



OUR MISSION: Women and Youth Supporting Each Other empowers young women by providing the resources and support necessary to make positive life choices and create community change.

The Facilitator Toolkit

Mentor Training Component: 3. The Role of a WYSE Mentor

When facilitating discussions about tough topics, it can be tricky to help each participant connect with the material. These tools will help you learn how to direct discussion and create an open environment for sharing.

the hand – “yourself as a tool”

Setting the tone with body language, eye contact, and tone of voice. Using your personal style to develop a sense of comfort. Examples: smiling, warm eye contact, attentive body language, general aura of welcoming people and their comments.

the ally – “your partner”

Forming a good partnership with your co-facilitators is crucial. Planning, dividing up tasks and roles, supporting each other, checking in with each other, and modeling respect and good communication (verbal and nonverbal). During discussions, make eye contact with your partners. It's okay to check in with them in front of the group. Example: “Maggie, I’m wondering if we should move onto the next section, since this topic will be covered then.”

the support – “establishing a secure structure”

Forming ground rules, physically setting up the space, making a circle; all in order to create a safe and comfortable space.

the screwdriver – “deepening a point”

Asking open-ended questions, follow-up questions, and redirection questions for the purpose of deepening discussion. Example: “Well, since it sounds like we all agree that we need to take personal responsibility, I’m wondering: How do you think we should do that?”

the balance – “equalizing”

Making sure participation is balanced. Convey inclusion and warmth non-verbally by making eye contact with ALL group members, etc. Also, verbally convey your desire to hear from everyone. Examples: “I notice that we’ve heard mostly from this side of the room – what do the rest of you have to say about this?” or “Do we all feel this way about this issue? Anyone who sees it differently?”

the prism – “splitting into many points of view”

Using a fact or statement to hear many opinions. Creating a multi-dimensional discussion from something that might have been just a block statement. Deepening and showing a kaleidoscope of ideas from what someone has said. Example: “Maria gave an excellent example of how to combat sexism – what other ways do you think we can combat sexism?” or “There’s a lot to what you just said, so let’s break that down into smaller components...”



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the hammer – “driving a point”

Paraphrasing, summarizing what you hear. In other words, pinpointing what has been said, ensuring accuracy (it's okay to point out an inconsistency). Example: “So, basically, we're saying that you should only have sex if you want to and feel ready to do it. Does everyone agree with that?”

the jack – “lifting support”

Affirming participants non-verbally and verbally with comments, nods, etc. Could be individual or to the group. The purpose of the lifting support is to validate group members and encourage discussion. Examples: “This is a great discussion we're having here!” “You're making a really mature observation!”

the adjustable wrench – “getting something that fits”

Being flexible by reading the group and adjusting your approach to fit what is happening. Dealing with silence by commenting on it or checking in with the group; moving to a leading question; adjusting the planned schedule (extending a hot discussion or cutting short one that becomes irrelevant).

the mirror – “reflecting back”

Especially useful when a difficult or challenging remark has been made. Repeating what someone has said and bouncing it back to the group to avoid reacting or stating your own opinion. Example: “So you're saying that sometimes it is a person's own fault, even if they are the victim. What do others think of that?” This tool is often useful if you feel that there may be a counterpoint or alternative opinion to what has been said. Again, you shouldn't sound oppositional to the comment, just reflective and non-judgmental.

the saw – “cutting where something needs to be cut”

Time-keeping, either following the schedule or determining when to appropriately get closure and move on. Example: “I'm sorry, this is a great discussion we're having, but because we don't have a lot of time left we really need to move on to the next question [or activity].” You can sometimes add, “We can get at some of these ideas later in the session.”

the ruler – “taking measurements”

Observing the ‘vibe’ or process, commenting on the process, clarifying points that seem to have been misunderstood or missed altogether. Examples: “I see a lot of confused looks on people's faces, should we go over that again?” “It seems like everyone got more interested when we brought up this topic.” Sometimes just the observation does the trick, other times these comments can be used in conjunction with the adjustable wrench, the prism, or the screwdriver.