

...FACILITATE REFLECTION

REFLECTION

Reflection is the minimum process necessary to turn experience-based learning into experiential learning. Reflection is critical to ensuring clients understand the change, participate successfully to create their desired future, and accept that the real change requires transformation of their own thoughts, attitudes, and behaviors.

NON-VERBAL

Non-Verbal processing of learning stems from the belief that experience is based on creative and meaningful interpretation by the client, rather than the facilitator driving the outcome. Not all people are masterful at expressing their feelings through words, so using non-verbal and symbolic representations of the experience allows clients to choose and have opportunities for self-exploration. Consider using non-verbal methods of reflection, such as art, photography, drama, music, dance, writing, storytelling, poetry, presentations, or even repeating the same activity. These methods should fit the age and culture of the clients. Be aware, however, that these methods can become routine, so use in moderation and alternate all methods often.

Artistic expression opens the heart and mind to a new way of learning for many participants, allowing them to gain control over strong feelings and letting them transform emotions into new and creative energies. Non-verbal methods allow for freedom of expression and can create novel value and wonder in learning. Expressiveness is valuable because it assists clients to understand emotions in general while contributing to the formation of an aesthetically satisfying whole. Some initial explanation may be necessary to give participants a sense of the task purpose, expectations for behavior, and motivation for participating. This approach helps shift the responsibility of learning from the experience to the learner and can facilitate the way ideas come together as a lasting lesson.

PROGRAM TYPES

Four types of programs are based on a primary intent to assist clients with their changes in feeling, thinking, behaving, and/or resisting and need differing levels of facilitation skills.

PROGRAM TYPE	CHANGES	FACILITATION
Recreation	Feeling	None
Education	Thinking	Basic
Development	Behaving	Intermediate
Therapy	Resisting	Advanced

Helping to change the way clients feel requires no formal facilitation, since a joyful experience speaks for itself and makes clients feel good. However, as client changes become increasingly complicated, facilitation skills must progress.

FACILITATION SKILLS

Basic skills require fundamentals and funneling during debrief discussions. **Intermediate** skills recommend freezing activities and frontloading introductions. **Advanced** skills suggest focusing on the solution and fortifying against resistance.

Fundamentals: the rudimentary essentials such as open-ended questions, circles, or neutrality.

Funneling: sequence of six structured questions (beyond what? so what? now what?) that filter extraneous info and hone in on desired change.

Freezing: calling “time out” to the action to ask one provocative question before restarting.

Frontloading: asking a few questions before the activity to spotlight change within the activity.

Focusing: changing the nature of the questions by addressing the solution and not the problem.

Fortifying: step-wise progression of techniques to help clients counter resistance to change.

Michelle Cummings & Simon Priest

Michelle Cummings
TRAINING WHEELS
www.training-wheels.com
michelle@training-wheels.com
888-553-0147

FURTHER RESOURCES

READING

Cain, J. H., Cummings, M., & Stanchfield, J. (2005). *A Teachable Moment: A Facilitator's Guide to Activities for Processing, Debriefing, Reviewing and Reflection*. Kendall Hunt.

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OTHER

Michelle Cummings YouTube Channel <https://www.youtube.com/user/TrainingWheelsLLC>