

PYE Third Thursday Assembly  
February 16, 2017

\*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Dear 3rd Thursday Assemblers! Welcome back, or, if it's your first time WELCOME! This is an exciting format we have been developing where people contribute and discuss a niche aspect of group facilitation.

Below you will find: A Check-in Question (please answer!); Goals and Agreements for today's session (hit "like" to agree to uphold these agreements during the session); 3 discussion questions and 3 case studies (posted approximately every ten minutes; answer in any order). I will be facilitating this experience for 90 minutes. There will be a pdf transcript posted on the [www.pyeglobal.org](http://www.pyeglobal.org) website, as well as the files of this facebook page, in a short while. These transcripts are so great we're thinking of making a book out of them!

This month we are discussing THE VALUE AND PRACTICE OF INTERRUPTING IN GROUP PROCESS

Interrupting is a skill that great facilitators use all the time. But we don't always talk about it or practice it because it's thought of as impolite, overpowering and sometimes even harmful. We might normally think of listening as positive and interrupting as negative, but in this session we are going to make that equation more subtle. We will start from a premise that people want to be heard, that deep and empathic listening is one of the three most important skills for a facilitator (along with speaking authentically and personal presence) and from there explore the ways that skillful interruption can support a group's process and development.

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[Nadia Chaney](#) Welcome Clarinda R. Laforteza!



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Goals and Agreements for this session on Feb 16 2017:

- 1) To understand the value of interrupting during a group process
- 2) To learn to interrupt in a more skillful manner
- 3) To increase our options and choices as facilitators
- 4) To share our diverse experiences of interrupting and being interrupted
- 5) To support each others learning and have meaningful fun!

In order to achieve these, here are some suggestions for COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS to make our time together flow really well. Be sure to add what you need or want AT ANY TIME DURING THE PROCESS. Let the group know or privately message the facilitator if you are concerned that an agreement is being broken.

- 1) No put downs of self or others. Keep a positive, lift-up vibe. If the facilitator finds your comments aggressive or inappropriate in any way you will receive a personal message.
- 2) Be willing to entertain simultaneous truths. Rather than proving a point, try to listen to understand, and be willing to agree to disagree. At the same time, if you have a strong belief be willing to stand up for it. This will make our conversations rich!
- 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. The questions move around depending on how many people are answering, so please scan the whole page for new questions now and then.
- 4) Maintain CONFIDENTIALITY by not sharing names or personal information about the participants in your groups, sharing from your own perspective, and asking permission before sharing someone else's story.



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5) Answer any questions in the COMMENTS below the question to keep the conversation organized and readable. Only open NEW questions in new threads.

6) 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](#) Malek Yalaoui, Yessica Rivera Belsham, Ray Schöne, Vanessa Richards don't forget to "like" these goals and agreements to indicate that you've read them 😊:)

[Sumanth Raj](#) Nice

\*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Check-in Question for Aug 25 2016: Look around at the place you are in right now. Describe one thing you see that represents the way you feel. (Using other senses is great, too!)

[Malek Yalaoui](#) House plant leaning towards the window/light.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Hi Malek! Great to have you here! Is this your first 3rd Thurs?

[Malek Yalaoui](#) Sure is! So excited 😊

[Nadia Chaney](#) For me, I feel calm and inspired. I see my favorite reading armchair across the room, with it's dark gray fabric and it's inviting arms!



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[Clarinda R. Laforteza](#) Rx files...feeling to organize myself - \*what i take in for nourishment

[Vanessa Richards](#) Moss green window sheers on a south facing balcony window. Expansive, defining, effective but lighthanded, and well weathered.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Hi Ness! Great to have you here!

[Yessica Rivera Belsham](#) My client's banana with brown spots. A little bruised, but has a bright glow. Waiting to have the layers pulled off to explore whats inside. It looks cozy.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Love it! Welcome Yessi!

[Ray Schöne](#) Sitting on a comfy couch with two cute kittens playing around me

[Nadia Chaney](#) Nice one! Hi Ray!

[Ray Schöne](#) Hi there Nadia 😊

[Kayley Marsh](#) Young girl coming of age, lying on a hill staring at the infinite sky of stars and possibility, poetry floating overhead.

