

# **Meet Your MP: It's Not as Tough as You Think!**



## **-Facilitator Guide-**

The United Church of Canada/L'Église Unie du Canada  
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# Acknowledgments

The United Church of Canada in partnership with the United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine/Israel hosted *Creating Brave Spaces for Hard Conversations: Deepening Learning for More Intentional Action* in November of 2018. Volunteers from across the country engaged in learning new skills for sharing information and designed the workshops you have your hands. Jeanette Romkema of Global Learning Partners ably facilitated the event and supported the process from draft workshops to final design, and we are grateful to her.

We give thanks for the many volunteers committed to ending the occupation in Palestine and particularly for promoting the “No Way to Treat a Child” Campaign of Defence for Children International - Palestine. The following people gave a week of their time for travel and education and then further work on refining their workshops. Thanks to: Dawn Waring, Dean Reidt, Debbie Hubbard, Donna Wilson, Doug Rigby, George Bartlett, Jan McIntyre, Jeff Winkelaar, Jim Wicks, Linda Scherzinger, Lori Minler, Mervyn Russell, Myrna Wicks, Nel Ouwens, Norman Williams, Pat Mercer, and Ranya El-Sharkawi. The workshops are:

1. *From Awareness to Action: Building a Network to Advocate for the Rights of Palestinian Children (4 Hours)*
2. *Seeking Justice: An Introduction to the Reality of Palestinian Children in Israeli Military Detention (90 Minutes)*
3. *Stand by Me: The UN Convention on the Rights of a Child and Palestinian Children’s Experiences with the Israeli Military (3 Hours)*
4. *Writing for Action: Letter Writing to Members of Parliament (2 Hours)*
5. *Meet Your MP: It’s Not as Tough as You Think! (2.5 Hours)*
6. *An Introduction to Self-Care for Justice-Seekers (2 Hours)*

All Brave Spaces resources are available for download on the United Church website ([www.united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/brave-spaces-talking-about-palestinian-childrens-rights](http://www.united-church.ca/social-action/justice-initiatives/brave-spaces-talking-about-palestinian-childrens-rights)). Note that the Brave Spaces resources were originally conceived of as in-person experiences for small groups; a tip sheet for adapting Brave Spaces for online delivery is also available at this url.

NOTE: This resource was written with the intention of acknowledging a variety of life experiences and cultural differences. However, it is acknowledged that this is done within dominant norms and frameworks that may inherently exclude some people's life experiences and culture.



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## Endorsement

“The United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine/Israel (UNJPPI) is an informal network of United Church of Canada people. We work for a just peace in Palestine and Israel by calling for an end to the illegal Israeli military occupation and equal right for all who live in Israel and Palestine. We do this through education and advocacy.

UNJPPI was pleased to support the Brave Spaces for Hard Conversations event and are now pleased to endorse and help share the workshops that were developed at the event. We expect that they will be an invaluable asset for people doing education and advocacy work in support of Palestinian children and their families.”

- The United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine/Israel (UNJPPI)



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# Acronyms

As you prepare for your workshop, you will come across some acronyms. Here is a list to help:

**CFOS** - Canadian Friends of Sabeel

<https://friendsofsabeel.ca>

**CJPME** - Canadians for Justice and Peace in the Middle East

[www.cjpme.org](http://www.cjpme.org)

**DCI-P - Defence for Children International – Palestine**

[www.dci-palestine.org](http://www.dci-palestine.org)

**IJV** - Independent Jewish Voices

<https://ijvcanada.org>

**NWTTAC** - No Way to Treat a Child

[www.nwttac.canada.dci-palestine.org](http://www.nwttac.canada.dci-palestine.org)

**UNJPPI** - United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine/Israel

[www.unjppi.org/index.html](http://www.unjppi.org/index.html)

**UNCRC** - United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child

[www.unicef.ca/en/policy-advocacy-for-children/about-the-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child](http://www.unicef.ca/en/policy-advocacy-for-children/about-the-convention-on-the-rights-of-the-child)

# **An Overview**

## **The People**

There does not need to be a limit on the number of people at this workshop, but a good group size is 12 to 16. These people have a commitment to a just peace for Palestinians and Israelis, are familiar and involved with the No Way to Treat a Child Campaign and are interested in gaining confidence to plan and to meet with their MP about this concern. They may be members of groups in solidarity with and working in support of Palestinian human rights such as KAIROS Canada, the United Church of Canada, Mennonite Church of Canada, Canadian Friends of Sabeel (CFOS) or United Network for Justice and Peace in Palestine/Israel (UNJPPI). All interested individuals are welcome.

