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Live Forum - August 16, 2018

LEARNING FROM FAILURE

WELCOME

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); 4 discussion questions and 4 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 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 LEARNING FROM FAILURE

About five years ago the transformative learning landscape began to buzz with the words Fail Forward. At Ideo, (the design thinking company whose founders wrote the book Creative Confidence that we have found so interesting and helpful at PYE) they use the phrase "fail early and fail often" to talk about the value of testing ideas rather than trying to find the "best" idea. I'm very interested in how this principle applies to our work as facilitators. Because our work happens in community, often with vulnerable populations; with young people; in charged political atmospheres; during conflict; or when decisions are being made, it seems to me that there is an important balance between failure and safety to consider. As you know if you've taken our 15-day Art of Facilitation training, Peggy reminds us to tell ourselves, "Yes! I failed! I'm learning!"

In today's discussion we will look closely at the value of failure in facilitation and how we can maximize our own learning and development while minimizing the impact on our groups.



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Partners for Youth Empowerment is a US non-profit and registered UK Charity with a mission to unleash the creative potential of young people.

Claire Gerin-Lajoie How do I take part in the live conversation?

Nadia Chaney Hi Claire! Do you see the rocking panda gif below? That's the first question for the day. Read the whole post above, it will explain how this works.

Claire Gerin-Lajoie I see that its uniquely through chatting

Nadia Chaney That's right

Claire Gerin-Lajoie ok, however I am not clear about the rocking panda. I guess I am not quite sure what to expect, therefore not sure what to look for

Nadia Chaney Look at the most recent posts, and you will see a gif of a panda on a rocking chair. That's where the check-in question is posted

Claire Gerin-Lajoie ok, I see it now, thanks !

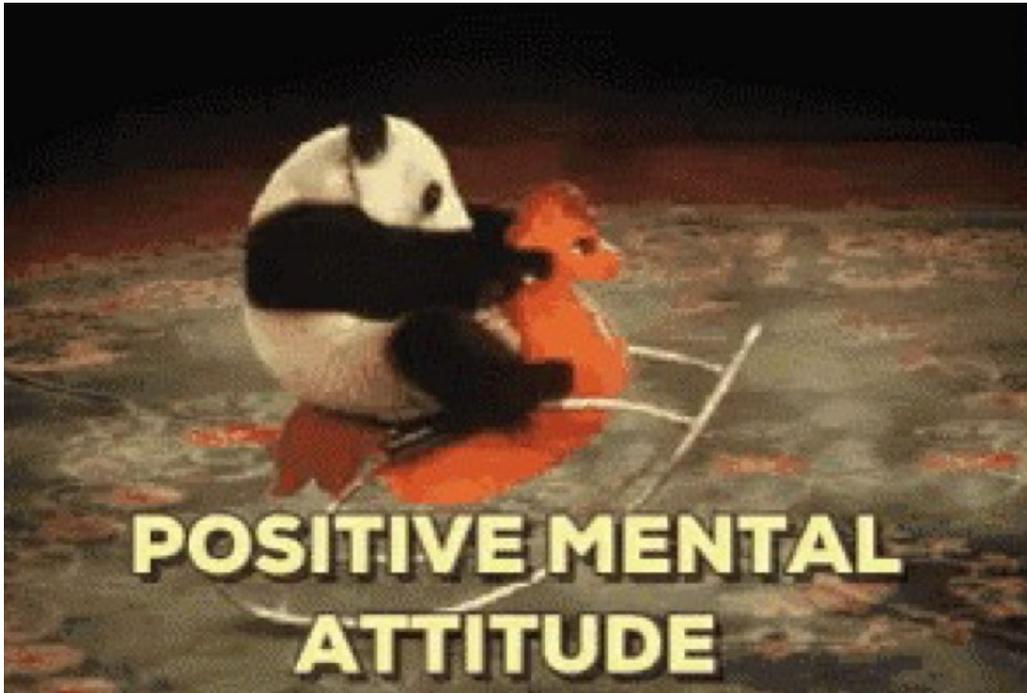
CHECK-IN

NADIA CHANEY

Check-in Question for Aug 16, 2018: We're going to have an open discussion in a public forum about failure! Let's start from feeling really solid and supported. Describe a person, place or thing that gives you a feeling of strength and security.