[Kayley Marsh](#) Will have to leave soon-ish for a meeting.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Wow, beautiful! Welcome Kayley!

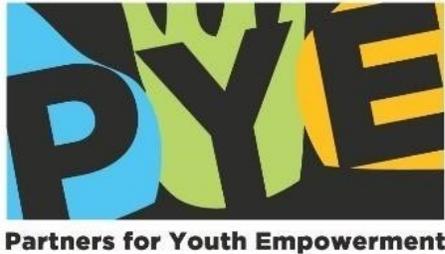
[Clarinda R. Laforteza](#) "infinite sky of stars' ~ \*luv that!

[Iris Moore](#) Piece of art I'm working on- a dancing lady

[Vanessa Richards](#) Hello dear Iris!

[Nadia Chaney](#) Iris! Hello!

[Carina Costom](#) Hi Iris:)



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[Silvia Giovannoni Webster](#) Hey All. Sorry I won't be able to stick around but wanted to check in. Such a good question. I feel like my rolled out yoga mat - grounded, stretched, a little sweaty and weathered.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thanks for checking in, Sil! You can always jump in later today or in the next few days, the posts will still be live

[Vanessa Richards](#) Sending you a hello and hug Silvia.

[Silvia Giovannoni Webster](#) Vanessa Richards big hugs back x

[Silvia Giovannoni Webster](#) Nadia Chaney most definitely will do Nadia. X

[Carrie Besko Garn](#) A stack of papers that I am hoping to minimize by the end of the day and a steaming cup of woody-smelling tea 😊:)

[Nadia Chaney](#) Hello Carrie Besko Garn!

[Carrie Besko Garn](#) Hi Nadia 😊:)

[Bru Na](#) Lung-ta (praying flags) blown by the breeze and lighed by the last sun rays in my patio. Centered calm yet moving with the flow.

[Debra Sequoia](#) Through the window pane. Tree, leafless, barren branches. Reveal clouding sky.

[Barb Applepieski](#) A cutting mat handed down to me by another artist, grooves worn in by rotary blades & exactos to cut fabric & paper. Endless possibility and a rich history! (I also will need to leave very soon but wanted to stop in and say hi)

[Nadia Chaney](#) Hi Barb! Great to have you here even if just for a mo'

[Natasha Duchene](#) Dog, chilled out on the couch.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Natasha! Welcome!



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[Arindita Gogoi](#) Sorry for a late check-in! Well, I can see a bunch of keys around me and I feel like I am unlocking the mystery to my own happiness 😊:)

[Nadia Chaney](#) Lovely to have you back!

[Natasha Duchene](#) I love this so much!

[Hatem El Wakeel](#) Bic Lighter , red and warm

[Carina Costom](#) I see a beautiful handmade Waldorf Style paper star on my window. As the white snows are melting here in the Kootenays, it reminds me of the beauty of colour, diversity and clear direction. I feel a sense of peace sitting on my kitchen chair planning workshops and feeling the privilege of moving forward with dreams that belong to me for the sharing.



\*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Did you read the goals and agreements, and answer the check-in questions? Yes?  
Yay!

Here's Discussion Question #1: When is it important to be able to interrupt in a group process? Let's build as long a list of examples as possible.



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[Nadia Chaney](#) I'll get us started...it's important to be able to interrupt as a facilitator when the group cannot hear the speaker.

[Ray Schöne](#) Not necessarily, if the groups is engaged in a productive process leading to some deeper discoveries, the facilitator should be able to let it flow and wait...

[Nadia Chaney](#) If someone is speaking and the group cannot hear them? Interesting. Tell me more.

[Ray Schöne](#) Sure, if the facilitator wants to give instructions it is important to try interrupt, but not when there is a natural flow in the group that might lead to some deep insights

[Nadia Chaney](#) Ah, I see what you mean, Ray. Thank you for that clarification. I meant, when a group member is speaking to the group, and they don't realize that some folks cannot hear their voice.