This workshop was created with the support and endorsement of The United Church of Canada. One of the Global Mission & Service partners of The United Church of Canada is Defense for Children International – Palestine (DCI-P) which seeks to help children and families survive and heal from encounters with the military justice system that is part of their everyday lives in the Occupied Palestinian Territories. Palestinian children from the age of 12 on up are prosecuted in the Israeli military court system in which they are systematically mistreated. The United Church is part of a Canada-wide and international campaign supported by Amnesty International and many other organizations seeking to increase awareness and to advocate for these children's rights. Canada has strong, supportive ties with Israel and has not questioned Israel's violations of international law or its unjustifiable human rights abuses of Palestinian children. We want to bring Canada's complicity to the attention of our federal politicians and urge them to take action on behalf of the rights of Palestinian children.

## **The Situation**

Talking about the situation in Israel and Palestine is very sensitive and controversial for most people in Canada. Israel and its supporters have a great deal of political and media power, which influences how Canadians see and interpret the situation in the Middle East. Critics of Israel are frequently accused of being anti-Semitic. It is a challenge for anyone – citizens or politicians - to speak up for the rights of Palestinians. No federal party has taken a positive stand on behalf of Palestinian rights. Focussing on children is one way to approach the topic in a way that is not as threatening as other aspects of the conflict.

The No Way to Treat a Child campaign has received some degree of support of congresspersons in the US. Currently Canadian supporters are working toward similar political support in our Federal Government. In order to be able to change the hearts and minds of politicians and encourage MPs to speak up for Palestinian rights, supporters of these rights need confidence and skill to engage with elected officials.

The people coming to this workshop want to gain confidence and skills to enable them to connect their passion for justice for children in the most effective way possible with their political representative who can make a difference.

## The Desired Impact

It is our hope that because of this workshop, participants will:

- Feel more confident to engage their MP
- Be more skilled at helping their MP see ways to take a positive position in support of Palestinian children’s rights and want to take action
- Feel more comfortable speaking up for social justice concerns – even unpopular ones

## The Place and Space

It is recommended that this workshop take place in a large comfortable space (see “Tips for Ensuring Safety”). There should be room for table groups of 4-5 persons, with space to move around. You will need wall space to post flip chart paper, so check if this is possible. If tables are not available, arrange the room in a horseshoe or semi-circle so everyone can easily see each other and the front.

See “Tips for Room Set Up” for more ideas.

## The Materials Needed

### Resources

- name tags (stickers), 1/person
- pens, 1/person

### Photocopies

- Participant Workbook, 1/person
- Feedback Sheet (see [Appendix](#)), 1/person

## The Time and Timing

This is a 2.5-hour workshop, with no break.

The following is a suggested timeframe for the workshop. If you have more or less time, adjustments will need to be made.

### Welcome! (10 min)

Acknowledgement of the Land  
Who Are We and Why Are We Here?  
Overview

### Why Is It Important to Meet with Our MPs? (20 min)

A – 5 min  
B – 5 min  
C – 10 min

## Who Should Visit Their MP? (20 min)

- A – 10 min
- B – 10 min

## A Visit with an MP (30 min)

- A – 15 min
- B – 15 min

## Let's Try It Out! (60 min)

- A – 5 min
- B – 10 min
- C – 30 min
- D – 10 min
- E – 5 min

## Planning My Next Steps (10 min)

### Closing

Here are times of the year to consider offering workshops:

- **March 21** – Palestinian Mother's Day  
[www.palestinecalendar.org/march.html](http://www.palestinecalendar.org/march.html)
- **April 17** – Prisoner's Day (to learn about administrative detention and political prisoners) [www.addameer.org/about/our-work](http://www.addameer.org/about/our-work)
- **May 15** – Nakba Day (commonly referred to as "the Nakba" - the Catastrophe. This is what Palestinians term the catastrophe that befell them in the war that led to the establishment of Israel in 1948 when hundreds of thousands of Palestinians were forcibly displaced from their homes.)
  - A Palestinian record: [www.passia.org/media/filer\\_public/b1/b0/b1b0086b-d91b-4a32-83b3-505700d0e67d/nakbafull.pdf](http://www.passia.org/media/filer_public/b1/b0/b1b0086b-d91b-4a32-83b3-505700d0e67d/nakbafull.pdf)
  - In-depth resource developed by Zochrot, Israeli organization for German audience:  
<https://zochrot.org/uploads/uploads/aa0d1cda57550fb0ad815d606cb1ccb1.pdf>
- **Third week of September** – World Week for Peace in Palestine Israel  
[www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/world-week-of-peace-in-palestine-and-israel](http://www.oikoumene.org/en/press-centre/events/world-week-of-peace-in-palestine-and-israel)
- **November 20** – United Nations International Day for the Child  
(see United Church worship resources for Children's Sunday [www.united-church.ca/worship-special-days/childrens-sunday](http://www.united-church.ca/worship-special-days/childrens-sunday))

- **November 29** – International Day of Solidarity with Palestine People  
[www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-of-solidarity-with-the-palestinian-people](http://www.un.org/en/observances/international-day-of-solidarity-with-the-palestinian-people)
- **December 10** – Human Rights Day (see [www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day](http://www.un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day))

## Facilitation Notes

The following are notes for facilitating the individual tasks in this workshop. They are meant as a guide and to help clarify what each task is about and what we are inviting participants to do. See [Appendix](#) “Core Principles of Learning.”

