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Final Paper: Group Facilitation Project Reflection

## **BACKGROUND**

For this group facilitation project, we worked in small teams to plan and lead an educational session for our classmates on a human services topic. The objective of the assignment was to strengthen our ability to work effectively in a team and present information to a larger group, because human services work often requires both. My group members were Liliana [REDACTED] and MaKayla [REDACTED]. We chose self-care as our topic. That choice evolved into a mission to create a trauma-informed mini training that acknowledged the realities of stress, capacity, and sustainability in human services work. MaKayla introduced self-care as the starting point, Liliana added burnout to explain why self-care is necessary in helping roles, and I added boundaries and power dynamics to connect self-care to self-advocacy, work-life balance, and ethical practice.

To support that mission, we produced more than the minimum required deliverables. In addition to the pamphlet and Google Slides presentation, we created an additional resources webpage with curated self-care links and a QR code so classmates could access the material later. We went beyond the basic requirements because we wanted the project to function like a real, trauma-informed mini-training rather than a one-time class presentation. This way our classmates could take the information we presented with them into any part of the field or any workplace they chose to work in. We also created a video version of the presentation because a maintenance

issue closed campus on our scheduled presentation date, which prevented us from presenting in person. This required extra coordination at the last minute during finals week.

## THE GROUP FACILITATION PROCESS

Several group norms shaped how we worked together. First, we built structure and clarity by default. We communicated primarily by text first, used a shared Google Drive folder to keep drafts and links organized, and kept expectations transparent so nobody had to guess what was happening. Second, we learned quickly that we functioned better asynchronously than with a rigid meeting schedule. We initially tried to set regular meetings, but we adjusted once it became clear that our best work happened when people could contribute in bursts around school, work, and family demands. Third, we maintained a norm of compassion without shame. We took each other's stressors seriously, respected communication apprehension, and approached delays as "what's getting in the way" instead of "who is failing." Finally, we practiced flexibility under stress and accountability when things slipped. When communication lapsed or timelines tightened, we repaired quickly, adjusted plans, and finished the deliverable while also pointing classmates to deeper resources through the additional webpage and QR code.

In our group, I consistently occupied both task and maintenance roles, and I also practiced boundary leadership by making decisions that protected capacity without abandoning the work. I coordinated the final assembly of materials, kept the structure moving forward, and built contingency plans like placeholders and backup options without taking over other people's contributions. Liliana contributed important content, and she also showed signs of communication apprehension and confidence strain, especially around whether she understood the assignment correctly. That meant she leaned into maintenance needs as well, because

reassurance and clarity were important for her to participate without shame. MaKayla was a proactive task contributor throughout the project. Her [REDACTED] temporarily constrained her capacity, but her approach remained responsible and engaged, including acknowledging when her communication slipped and re-engaging when she was able.

My communication apprehension did not show up as fear of speaking or participating. Instead, I was mindful about how to communicate expectations without sounding like I was nagging or making my teammates feel judged, especially because I could tell Liliana was worried about getting something wrong and felt sensitive to confidence and rejection. Liliana's apprehension was more direct. She worried about understanding the assignment correctly and whether her contributions were strong enough, which influenced how confidently she could move forward. Presentation anxiety also showed up in a specific way. Both Liliana and MaKayla told me they were terrified of presenting without notes, and they felt relief about presenting on video. Ironically, I had the opposite reaction. I feel much more comfortable presenting live than recording a video, so the switch to a recorded presentation increased my own anxiety even though it reduced theirs.

Cohesion showed up through consistent communication, mutual support, and a shared commitment to finishing strong without turning stress into blame. When challenges came up, we stayed engaged and problem-solved instead of making assumptions about effort or intent. For example, there was a point when Liliana was delayed in getting some material to me, and after talking with her I understood it was tied to apprehension and fear of being wrong rather than a lack of commitment. Once I knew the root issue, I could encourage her to send what she had and then ask for help with structuring it for slides and coherence, which kept her ownership intact while also reducing pressure. The same approach helped when MaKayla's [REDACTED]

affected her bandwidth. In both situations, naming the barrier and responding with validation kept the group from sliding into resentment. My own purposeful self-disclosure, including experiences with perfectionism, fear of asking for help, and [REDACTED], helped everyone feel safe, seen, and understood. That improved morale and increased capacity across the group, which is ultimately what allowed us to stay cohesive through finals week.