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Joanne Lauterjung Hi everyone! Looking forward to this - it's been a long time since I've been able to join one of these. Feeling of strength and security . . . this might sound a bit odd, but the memory of taking care of my mom in her last days. It was a profoundly rewarding experience, and was a huge gift to myself to know I could do it. I felt grounded, connected, strong, capable.

Nadia Chaney Great to see you. Thank you so much for starting us off with such depth

Nadia Chaney Lately something that gives me a sense of security is taking good notes while I'm reading for school. There's so much to do and read that the notes really make me feel grounded and like I'm getting somewhere



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Joanne Lauterjung Me, too. Grad school can really kick your butt. I remember after I finished my Masters, all I wanted to read were "fluffy" novels. And not have to take notes! I'm with you, though - taking notes helps me remember the information.

Nadia Chaney totally...the fear of failure is so real with a PhD! Taking notes gives me a feeling that there is a ground somewhere in all the words!!

Ekua Adisa I'm so glad that it's aligned for me to participate today. I feel strength and security from knowing that I have an interconnected community of folks who love me and each other, committed to liberation and healing.

Nadia Chaney Ekuuuuaaaaa!!! Hi!! Welcome

Ekua Adisa 😁 Hiiiiiii.

Lucy Rist Hi everyone! Sitting at the lake behind my cabin gives me a feeling of security. I sit and look at the mountains behind, their reflection in the water. Sometimes the feeling is immediate, sometimes it takes a while but without failure I arrive.

Nadia Chaney Welcome Lucy!

Shilpa Setty Hi!! Something that gives me a sense of strength and security is my inner self, which keeps pushing me up and keeps telling me to not believe in the negative chatter and judgments that keeps happening. Helps me give hope

Nadia Chaney Hi Shilpa! Welcome back!

Manjunath Anand I don't have a particular thing or place that can give me strength. For me, I derive strength from my stepbacks. Everytime I am unable to succeed I question myself and find out why it didn't allow my to be where i wanted to. These kind of step backs would always give me strength or positive mind set to take up bigger challenges.



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Nadia Chaney Welcome Manju! Wow, your check in is so connected to our topic today!

GOALS AND AGREEMENTS

NADIA CHANEY

Goals and Agreements for this session on Aug 16, 2018

1) To deepen our understanding of facilitative failure

A large part of productive failure is noticing the nuance of what's happening. We will talk about the details of failure and how to notice and process them in a way that leads to learning and growth.

2) To understand the costs and benefits of leadership failure in group processes

The more we understand the dynamics of our risks and failures in leadership, the more we will be able to create ripe conditions for transformative change for our groups through both design and delivery of programming.

3) To learn how to develop and deepen our resilience when we fail

Our emotional landscapes are an important aspect of our leadership capacities. The more we understand how to turn failure into a learning experience, the more it can enrich our capacity to lead with confidence and vision.

4) To increase our options and choices as facilitators

Sometimes we avoid leading a group in a certain direction or towards a certain end because we are afraid of failure. Becoming more aware of these aspects of failure will open us up to more options, choices and to be better able to hear the needs of the group.

5) To support each other's 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.



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- 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.
- 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.

Sudhakar Nooralbettu Karkala Super

DISCUSSION QUESTION #1

NADIA CHANEY

Discussion Question #1: Let's start this session by creating our own practical definition of facilitative failure. What does failure look, feel, taste, sound and/or smell like during a group's process? When do you



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notice it? What kind of failure do you fear most? Do you ever plan to fail?

