

STAR for Sexual Harms

I. Guide for Manual Use:

As traumatic experiences are often accompanied by physical and psychological states of heightened duress, it is important that this manual's contents are engaged in sensitive and trauma-informed ways. In light of this we recommend that special consideration be given to gauging a facilitator's level of preparedness for taking this work on. To inform this evaluation process we draw on the manual's five chapter topics as primary indicators. We encourage potential facilitators to consider these factors in evaluating their readiness for taking on a facilitator role.

(1) Safety & Wellbeing

Facilitator Considerations:

- Do you feel that the learning space is structured in a way that it will provide you as a facilitator with the safety you need?
- Do you have co-trainers/colleagues in place to help you reflect on what happens in the learning space?
- What is your capacity for handling vicarious trauma right now?
- Do you feel you have the power necessary to acknowledge your own preferences, biases and/or limitations?
- What people, resources, or processes need to be in place in order to free you up to be fully present in the learning space?

Group Considerations:

- What group guidelines/commitments have been agreed to in order to ensure that the learning space feels safe for all participants?
- Is there an accountability structure or processes in place to mitigate situations where group protocols might be breached?
- Are there professional support persons available (or on-call) to address incidents of retraumatization?
- Have facilitators and participants been appropriately vetted before joining the learning community?
- What introductory exercises have been incorporated into the learning experience that provide opportunity for participants to safely disclose what they desire about themselves?
- What confidentiality agreements are in place within the participant (and virtual) group context?
- What institutional assurances of privacy and safety have been communicated to participants?

(2) Dignity & Empowerment

Facilitator Considerations:

- As a facilitator, do you have experience and expertise in navigating diverse and complex group dynamics?
- Has consideration been given to who is or isn't represented in the composition of the facilitation team?
- Are you comfortable and skilled at navigating brave and potentially conflictual conversations?
- How comfortable are you with the participant group self-regulating around agreed upon norms?
- Do you have experience navigating groups that include both survivors as well as those who may have caused harm?

Group Considerations:

- Has care been given to creating educational content and pedagogies that resonate with multiple learning styles and that are as inclusive and representative as possible?
- What elements of institutional or structural privilege might be at play in the learning environment?
- Who is monitoring how dynamics of privilege and power are represented in the training agenda and learning space?
- Has consideration been given to what voices are present and what voices are absent?
- What strategies are being used to include under-represented voices?
- Are there specific accommodations that need to be put in place in order to ensure an optimal physical, social, and/or psychological learning environment for all participants?

(3) Attachment & Community

Facilitator Considerations:

- What check-in spaces are present for you to regularly process your experiences as a facilitator?
- Does the learning space include intentional time designated towards the work of self-healing?
- How comfortable are you with participants owning and leading the learning experience?
- Are appropriate boundaries in place to mitigate against dynamics of enmeshment or co-dependence between facilitators and group members?
- As a facilitator do you have your own 'care community' in place?

Group Considerations:

- Does the training experience include community-building activities and exercises?
- What protocols are in place for soliciting the full participation of group members who may feel less connected?
- Have healing and support locations been identified for participants to make use of?
- Does the composition of the facilitation team provide multiple affinity-building opportunities for participants?
- Do learning activities acknowledge and represent the needs of the communities participants represent?
- Are there ongoing feedback loops in place over the duration of the training?
- How is monitoring the group's experience being handled?
- What post-training points of connection are being provided for participants?

(4) Structure & Collaboration

Facilitator Considerations:

- Do you bring significant and seasoned experience in the sexual harms field to this training role?
- Do you model trauma-informed practices in other parts of your life?
- Are you skilled at managing unanticipated disclosures?
- What is your capacity for managing your own or others met or unmet expectations?
- How comfortable are you working as a member of a facilitation team?
- How much experience do you have facilitating training experiences that provide a structured and yet flexible learning agenda?

Group Considerations:

- Are a variety of delivery formats and platforms being used throughout the training experience?
- Are activities organized in ways that address the needs of participants' bodies?
- Does the training venue provide capacity (and supplies) for embodied and kinesthetic activities?
- Are pedagogies being used which link new information to participant's prior experiences and knowledge?
- What centering or grounding exercises or practices will be used throughout the training?
- How are rituals being used to frame opening and closing shared spaces?

(5) Justice & System Change

Facilitator Considerations:

- How comfortable are you in naming your privilege in being a facilitator and the power dynamics that may arise from that role?
- What are your strategies for sharing this form of power with participants and other facilitation team members?
- In what ways might your identity/ies coopt precedence in the learning environment?
- In what ways may your identity/ties be disrespected in the learning space?
- Do you have trust in support and advocacy by your co-facilitators and sponsoring organization?
- Do you feel free to call out institutional complicity (possibly on the part of sponsoring organizations) with sexual harm?
- Are you comfortable with navigating between commonly shared and divergent perspectives as part of the educational experience?
- In what practical ways are you embodying an advocacy agenda?
- What advocacy mentors and role models can you point participants to?

Group Considerations:

- How are you helping participants engage with the connections between systems of oppression and sexual violence?
- Are there training activities for engaging how peoples' identities, lived experiences, and trauma, intersect?
- Is training content and pedagogy culturally informed and relevant?
- Are advocacy organizations regularly identified and featured in the learning space?
- What consideration has been given to communicating about laws (and their systemic biases) within local, national or transnational jurisdictions?
- Are survivor-centered and transformative justice interventions featured in the learning agenda?
- What opportunities for activism are being offered within the training experience itself?
- How is the training providing for the inclusion of local community voices so that the learning experience stays grounded and has contextual integrity?

II. Target Audiences (ideal types of training groups/locations)

- Front-line responders (health, safety, emergency & social service providers)
- Humanitarian (aid & relief workers; domestic & abroad)
- Faith-based groups (lay & clergy)
- Trauma practitioners (individuals & networks)
- Educators (higher education; students, providers & campus groups)
- Survivor networks (formal & informal)
- Counselors (in school, private or corporate sectors)
- Shelters, DV, IPV services (acute & protracted care providers)
- GBV-focused groups (national, international, & transnational)
- Government contracts (VOWA, OVC, health & human service-related grants)

Groups less-well suited for STAR-SH (at this point)

- Folks with limited English proficiency
- Folks who identify on the autism-spectrum
- Youth
- Children