



[Nadia Chaney](#)

Dear 3rd Thursday Assemblers! Welcome back, or, if it's your first time WELCOME! This is a wild, wonderful format we have been developing where people contribute and discuss a topic on a specific question. Below you will find: A Check-in Question (please answer!), Goals and Agreements for today's session (please add anything you need/want to the agreements, and hit "like" to agree to uphold these agreements during the session), 3 discussion questions (answer in any order) and 3 case studies that we will use to design 3 new activities together. I will be facilitating this experience for 90 minutes. There will be a pdf transcript posted in a few days. Have fun!

This month we are discussing EYE CONTACT IN GROUP FACILITATION. Most great facilitators use eye contact in very specific ways. They are often highly conscious of the impact of their eye contact and use it as another part of their body language and voice tools. During this Assembly I hope to gather our collective wisdom about how we use eye contact and how we can improve this aspect of our practice.

TODAY'S GOALS

- 1) To explore the potential, principles and practices of working with EYE CONTACT in facilitated groups.
- 2) To use case studies (examples) to examine some of the issues and complications regarding using eye contact in groups
- 3) To share our experiences and best practices of eye contact in groups.
- 4) To connect, reinvigorate and have meaningful fun online

In order to achieve the goals (posted below), here are some suggestions for agreements to make our time together flow really well. We are still experimenting with this form, so be sure to add what you need or want AT ANY TIME DURING THE PROCESS.

COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS



- 1) No put downs of self or others. Keep a positive, lift-up vibe.
- 2) Share at your level; Everyone is welcome, no matter their level of experience as a facilitator or community organizer. All questions are important, and all answers (or further questions) are valuable. It is also okay and important to respectfully disagree with each other.
- 3) Show your presence, by LIKING and by responding to keep the flow. Ask questions, make comments, connect. The technical trick for this format is to REFRESH your browser fairly often. LIKING IS MORE IMPORTANT NOW THAN EVER SINCE FACEBOOK HAS CHANGED AND WE CAN NO LONGER SEE HOW MAY PEOPLE HAVE READ A POST.
- 4) Answer any questions in the COMMENTS below the question to keep the conversation organized and readable. Only open NEW questions in new threads.
- 5) You can come and go as you please, take as long as you like to respond, and basically enjoy the text-format to make this work no matter whether you are just waking up, just going to bed, or on your lunch break (time zones unite!!) A pdf transcript of the conversation will be provided. Feel free to continue the conversation even after the 90 minute period has ended.

[Nadia Chaney](#) I've posted the Check In and Discussion Question #1 so far. Sometimes they fall out of order, so please scroll for them...

[Amber Hescoc Johnson](#) Be sure to REFRESH every once in a while, too (PYE comm mgr here)

[Nadia Chaney](#) Yeah, REFRESH is actually the key to these discussions ☺ That and

[Nadia Chaney](#) Questions #2 and #3 are posted. #4 is upcoming and then....the long-awaited Case Studies!!



Nadia Chaney

Check-in Question for June 18 2015: Tell us about a moment in your life, work and/or art when eye contact really mattered.

Amber Hescocock Johnson Years ago, I was in a presentation with my marketing team, trying to pitch the CEO on a really creative idea, and I felt overlooked and unheard. Later, I got the feedback that he noticed a lack of eye contact from me. I realized how important it was, but for me, it doesn't come naturally for some reason, especially when I'm nervous.

Bunty Cumberpants I can relate to that, I think it really depends on where you are coming from yourself ...

Nadia Chaney Thanks Bunty Cumberpants! What about you? When was a moment eye contact really mattered to you?

Amber Hescocock Johnson I love the name Bunty Cumberpants.

Bunty Cumberpants Just now - funnily enough, I've just been facilitating one of our self-advocacy groups and we had a new member today who was really nervous about being there, it made such a difference to maintain eye contact, I felt that it was reassuring for both of us

Susan Wellisch I used to be more shy than I am now and I remember sitting with someone in a cafeteria having a conversation and my eyes would drift away. I remember her trying to catch my eye and bring me back to eye contact. That was maybe the first time I was really conscious of eye contact.

Nadia Chaney For me I think it has been with teachers in school, being able to make strong eye contact with them has often helped me to create lasting relationships across the difference in power. Especially in university in big lecture halls.