[Ray Schöne](#) ok, understand

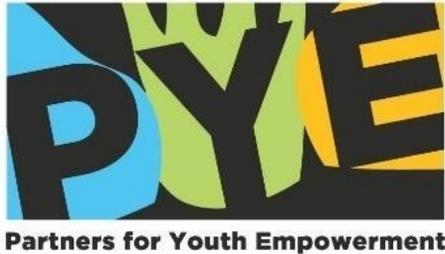
[Ray Schöne](#) I think that the skill of listening is one of the most important ones that anyone can learn, because it leads to insight, understanding, wisdom, and learning as a whole. So, it would be important for the facilitator to help the group understand the benefits of listening well.

[Iris Moore](#) When an activity has started but you notice not everyone understands the instructions

[Kayley Marsh](#) I feel like it's important to interrupt when someone is saying something oppressive (i.e. broken agreements), but I wonder a lot about the complexity of these circumstances and facilitating a process of transformation from that break.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Hopefully we're going to reach that depth today, as we continue to discuss

[Nadia Chaney](#) Sometimes I will interrupt and put a pin in the comment, and let the person finish what they are saying, then begin the Broken Agreements process...usually one on one, and then coming back to the group later. Unless the comment is very inflammatory, in which case I will have the Broken Agreements conversation in front of the group, and with lots of spaciousness and respect. To me, the interruption here is key, because if the group doesn't know that you will uphold the agreements, it's hard for them to engage in the process at all.



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[Yessica Rivera Belsham](#) When there is a fire, or medical emergency

[Malek Yalaoui](#) When the person has been droning on for a long time....?

[Nadia Chaney](#) Oooh! What do people think? For me, sometimes I notice people seem to go in circles when they speak sometimes, and they appreciate being interrupted with a validation that they are being understood.

[Patty Thille](#) Some do, yes. Some however, are people who simply refuse to cede the floor. I'm thinking here of a person who does that at every event I've ever seen him attend.

[Carrie Besko Garn](#) I am interested in people's suggestions for this. We had an individual at camp last year who really enjoyed sharing her stories and experiences, but since our check-ins were often time-constricted, the group was getting fairly tense.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Yes, that is a different situation. Do you think that it is important to be able to interrupt people who are dominating the group?

[Nadia Chaney](#) I'm hoping that over the course of this session we can build/uncover powerful tools for interrupting in an empowering way, Carrie Besko Garn

[Natasha Duchene](#) I do feel it is important to be able to interrupt people who are dominating the group. That being said, I've had it go sideways. In one instance, I was trying to make space for other participants, but the person dominating shut down and our rapport / trust was broken.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Does anyone have a story from this thread, about interrupting the "long talker" for Discussion Question #4?

[Nadia Chaney](#) Would you interrupt if you think that a speaker's comments are rude or offensive towards someone else in the group?

[Patty Thille](#) I would be likely to, especially if they are not ceding the floor.

[Carrie Besko Garn](#) My instinct is yes, but I wonder if that would be disrespectful to the person that the comments were directed at.



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[Carrie Besko Garn](#) Giving them a chance to respond makes more sense, I think.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Nice, Carrie Besko Garn. Would you let the speaker finish the comment first?

[Carrie Besko Garn](#) I would like to think so. I think it really depends how inflammatory the comment was. I tend to be impatient-I'm working on that.

[Ray Schöne](#) Perhaps it would be help to interrupt here and ask the speaker to just give the one who is addressed the chance to state if this can continue or if this is becoming unbearable for the one who is addressed.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Would you interrupt to help refocus a heated conversation?

[Ray Schöne](#) It depends, sometimes it has it's own dynamic flow that could lead to some productive points that might bring closure to previously unaddressed questions.

[Ray Schöne](#) Interruption can have different qualities - it could mean stopping a certain communication or it could be a deflection or redirecting of flow

[Thandile Giyama](#) When there's a put down in a community, be it of self or others.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thandile Giyama, it would be great to hear in Question #3 how you have interrupted to address a put down in teh group

[Nadia Chaney](#) Would you interrupt if someone is about to make a really juicy, salient point and then backs up or slides over it to another topic?

[Vanessa Richards](#) I may remind that speaker that their POV is appreciated and they are safe/encouraged to speak what's sometimes harder to say.