Leadership in our group was mostly shared, but I took the primary leadership role in coordination and follow-through. The type of leadership I practiced was closest to servant leadership with boundaries and situational or adaptive leadership. I focused on keeping the project moving while protecting the group's morale and each person's ownership of their work. Concrete examples of this include making scope decisions to keep the deliverables realistic, creating placeholders and a backup plan so the project could stay structured during MaKayla's emergency, and building the additional TEFI resources webpage as a "just in case" measure so classmates could still access deeper information. I also regulated my tone and feedback to protect Liliana's confidence and reduce the risk that she would disengage due to shame or apprehension. At the same time, leadership was not one-directional. MaKayla and Liliana contributed key content that shaped the training, and the final product reflects their input rather than a single person's voice.

Two concepts that applied strongly to our group were cohesion under stress and the difference between conflict avoidance and healthy boundary-setting. Cohesion under stress showed up in how we responded to multiple pressures at once, including a [REDACTED], apprehension-driven delays, and the overall intensity of finals. Instead of withdrawing, blaming, or making assumptions, we stayed connected, adjusted timelines, and used concrete strategies like placeholders, backup plans, and shared organization systems to keep the project stable. The

second concept, conflict avoidance versus healthy boundary-setting, applied to how I communicated and how I managed my own tendencies. I was careful not to “nag” in a way that would trigger shame, especially for Liliana, but I still communicated clearly enough to keep forward movement. I also practiced boundaries by not rescuing or taking over other people’s work, even when deadlines made it tempting to overfunction. At the same time, I recognized my own limits during finals week. I was running on fumes by presentation day and missed an email about the video alternative because I allowed myself to get some extra sleep, which meant we needed an extra day to coordinate. That moment reinforced the central idea of our topic: self-care is not just personal wellness, it is capacity management, boundary-setting, and realistic planning inside stressful systems.

The most challenging part of the group dynamic for me was resisting the urge to overfunction and control the entire project. I care a lot about the quality of my work, and I wanted the deliverables to look polished and feel usable outside the classroom. This could have easily turned into a temptation to do everything myself on my own timetable. Throughout the project, though, I stayed mindful of that impulse and used coping skills to tolerate ambiguity. It was more important to me that I allow my group members space to grow and trust that they would come through. I did keep the design and tech portions in my hands as a practical safeguard in case last-minute changes were needed (and also because my professional background does make this work make the most sense to rest on me), but I did not use that as an excuse to take over content ownership. Both MaKayla and Liliana ultimately did their fair share and responded well to the skills I was practicing. The process taught me that strong outcomes do not require rescuing or control when trust, structure, and communication are handled well.

## REFLECTION

Looking back, there are a few things I would do differently next time. I would set clearer norms earlier about what “good enough to send” looks like to anticipate someone feeling perfectionistic or apprehensive. I would also build in a more explicit contingency plan from the start, not because I expect emergencies, but because human services work always involves real life happening at the same time as deadlines. Finally, I would protect my own capacity sooner. I was running on fumes during finals week and it caught up with me, including missing an email about the video alternative, which added last-minute coordination stress. In the future, I want to treat my own baseline self-care like part of the project plan, not something I squeeze in only after everything is finished. Our project was literally about self-care, and I forgot to practice it while working on the project.

There are also skills from this project that I want to keep practicing in future group work. The biggest one is leadership with boundaries. I want to keep building the ability to support people without rescuing them, and to communicate clearly without slipping into nagging or shame-based pressure. I also want to keep practicing tolerance for ambiguity and storming, because group work rarely follows a perfect timeline and staying regulated through conflict matters more than being reactive. Lastly, I want to continue using purposeful self-disclosure carefully when it is actually capacity building, because in this project it helped create psychological safety and made it easier for people to ask for help and stay engaged.

I am proud of both the final products and the way we handled the process. We took a topic that could have turned into a shallow wellness message and built something that felt like a trauma-informed mini-training with real takeaways. We created multiple deliverables that made

the information usable beyond one class session, and we stayed respectful and cohesive even when stressors showed up. I'm also proud of the growth this required from me. I resisted the impulse to overfunction, trusted my group members, and practiced leadership that balanced standards with compassion. In a field where people are constantly asked to do more with less, I'm proud that our group modeled the same skills we were teaching: capacity awareness, ethical boundaries, and support without shame.