Nadia Chaney Joanne Lauterjung, Claire Gerin-Lajoie, Sudhakar Karkala facebook isn't posting new posts at the top, so just letting you know the first discussion question is here, and the Goals are also posted

Claire Gerin-Lajoie Failure in a group presents itself like losing the group's attention or feeling like my credibility is under scrutiny

Joanne Lauterjung I think the times when I've felt I failed was when I did or didn't do something that compromised the emotional safety in the room. Before I'd taken the POH training, I had a bad co-facilitation experience that involved my own white guilt, and stepping back when I needed to step up. People left feeling unheard and were angry at me. It tasted metallic, bitter, cold. I noticed it in the moment, like watching a slow motion train wreck, and didn't trust myself to know what to do, so erred on the side of doing nothing. I think that kind of failure is hardest for me - the feeling of not trusting my own experience, my own gut, and the guilt of feeling cowardly or insecure. I'm not sure if I plan to fail, but I'm a lot more honest about my strengths/weaknesses, I try never to "posture" in front of a group, and always try to involve the group by just saying what I'm noticing and then letting that be a discussion.

Claire Gerin-Lajoie I don't plan to fail, however I do play the game of "first run throughs". In this game, it feels like I am in a "laboratory" or a trial and error process

Joanne Lauterjung I took an improv class from Matt Smith in Seattle, and he has a great exercise called the "Failure Bow". I've tried using it here in Myanmar, but it's a really big stretch in a face-saving culture.

Nadia Chaney At PYE we go to a celebration stance...working to reprogram the body and posture towards power rather than



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collapse after failure. This is a very important comment about whether/how that kind of activity can translate culturally

Claire Gerin-Lajoie I think that celebration, playfulness and and being of service is something that is felt and so its cross-cultural

Ekua Adisa for me failure during a group's process feels like misalignment: an interruption of flow, a lack of ease. it feels like folks' energy not being invested in what's happening, folks not being present. it feels like folks falling out of the container. i notice it when most of the people are disengaged or neutral.

Ekua Adisa i was gonna say i don't fear failure, but the type of failure i fear is people not getting what they need out of a container i'm helping to hold, people walking away feeling unfinished.

Joanne Lauterjung What do you do in those times? When you notice that?

Ekua Adisa Joanne Lauterjung when i notice that misalignment, i tend to name it and ask questions to the group around what is happening and what is needed. that usually shifts things.

Nadia Chaney Ekua Adisa Joanne Lauterjung this takes us right over to question #2, which I just posted. Will post #3 as well in case you want to move right over to that

Shilpa Setty For me failure in group's process is when I lose connect with myself, and connect with the participants. And when I'm not bringing in the right energy to boost the group's process.

Manjunath Anand If i have to say within the training context we plan the design and when it's been delivered, you notice the group is not receptive for the process, it will sort of make you sense failure. At times there will be a question why the group is not understanding or do we



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need to do something else.? I usually don't plan failure now a days i have been open to failure. Started to accept it.

Kevin Pedrey Failure to me is being to rigid. Having a plan and not being able to be flexible when the group needs change. Not being present to the needs of the people I am working with and making my presentation based on information and not interaction and movement with the group. Failure feels disconnected, lonely and not authentic as if I am just trying to rehearse information.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #2

NADIA CHANEY

Discussion Question #2: What tools do you have to recognize failure as it is happening? Do you acknowledge a failure to your group (if so, how)?

Ekua Adisa ah, yes. the biggest tool for recognizing failure in the moment is my body! tightness or energy blockages in my body let me know whats happening in the room and in other folks' bodies. I prefer to name what is happening out loud so (1) my co-facilitators and i can be on the same page and (2) so everyone in the space can be involved in the learning and support getting back to center.

Ekua Adisa that could look like just naming that something feels off and asking how folks are feeling.