Helena Hennighausen When I was growing up, someone told me that assertive eye contact was very important and that it was something I should practice. I sort of trained myself from a very young age to be very direct with eye contact (I remember practicing by staring people down in malls as a kid! It was all very odd now that I look back at it.) In college and in my earlier career I started to get feedback about how intimidating I can my presence could be. It wasn't until a later mentor suggested that I work on reducing eye contact. I was always conveying a personality I didn't intend.



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[Bunty Cumberpants](#) I think that it was something I really struggled with when I was younger, as I was incredibly shy and thus quite hidden, I guess that it can leave a sense of feeling a little exposed when you are coming from that place

[Nadia Chaney](#) This check-in is really powerful. Thank you for setting this foundation for our discussion. I posted Question #1...I'll post #2 as well, in case you'd rather start there.

[Helena Hennighausen](#) Bunty, It seems like we came into eye contact from opposite sides of the spectrum when we were young - and both ends had impact as we grew into adulthood.

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) (Another reminder: Please REFRESH every once in a while to make sure you see all the comments.)

[Bunty Cumberpants](#) Thanks [Helena Hennighausen](#) I really like that idea of opposite sides of the spectrum, there is something within that regarding finding a balance I think

[Clarinda R. Laforteza](#) during personal introduction[accompanied by a hand shake],apologizing[esp.to daughter/child],chatting over a meal,support for when someone is performing on stage,asking for help[esp.directions],receiving service[waitress,cashier]...listening intently[lecture/speaker]

[Virtually Ally](#) Hi. There have been many times in my life when I make eye contact with a stranger and it's just an instant connection!! The feelings (through the eyes) bubble with curiosity, excitement & ease. I love that moment of connection...when you know you are truly being recognized and something amazing is about to happen.

[Barb Applepieski](#) At the end of a school workshop the teacher asked each student to make eye contact with me and say "Thank you" on the way out. It was nice to take the time to be fully present with each of the 30 students, even if just for a moment! I use this memory as inspiration to be that present with large groups in more moments during the day.

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) I love that, [Virtually Ally](#)!

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Barb Applepieski](#), [Virtually Ally](#), [Clarinda R. Laforteza](#)...welcome!

[Rekha Kurup](#) I have always been known by everyone to look straight into the eye while talking whoever it is. I can't do it any other way. Personally for me, the best moments of eye contact is with children. They look right into you, give themselves into your trust



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100% and hold u there. Even words fall back. It is always the most powerful experience for me.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Welcome [Rekha Kurup](#), thank you for your insightful check in!

[Rekha Kurup](#) Thanks [Nadia](#)!

[Rekha Kurup](#) Anther space that I am exploring eye contact is on the streets of Bangalore when strangers stare at you so cheaply.... Sometimes instead of ignoring I directly look back into their eyes, and like send the msg "what!". All the time, they can't hold the gaze! It is one of the most difficult things to do but I a so tired of these meaningless perverse stares by most male doesn't matter the age.

[Xoli Fuyani](#) Just now! Just finished a 5rhythms movement class with my little one's... I've made a ritual, at the end of our class to look into each child's eyes and tell them something special about their body/movement followed by a huge hug. It really touches them as they often dnt get praised and hugs from home. Favorite part of the class!!!

[Helena Hennighausen](#) Rekha, I posted up above about working on eye contact as a youth. I think I perfected the "What!" stare at a very young age! It's a powerful tool!

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Xoli Fuyani](#) that's a beautiful ritual! Reminds me a little of the Waldorf practice of shaking the child's hand as they enter and leave the classroom. But deeper.

[Rekha Kurup](#) Just read your post [Helena](#)!

[Rekha Kurup](#) In movement to hold the gaze of a partner and just move to the gaze - doesn't matter the proximity. The person could move all the way across the room and yet, the presence can be felt so strongly! I love that! I encourage that when I facilitate circles with women to explore.

[Rekha Kurup](#) [Xoli Fuyani](#) thanks for sharing about 5ryhtms. Brings memories of evenings when movement and gaze come together so beautifully.

[Amber Hescoc Johnson](#) [Xoli Fuyani](#), I love that so much! Thanks for sharing. Made me smile.

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Eye contact during any session with children for me is important because that way I get a glimpse of whether they are in agreement or conflict.