Please check your understanding of who will be coming, why they are coming, where and when it will be, and what the expectations are to ensure alignment. We encourage you to adapt this workshop as needed, without compromising the interactive nature of this learning design.

### Welcome!

This workshop supports the No Way to Treat A Child Campaign (NWTCC) of United Church of Canada partner Defence for Children International – Palestine This campaign seeks to challenge and end Israel's prolonged military occupation of Palestinians by exposing widespread and systematic ill-treatment of Palestinian children in the Israeli military detention system.

Please add a few words about this particular workshop and why this is important. Introduce yourself, too!

### Acknowledgment of the Land

This workshop encourages the offering of Acknowledgement of the Territory. Ideally you will have access to an acknowledgement used within your community. If that is not the case, please use the text below, which you can customise to your workshop and location or do your own research.

Possible script:

*We gratefully acknowledge that we gather on the territory of \_\_\_\_\_. We acknowledge their stewardship of this land throughout the ages and we seek to live with respect on this land, and live in peace and friendship with its people.*

For more information about land acknowledgments, go to:

- United Church of Canada guide ([www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/acknowledging-the-territory.pdf](http://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/acknowledging-the-territory.pdf))
- *Whose Land* ([www.whose.land/en](http://www.whose.land/en)), which helps you find out whose Indigenous territory you are on. That information is on the landing page. Additional information about why you would choose to acknowledge the land you are on is here too, just visit the “why acknowledge” tab.
- “What We’ve Learned about Land Acknowledgments” <https://mediastyle.ca/2019/09/10/heres-what-weve-learned-about-land-acknowledgements>

## Overview

It is important to give participants an idea of what you will do in the workshop. Give a quick overview and move on.

## Who Are We and Why Are We Here

This is time to introduce yourself and why this workshop is important.

## Why Is It Important to Meet with Our MPs?

Understanding why it is important to meet our MPs is critical. Be clear and affirm all answers.

## Who Should Visit Their MP?

It is helpful to share your *personal* story of visiting an MP – you are leading with your example. You don't want it to be too long but ensure you highlight key elements of such a visit. If you don't have a personal story, you can share one from someone else. Ahead of time, you might want to approach participants and see if one of them can share. Here is an example:

- We were members of our church and social justice groups who were also constituents of our MP
- From previous visits we know our MP went to Israel on a trip paid for by a Canadian pro occupation advocacy organization.
- We know he has several young children.
- He is a backbencher in his first term as an MP.
- He was not aware of the United Church/Mennonite Central Committee lobby visit with MPs in Ottawa, April 2018, focused on “No Way to Treat a Child”.
- We need to know more about his voting record.
- He has met and listened to our concerns before but has not made any personal commitment. We need to know more about his knowledge and attitude about Israel/Palestine.
- We want to ask him to be willing to talk with members of his caucus about the plight/mistreatment of Palestinian children by the State of Israel. Specifically, we want him to talk with the Minister of Foreign Affairs about holding Israel accountable for violating international human rights law - specifically for the mistreatment of Palestinian children.

## A Visit with an MP

This is the new content of the workshop. Although it is important don't let the group get bogged down here. The learning will happen in the next section “Let's Try it Out!”

## Let's Try It Out!

To be able to do the role play, you will need a co-facilitator or ask someone from the group to play the role of MP. If you select a participant for this role, it would be helpful to brief that person in advance, offering a bit of coaching to make the role authentic.

Learning is in the doing and the deciding. As such, this is the most important part of the workshop. Participants will need time and space to practice how to visit an MP as well as give and receive feedback. This may be new for many, so they may enter hesitantly and so affirming their attempts is important.

It is helpful to invite a few suggestions after each role play. However, limit it to 1-2 in order stay positive about all the efforts made. Shaming someone is not helpful, and most people feel quite vulnerable doing a role play – safety is key.

### **Planning My Next Steps**

Making space to plan their next step is important to do before leaving. Protect time for this personal action planning. Inviting some people to share will help inspire the group and celebrate the brave steps being taken.

### **A Celebration and Closing**

Feedback is important. Please give each person a copy of the “Feedback Sheet” and ensure there is enough time to complete it.

Close with a warm thanks and gratitude.