[Barb Applepieski](#) I don't know if I'd interrupt but I'd totally try and direct the next question either into the new channel or back to the juicy point (but from a different angle)

[Naava Smolash](#) ooooh interesting



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[Natasha Duchene](#) I have had this happen to me! And I think you saw me backing up, [Nadia](#), and I was grateful (though nervous!) to go there. It was so worth it though!

[Nadia Chaney](#) Would you interrupt if someone is "rescuing" another participant, or jumping in to "save" them?

[Vanessa Richards](#) Ah, just had the impulse to save the one being saved...!

[Vanessa Richards](#) Would really need to monitor my own impulses on that one :- )

[Ray Schöne](#) I'd like to because the 'saving other' / 'helper syndrome' could itself be an interruption to the flow of the groups dynamics.

[Barb Applepieski](#) I think it would be fair to interrupt here, and ask the rescuer to hold their thought. It sounds like there is an opportunity to ask a closed question too, to ask the whole group "who else is having thoughts about this?" to acknowledge that rescuers impulse without letting it derail.

[Vanessa Richards](#) Barb Applepieski , yes and then maybe something like, "We can talk about that more after we move through this original conversation'. My concern would be that the speaker would then feel self conscious and loose the juice. Not sure here what would be best for speaker and group, the conversation...

[Barb Applepieski](#) Lots to think on here, thanks!

[Nadia Chaney](#) Would you interrupt to break up a long statement into separate parts for teh group to be able to hold onto and think about? (A specific kind of reframing)

[Ray Schöne](#) Perhaps I would invite the group to give comments to points they might find interesting or important and then move on

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Most of the scenarios have already been discussed; I'd interrupt if I feel that a person becomes the focus instead of the process or the case in question. Though there may be times when it is possible to create an inter-personal space(when there is willingness from the participants), but if I feel that it is disengaging a large group of people, then I might try to interrupt and take the example of the particular case study and open the discussion to others as well.



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[Arindita Gogoi](#) I would also interrupt if I hear the language to be generic; I have tried to focus a lot on 'I' communication and be accountable for what I say - the moment I start talking as we/people/everyone, there is a risk of generalising and forced consensus while the only opinion one can have is for oneself. Hence if I hear the language of stereotype and generalisation, I interrupt immediately. I request people to speak for themselves.

[Arindita Gogoi](#) I will also interrupt if we are going beyond the time limit and there is a requirement to move to another segment. It is difficult but also important to wrap up on time and ensure that I have fulfilled as a facilitator, the primary agenda for that day.

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Fourth scenario: If I am training facilitators and they are speaking in circles (or using way too many words to describe a simple thing.) I have learned this trick from my coach/guru: He used to tell us two things: 1) Before beginning to speak (as facilitators) ask yourself one question - what do I 'REALLY' want to say? 2) If I can't say what I want to say in four sentences, perhaps I have not understood it well enough, yet - hence redraft what you are planning to say. I have found these to be great tools for trainers' training interventions.

### \*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Discussion Question #2: What do you need to be aware of when interrupting?

[Thandile Giyama](#) To me, your body language would be one of the things that you need to be aware of. You might in your best awareness on your tone of voice, volume, with great awareness of words chosen. The commuters may experience different emotions to the ones you set for them to have...

[Debra Sequoia](#) I need to be aware of my motivation if I am interrupting. Am I being triggered by what they are sharing? Does my interruption facilitate or shut down the communication?

[Barb Appleski](#) Intention. Being grounded in your intention for the group/individual.

[Naava Smolash](#) need to be aware of how many different verbal / cultural / subcultural styles exist in the group or in the people involved in the moment and what constitutes an interruption for



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each. ie how much back channel talk or interleaving will this person need / expect, how much will interleaving vs silence be perceived as disrupting flow of conversation? for some, silence is a disruption because indicates disengagement while for others, silence is an indication of listening. for interleavers, an interruption is typically when you abruptly change topic without respecting the sequence of subjects or without responding and connecting to what they said in some way, or when you don't properly come back to a prior nested topic. for non-interleavers, any simultaneously speech may be an interruption - even speech that occurs without a long three second pause, for instance. how aware is the group of these cultural differences etc and how consciously can they engage across them

[Vanessa Richards](#) What is an interleaver?

