. Inviting participants to share their experience and perspectives (instead of only 'any questions?') is helpful, as it frames participants as important contributors. When a participant asks a question, we can also turn the question back to the larger group, 'I wonder if others have thoughts on this?'



- Let participants know at the beginning of the workshop **when breaks** will be and stick as closely as possible to this. This models care and attentiveness to the needs of the participants. Assure participants that they are free to take breaks when they need to.
- **Dedicate a generous amount of time (at least 1 minute per person) to introductions.** Even if all participants will know each other, asking a low-risk question for them to answer during introductions sets a tone of comradery. If on video, turn off 'screen share' during this part, so everyone can see each other.
- Use **participants' names** whenever possible. If you won't know everyone, name plates are very helpful unless your memory is very good. On video platforms, ask people to name themselves what they prefer to be called with preferred pronouns.
- Since the foundation of empathic workshops is connecting with others, dedicate some time (2-3 minutes for a short 1-2 hour workshop, or 5-7 minutes for a 3 hour or longer workshop) **to sharing what your personal connection to the content of the workshop is.** This is where telling a story about yourself can be particularly effective. This is ideally connected to a picture you've included in the slide deck.
- Remember that the goal is for participants to have an **experience** of using the skills in the workshop, as well as **being the recipient** of empathic listening. In this way, participants have an experience of feeling connected to another person listening deeply to them. Practice episodes or discussion in pairs or threes ideally make up about 30% of total workshop time. See 'facilitating practice and discussions during workshops' for more detail.
- Model **'rolling with resistance'** by avoiding contradicting, arguing, or criticizing any participant's comments, even in the most subtle ways. Avoid using the word 'but' after a participant shares (as in 'yes, but we also need to...').
- **Model the intervention of autonomy** by avoiding verbal or written 'command' rules at workshops (for example, 'no cell phones' or 'no late entry'). If limits are necessary, state the action you will take, not what others 'must' do, for example 'Unfortunately if a participant is more than 15 minutes late, the workshop won't be very useful to them, so we will reschedule for the participant to come to another workshop'.



- Use the empathic communication techniques in the workshop with participants when possible, such as **normalizing, affirming, acknowledging, empathic reflection and open ended questions.**
- Avoid calling on people to share. This is anxiety producing for many people; even if the person you called on is not anxious, those that are in the group will find it difficult to relax knowing they could be called on.
- Avoid evaluating questions or comments from participants with 'great question' or 'excellent point'. Other participants who were not the recipient of these comments may feel less-than; it also place the facilitator in an 'evaluator' position, which is a power differential not conducive to learning.
- If you catch yourself giving advice, asking closed questions or other less skillful means, **engaging in transparent, narrated self-correction** demonstrates humility as well as a growth mindset for the participants.
- Explicitly invite honest feedback at the end when handing out evaluations. Review all feedback in the spirit of improvement (not self-criticism) For virtual workshops, have a link for an evaluation summary on survey monkey or other platform.

Considerations for In-Person Workshops:

- **The 'U' shaped format is one of the best workshop set-ups,** as it allows everyone to see one another, which is essential to creating a shared experience in the workshop. It also allows you, as the facilitator, to walk closer to those who are talking. If the 'U' isn't possible, small groups at round tables is second-best. Classroom set ups, with rows of tables and chairs is the least relational as it can reinforce power differentials.
- **Having refreshments is best.** Offering food and drinks is one way of demonstrating empathy, concern for participants' comfort, and an appreciation of their time.



Considerations for Virtual Workshops

- Make sure a welcoming slide is up, your camera is on. Greet everyone as they come on.
- Periodically take off 'screen share', and invite participants to turn on their cameras if they wish. This can be done at the beginning of the workshop, to say hello to everyone and increase connection as well as at intervals during the workshop to invite discussion questions. This can be a nice way of saying goodbye to everyone too.