# Tips for Talking about Palestine/Israel Concerns

Talking about Palestine/Israel concerns is not easy. The following tips are offered to you from the years of experience of the authors of this workshop. *What would you add?*

1. **Frame the issues using shared values.** If people care about values like equality, justice, human rights, this can be a starting point. Create space and opportunity for people to name values. Reinforce what is shared and held in common rather than emphasize the differences in perspective, experience and opinion.
2. **Remain focused on the issue and re-direct discussion back to the focus.** If participants raise issues that are somewhat off topic, myths or try to shift the focus, acknowledge that there are many aspects to the situation of injustice; however, remind everyone of the focus for this conversation or workshop.
3. **Address areas of tension.** This is frequently a difficult, emotional, and potentially traumatizing conversation. If there are areas of discomfort or conflict, address them as soon as possible. Don't let unaddressed issues derail your learning experience or jeopardize it in some way.
4. **Challenge anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.** Invite participants to learn and confront their own and societal anti-Semitism and Islamophobia.
5. **Refer to problematic policies of the Israeli, Canadian, or Palestinian governments.** Be clear that the problem is policies and practices that violate human rights and international law. Do not refer to "the Jewish lobby", "Jews" or "Jewish people", or infer that all Jewish or Israeli people are collectively responsible for the occupation. This is anti-Semitic.
6. **Challenge global and systemic injustice.** Canada plays a role in perpetuating systemic injustices at home and overseas, as do the United States, the United Kingdom, China, Russia, Israel, etc. Comments that perpetuate anti-Semitic canards about a "global Jewish conspiracy" or make such inferences should be immediately shut down and rejected.
7. **Avoid "triggering the frame."** Repeating a misconception in order to disprove it often ends up reinforcing the erroneous idea in people's minds. Don't start by refuting a claim you think others will make; start by describing your vision for change with a positive framing (see [https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ConversationGuideNOV2016\\_v2.pdf](https://jewishvoiceforpeace.org/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/ConversationGuideNOV2016_v2.pdf)).
8. **Take steps to avoid being triggered yourself.** This can happen at unexpected moments for unknown reasons in unexpected ways i.e. negative assumptions about your motives, your level of knowledge and/or experience can derail your ability to facilitate learning or the whole exercise. Try to address the underlying reasons for these disruptions directly without becoming defensive, arguing or making it personal. Remember: hostility and confrontation can be a result of a person feeling vulnerable or of having one's long-held beliefs challenged by new information.
9. **Affirm the historical and authentic connections and linkages** that Jews, Christians, and Muslims alike have to the Holy Land. Diminishing these, diminishes us.
10. **Emphasize that human rights of all are of concern.** A movement motivated by concern for human rights and justice for all requires caring about the dignity, well-being,

concerns and self-determination of all people. This should be clearly expressed even as we highlight violations of the rights of particular groups.

11. **Decolonize your solidarity.** Because global minority/global majority (North/South) relations have emerged from a history of domination (see <https://thewalrus.ca/the-canadian-narrative-about-slavery-is-wrong/>), good intentions are not sufficient to overcome inequalities. Despite ourselves, we often reproduce the relations of oppression we wish to abolish. Begin by situating ourselves within the inequalities we seek to identify and take stock of our own social positions. Identify the privileges conferred on us and withheld from people with whom we wish to build relationships of solidarity e.g. freedom to move, speak, buy, and work. (See <https://thebodyisnotanapology.com/magazine/10-examples-that-prove-white-privilege-protects-white-people-in-every-aspect-imaginable/>.)
12. **Listen as well as speak.** Avoid making it a competition or a history lesson. Listening works surprisingly well; better than lecturing. Affirmation also works; shaming isn't helpful. See "10 Core Principles."

## Ideas for Inviting People

Here is a template of an email you can use to reach out to potential participants:

Dear [name],

Did you know that Palestinian children in the West Bank are frequently subject to Israeli military detention and imprisonment? Day and night, Palestinian children are at risk of being arrested by Israeli soldiers or police, often for arbitrary reasons, sometimes for no reason at all. Israel has the dubious distinction of being the only country in the world that systematically prosecutes around 700 children each year in military courts lacking fundamental fair trial rights.

Are you wondering what you can do?

Join us at [date] at [place] for the workshop “Meeting Your MP: It’s Not as Tough as You Think!”. It’s time to talk to our politicians.

For more information and to register, contact [name], [title and contact info].

# Learning Needs and Resources Assessment—Ideas to Try

Below are some ideas for discovering helpful information about the people coming, why they are coming, the place you will be at and content you are planning:

1. Email registered participants in advance of the workshop and ask them 2-3 questions that can help you in planning. Here are a few examples:
  - a. *What is your involvement or what have you learned about 'No Way to Treat a Child' (NWTTAC)?*
  - b. *What are you hoping to learn in a workshop re 'meeting your MP'?*
  - c. *Why would you come to that workshop?*
2. Call or meet with a few people coming to your event to get to know what their experience, concerns, interest and hopes are regarding meeting their MP.
3. If people who have completed an introductory NWTTAC workshop and chose to follow up by meeting with their MP about Palestinian children's rights, you might ask them questions such as:
  - a. *Have you had experience meeting with an MP? If so, did you feel it went as well as you had hoped? Why or why not?*
  - b. *What did you learn? What were your most important insights as a result of that experience?*
  - c. *Why are you interested in participating in this workshop?*

# Core Principles for Learning

The following core principles of adult learning will help to maximize learning. Here are some practical ways to help these come alive.