[Naava Smolash](#) folks who are from families or cultures that expect shows of politeness to be demonstrated through forms of speech that overlap rather than beginning separately. ie interleavers may expect the conversational flow to move back and forth in shorter bits with a subtle signalling of when turn-taking is expected (a 'latch'), unlike in non-interleaving speech where silence is expected between utterances.

[Naava Smolash](#) typically white culture (especially prairies or central) expects silence between utterances to signal turn taking, where many cultures or subcultures find this a show of disengagement - and it also results in long speech making rather than many small back and forths that build. i have generally been told east asian cultures on the whole lean towards non-interleaving as well, while many south asian, arab and middle eastern, and Black cultures tend more often towards interleaving. obvs it's not like every family or person does what is the cultural norm in any given context but in very wide strokes

[Naava Smolash](#) also need to be aware of unspoken power dynamics in the group. who is feeling entitled to space and who may need more encouragement or safety.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Naava, is this your first 3rd Thurs? It's so great to have you here!

[Naava Smolash](#) yay! yes first & i so glad to be learning w you.

[Natasha Duchene](#) I find this so hard! I often have more structural privilege than many people in my groups and so I am very aware of that if I feel interrupting may be necessary.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Thank you, Natasha. I'd love to hear how you manage that privilege in Question #3



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[Arindita Gogoi](#) 1. That I am not interrupting a flow 2. That I am clearly stating that I am stepping in because of a particular reason, and state the reason 3. I acknowledge that I understand that people want to express and continue speaking and engaging, but we need to bring focus to a certain issue 4. I don't use any violence during the interruption 5. I am mindful of my gestures - no facial or other physical expression/body language that communicates disdain, anger, judgment or disengagement

[Naava Smolash](http://www.sklatch.net/thoughtlets/turns.html) <http://www.sklatch.net/thoughtlets/turns.html>  
*Conversation styles for collaboration*

Essay shows how an interleaving conversation style supports collaboration.  
sklatch.net

[Natasha Duchene](#) This looks very interesting. Bookmarking for later, thank you!

\*[Nadia Chaney](#)

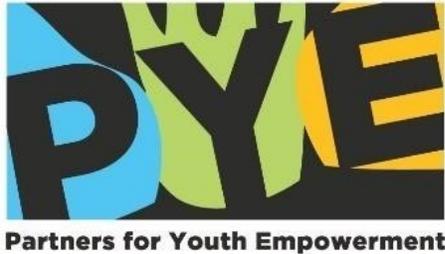
Discussion Question #3: What skills and techniques do you use to interrupt in a skillful way? Are there specific phrases or methods that you use?

[Nadia Chaney](#) Vanessa Richards, I think your last comment could be fleshed out here...

[Nadia Chaney](#) For me, one thing I'm really trying to work with is the rhythm of breath, both mine and the person I'm going to interrupt. I'm often looking for the very nuanced timing when the interruption seems most natural.

[Vanessa Richards](#) That seems a very good technique for 'catching' the flow and not jarring it. Kind of akido like.

[Barb Appleski](#) nice, thank you for this!



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[Nadia Chaney](#) I also really like to use positive energy to interrupt, like saying things like "Nice, I love that comment" or "Thank you so much for sharing that" "or "That is very interesting" ...and really giving that energy of appreciation some space of it's own before inserting the interruption

[Nadia Chaney](#) Do you ever interrupt using ONLY body language?

[Natasha Duchene](#) I try to be as grounded as possible in my integrity, being honest about my reason for interrupting, while still staying positive and doing my best to make sure the person speaking feels heard and acknowledged. I could use some more skills in this department though! I was in a group where a person had been consistently dominating for many sessions together, and the facilitator simply brought attention to the fact that this person was doing a lot of speaking and other folks were not speaking as much. It really felt like a "highest self to highest self" comment and I was impressed. It took awhile for the feedback to sink in I think, but the group immediately took a deep breath and I do feel it moved us forward.

[Nadia Chaney](#) I love this. I think it's important for the facilitator respectfully acknowledging "the elephant in the room" even if it doesn't immediately change behaviour. Interrupting can be about bringing things to light.