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[Arindita Gogoi](#) Also at a personal level when a friend is opening their heart out or I am expressing something deeply personal to someone, eye contact either way is very important for me. That is hugely reassuring of the honesty and earnestness of listening.

[Xoli Fuyani](#) It teaches them a new culture as eye contact is not practiced or encouraged in my culture. It's a sigh of disrespect esp with elders

[Arindita Gogoi](#) There is something similar in India too where young ones were expected to lower their gaze while talking to a senior person. But it is changing gradually because the dynamics of relationship of parents and children are changing and gradually from the pure space of respect, the newer breed of parents and children are sharing a space of friendly comfort. But thanks for bringing that up [Xoli Fuyani](#)!

[Rekha Kurup](#) [Nadia](#) and friends, I got to go. Thank you so much for all your wisdom. I Greatly appreciate this space. Thanks PYE for doing this.

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Rekha Kurup](#) thanks for being here! Check out the transcript afterwards!

[Rekha Kurup](#) Thanks [Nadia](#). Will look forward to the transcripts.

[Amber Hescoc Johnson](#) Thank YOU, [Rekha Kurup](#)!

[Nadia Chaney](#) Discussion Question #4 and the Case Studies are below...scroll for 'em~!

[Amber Hescoc Johnson](#) Also helps to REFRESH (last reminder from your friendly PYE communications manager)

[Silvia Giovannoni Webster](#) Hello all- although I can't spend too much time here (I will come back to read and the discussion is fascinating), I thought I'd share something that happened recently. I volunteer at a youth education charity in London and at the beginning of each session the Volunteer Manager has a briefing session with the volunteers. She spent the entire session looking down at her hands/sometimes notes and made almost no eye contact at all with the group. I was surprised at how unsettled I felt and it was a struggle to listen to what she had to say. I also noticed having to muster some extra enthusiasm for that session when the young people arrived.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Hi [Silvia Giovannoni Webster](#)! What a lovely coincidence...this is very similar to our Case Study #1. Thanks so much for popping in with it

[Mayan Patel](#) We did these exercises in a hakomi therapy workshop last week. Looking at someone and finding the nourishment in it, looking at them as if they had suffered. Then



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as if they had suffered and survived. Even with all the projection the eye contact was really powerful and like the transmission of a gripping emotional novel

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Mayan Patel](#), that is such an interesting way to practice fine-tuning messaging that comes from the eyes.

[Livier Ayon](#) I had some technical issues and couldn't join earlier. But I am reading the posts and I love the discussion!

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Livier Ayon](#), feel free to add anywhere you'd like. We're done with the facilitated portion, but there are definitely some folks still around.

[Livier Ayon](#) Thanks [Nadia](#)!

[Nadia Chaney](#)

Discussion Question #1: What are eyes? Why are eyes so important? What are images from movies, clichés, literature, or myth, or music that come to mind when you think of eyes?

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) My 6-year-old daughter wears bifocals has strabismus, amblyopia and is severely farsighted. I've learned so much about eyes and vision from her. I often think of a quote from my research to help my daughter: "Vision is the brain's way of touching the world." The eyes are really an extension of the brain.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Wow, thank you for sharing that [Amber Hescocock Johnson](#). What a powerful thought, to think of the brain actually reaching out to the world through the physical eye!

[Susan Wellisch](#) Vision is the brain's way of touching the world - that's big! The classic - eyes are the window to the soul - comes to mind. I think eye contact indicates something personal and in a way intimate. When there is no eye contact you feel like you are not seeing the person, just their face. I think of television where the new style is to have the person speaking photographed from an angle so they are looking away from the camera. It drives me crazy because it feels disconnected.



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[Nadia Chaney](#) That's so interesting, [Susan Wellisch](#). I wonder what it is about the eye...that makes it different from the rest of the face?

[Susan Wellisch](#) Yeah like why would your eyes be more important than your mouth - which is where the words are coming from ;) I think it is because eyes can better display emotion than say your nose?

[Nadia Chaney](#) ☺ [Susan Wellisch](#), is it the tiny eye muscles, the reactivity to light...I WONDER!!

[Rekha Kurup](#) I feel eyes are windows into the truth of a person. Nothing can be hidden there. Eyes reveal!