**Respect.** Learners want to feel their ideas, experiences, knowledge, culture, and everything about them is respected and honoured.

**Safety.** Learners need to feel emotionally, physically, and psychologically safe enough to share personal stories, ask difficult questions, and offer challenging ideas. An example of this is for the facilitator to state up-front that emotions will surface, and that's okay. See "Tips for Ensuring Safety," below.

**Authenticity.** Being fully present with the learners—feeling their emotions and sensing their struggles—will ensure your responses and questions are meaningful and relevant to each person in the room at that time i.e. watch your eye contact and body language.

**Humility.** We are all learners in this journey, so deep humility about what we know and don't know is important; it's okay to say, "I don't know."

**Deep listening.** Sometimes what *is not* said is just as important as what *is* said. Deep listening will help learners feel safe i.e. listen with your whole body.

**Relevance.** Learners need to understand how each session is relevant and important for them and their lives. If someone cannot see the relevance, they will disengage and not learn. Invite participants to personalize as much as possible.

**Engagement.** Learners need to be engaged in their learning for learning to occur. Encourage everyone to fully participate.

**Inclusion.** Learners want to feel included and valued. Thank people for all input, even when they push back or challenge what is said.

**Transparency.** Learners feel safer when they know what to expect (good or bad). For example, at the beginning, clarify what the workshop will be able to address or not address, how they will engage with the content, and what they will learn.

**Learning styles.** All learners have different learning preferences: auditory, visual, or kinesthetic. For this reason, offer a variety of ways to engage with the material. Ask questions specific to the learning style: what did you do? what did you see? what did you hear?

**Immediacy.** Learning is deepened when learners can use the new content they have just learned right away in their lives. At the end of your workshop make space for people to plan their next steps.

# Tips for Ensuring Safety

Learners need to feel safe to learn new things and talk about them in a personal way, especially a serious topic such as Palestine/Israel concerns. Here are some tips for ensuring safety.

1. **Select a venue based on who is coming.** If you have invited the community or people of various faiths, avoid the church setting. If you have invited a United Church group, the church may be a preferred option.
2. **Connect with a group before the event.** This starts to work on building safety – for everyone. An email, a face-to-face chat during a church service, or a phone call can go a long way.
3. **Warmly welcome each person as they arrive.** How they are greeted can set the stage for what happens throughout the event.
4. **Appreciate all answers.** Paraphrase and say, “thank you” even to those tougher, more negative responses. Participants need to know that every answer, regardless of how strange or different, is appreciated and welcomed. When learners know that all answers are respected, even if they are not universally shared by the group, they will be more open.
5. **Keep the workshop tightly focused.** Facilitators should resist talking a lot “off script” to prevent the possibility of going in an unhelpful direction where learning or safety might be compromised.
6. **Wait at least 5 seconds for an answer after asking a question.** Silence is a difficult thing when we are facilitating. However, people need time to think of what they want to say and how they feel. Sometimes they need to gather the courage to speak, and that’s okay.
7. **Encourage crosstalk.** People are accustomed to the “teacher” as the focus of a session and all discussion. However, facilitators need to encourage the group to answer and respond to each other’s ideas and questions, while avoiding having some participants feel like their comments or opinions are being challenged or disregarded.
8. **Use partner interactions: pairs, trios, table groups, and so form.** These increase engagement, invite all voices, and create more safety for “rough draft” thinking. Learning is in the doing, discussing, and deciding.
9. **Remember:** Despite best efforts, not all spaces will be safe for everyone because of social and systemic inequities.

# Tips for Addressing Strong Emotions

Having a strong emotional response is normal and common for participants in workshops about vulnerability and issues close to your heart. How we deal with it (or avoid dealing with it) can make the difference between a positive experience and a negative one. Here are a few suggestions:

## **Sorrow or sadness**

1. Assure the person this is a normal response.
2. There is no need to talk; just sit in silence and allow the person to feel the emotion.
3. Don't try to "fix" or gloss over it.
4. Have tissues handy.

## **Anger (positive)**

1. Assure the person this is a normal and important response.
2. Although it is natural to want to leap into action, it is important to live with this emotional response. Action can be discussed and planned at a later time.
3. Enhance safety by thanking the person for being open to expressing their anger.

## **Anger (negative)**

1. Acknowledge this response; don't try to ignore it.
2. Avoid being pulled into a deep discussion about specific facts and figures, or personal stories.