Nadia Chaney It's amazing the space, permission and relationship this kind of reflection can open

Ekua Adisa yes. and juicy vulnerability

Joanne Lauterjung Oh yes, body awareness is soooo important! Thanks for mentioning that.



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Joanne Lauterjung Wow, FB is squirrely tonight! Q3 showed up above Q1, and this Q2 is way down here! LOL. If I'm in tune with the group, I notice it right away. If I'm modeling treating mistakes as a learning opportunity, I won't call it "failure" to the group. But I will acknowledge that things aren't on track, and will stop and have a discussion about it to suss out where they are. But I don't want to interrupt flow, if that's happening, so I might wait for a break, talk to my translator or someone else on the team, to see if what I'm seeing is something they're seeing. Working through a translator creates all kinds of opportunities for failure! I know enough of the language now to catch when things aren't accurate, but I acknowledge this limitation working in a culture that's not mine.

Nadia Chaney Haha!! side note, reminds me of a time I didn't properly prep a translator and she translated "creative spirit" as "holy spirit" for a whole afternoon ahhhhhh that was a funny one to reorganize once we realized it

Joanne Lauterjung That's funny. For me, I struggle a lot with translators wanting to offer up their own examples rather than letting the group struggle with thinking on their own. I learned the Burmese word for "example" early on, and then heard it ALL the time. Now I know to sit with the translator and not only go over key vocabulary, but also clue them in to the style of facilitation and learning I'm going for.

Nadia Chaney Joanne Lauterjung this would be a great topic for an online session, actually...maybe a zoom with some folks who are often working in translation

Joanne Lauterjung Yes, I'd like that.

Joanne Lauterjung I would also add, self forgiveness as a tool! An important one. I grew up near Los Angeles, and Hollywood's pervasive power was all about perfection and performance. Once I got out of my own way as a facilitator, really deeply learned it was about the group, it



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made a big difference in being able to forgive myself and move on in service of the group. It's not about me.

Shilpa Setty Wow.. Thank you Joanne for sharing this. I can so relate to what you are saying. Even, I used to feel that its all about be, and find it hard to forgive myself. But, have made some progress in being able to do it

Manjunath Anand I haven't come across such as failure. I would say probably process didn't work or group didn't have transformative experience. Usually facilitator knows it not the group.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #3

NADIA CHANEY

Discussion Question #3: What tools do you have for dealing with failure during and after a group process? What keeps your group safe when your facilitation/leadership fails?

Joanne Lauterjung For me, I've learned to throw the agenda out if I need to be of service to the group. Mindfulness - really being in the moment, and responding to what's happening in the moment is key. Experience and time have been important - so I guess that would be having perspective. When I first started, small things felt like big failures. But now, when something doesn't go as planned it's more an opportunity to step back and involve the group in supporting their own collective dynamic. I think the group needs to take some responsibility to keep the group safe, and I work hard to develop that early on.

Nadia Chaney I love this. It reminds me of the adage "resistance is the site of transformation." When I started facilitating I would feel that a group or individual's resistance was my failure...but now I experience it more like an opportunity or a puzzle...potential for something to shift



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Ekua Adisa yes! definitely allowing the group to take responsibility for hosting themselves and one another helps failures and breakdowns blossom into beautiful emergent opportunities!

Joanne Lauterjung Nadia, yes, yes, yes. Curiosity, not condemnation! If I allow myself to be curious, it bypasses my own internal judgement. Hanif once said something that I will never, ever forget: all behavior is that person's best attempt, given what they know, to get their needs met. So being curious about what need is trying to express itself, and being kind in recognizing that this is someone's strategy based on what they've learned or haven't learned. Yes, just like a puzzle.

Joanne Lauterjung I like the phrase, "beautiful emergent opportunities". Lovely.