[Naava Smolash](#) this can be so scary to do

### \*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Now, I love to ask "story" questions, but I notice they can be tough to answer. Remember, your story can be just a line or two...just a quick sketch can be so helpful.

Discussion Question #4: Can you share a short story about a time you interrupted as a facilitator? Both "success" and "failure" stories are welcome!

[Vanessa Richards](#) There was a floor dominater at a public forum and the room was getting frustrated. I was not facilitating and I did interrupt. I said, "Stop. Please stop talking. Share the floor. Let others speak". They stopped and the room exhaled. It was simple and the forum continued renewed.



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[Vanessa Richards](#) At the time I wasn't sure if it was too bossy but it felt the most time effective and clear and met the energy of the speaker.

[Nadia Chaney](#) Bold! Love it. Part of the impetus of this topic for me was to push back on normal politeness, to get to deeper levels of connection and possibility.

[Arindita Gogoi](#) I will share what I thought was a good intervention by a co-facilitator. We were discussing about conflict resolution and it was a mixed group of people (professors of colleges, therapists, special educators, teachers, school principals, adventure facilitators) and the principal of a school kept bringing her personal conflict case about a particular person in the school. At first we went with the flow to understand if we can learn something from the experience. But then as the program progressed we felt as if she had come to attend that session to ensure that she goes back with a solution to that particular problem alone and she was taking up every body else's space to share. Our co-facilitator finally interrupted her and requested her for a separate platform, if she really wanted to discuss about it and made herself available for that conversation, and then she opened up the case study as a general case study where if you have a conflict like this - what would others do in this case. And then view it from various conflict models.

[Sumanth Raj](#) Some days back in my school 3rd standard students started happily shouting,creaming,jumping, exited lot ..... When i m started entering there class room side n taking another class I was shocked n i can't controlled there exitment n shouting it tough time in cls room

### \*[Nadia Chaney](#)

CASE STUDY TIME HAS ARRIVED!! (Remember, you don't have to answer the questions in order...)

Case Study #1: You have a group of fifteen teenagers in an after school program. They always come in full of energy and excited to see each other, and usually take at least a half hour of your ninety minutes program to get started. Today that has stretched to forty five minutes. They are in the midst of a conversation about a pop star in the media. Do you interrupt to get your program started? If so, how?



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[Arindita Gogo](#) Hehe...that happens so often! At a point like this, I usually try not to engage them in any conversation. I play a video/song and leave lyric sheets around and start encouraging them to sing along...it takes about five minutes, but it has done the trick each time.

[Nadia Chaney](#) I like that. I love the way you interrupt the habit of the group by anticipating their behaviour and redirecting.

### \*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Case Study #2: You are facilitating a community meeting about a serious neighbourhood issue and the outcome of the meeting is a group decision. There is a respected elder who has been explaining the situation in the tiniest detail. People are starting to squirm. Do you interrupt, and if so, how?

[Sarah Cathrae](#) I would interrupt with a really general question. Hopefully the elder would stop and answer the question and the follow-up questions would demonstrate the appetite of the group for specifics.

[Arindita Gogo](#) I like this approach - to raise my hand and ask a question which hopefully does not lead to another detailed answer.

[Naava Smolash](#) i wouldn't

[Naava Smolash](#) (i would model for the group listening to the elder past what the group might be used to, depending on context?) also depends where this is happening, is it an Indigenous or settler context etc

[Naava Smolash](#) (or is the elder an older white dude who just likes to hear himself talk but isn't that informed - i guess then i would)



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[Nadia Chaney](#) To me, the question for me is in the tiny details from the "respected elder"...is there an insight or perspective that the group hasn't considered. I might interrupt though, to help refocus the group and contain the squirming...sometimes people talk long when they don't feel heard...

[Natasha Duchene](#) oh I like this, thank you!

[Arindita Gogoi](#) It is a tricky one - if there is a person who is already facilitating this meeting, then I will not interrupt. I will try to have some kind of non verbal communication or eye contact with the facilitator requesting for an interruption or pass a note. If it was me who was facilitating this meeting, then I would certainly intervene keeping in mind all of the things that I had mentioned about interruptions.

[Crystal Smith](#) I know this is super late but I felt the need to answer.