[Susan Wellisch](#) I think your eyes are emotionally more attached to your heart. If you are sad you cry, if you are happy your eyes light up.

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) I recently read that while wolves don't make eye contact with humans, dogs do and really rely on it. They evolved as such because that was necessary in partnering with humans. They are experts at reading our emotions, though eye contact. It's amazing!

[Clarinda R. Laforteza](#) commonly: "windows to the soul"

[Nadia Chaney](#) How about "an eye for an eye" ...

[Clarinda R. Laforteza](#) filter, perception, outlook [looking glass] ... gate [point of entry]

[Clarinda R. Laforteza](#) myth: third eye(?)

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Eyes are source of honesty. They're important because they create a sense of attachment in the communication process (in case of a visually challenged person it could be touch). First image from a movie: Un Chien Andalou by Bunuel; the opening scene where a razor cuts the eye followed by the clouds piercing through the moon. Difficult imagery but I just could never get over it!

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Arindita Gogoi](#)! Welcome back!

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Thanks! I am typing this out from a ferry! So delays and poor network will keep disturbing me ☹



Nadia Chaney

Discussion Question #2: When and how does eye contact most benefit your facilitation work? What can you do to get even more benefit from your eye contact in groups?

Bunty Cumberpants Eye contact is beneficial throughout our sessions, but especially following an activity when the members come back into the group and we are hearing how it was for them - there is something so key in demonstrating good attention that comes from eye contact

Nadia Chaney Agree, Bunty Cumberpants. I love your "especially" there. What do you think is special or specific about that particular moment in a group's journey, when they going to share their experience of an activity?

Amber Hescocock Johnson When I'm leading groups of kids I notice that by using eye contact and subtle facial expressions, I can get attention and even some laughs.

Bunty Cumberpants I feel that is a very specific moment because often we are at our most vulnerable when we are feeding back on something we have just completed and it can be intimidating for some people to put themselves forward at that point

Nadia Chaney Bunty Cumberpants...are you saying that the eye contact is supportive at that time? Is there a style of eye contact that you use at that time?

Bunty Cumberpants Hmm, that's an interesting question ... I'm not sure about style of eye contact - it's probably a whole facial expression - but my intent comes from a place of offering reassurance

Nadia Chaney Ah...intent and eye contact...Bunty Cumberpants, that is an interesting arena to explore!

Bunty Cumberpants Indeed!

Helena Hennighausen Amber, I agree. Young children naturally seem to like to be seen. However, recently I was working with a group of pre-teens and they would not connect to eye contact at all. I felt like I stepped into foreign territory with them. The group threw me off kilter!



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[Nadia Chaney](#) [Helena Hennighausen](#) thank you for sharing that experience! What strategies did you use, or what might you have tried?

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) [Helena Hennighausen](#), ooh, yes. Hard to navigate without some eye contact for feedback. With some people though, just a moment or second of eye contact is sort of a big gift. Hmm.... I would love to learn more about whether teens have unique levels or usage of eye contact.... maybe they're just more shielded around adults?

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) and [Helena Hennighausen](#) I wonder if it is connected to a kind of group culture...and if sometimes we can kind of learn HOW a group uses eye contact differently than we do. I've noticed that in some of my travels...eye contact has a different tone in different places and cultures.

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) [Nadia Chaney](#), that is so fascinating. I suppose you are mindful and able to adjust? What a skill!

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) I've learned a lot through mistakes and feedback, I'd say. ☺

[Helena Hennighausen](#) This was the first time I was with a group of 11-13 year olds and was last minute tasked with organizing a group of youths to run a booth at a fundraiser – so not a facilitation type role. They had their agenda, I had mine. I found myself getting more dominant to try and regain control - More eye contact, stricter communication. I like to be the adult that the youth in my community feel comfortable with and be a person who can calmly redirect a group. To be honest, the whole interaction went to pieces, and I am still trying to learn from it.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thanks for sharing it, [Helena Hennighausen](#). It's actually a really helpful story...I am hoping that we can look at the times when eye contact is tough or hard to use in this Assembly. (appreciative glance)

[Helena Hennighausen](#) [Nadia Chaney](#), I took a course last year on Multiculturalism and Globalization. The text is about three inches thick, covering many cultures! Each cultural section discusses the use of eye contact in that culture. I found it really interesting. As [Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) brought up, I also wonder whether different groups within the same culture have naturally different expectations and comfort with eye contact. Does eye contact change during our lives depending on our developmental stage?