Ekua Adisa i think elements of the container keep the group safe when my facilitation fails, like the agreements we've made, the ways that we've invited our ancestors and cultural practices into the space, trust that has been built through vulnerability and compassion. along with the other member(s) of my team, because they allow me to fail with grace and be held and everyone gets to witness that. (i prefer facilitating on a team/with another person)

Kevin Pedrey I am still learning how to work with myself and groups when I feel that I have failed to connect with the people I am working with. I had an experience with at risk youth at a corrections facility and I noticed that I was feeling a little intimidated when I first started because I wanted to be perceived well and I wanted to make this huge impact in their lives. I wanted to share my story in hopes that I would help them see things differently. What I didnt realize was that I went in with HIGH expectations. Although the event went well, I was asked to come back, I didn't feel good about how the progression of our conversation went and I left feeling a little beaten up! After I had the chance to digest the experience, I realized that I didn't really plan



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anything concrete and when the outcome wasn't what I expected, I realized that my expectation and my thought process about the event was not realistic. I needed to be more planned in terms of what I wanted to achieve and also not have expectations for the group.

DISCUSSION QUESTION #4

NADIA CHANEY

Discussion Question #4: What would you do differently if you knew you could always handle failure in a way that was positive for yourself and your group? What is the next level of working with failure for you in your facilitation practice?

Joanne Lauterjung Hmm, challenging question. I'm working in a conflict setting, so I have to be very careful about certain kinds of failure. There's too much at stake. But I suppose the next level of working for me is to keep deepening my cultural understanding so I can keep strengthening the container, even help people understand the very idea of a container, and to nudge people to take more creative risks, "safe" risks, so they can experience an iterative process and trust their own resilience to stay engaged and keep working towards solutions.

Nadia Chaney I'm hoping we can talk a little more into this question of what's at stake. To me, the idea of failing forward is tempered by the risks in a sensitive situation. But...what is lost if the facilitator is playing "safe"?

Joanne Lauterjung Well, I have to first "do no harm". For example, youth empowerment in Myanmar is so important, but if we're not working with the parents or older generation, then the youth push at boundaries at home that could have physical consequences in terms of punishment. My husband teaches at an international school, and parents sometimes (not often) say,



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"My kid was a good kid until they came here! Now they ask questions and talk back. I will beat them." So part of being conflict sensitive is recognizing that the youth have a home and lives outside the workshop that I have to be mindful of, and make sure I'm giving them the skills to handle all this new awareness and information. Or if I'm working with religious leaders, which I just did for the past 2 years, safety for them is very different than for lay people and if I don't know enough about their practices and someone posts a photo on Facebook of some activity we did, they could become targets of hate campaigns. I'm still feeling my way around all of this - how to create safe enough space for people to take creative risks, and then . . . carry that knowledge forth without endangering themselves. The power dynamics here are so out of whack, that I do need to be careful about how people leave the workshop space.

Nadia Chaney Joanne Lauterjung I hear the importance of placing the design and facilitation in the context of power and consequence. Something makes me want to ask if there is a difference between the risks the group is taking vs the risks the facilitator is taking. I wonder even in a context where it is very important to tread carefully, if there is a value or a possibility for the facilitator to move towards their own edges...and what might be factors to consider there...it's a big question and you've already been so generous with your sharing above, so I'm perfectly happy if it just sits here as a question! But I am so curious about these edges

Joanne Lauterjung Your question brings up an experience from last week, when I was co-facilitating with someone I don't know very well, and she doesn't live in Myanmar and wanted to do things that pushed my edges. I learned a lot from that, that there are times when I do play it too safe creatively. So I think that's what I will push myself on in the near future. It ended up being a great experience, and the things I was concerned about didn't manifest, and the group had great discussions because of her exercise. So you're right - I need to keep thinking about this.



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Thanks so much for bringing that up. It's a hard balance to strike, and even after 7 years here I'm still searching and learning!

