SESSION THREE

Learning Objectives

- Identify common facilitation techniques for introducing, expanding on and responding to Interactive Journal exercises
- Review how these techniques are used within different settings supported by Facilitator Guides
- Practice skills for implementing these facilitation techniques, using example settings and scenarios

Introduction

Welcome to the final session in this eLearning module on Interactive Journal Facilitation. So far you have explored the foundational elements of Interactive Journaling®, as well as some tips for how to effectively structure a Journal session. This module will conclude by exploring some different facilitation techniques you can use to introduce, expand on and respond to individuals and their Interactive Journal exercises.

Although every facilitator brings a special set of skills and strategies to the table, there are some well-known techniques that have proven successful in maximizing both time and responsiveness for an Interactive Journaling® curriculum. Think of these techniques as additional tools you can use to help participants explore, develop and assess their own Journal work.

This session will explore some of the most common facilitation techniques, starting with the most population-specific, and moving outward to the most broadly applicable. We’ll start by learning about some facilitation techniques designed specifically for group settings. From here, we’ll broaden our base, learning techniques that can still be used in a group, but also are effective in one-to-one participant interactions. Finally, at the broadest level, you’ll be introduced to some Journal facilitation techniques that harness some basic counseling skills, and are applicable in any Journal setting.

Let’s get started.

Group Facilitation Techniques

We’ll begin by focusing in on some facilitation techniques that can only be used with specific populations: namely, groups. The good news is, any size of group can benefit from the strategies you’ll learn about here. A lot of different programs choose to facilitate some component of their Interactive Journal curriculum within a group setting. Journal exercises take on a new dimension when they are discussed in group. Individual work in the Journal is expanded upon by group interaction that offers new perspectives and solutions.

As a facilitator, there are many different techniques you can use to guide your Journal groups. Here, we’ll work through three techniques often applied in a group environment.
Rounds

The Rounds facilitation technique is a style of discussion that encourages all participants to share their thoughts and feelings in response to a specific question posed either by their facilitator or their Interactive Journals. The Rounds technique can help participants get comfortable with sharing and listening to responses, and clarify a topic by offering multiple perspectives.

A Rounds exercise often begins with the facilitator posing a target question to the group. From here, the facilitator can then select an individual to start the cycle of responses, to be followed by some or all of the remaining participants.

When using a Rounds exercise, the focus is not on the discussion of all individual responses, but rather on the group’s understanding and processing of the topic as a whole. Effective facilitators make sure the goal of a Rounds exercise remains one of clarity and perspective, rather than simply everyone getting a chance to talk. Facilitators also may decide to incorporate an element of feedback, to assist the group in maintaining their focus on the target question, or to reinforce key messages being expressed.

Rounds with Feedback

One twist to the Rounds facilitation technique is to incorporate a feedback element in the discussion. The same introduction and application is used, but after each participant responds to the target question, the facilitator or other group members may solicit more information or provide relevant and constructive feedback.

When using a Rounds technique with feedback, it is important to establish a set of group agreements before beginning. This might include things like agreeing to full participation, or having only one person talk at a time. When performing Rounds with Feedback, also make sure to consider the size of the group. More group members can mean more session time is needed. Making the proper adjustments beforehand will ensure that everyone has a chance to participate and share.

Rounds Tips

Here are some tips for using the Rounds facilitation technique.

Clarify expectations and target question

Before beginning the exercise, make sure participants understand what is expected of them in terms of their responses. Make sure the target question is clearly posed to the group and check to make sure its intent is understood.

Arrange the group in a circle

When including all group members in a Rounds exercise, a circular arrangement can help individuals feel included and part of the activity. The more you can encourage an open environment with this exercise, the more likely it is your group members will participate fully.
Offer the option to pass

Although Rounds works best when every group member participates, you may decide to offer individuals a chance to “pass” their turn. This gives participants more of a choice about what to share and what to keep private. It may help to acknowledge that some topics can be difficult to discuss. At times, group member passing can be of more therapeutic value than offering some potentially contrived or inappropriate response. However, also be on the lookout for patterns of avoidance, lack of participation and other non-content-related data in these situations.