[Nadia Chaney](#)☺[Helena Hennighausen](#) I think it's connected to the thread [Xoli Fuyani](#) is on in Discussion Question #3! Ah the chaos of the Assembly! I love it!



[Arindita Gogoi](#) I remember as a child one of the teachers would make eye contact with only the boys and he would literally put a blind eye to the girls and it really lowered our self esteem in the subject. We later on confronted him. But this taught me a lesson for life. How not to facilitate. It was a stark case of intentional non-invitation to education.

[Nadia Chaney](#)

Discussion Question #3: Are there times when eye contact can disrupt your facilitation work? What can you do to lessen these disruptions?

[Nadia Chaney](#) Or maybe you have a story to share here?

[Bunty Cumberpants](#) Sometimes this can be difficult in the field of Learning Disability, as some of the people I work with can be triggered by eye contact - it is often a case of learning who feels uncomfortable with this within the Group and respecting that ...

[Nadia Chaney](#) Yes, [Bunty Cumberpants](#). This is where I'm hoping we can go with this Question. What are some important cautions...when is eye contact not "a good in itself..."

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) Yes! [Bunty Cumberpants](#), great point. My daughter's vision issues make sustained eye contact hard. I have to work closely with her teachers so this isn't held against her.

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Bunty Cumberpants](#) and [Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) I hear you both talking about assumptions here.

[Susan Wellisch](#) Shows how important it is.

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) Yes, [Nadia Chaney](#). People often assume no eye contact = no interest/attention. Some people with ADD, for example, can engage better while moving/doodling.

[Bunty Cumberpants](#) Absolutely, I have been in a situation in the past where I witnessed a agency support worker transgress this boundary with a young student on the Autistic Spectrum and it had very serious implications



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[Susan Wellisch](#) So sad - gotta go now. I'll read the pdf. Thanks for everyone's insight. Beautiful.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thanks [Susan Wellisch](#)! See you soon

[Susan Wellisch](#) Bye

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) Catch you later, [Susan Wellisch](#)!

[Rekha Kurup](#) I don't think I have ever had the experience of eye contact disrupting facilitation work. It maybe because I know how to modulate and work with my eye contact. However, I have found between participants it can cause discomfort if you have someone whose eye contact can be perceived as a judgement stare or rudeness. I always speak about eye contact in the guidelines of facilitation to give everyone the freedom to meet or not meet your gaze, and being mindful of your gaze.

[Rekha Kurup](#) Especially when working with at-risk youth or trauma victims, it is very important to handle gaze mindfully!

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Rekha Kurup](#), could you describe that mindfulness a little? What techniques or tips could you share about how you work with at-risk or traumatized populations?

[Xoli Fuyani](#) Yes... coming from a tradition where eye contact is seen as a sign of disrespect esp with elders. When working with african black elders need to remind myself not to make too much eye contact. At times even young ppl feel uncomfortable when you look them in the eyes... very tricky one but you learn to adapt to each situation and be flexible.

[Rekha Kurup](#) Focusing on Working with hands, art, and giving them the freedom to not having to look. I always say it is ok to keep your gaze low - towards the earth or with yourself as we get into activity or when sharing till you feel comfortable in the group.

[Rekha Kurup](#) Yes. [Xoli](#) depending on the audience we need to play with our eye contact. In india also in certain situations with elders we might need to keep our gaze low as a sign of respect.

[Mayan Patel](#) When I teach yoga I often don't make eye contact with students mid practice because there's a specific place I want them to look with their gaze (in turn orient their body) and have their awareness internally rather than engage with me.



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[Nadia Chaney](#) [Mayan Patel](#), I've found that sometimes in my facilitation practice...sometimes my eye contact can prevent the group from connecting with themselves, or even with each other. It keeps drawing the attention back to me.

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) You're making me realize that I probably avoid eye contact in an effort to not bring attention to myself. Great discussion with great people.

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) YES, isn't that interesting. And as I become more conscious of those choices, my spectrum of choice increases, I think

[Virtually Ally](#) [Nadia Chaney](#), that's interesting...how does your eye contact "prevent the group from connecting with themselves"?