As an Indigenous women I have been taught never to interrupt an elder. I've been told that though you might not remember all the details of the story and maybe you lose focus but later in life the story comes back to you and gives you guidance.

\*[Nadia Chaney](#)

I don't usually do this...but I'm going to post ALL the Case Studies in case one appeals to you especially.

Case Study #3: You are leading an anti-racism workshop for a small business in your community. Someone makes a remark to the effect that racism does not exist. Other people are clearly offended but no one says anything. The first person continues talking, trying to explain themselves. The situation is becoming more and more tense and awkward. What do you do?

[Carrie Besko Garn](#) Perhaps ask questions that might help the person clarify?



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[Patty Thille](#) E.g how do you define racism?

[Patty Thille](#) Though even with that, caution is needed. A pause to say, "not everyone in the room agrees with you. Let's try to figure out how to best proceed", maybe?

[Patty Thille](#) I'm still thinking about this. Perhaps it would work to pause the group, and ask everyone to write out what they think racism is. Collect the responses, and read them aloud, then work from there?

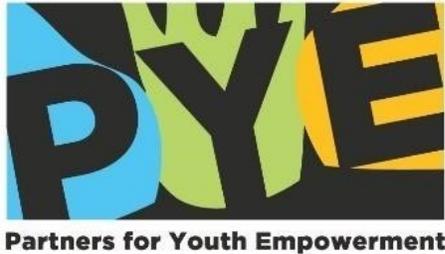
[Carrie Besko Garn](#) That is a great idea! It takes the pressure off and encourages discussion.

[Natasha Duchene](#) Depending on how long the person is talking, I might not interrupt right away but rather give myself and the group a moment to ground and breathe, remind the speaker the group that this is why we're here and to revisit agreements before moving the conversation forward. Edit: I want to add that this response comes from a previous 3rd Thursday Assembly, which was also super helpful. Thanks again Nadia 😊:)

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Firstly, I will not judge that person because that is going to completely cloud what approach I take next (Everyone comes from their own conditioning and primary experiences and it is possible that either s/he has an inaccurate understanding of the term itself or has been in an environment where they've not had the exposure to any form of racism). Then I will genuinely try to understand, by asking them the following questions 1) What is his/her definition/understanding of the term racism? 2) Request him/her give objective reasons or examples to illustrate that view point 3) Open up the question to the rest of the group where I will ask if they have had similar or different experiences?

\*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Case Study #4: You are facilitating a personal development seminar and someone is telling a very long, tearful, personal story. You feel them starting to go in circles with the story. What do you do?



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[Debra Sequoia](#) This is the situation I struggle with. Hope there are some ideas out there!

[Nadia Chaney](#) The question, what is it you most want to tell us right now can be helpful.

[Natasha Duchene](#) I might interrupt with some active listening statements, and then ask a question to try and refocus the story. I really like the question about what's most helpful to the group also! Something we do in our expressive arts groups when this happens is to ask the person how it might be if someone were to sit back to back to them, and maybe even have another person on each side with their backs to the person as well (leaning in a bit). If they said no, it might be a moment to invite them to take a deep breath and ask a focusing question, and if they agree to having physical support while they tell their story, it does take a little bit of time, but so far every time the person has grounded and the energy has shifted through this process.

[Iris Moore](#) asking first if you can ask them question, then asking a guiding question to help them find their conclusion (and seeing if it can be tied back into whatever the context of the discussion is)

[Iris Moore](#) in sensitive moments, asking for permission to interrupt or to ask a question can make an interruption seem less abrasive, and more often than not the person accepts gracefully

### \*[Nadia Chaney](#)

Well, thus endeth our 90 mins together this month. I'll keep checking in thru the day for any late posts. This has been a really useful session, thank you everyone for bringing your experience, curiosity, and witnessing to the process. Thank you for your skills, your practice, your honesty and your willingness to support each other! 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 always open to 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! Don't forget to check [www.pyeglobal.org](http://www.pyeglobal.org) for upcoming trainings, too, there's some new ones just posted.



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[Vanessa Richards](#) Thanks all for your wisdom and generosity! I appreciate that you were able to be here now. Vx

[Natasha Duchene](#) Thank you so much Nadia! I learn so much from you and from everyone here.