

## The Reflective Debriefing Process

One of the most valuable learning tools we have as practitioners is each other. Our skills around being excellent active listeners can be put to use in ways that can help other practitioners learn from their work in ways they can never get from a book or a class. When we help each other dive deep into what happened in a meeting, and see what was going on for us as the practitioner at specific points in the process, we all learn key lessons about ourselves and the process.

### The Process / Exercise:

1. Before or after a person has led a meeting of some sort like a mediation, facilitation, training, coaching session, etc... talk with them and agree that you will get together and work to debrief the work they just did.
2. Sit down with that person in a comfortable, focused, confidential, nurturing environment and start a conversation.
3. Ask questions and debrief what happened with that person.
4. Use the balance of this process guide to support a good debrief process that leads to insights and self-awareness for the person being debriefed.

Notes:

## Roles of a Practitioner and Reflective Debriefeer

### A Comparison

#### Coach / Mediator / Facilitator

- Belief in the parties
- Self determination is goal
- Asks questions
- Frames
- Holds a mirror
- Participants determine the outcome
- Does not give an answer
- Curiosity
- How can I help you?
- They are the experts
- May share information
- Encourage
- Build trust
- Cast doubt
- Reduce defensiveness
- Opens the door to options
- Opportunity for individuals at deeper level
- Invites self reflection
- Invites personal growth
- Encourages careful analysis
- It's not my problem
- You did it
- Never works harder than the parties

#### Reflective Debriefeer

- Belief in the practitioner
- Self determination is goal
- Asks questions
- Frames
- Holds a mirror
- Practitioner determines the outcome
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- Curiosity
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## Reflective Debriefing Tools

Some Examples of Debriefing Questions:

- Questions
  - What do you need?
  - What would you like to focus on?
  - How can I help you think about the work you just did?
  - Was there any learning for you? Why?
  
- Observations
  - I noticed that when Party A \_\_\_\_\_, you usually \_\_\_\_\_. Were you aware of that?
  - I am noticing that you have brought up several times the point in the mediation when \_\_\_\_\_ happened. Why is that important to you?
  
- Insider Information
  - When you told the parties to stop talking and think about how the other person may be feeling, I wonder if either of them felt like they were being reprimanded?
  
- Musing
  - I wonder how it would have been different if the parties had been more aggressive?
  - What would have changed if you had been allowed less time to do the meeting?
  
- Imagining
  - I am imagining that you might be feeling criticized right now. Is that the case?
  - I am getting the feeling that during point \_\_\_\_\_ in the meeting you were feeling \_\_\_\_\_. Am I getting that right?
  
- What is the question behind the request?
  - You've asked me to give you some suggestions on how you could have helped the parties come to a different outcome. Tell me why you are asking? Is it possible for you to identify some ideas and then I can tell you if they match my experience?
  - You've asked me to help you figure out why you lost respect for Party A during the mediation. Why is that important to you? Can you imagine it happening again in another mediation? Can you imagine a situation when your reaction would be OK for you?

What other tools can you think of to help your fellow practitioner come to a greater understanding of their practice?

## Levels of Guidance and Support

The practitioner does his/her best reflecting at approximately the same stage as his/her own development. This requires the ability to self-assess and receive assessment from more experienced practitioners. The reflection partner (the person doing the reflecting with the practitioner), in general, will not do well guiding a reflection beyond their own level of development.

Whatever the level of reflection, it will be most useful if the majority of the work is done by the practitioner. It is the practitioner who processes the information and interprets it. The reflector partner(s) may make observations and invite the practitioner to engage with those observations. The reflector partner(s) may also ask questions, particularly ones that invite self-reflection by the practitioner.

### What is our attention drawn to?

With the beginning practitioner	Basics; structure of the process; roles; impartiality; questioning; active listening; reflection. <b>Fundamentals Stage</b>
With the intermediate practitioner	Artful questioning; transitions from one phase to another; framing and verification; adequate interpretation of emotional cues <b>Living Into Fundamentals Stage</b>
With the experienced practitioner	Full presence of the practitioner; barriers to commitment to clients & process are removed; fluidity; clarity of purpose; clear intent; development of theory in action <b>Creating and Understanding Stage</b>
With the advanced practitioner	Elegance; commitment; intentionality; reasoning behind choices; letting go of rigid beliefs about "how to do it" <b>Artistry Stage</b>