Ekua Adisa I very much do know that I can always handle failures (and breakdowns) in positive ways that fuel the containers I'm holding and also enhance my own awareness of myself and sharpen my abilities. My inner critic sometimes puts a negative hue on failure which can get me caught up in the optics of failing while leading or not being perfect. For me, the next level is modeling this so that failing and breaking down can be normalized and affirmed in these containers... then we can be experimenting with more ways to play and learn and connect and grow together.

Ekua Adisa also keeping my process accessible to others in the group is very important to me. It humanizes me and allows for greater vulnerability with others in the group.

Kevin Pedrey This one was challenging for me when I first started leading groups. I always wanted everything to be perfect. I needed to feel prepared and that I knew what I was talking about. As I continue in group training, I realize the people we work with are dynamic and that things change instantly. One thing I have learned a lot in the last 4 months is that if I have a genuine wish to be better, I realize that learning takes being uncomfortable some times. Taking the risk to be authentic and real to the people we work with. I realized however that my "failure" is never really a failure as I always learn. I had this thought recently that I am not nervous, I have nerves. When I feel lost, I realize that my intention is good and that I am genuinely trying to help other people. When I stop trying to look good, or say the perfect thing, the entire situation becomes much easier and I can connect with the people I work with easier.

Manjunath Anand I think for the best way is to accept failure and understand it's meant to happen. You need to remain calm and compose during those times.



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Claire Gerin-Lajoie Failure for me is understood as a disengagement and an incapacity to adapt and move with the flow. If the situation changes and the engagement wanes, I feel the need to reorient my questions and focus. That way, the group feels that I am engaged and will respond by re-engaging themselves.

Hanna Sybille Müller Love that question. Depending on the group and the context, but failure makes me vulnerable, this could help a group to see me in a vulnerable state + It makes me think, evaluate and question my teaching in a productive way so most of the times I learn the most out of failure... I need to think more about it. Thanks for this question and all your answers!

CASE STUDY #1

NADIA CHANEY

Case Study #1: You have a group of fifteen teenagers in an after school program. You are arriving after a day of work and are already tired. They are also exhausted from a day of school and it's difficult for them to focus. After trying to get their attention for twenty minutes you finally start yelling. When one of them talks back in a way that feels very rude to you, you tell them that if they won't work with the group they don't need to come back next week. Would you consider this a failure? How would you handle it? What lesson might you take from this situation, and how might it change your decisions in the future?

Top of Form

Ekua Adisa 🙄 yikes.

Nadia Chaney posting case study #2, in case this one is a little TOOOO yikes :)

Ekua Adisa I'm already judging my theoretical self like "how could you!?"



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Ekua Adisa I'm curious about my resistance here and wanna move towards it. this feels like an extreme example that involves violence (yelling) and also beginning at a deficit in the first place being already tired after work. the biggest lesson for me here is that i cant offer care for other humans if im not caring for myself, and i need to set my life up so that if it is my job to hold space for other humans, i have the energy to do that with care and compassion.

Nadia Chaney Ekua Adisa I think this is so important. To really understand personal boundaries and the serious impacts of ignoring them. What might you do it in the moment after something like this happens?

Ekua Adisa I'm having a hard time locating myself in the moment. after i've asked the young person to leave, perhaps they leave, perhaps they say "im not going anywhere" and look back at me defiantly... i imagine that i might stop here and take some deep breaths, slow down. i imagine that i might apologize to everyone for exhibiting violence (naming it as violence and inappropriate) and specifically the person i yelled at. i would share with everyone that i'm tired and be clear that i need to take better care of myself so that i can have more energy for them. then i'd probably invite an open talking circle for sharing about violence, self-care, making repair after harm... i could see it going like that.

Joanne Lauterjung Oof. Yes, a hard one. And the thing about anger is that once that adrenaline is released into our bodies, it takes awhile to drain out again. That's why anger is so hard to deal with in the moment when it happens. It's SO not my style to yell, but . . . I would talk to the participant privately, apologize, and practice my NVC. Say what I noticed, how it made me feel, and request that they engage with me because they matter to me. What were they needing in that moment? It could then be a group conversation about what respect looks like. I find we often talk about respect as if it's the same for everyone, but it's not.