Record responses with Chalkboard

If relevant and available, you can record group responses from a Rounds exercise by using another facilitation technique, known as a Chalkboard exercise.

Identify themes and provide context for responses

When using both Rounds and Rounds with Feedback exercises, a key role for facilitators is to identify themes from participant responses that emerge, and provide context for these perspectives that supports group cohesiveness and moves the group as a whole toward its identified goals.

Summarize progress

Summarizing a Rounds exercise can help clarify for participants the benefits and progress made. This will also give you a chance to clarify what new behaviors or new concepts were introduced.

Podium

The Podium facilitation technique is a useful exercise to employ when wanting to highlight an individual’s change or commitment efforts by having participants stand in front of the group. Often, facilitators will use Podium exercises as a formal or “milestone” activity for a Journal group. For example, individuals might present their Readiness Statements or their Relapse Prevention Plans through a Podium exercise. Podium exercises can be powerful catalysts for positive change, specifically when a participant stands in front of his or her peers and makes a personal commitment to change.

Podium exercises can also be joined with a Feedback component, in which the facilitator or other group members may solicit more information or provide feedback, all within a constructive, respectful environment. A Podium exercise with Feedback might include audience members providing positive suggestions and responses to a specific shared exercise. The facilitator can reaffirm group member suggestions he or she believes will be particularly helpful for the individual, or other group members may acknowledge observed progress or skill development.

Podium with Milestone Activities

There are certain activities within an Interactive Journaling® curriculum that work particularly well with a Podium facilitation technique. These are often referred to as “Milestones.” Milestone activities help a participant demonstrate key skills or concepts as they relate to his or her life. Interactive
Journaling® Milestone Activities include Readiness Statements, Statements of Commitment, Recovery Maintenance or Relapse Prevention Plans and Personal Statements of Change, among others. When paired with the Podium facilitation technique, these Milestones provide opportunities to reinforce positive behavior and progress toward established goals.

Podium Tips

Here are some other tips for using the Podium facilitation technique.

Clarify the goal and the information to be presented
Make sure the individual who is presenting stays on track by sharing the specific information the exercise calls for.

Honor group agreements
As in any presentation- or feedback-based exercise, remind and support all established group agreements, including showing respect and providing feedback in a positive manner.

Structure feedback
For certain exercises, facilitators may call for a specific type of feedback to be provided, such as self-talk alternatives or reflections of thinking errors, all presented in a constructive and positive manner.

Presenting Milestone activities
Milestone activities reflecting significant change steps can be positively reinforced through a Podium exercise. Be sure to structure enough time for participants to prepare their presentation, and summarize personal progress in a supportive manner.

Dyads and Triads

As you might infer from its name, the Dyads and Triads facilitation technique involves facilitators splitting participants into groups of two or three. Dyads and Triads are designed to increase participation, build rapport and promote more active discussions. Dyads and Triads can create opportunities for reluctant individuals, who may be hesitant to open up in a large setting, to practice and develop confidence in sharing personal information.

Most often, Dyad and Triad facilitation is used when sharing Journal work and receiving peer feedback. During this small group work, participants tend to benefit most from the self-exploration and peer feedback this technique provides, with facilitators stepping in to provide guidance when needed.

Forming Dyads or Triads within a Journal group is a simple process. Facilitators can choose to divide up group members randomly (using a count-off system, for example), by individual choice or by assignment. Facilitators can explain any instructions, prompts or expectations for the specific exercise.
Once the Dyad or Triad exercise is underway, the facilitator can then move around the room to monitor activity, redirect groups that have gotten off-track and guide participants on practicing effective listening skills. Monitoring the room also allows the facilitator to hear comments or suggestions from individuals that would be helpful for others to hear. When this happens, the facilitator can ask the individual to share with the group once the exercise has concluded.

When concluding a Dyad or Triad exercise, be sure to budget enough time to not only bring the group back together, but to report on and discuss key information that was explored in the small groups. This summarizing activity helps identify themes and learning points.

**Dyads and Triads Tips**

Here are some other tips for using the Dyads and Triads facilitation technique.

- **Provide clear instructions**
  Make sure all participants understand the purpose of the Dyads and Triads exercise, and the method of group division. Be clear with directions, time limits and what kind of response is expected.

