

Session Structure

Dose and intensity

Interactive Journals and Facilitator Guides are built to maintain structure and consistency while providing the flexibility to meet individualized needs of participants. In general, dose and intensity are adjusted through the manipulation (and combination) of session content, length of session, frequency of sessions and out-of-session behavioral activities. Higher intensity generally results from a combination of more intensive content focus (fewer Journal pages), longer/more frequent sessions and comprehensive out-of-session assignments. All facilitation should allow participants to discuss and receive feedback on the targeted Journal pages. Participants will leave most sessions with out-of-session assignments. Intensity can be increased with assignments.

Structuring a session

The pace of programming and amount of program content is often at odds with individual program and staff weekly schedules. As you design sessions, keep in mind that one goal of the group is to provide the facilitator the time and space to observe and interact with participants, not to lecture on content.

Part one: Review

This time is spent reviewing or sharing responses from previous sessions or out-of-session activities. In this part of a session, facilitators will want to:

- Review previously discussed content and out-of-session activities to find out the participants' experiences and follow up with any material that might be helpful.
- Stay aware of struggles or ongoing challenges participants may be having with content.
- Take note of any responses that can be used as a way to transition to the new content.

Part two: Explore

Here, participants discuss and develop skills around Journal pages, new concepts or new strategies. Facilitators use their Guide to apply suggested facilitation strategies to introduce or reinforce Journal content (including participant presentations). Facilitators might follow these steps:

- Stating the purpose and goals of the material or concept.
- Exploring the action steps to take, both within the session and outside of the session.
- Building positive expectations for the outcome.

Part three: Reinforce

This part of a session can be devoted to additional group discussion, or assigning and introducing behavioral out-of-session activities, using suggestions from the Facilitator Guide. Plan the time and collaborate with participants to figure out what would benefit them the most.

Designing out-of-session activities is an important part of a Journal session. It can help participants apply what is being discussed in-session to their lives. Out-of-session activities reinforce skills through repetition and feedback.

Session Structure Template

Make copies of this facilitation template as needed to take notes on your session structure & design.

Session #: _____ Session topic: _____

Journal pages: _____ Duration of session (e.g., 60 minutes): _____

Review (including any prior out-of-session activities, if assigned, or participant presentations):

Explore and reinforce new content (include facilitation activities being used for in-session concept exploration and/or skill development):

Out-of-session activity:

Journal assignment for next session:

Notes:
