



Top Tips

Managing Group Dynamics

Every group on a HENRY programme or workshop is made up of individuals, with their own attitudes, hopes, expectations and life experiences. So it's not surprising that every group will be different, with a different dynamic.

As HENRY Facilitators, you are equipped with a range of skills and strategies to manage these different dynamics:

Building relationships

- From the first contact, respond to parents and carers in a warm and welcoming way, using lots of inclusive language
- Using plenty of Empathy, Strengths and Paraphrasing will help parents and carers feel heard and valued
- Think about the hopes and anxieties parents and carers may be bringing, to help you respond with empathy
- Refer to our Top Tips on Recruiting and Top Tips on Retention and Good Attendance for more ideas

Group Guidelines

- This is a powerful tool in managing group dynamics - remember to ask the group how they want to manage phones (including texting), and to include the right to pass and be clear about confidentiality
- For online groups, this is the place to agree how to manage cameras ('on' wherever possible), microphones and use of the chat box
- Refer back to the group guidelines at the start of every session, giving the opportunity to add to them, and during a session when necessary - for example, by asking the group "How do we think we're doing when it comes to not using phones?" or "How are we doing about keeping our cameras on?" This allows us to address issues in a non-confrontational or 'telling-off' way

Iceberg - the link between behaviour, feelings and needs

- When faced with behaviour that we find challenging, it can be very helpful to step back and think about what might be going on 'under the surface' for that person, and what emotional needs aren't being met
- This can help you find ways to respond to meet those emotional needs - for example, what might someone need who has been referred but doesn't want to be there? They might be feeling judged or embarrassed and might need plenty of praise and strength spotting

Car Park

- The car park flip chart is where topics can be 'parked' to be picked up later, either during a break or in a later session
- As well as giving Facilitators time to find answers to questions, it's a great way of keeping on track and to time, bringing discussions to a close while still ensuring that contributions are heard and valued

Attention Attractors

- Another great way to bring a discussion to a close - remember that it's the parents/carers who use them, not the Facilitators
- It's a way of involving quieter members of the group, or, if you ask an over-talkative participant to use one, to stop them talking without 'telling off'

Activity Breaks

- It's always helpful to have a quick activity break, such as standing up and stretching, up your sleeve for when you notice the energy in the room beginning to flag - both for online and face-to-face groups
- The 'changing places' activity break can also be helpful to unobtrusively separate participants having side conversations

Collective Rewards

- As well as modelling a helpful strategy for use at home, collective rewards help to reinforce praise and build confidence
- Another way of bringing a discussion to a close, particularly if the group is going off-topic, whilst valuing the contribution

Your co-Facilitator

- Sharing feedback at the end of a session is a golden opportunity to reflect on the group dynamics and plan strategies for dealing with any issues in the next session
- Sitting next to an over-talkative participant can often help them to quieten down and focus
- Sitting next to a quieter participant or someone who has difficulties with literacy or EAL can similarly allow us to support them
- For online groups, your co-Facilitator can help 'read the room' and spot people who are trying to speak, and also monitor the chatbox
- Also with online groups, your co-Facilitator can directly message anyone you have a concern about, to check in with them