## **Guilt**

1. Assure the person this is a normal response.
2. Although our country, church, or community may be complicit in the occupation and injustice, it is now our responsibility to learn and journey with each other toward a just peace.

## **Denial or disbelief**

1. Assure the person this is a normal response, because this information has been unknown and even hidden for a very long time.
2. Highlight the fact that all the information shared in the workshop comes from reliable sources and lived experience.

Here are a few ideas to help a group process strong emotions:

- take a break
- invite a moment of silence, reflection, prayer or song
- return to the breath
- affirm all emotion.

# Tips for Dealing with Tough Questions

Participants in Palestine/Israel workshops often ask tough questions. Some of these may include:

- “I don’t believe that this actually happened, because I once read.... What do you think?”
- “Why do I get the feeling you are only telling one side of the story?”
- “This can’t be true! Why haven’t I ever heard this before?”
- “I don’t understand the facts around.... Can you explain them to me?”
- “How do I know who to believe? My whole life I have been told....”

Here are some ways to deal with this:

1. **Affirm all tough questions.** This will encourage openness and safety. However, not all questions need to be answered or need to be answered *by you*. Also, some tough questions have the potential of sidetracking, distracting, or dominating the dialogue and compromising the learning. Use discretion in deciding when a conversation needs to end or be redirected.
2. **Bounce the question to the group.** Sometimes the knowledge and expertise are in the room. When it comes from the group rather than you, it validates the speaker and her knowledge.
3. **Know you don’t need to know all the answers.** You can say, “That is a good question that you and I will need to look into after the workshop.”
4. **It’s okay to say: “I don’t know.”** We are all learners on a journey.
5. **Assure the group that the information heard and read in the workshop comes from reliable sources and lived experiences.**

# Tips for Digging Deeper

The following questions will help you encourage participants to share more deeply:

1. Tell us more about....
2. Why do you say that?
3. It must have been very difficult for you to.... Tell us more about how you....
4. What else can you tell us about...?
5. What else...?
6. Help us understand....
7. Can you give us another example of...?
8. Tell us why....
9. So why do you think that ...?
10. I'm not sure I understand.... Can you tell us more about that?
11. I'm not certain what you mean by.... Can you give us some examples?
12. What stands out in your mind about that?
13. So, what I hear you say is.... What are we missing?
14. What makes you feel that way?
15. You just told me about.... I'd also like to know about....
16. What would ... say about what you just said?
17. How do *you* feel about that?
18. What exactly did you mean by ...?
19. And what happened after that?
20. Why do you think that is/happened?
21. For you, what prevented... from happening?
22. What would it take for us/you to do that?

# Tips for Minimizing Resistance

Resistance to what is being taught or how it is being taught is normal. What we want to do is minimize it so that it doesn't interfere with learning. Here are 10 ways to do this:

1. **Early invitation and plan.** Tell learners in advance what they will be learning and doing. Getting rid of the element of surprise will minimize resistance for some.
2. **Safety.** Learners need to feel emotionally and physically safe enough to engage with the content and learn. If they don't, they may start to resist the process and disengage. See "Tips for Ensuring Safety."
3. **Respect.** Showing respect to all learners can minimize resistance. People can react to feeling left out or unvalued. Ensure everyone feels seen and heard.
4. **Affirmation.** Everyone likes to be appreciated and affirmed. The more you do this, the less resistance you will have from your learners.
5. **Relevance.** When learners do not understand how something is important in their life, they may resist the learning experience. Help learners know *why* this content is important in their lives and why it matters.
6. **Choice.** Offering learners choices on how to learn or how to participate or where to sit, can minimize resistance. They will appreciate having input in their learning experience.
7. **Transparency.** Explain to learners why you are doing something if it is different from what they are used to. Once they understand there is a reason, there will be less resistance.
8. **Welcome it.** Never avoid resistance because it will most likely build and come back to you, *stronger*. Welcome and celebrate it because often the best learning comes when an idea or way of doing something is first resisted. Just don't get 'hooked' by it.
9. **Check in.** You can check in with learners privately before the session, during a break or with the entire group at the end of a session. If you let them honestly tell you how they feel and they see you responding to what they tell you, resistance will be minimized.
10. **Stick to the program.** Don't change the workshop unless you have a good reason to do so, and explain it to the group.

# Tips for Getting Quick Feedback<sup>1</sup>

It is important to get feedback from the group to hear what they think of the content they are learning and how they are learning it. Here are some ideas that do not take much time. For each of these, you only need to hear a few responses.