- **Choose appropriate group division**
  Different methods of group division may support different purposes. A random group division may mix up the group well. Using a volunteer method can support participant autonomy, though people may choose friends or “clique up,” in this situation.

- **Monitor group work**
  One of the advantages of using small group exercises is the opportunity to monitor different groups. While participants are working together, you can wander the room providing support, direction and additional information.

- **Summarize progress**
  As with all facilitation techniques, it is helpful at the end to summarize the exercise and progress made in order to clarify what new behaviors or new concepts were introduced. This step is even more crucial with Dyads and Triads exercises, since participants might need help spotting the connecting themes that overlap between small group responses.

**Individual Facilitation Techniques**

You just learned about three techniques that can be used to facilitate Interactive Journals in a group setting. Now let's broaden our foundation a bit. Here, you'll learn about three more Journal facilitation techniques. These three can still be used in group settings (in fact, Journal group facilitators make use of them all the time), but they also prove effective in one-to-one interactions. As you learn about each technique, think about the different ways it might apply to your own Interactive Journal settings.
Chalkboard

The Chalkboard facilitation technique is a great way to record key points from discussion or Journal work. Facilitators often use it to brainstorm solutions to problem behaviors, record and discuss responses to high-risk situations, or highlight strengths, resources and abilities that are available to a single participant, or a group.

In a group setting, a facilitator may start a Chalkboard exercise by asking participants a target question or set of questions. Then a participant – or the facilitator – writes responses on a chalkboard, white board or display chart. This writing may reflect participant responses to specific Journal questions, or even general discussion questions, which then becomes a record of the group’s experience. The same exercise may be done in an individual setting, though here the facilitator might choose to be the recorder as the participant brainstorms different solutions for him or herself.

As with any facilitation technique, the Chalkboard technique is designed to be flexible enough to accommodate unique settings. A facilitator may choose to record all responses, or focus on recording the most applicable element of a discussion. Facilitators may choose to record responses themselves, but especially in groups, it can be better to have a volunteer act as record-keeper. If you feel you have the appropriate group setting, invite participants up to each write their own responses to a Chalkboard exercise. Remember, individual participation is a great way to instill ownership amongst group members. It also allows you to observe participant dynamics, roles and other therapeutic data.

Chalkboard Tips

Here are some tips for using the Chalkboard facilitation technique.

Volunteer recorder or assigned recorder

If you have a “disruptive” or “hyperactive” participant in a group, asking them to record responses can be a productive way to channel their energy. Asking for volunteers or rotating through multiple volunteers is another way to increase participation and buy-in.

Use more than words

Although more commonly used in advanced Chalkboard facilitation with longer preparation time, pictures, charts, diagrams and scales or meters all can be effective ways to gather and display responses in a one-to-one or group setting. Participant recorders also may appreciate being able to use pictures or drawings instead of words.

Recording responses

When recording participant responses, consider using different colors of pen, if available. Try to record an individual’s words exactly as he or she said them, or get permission or clarification before changing them.
Prepare in advance

Preparing Chalkboard exercises ahead of time can help keep the Journal session moving smoothly. If there are charts, scales or other visuals you would like to display, consider creating these before the session starts. If using a chart or other type of display paper, one trick is to write notes for yourself in pencil: you will be able to see these, but your participants won’t.

Keep key information on wall

When possible, keep Chalkboard exercises posted in the room, at least during the current session. If written on a surface that’s transportable or savable, consider reposting important or valuable exercises during future sessions.

Discussion

The Discussion technique helps participants further explore and process information from their Interactive Journals through dialogue. The Discussion technique is used to help participants open up and share parts of their lives they might not have been able to share before. This technique also gives participants an opportunity to ask questions and receive feedback about what they have read or written in their Journals.

The Discussion technique begins with the facilitator posing a target question or topic, then actively participating in a conversation with an individual, or guiding a conversation between group members. It may seem like a pretty straightforward technique, but be aware that a Discussion can quickly get off track, particularly with large groups, or with a new participant in the program. There also is a potential risk of one or a few participants dominating the discussion of a group. Therefore, facilitators will want to maintain focus on the objectives and learning points of the session, rely on the content from the Interactive Journals and make use of targeted questions to give the Discussion a clear timeline and directive. At the same time, it can be helpful to observe what happens organically between members of a group during a discussion. How participants behave toward and interact with one another often reveals a great deal about their issues and needs.