[Nadia Chaney](#) Well...it's almost like a hub on a wheel [Virtually Ally](#). As if each individual is connected to me at the centre. Sometimes that can be good...at the beginning. But as soon as we have a little traction I want to move out of the centre and start centering the group's relationships and process. So I start tempering the intensity of eye contact, or even asking participants to speak to the group and not to me.

[Virtually Ally](#) Thanks, [Nadia Chaney](#)...ok, I think I see (pun intended), centering/guiding the group into relationship & process, which creates more and more eye contact with each other (or their art etc) and less focus on the facilitator.

[Virtually Ally](#) "Asking participants to speak to the group and not to me" Thanks, [Nadia Chaney](#) for this gem of a reminder!!

[Clarinda R. Laforteza](#) would a break be appropriate(like a time-out?) ?

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Clarinda R. Laforteza](#), do you mean for the Case Study with the giggles? Yes, I think taking a break or playing an activity where the eyes were otherwise engaged would help...



[Nadia Chaney](#)

Discussion Question #4 (last one before the case studies!): What are some of your best practices or tips for using eye contact in group facilitation? What are some important things to keep in mind?

[Nadia Chaney](#) One to get us started: I try not to make more eye contact with the people who seem to "like" me or who are giving me positive feedback in the group.

[Nadia Chaney](#) I'm commenting here to move this question up the page ☺
cheating!

[Amber Hescoc Johnson](#) I don't have much experience but from what I've learned about my daughter and her vision issues, something to keep in mind is that a lack of eye contact doesn't necessarily mean a lack of engagement.... sometimes even a brief bit of eye contact can be powerful and enough to stay connected.

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Amber Hescoc Johnson](#), what are some ways to connect that can easily substitute for eye contact in your experience?

[Amber Hescoc Johnson](#) I use my voice and probably exaggerate my tone a bit--without even realizing it. This shows engagement too.

[Mayan Patel](#) When I was giving a talk a friend of mine gave me a tip that worked well for me "imagine having a 5 second conversation with everyone" if anything it helped me connect to myself rather than dissipate out undirected energy

[Nadia Chaney](#) Got this advice from [Warren Hooley](#): "think in the eyes" in group leadership, and also "watch it land" which I think connects a little to what you're saying
[Mayan Patel](#)

[Amber Hescoc Johnson](#) [Nadia Chaney](#)--what do you mean by "watch it land"?

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Amber Hescoc Johnson](#), what I got from [Warren Hooley](#) was that when you say something to a participant hold the eye contact with them as they digest what you've said. Watch as they digest what you've just said. It slows down the process and allows for more processing and connection

[Nadia Chaney](#) I think [Warren Hooley](#) learned these things from a master of public speaking course he took...can't recall the name. But maybe he'll see this tag and add it in.



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[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) Thank you, [Nadia Chaney](#)--that will be something I practice!

[Warren Hooley](#) "Watch it land" has single handedly changed my speaking style ;-)) just pausing your speech for even literally a second and holding your engagement with someone can really create that feeling that your having a one on one conversation with each person in the room ☺

...I have gotten that exact feedback multiple times said in different ways ☺

Thanks for the shout out [Nadia Chaney](#)...hope this "lands" Amber ;-)

[Nadia Chaney](#)

Oh Yes, it's time for...Case Study #1: There is a young person in your opening check in circle who is looking down at the ground, and is mumbling their answers so no one can hear. You ask them to please look up so people can hear and they seem to shrink further into their chair. What do you think is going on for them? What can you do?

[Nadia Chaney](#) Hi! I'm going to post the 2nd Case Study too...

[Amber Hescocock Johnson](#) I think they are so nervous they can barely speak. Maybe removing any pressure for a while, then offering extra reassurance or encouragement. I don't know... what has worked for you in such situations?

[Clarinda R. Laforteza](#) social anxiety [blockage of intimacy - afraid to be known]

[Clarinda R. Laforteza](#) public speaking fear

[Arindita Gogoi](#) I think it could be social anxiety and we should not insist on eye contact. We should first try to create a safe space for him/ her...if they are already muttering answers, it might be a better idea to go very close to them and ask them to speak only to you, or encourage them to write it down. And gradually work with them .



Nadia Chaney

oooh, ahhhh, it's Case Study #2: You are doing a new workshop and you are feeling a little nervous. Most of the group seem to be interested, but fairly quiet. There is one participant who is an expert in your topic and is being very challenging and vocal. How might you use your eye contact to support yourself?

Clarinda R. Laforteza cross eyes for an awkward reaction?(!)

Nadia Chaney Clarinda R. Laforteza! That is a fascinating answer! What effect do you think it would have on the group as a whole, and on that individual?

Clarinda R. Laforteza noticing & addressing lightly - set tone of correction w/acceptance of person - acknowledging necessity of a sense of humor in group

Clarinda R. Laforteza crossing fingers too that it'd work

Nadia Chaney 😊

Nadia Chaney

Aaand...

Case Study #3: You are leading a group song or telling a story. How do you use your eyes?

Virtually Ally I have never led a group song (although I hope to one day). I remember sitting in a large group and we were taught a song and once we knew the words the teacher asked us all to close our eyes and sing. A very powerful experience! Closing the eyes gave people permission to let go.

Nadia Chaney Virtually Ally, if you imagine yourself leading a song in the future, what do you imagine you might do with your eyes?



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[Virtually Ally](#) My eyes are very expressive when I tell a story. It's almost like they are characters - they crinkle up, get big and wide, soften and even smile!

[Nadia Chaney](#) Lovely!

[Amber Hescoc Johnson](#) I want to come to your story time, [Virtually Ally](#)! 😊

[Clarinda R. Laforteza](#) very expressively - telling it through them

[Virtually Ally](#) I'm imagining Charlie when he taught us the Kuku Body Rhythm and I noticed he started by gazing across the entire group, not holding anyone's gaze for very long, and he even looked down a few times. I remember thinking he was creating a feeling of safety for all of us - but as we started to boogie I would notice he held each person's gaze for a longer amount of time as a sign of encouragement. And he never stopped smiling. If I imagine leading a song I would try that out because Charlie inspires me. 😊

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thanks for that, [Virtually Ally](#)! [Charlie Murphy](#) is definitely a very inspiring song and rhythm leader...amongst other thing 😊 Thanks for sharing your memory of that moment!

[Nadia Chaney](#)

And finally: Case Study #4: Two participants in your group keep making eye contact with each other and smiling or even laughing while others are speaking. How might this be affecting the group? What might be happening? What can you do?

[Clarinda R. Laforteza](#) giggle-itis(possibly?!)......love connection(untimely)...total disruption

[Amber Hescoc Johnson](#) They are nervous and sort of leaning on each other, perhaps. It might distract the group or make them feel self-conscious or annoyed!

[Yoram Bitton](#) In every group processing lie down idea of couple. Byon



[Nadia Chaney](#) [Yoram Bitton](#), I agree. Reminding them about how coupling can affect a group's dynamic is so important.

[Yoram Bitton](#) Reflecting, or thinking of activity makes the idea of couple activated

[Jacob Rose](#) I haven't yet participated in one of these but my idea: If it's simply short term distracting and not a repeated issue, try an exercise that gets everyone into themselves/connected with someone they don't know. For example a visualization exercise where everyone closes their eyes, or something where people pair off and ensure they do with someone new.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thanks Jacob Rose!

[Nadia Chaney](#)

Okay good people. This has been a brilliant discussion. Thank you for your wisdom, experience, compassion and all your hard work and big love in the world. PYE will soon post the transcript, and this page stays open if you would like to add anything to any of the posts. We are seeking new topics for the upcoming sessions. If you have any ideas please feel free to post them on this page. If you enjoyed today's session please tell your facilitator, teacher, manager, social worker, group therapist activist and social artist friends! Please take a minute to fill out this survey so we can improve your experience:



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[Virtually Ally](#) Thanks to everyone! Grateful to visionaries [Nadia Chaney](#) & [Amber Hescock Johnson](#). I'm "seeing" this topic in new ways. Wishing everyone continued great health, happiness & ease.

[Amber Hescock Johnson](#) Same to you, [Virtually Ally](#)!

[Xoli Fuyani](#) Thanks [Nadia Chaney](#).... lost connection & cldnt continue to participate. but read all comments ☺ X

[Nadia Chaney](#) [Xoli Fuyani](#) that's too bad. But thank you for being there.



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