1. **How I feel.** “Take a minute on your own to think about how you feel right now.... Call out the word or phrase that expresses how you feel about what you are learning.”
2. **What was new.** “Let’s take a minute to hear 1 thing that was new for you today.”
3. **What worries you.** “Let’s take a minute to hear 1 thing that worries you about what you heard today.”
4. **What surprises you.** “Let’s take a minute to hear 1 thing that was surprising or worrying to you today.”
5. **Your questions.** “At this point in our program, what 1 question do you hope gets answered before we finish?”
6. **What bothers you.** “After all we learned today, what do you think is most misunderstood in your country? Your community? Your church?”
7. **I want more.** “After today’s session, what do you want to learn more about?”
8. **Your session.** “What went well for you today?” and “What suggestions do you have for our next session that would help your learning?”
9. **Check energy.** “Let’s rate our energy on our fingers at this point: From 1-10, what is your energy?” (At the same time, everyone should hold up their two hands to show their number.)
10. **Checking in privately.** Sometimes it is wise to check in on someone who is concerning you (whether you are wondering about interest, engagement, relevance, or something else). During a break just ask, “How is the workshop working for you so far?” or “You seem to still have some questions or concerns about what we were doing. I’d love to hear what they are...”

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted with permission from Global Learning Partners [www.globallearningpartners.com](http://www.globallearningpartners.com).

## Tips for Room Set Up

The space and place can impact the level and ability of engagement from your group. Arrive early and take time to consider and make the best use of the limitations and opportunities in the room and building you will be in.

1. **Start setting up early.** You want to be ready to greet people as they arrive and not be distracted by other things. If you can set up a day in advance, even better.
2. **Clear the space of unnecessary clutter.** Extra furniture and debris can get in the way and be a distraction. Ensure a tidy space as much as possible.
3. **Decide where “the front” should be.** There is usually a choice and you want to select carefully. Your goal is to ensure everyone can see each other and you.
4. **Arrange table groups with 4–5 individuals each.** Table groups are ideal for personal and authentic dialogue. Where possible, arrange a semi-circle of tables to ensure everyone can see each other. You may want to start in a circle and then work at tables for the rest of the workshop.
5. **Place a basket on each table.** These baskets can contain pens, markers, Post-it notes, manipulatives, candy and any other necessary items.
6. **Ensure there is a clock in the room.** Keeping track of time is the responsibility of the facilitator. Although you need to stay flexible for meaningful dialogue, you also need to ensure you offer the entire workshop experience. Hold these opposites.
7. **Prepare all your resources and visuals in advance.** Preparing for a workshop takes time. Ensure you have plenty of it to be ready when people start arriving.
8. **Have snacks and drinks in the room.** Learning is hard work and when you are with a group of people you don't know it can be even harder. Snacks and drinks can help the learning and the learners.

# Tips for Getting People Talking<sup>2</sup>

Getting learners to talk and have dialogue with each other (and themselves!) is critical for ensuring learning. Here are a few ways to get people talking:

1. **Partner/pair work.** Dividing people into pairs ensures that everyone is talking and engaged. This also minimizes the problem of the same people “stealing the floor.” People often feel safer to talk with one other person. This is especially helpful for introverts.
2. **Small group work.** Dividing people into small groups also gets most people talking. People feel more comfortable and freer to talk when they are in a small group than in the whole group.
3. **Open questions.** Open questions have no set answer and invite dialogue. Questions that start with “W” can offer good open questions: why, what, where, who, when. “Why” is often called a “powerful open question” because it can push learners to share deeply.
4. **Table work.** When a group is divided into multiple table groups, more talk happens. There should be a task for each table group and a timeframe given.
5. **Choice.** When learners are given a choice about how to do something or what to do, they will usually choose what they are most interested in and what energizes them.
6. **Silence, reflection, and journaling.** Often learners need time to think. Silence, reflection and journaling provide an opportunity for learners to talk *with themselves*. This is especially helpful for introverts.
7. **Relevance.** When something is relevant to the learners’ lives, they will want to talk about it. Engagement is high when people are learning something they want to learn about.
8. **Engagement.** Learners learn by doing, discussing and deciding. It is important to invite meaningful and purposeful dialogue; however, deep engagement often comes from more complex activities i.e. creating a poster, roleplaying a meeting with your MP, synthesizing an article, analyzing a case study, writing a letter to the Minister of Foreign Affairs, etc.

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<sup>2</sup> Adapted with permission from Global Learning Partners [www.globallearningpartners.com](http://www.globallearningpartners.com).