Discussion Tips

Here are some tips for using the Discussion facilitation technique.

Direct discussion to meet session objectives

Although this can be an open discussion, the exercise should still support the objectives and learning points for the current session. Facilitator Guides can often help in providing these points.

Use Journal content and target question to guide discussion

When a Discussion drifts from the session objective, you can use the pages and questions of the participants’ Interactive Journals to help redirect focus.
Honor group agreements

Similar to some of the group techniques you learned earlier, it can help to establish a set of agreements before beginning a Discussion in group (for example, “one person at a time,” “full participation,” etc.).

Set time frames

Use a predefined time frame to help keep your Discussion within the appropriate session parameters. Also make sure to leave time to summarize key points and progress made from the Discussion.

Role-play

There’s one final facilitation technique to cover at this level, and it’s often considered one the most powerful strategies at a facilitator’s disposal. It’s called “Role-play,” and you’ll find versions of it used both in group and one-to-one settings.

Role-play gives participants a chance to practice new behaviors. They can be a simple way to illustrate key points from a Journal session, and provide new learning opportunities that come from seeing the world through different perspectives. Role-plays also allow participants to actively “try out” new skills or behaviors.

When creating a Role-play exercise, it helps to have a clear structure in place, and even a predesigned outline of the key focus areas or therapeutic intent. You may choose to script your own Role-plays, or consult your Facilitator Guide for some prompts. Another alternative is to engage your participants in the scripting process, having them identify things like high-risk situations or common responses to use as starting points for a Role-play exercise. Remember, nobody is going to have a better understanding of what is important to them than the participants themselves.

Role-plays can be thought of as a form of “modeling,” so be sure you know what you want to achieve through the exercise. In a one-to-one setting, for example, you may switch roles with a participant to model key skills or behaviors, then switch back to have the participant try these skills out for him or herself.

The Role-play facilitation technique can also be paired with others. In a group setting, you might conduct a Role-play exercise using Dyads and Triads. Starting a Role-play in smaller groups like this can take away some of the performance pressure, and also allow you to move about the room making adjustments or pointing out positive examples.

Role-play Tips

Here are some other tips for using the Role-play facilitation technique.

Clarify before beginning

Before starting a Role-play exercise, be sure to clarify the purpose of the Role-play, which can include identifying the issues to be addressed or behavior to be learned, where the Role-play is supposed to occur and the general characteristics of each role. Providing the appropriate instructions will help keep the Role-play focused and effective.
**Encourage participants to stay in roles**

Going off script can damage the learning opportunity you have created for the Role-play exercise. Encouraging a participant or group of participants to stay in their assigned roles can help you stick to the script, or direct the Role-play toward its desired conclusion.

**Make sure participants learn the intended message**

Be aware of how the Role-play unfolds. Look for verbal and nonverbal “mistakes” or areas that may leave the wrong impression. Stop the Role-play if it gets out of hand or is not presenting the intended learning points. It is better to stop a Role-play early and make adjustments than it is to let the Role-play continue to go off-track.

**Structure the audience behavior**

When conducting a Role-play in a setting where others are watching, be sure to include instructions for the audience as well. These instructions may include what not to do, such as laughing, joking or trying to take over the role of participating players.

**Debrief the session**

Upon conclusion of a Role-play, thank the participant or group of participants and debrief with everyone involved about how the Role-play unfolded. Include specific observations and suggestions for improvement or future discussion, where appropriate.

**Individual Facilitation Techniques: Journal Exercise**

The Chalkboard, Discussion and Role-play techniques can be a great addition to a group Journal setting, and complement the Rounds, Podium, and Dyad/Triad techniques you first explored. However, as you’ve learned, Chalkboards, Discussions and Role-plays can also be used in a one-to-one environment. Effective facilitators make use of these strategies in both.