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So uncovering those assumptions, and revisiting group agreements, and acknowledging my own bad behavior to the group.

Joanne Lauterjung And the lesson would be self-care! Can I set a timer at work and leave 15 minutes earlier to give myself the time I need to transition? Have go-to music at the ready for that transition, make sure I've had water and food, if I need it. Self care, for sure. Which is so hard sometimes!! I'm so passionate about my work, and it's easy to over-commit.

Kevin Pedrey Having three small children, I realize some times my ability to handle stimuli gets very high. I have practiced being able to just listen to their needs, ask questions and try to remove myself from the feelings that are becoming overwhelming. I have found when I ask questions and truly hear what others have to say, things usually settle down. More than anything, I believe people want to be heard and they have a need. Most people are unaware of their need and are only reacting to the feelings inside their body. If you can help identify the need, and can be authentic with trying to hear, usually this gives you the opportunity to see things differently and more patiently.

CASE STUDY #2

NADIA CHANEY

Case Study #2: You are facilitating a community meeting about a serious neighbourhood issue that needs urgent resolution. Emotions are running even higher than you had expected. You end up expressing a personal opinion that clearly favours one group over another. Someone in the group suggests that you are the wrong person to facilitate the meeting since you are obviously biased and unfair. Would you consider this a failure? How would you handle it? What lesson might you take from this situation, and how might it change your decisions in the future?



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Joanne Lauterjung Ooh, good one. I'm curious how many people would be there, because the tools I have for this kind of situation would be a little different if there were 10 versus 50 people. I would acknowledge that person and their observation, and then maybe suggest a structured dialogue process to allow all voices to be heard. Circle process if the group is small, or timed talking in smaller groups if there are a lot of people. I think it's important to regain neutrality, and provide enough structure so that true dialogue can happen, and you can hear from other voices to see if and how many others agree with that one person. And after that, if there's consensus that I should step down, I would. But turning the process over to the group usually helps regain my neutrality and trustworthiness as a facilitator. I might talk with that person privately afterwards if they had a minority opinion, and be curious about their opinions and perspective.

Nadia Chaney In the original case study it was a full room, probably closer to fifty

Kevin Pedrey One of the biggest things I am learning as I become a facilitator is to be aware of the things we say so as to be conscious of other view points. At the end of the day, the importance is not about trying to be right or wrong, but to realize different people have different opinions, beliefs and viewpoints. Where we currently are in our thinking is just where we are. Just like all other people. Having open, honest and authentic communication is very important. Whether our intent was to voice our opinions and the viewpoint, is not an issue but how we go forward listening and respecting the other side of the viewpoint. More than anything, it is our hopes that we can have honest, true and real conversations with out putting people down, or steam rolling the other thoughts in the room. As long as the intention is not to purposely hurt someone or put them down, good communication skills come from speaking truthfully and having honest communication.

Stephen Sillett If in such a context, I had expressed a personal opinion that clearly favoured one group over another, and I had underestimated the emotions in the room. Then I would have to put my hand up and accept that.



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My first reaction to the feedback (which I cannot brush off as just experience) and possible next steps:

- Assess whether I have the skills to keep going with the session, knowing emotions are high. This is a core ethical question, if I do not have the competence for such a situation I need to face that challenge. Next reaction to the issue of facilitating the 50 people in the meeting.
- Who else is present in the facilitation team to help regain confidence?
- Had the situation that has arisen, affected the chance of reaching a useful outcome?

Ultimately, if I were running such a workshop, I would stay accountable for moving it through challenges, and taking responsibility for problems.

Outside of who facilitates the process for the meeting, I would think about:

- Does the workshop need to shift from the urgent neighbourhood issue, to the conflict and emotions that are present in the room? If so, a major shift in focus maybe needed, and another meeting with a different format held later to get resolution.

I am curious to know more about some details:-

- Why does the neighbourhood issue need an urgent resolution?
- What kind of issue is it (land use, policy engagement, decision making on community project)?
- What kind of outcome needs to happen so that a resolution can be possible?

CASE STUDY #3

NADIA CHANEY

Case Study #3: You are leading a team building session for a group of twenty young (13-18years old) members of a community art centre. Someone makes a remark that reminds you of a hard time in your life, and you find yourself thinking of that time and feeling quite emotional. You begin to cry, and when one of the participants asks if you are okay



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you say “no” and tell them a part of your story that is still very raw and painful for you. This takes up about ten minutes of the group’s session. Would you consider this a failure? How would you handle it? What lesson might you take from this situation, and how might it change your decisions in the future?

Joanne Lauterjung I suppose it would depend on whether or not my sharing my own story is of service to the group's learning and process. And that's hard to gauge in the moment when I'm clouded with emotion. I think I would turn it over to the group and ask if anyone else has had a similar experience - something to shift the focus back to their learning, and so that they don't feel like they need to caretake me. And the lesson, for me always, is to do my work! On my own, or with my own friends and community, and come to trainings as healed as I can be. Yes, there are situations where it's important to be vulnerable and use it as a teachable moment, but I've seen facilitators put participants in the awkward position of taking care of them and then the participants later feel resentful.

Kevin Pedrey I think there is a balance between how much you share and the intent behind sharing. If there is a lesson in which can help the group move forward, I think this is good. If you are confused about the emotion and it causes confusion amongst the group, I think this could be a problem. Although, being honest is also a good quality value and one that can bring people together.

CASE STUDY #4

NADIA CHANEY

Case Study #4: You are facilitating a week-long personal development seminar for teachers and staff at a local college. One of the members arrives in a wheelchair. You have not planned your activities for different abilities, and you find yourself stressed and anxious about how accessible your plan is for this participant. Would you consider this



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a failure? How would you handle it? What lesson might you take from this situation, and how might it change your decisions in the future?

Ekua Adisa i would consider this a failure. this is a week-long seminar, so i would see the failure in not having had all of the information about participants to create an appropriate container that is accessible for them. i would welcome the participant letting them know that i will be tending to this and inviting them to let me know at any time if there is something they need to be able to participate.

Ekua Adisa later i would want to be talking to my team about our values around access and ability: do we have them? how are we living them out?

Joanne Lauterjung It's also an opportunity to talk to the college about the issue. If no one communicated with me that someone in a wheelchair was coming, it makes me wonder about the school's access policies. I would definitely talk to the participant in the wheelchair, and engage them in finding solutions that will work for the week.

END

NADIA CHANEY

Well, thus endeth our 90 mins together this month. Thank you all so much for a rich conversation! You are amazing, and I'm so glad you are in the world doing your good work with so much integrity. Next month's topic will on THE PLACE FOR PERSONAL OPINION IN FACILITATION. Hope to see you there.

PYE will soon post the transcript on our web page in the free tools section and this page stays open if you 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,



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social worker, group therapist, activist and social artist friends! Don't forget to check www.pyeglobal.org for upcoming trainings, too, there's some new ones just posted.

Ekua Adisa Thank you Nadia! 💕

Nadia Chaney so great to spend a little time with you

Ekua Adisa yes! a lovely tease, and I'll take it!!

Nadia Chaney Let's have a call soon!

Ekua Adisa *gasps excitedly* yes please!

Joanne Lauterjung Thanks, Nadia! And good luck with your studies.

Shilpa Setty Thank you Nadia for an insightful session. I learnt so much by reading the discussion. As I had to attend to something urgent, couldn't continue being there.

Gloria J. Williams I'll look for the transcripts. Thank you in advance!

Sudhakar Nooralbettu Karkala Lovely thanks