## Tips for Effective Facilitation<sup>3</sup>

Facilitating well can make all the difference in a learner feeling safe in a workshop or not. This is a skill and an art. Here are a few tips to help (some of these tips overlap with “Tips for Ensuring Safety”):

1. **Don’t tell; teach.** Your job is to teach important content people have come to learn. By facilitating dialogue and engaging them with the content, they leave better able to make informed decisions about their involvement in the Palestine/Israel concerns.
2. **Wait at least 5 seconds for an answer after asking a question.** Silence is a difficult thing when we are facilitating. However, people need time to think of what they want to say and whether they want to share.
3. **Appreciate all answers.** Learners need to know that every answer, regardless of how strange or different, *is appreciated*. When learners know that all answers are welcome (although not always correct), they will be encouraged to share. Say, “Thank you Tom, that brings up an important point...” Be fully present to hear what is being asked, and determine what to do with it.
4. **Talk less, listen more.** The more learners can discuss, debate, and assess new content, the more they learn. This means *less* of you, and *more* of them.
5. **Time wisely.** It is critical to watch the clock at all times—having two clocks in the room is often a good idea. Stating the amount of time available for a task can help you manage time well and keep the group on track.
6. **Ask open questions.** Open questions encourage dialogue and invite ideas, opinions and discussion. Since open questions don’t have ‘yes/no’ answers, learners are invited to engage with the content and each other, explore and make sense of the topic for themselves.
7. **Use invitational language.** Invitational language is respectful and inviting. Try phrases like: “I invite you back to the circle...” or “Who would like to share their story...?” or “Who has a question?”
8. **Sample to keep energy up.** When debriefing group work, it is often *not necessary* to hear from everyone. It is important to honour the work that was completed and invite questions, but this can be done by sampling: “Let’s hear from two groups” or “Let’s hear one of your stories”. This will also keep the energy up in the room!
9. **Encourage crosstalk.** People are accustomed to the presenter as the focus of a session and all discussion. Facilitators need to encourage the group to answer and respond to each other’s ideas and questions rather than a back and forth with them.

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted with permission from Global Learning Partners [www.globallearningpartners.com](http://www.globallearningpartners.com).

## Tips for Co-Facilitation<sup>4</sup>

Facilitating with others is different than doing it solo. Here are some tips to ensure you are successful:

1. **Agree on the “big picture.”** Before every event, take some time to share your understanding of the group you expect for the workshop, their expectations, venue, time available, and your plan. Together, decide what may have to be adapted or changed for the unique situation.
2. **Clarify roles.** As soon as you know you will be working with each other, get together to plan. You need to agree on the timing, and who will lead each part of the workshop.
3. **Tell your partner what you expect and need.** The first time you meet, tell each other what would be helpful to you, and how you work best. Everyone has a different understanding of co-facilitator roles and this needs to be shared.
4. **Check in with each other during the workshop.** When possible and necessary between activities, check in with each other briefly. Sometimes you just need to tell the person that you’ll want their help with something such as distributing a handout. Checking in helps the flow and shows participants that you are taking their time seriously. The best time to check in with each other is during breaks.
5. **Support your co-facilitator in a number of ways.** While your partner is leading an activity or discussion, be fully attentive to what she needs *and* what the group may need that you can do. You can help your co-facilitator be more focused by writing for her on a chart, taping something to the wall, or supporting a confused group.
6. **Set personal and team goals.** Before the meeting, name 1-2 facilitation skills you especially want to keep in mind during the event such as waiting, affirming or using open questions. Tell your partner what skill/s you are focused on, so that she can give you supportive feedback on these goals at the end of the session. Setting team goals is also a great idea.
7. **Work as a team.** At all times, you want learners to see the two of you as “a team”. Support each other, affirm each other in front of the group, and weave the work your co-trainer did into your work. You want the learners to think: “Wow, you work well together!”

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<sup>4</sup> Adapted with permission from Global Learning Partners [www.globallearningpartners.com](http://www.globallearningpartners.com).

# Tips for Hosting a Workshop

1. **Pray for wisdom and an open heart.**
2. **Decide how you will invite people to come. Some ideas:**
  - Church bulletin insert
  - Church service announcement or website
  - Personal invitations or phone call
  - Email message or social media invitation
  - reach out to local like-hearted organizations
  - National and regional networks and events
  - Regional Council website.
3. **Carefully select the right space.** Intentionally choose the space that will work best for the size of group, the interactive nature of the workshop, and accessibility for all.
4. **Plan a time to meet with the facilitator(s) before the event.**
5. **Inform the facilitator(s) about the people coming, the situation, the hoped-for impact, the time available, the place and space,** and anything else that will help them plan well.
6. **Ensure the space is clear** of extra furniture and other objects, and clean.
7. **Check facilitator's needs** with regards to technology, furniture, kitchen, etc. Also, ensure technology is working.
8. **Assist the facilitator(s) to set up** the space before people arrive.
9. **Offer drinks and light snacks as people arrive.** This helps people feel welcome and helps them socialize before the workshop begins. Check your expectations with the facilitator.
10. **Check dietary, scent and other restrictions,** as applicable.
11. **Warmly greet people as they arrive.** Feeling welcomed and connected will help them engage meaningfully and learn.
12. **Be a full participant of the workshop,** even if you have participated before – there is always more to learn.
13. **Help the facilitator(s) clean up.** Many hands will make light work.
14. **Debrief with the facilitator(s)** after everyone has left. They need your feedback and you need theirs..