How will you work to apply these facilitation techniques to different kinds of Journal settings, including one-to-one sessions? Come up with some personal examples of how Chalkboards, Discussions and Role-plays might be used when working with a single participant. For example, you could write about how a Chalkboard exercise might be structured differently, or something you’d want to look out for when conducting a one-to-one Role-play. Creating your own responses for these techniques will help you plan out your future work with these tools.

**General Facilitation Techniques**

We’ve reached the broadest level of Journal facilitation techniques. The strategies you’ll learn about here are different from the ones we’ve covered so far, in that they reach out and tap into other basic counseling skills. As a facilitator, you might have used one or more of these strategies outside of a Journal setting. And yet, each of these general techniques works within a Journal session as well. They all can be effective tools in both group and one-to-one work.
These general facilitation techniques can be incredibly diverse and open to a facilitator’s interpretation. Because this level has so much to do with the facilitator’s unique skills and style, as well as experience, let’s explore these general techniques by simply reviewing some common tips you may have run across in implementing these on your own. Keep these tips in mind as you bring these general facilitation techniques into Interactive Journal settings.

**Rehearsal**

The Rehearsal technique is a way for participants to rehearse a response or a learned skill within an imagined or hypothetical setting.

When first using this technique, start by keeping the Rehearsal scenario simple. As participants become more familiar or practiced in an example setting or target skill, you can increase the complexity of the Rehearsal as needed.

**Problem-solving and Decision-making**

This technique gives participants a structured way to explore challenges and issues before they occur, and prepare healthy responses to future situations. Facilitators can provide a Problem-solving and Decision-making structure for any participant issue by posing the following five steps:

1) What is the problem?
2) Why is it a problem?
3) Identify solutions
4) Make a plan
5) Put the plan in action and evaluate results

**Pattern Identification**

The Pattern Identification technique allows facilitators to help participants explore patterns of thoughts, feelings or behaviors across a range of settings from their lives. Using this technique can help participants prepare effective strategies for recurring challenges.

When using a Pattern Identification technique, be sure to keep the focus as broad as possible, exploring a variety of life situations in which a common pattern might be present.

Also, recognize that this technique can be used for both positive and negative patterns, exploring what common challenges are present in a participant’s life, but also where there are common strengths, skills or resources.

**Ranking**

The Ranking technique allows participants to prioritize issues and clarify their personal motivation for addressing what’s most important to them. Ranking activities can provide context for a Journal exercise or topic area, placing a smaller piece of content within a larger set of goals.
When using Ranking, it’s often easier to begin with the most difficult challenge or most urgent priority, then layer secondary topics or challenges underneath.

**Goal-setting and Contracting**

This technique helps participants take steps and measure their behavior-change progress. You may suggest having participants break larger goals into several small steps. Consider using the acronym “SMART” when helping participants set up their goals. Make sure each goal is:

- Specific
- Measurable
- Achievable
- Rewarding
- Time-based

**Homework and Optional Activities**

You did it! You reviewed all three types of facilitation techniques, ranging from group-specific ones to basic counseling ones, and everything in between. When it comes to facilitating a Journal session, these are just some of many techniques and tools at your disposal. In fact, there are many more right at your fingertips, such as the Facilitator Guides of your *Interactive Journaling®* curriculum, and even the Resource tabs of this eLearning module.

Take this Resource tab for example. In it, you’ll find a sheet containing optional and homework, or out-of-session, activities you can pair with your in-session facilitation techniques. These tools can help you decide which facilitation techniques to use, and also how to best structure or provide suggestions for a participant’s time in Journal sessions.

You’ll also find most or all of the techniques we covered here in your Facilitator Guide materials. For quick-reference and ease of use, Facilitator Guides usually separate out the most commonly used one-to-one techniques from the most common group techniques, though as you’ve learned here, many of these can be effectively applied in both settings. It’s really up to you as a facilitator to decide how to best introduce and guide participants through each Interactive Journal page. And now that you’ve completed this eLearning module, you’re well on your way to developing an expertise in your *Interactive Journaling®* curriculum.

**Wrap-up**

Thank you for your participation and hard work in completing this eLearning module on Interactive Journal Facilitation. Feel free to review or return to the information contained here as you continue to hone your skills. You also may want to hang on to your open-response writing from this module, or add it to your program or session planning for the future. Thanks again!