

# Writing for Action: Letter Writing to Members of Parliament



## -Facilitator Guide-

# 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

This workshop is most suitable for adults and mature youth, and for groups of 12 to 20 individuals. It was developed for those who:

- Understand the realities of life in Palestine and particularly the plight of youth arrested under military detention
- Want to deepen their personal understanding of NWTAC and share their understanding with elected officials
- Are interested in engaging elected officials and want to strengthen their letter writing skills

## The Desired Impact

As a result of this workshop, it is hoped that participants will:

- Feel more confident and skilled at writing for 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.

If you opt to use a video, you will need access to reliable internet, a clear surface to project, and audio-visual technology. See “Tips for Room Set Up” for more ideas.

## The Materials Needed

### Resources

- name tags, 1/person
- Quotations for Display (see [Appendix](#))
- pens, 1/person
- blank paper (to write letter on), 1/person
- sheets of flipchart paper (or other large paper to write commitments), 2
- dark markers, 5
- masking tape, 1 roll
- envelopes and stamps, 1 of each/person
- audio-visual technology, if you’re showing the video *Detaining Dreams* (video is optional)

### Photocopies

- Participant Workbook, 1/person
- Quotations Handout, 1/person (see [Appendix](#))
- 5 Case Studies—there will be 5 table groups and every person in each group should have a copy of the same case study
- UN Convention on the Rights of the Child – In Child Friendly Language, 1/person
- Feedback Sheet, 1/person

## Video (optional)

- *Detaining Dreams* ([www.nwttac.canada.dci-palestine.org/detaining\\_dreams](http://www.nwttac.canada.dci-palestine.org/detaining_dreams))

## The Time and Timing

This is a 2-hour workshop. If you have more or less time, you will have to adjust your workshop accordingly.

Here is the suggested timing for this workshop:

### Welcome! (10 min)

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

### Getting to Know Each Other (15 min)

A – 5 min  
B – 10 min

### The Situation of Child Detainees (30 min)

A – 15 min  
B – 15 min

### UN Convention of the Rights of the Child (20 min)

A – 10 min  
B – 10 min

### Writing a Persuasive Letter (30 min)

A – 5 min  
B – 5 min  
C – 10 min  
D – 15 min

### Planning My Next Steps and Closing (10 min)

A – 5 min  
B – 5 min

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.

**Remember:** learning is in the doing and the deciding!

### Welcome!

This workshop supports the “No Way to Treat A Child” Campaign (NWTTAC), an initiative of The United Church of Canada partner Defence of Children International – Palestine (DCI-P). 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>

## Who Are We and Why Are We Here?

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

### Overview

Briefly share an overview of the different parts of this workshop, as well as some general housekeeping. Don't forget to mention where the bathrooms are.

### Getting to Know Each Other

It is important to hear all names and pronouns, so everyone feels welcome and seen. When taking turns sharing names you can also ask each person to share the pronouns that they would like people to use to refer to them.

For more information on how to introduce pronouns as facilitator in a meeting space:

<https://www.united-church.ca/sites/default/files/facts-about-pronouns.pdf>

### Situation of Child Detainees

Arrive early to ensure you have tested your audio-visual technology in advance.

Your introduction to the video will vary depending on the audience's knowledge of the situation.

DCI-Palestine provided the attached case studies in the fall of 2018. You might obtain more recent case studies from their website [www.nwttac.canada.dci-palestine.org](http://www.nwttac.canada.dci-palestine.org) or by emailing them.

Ensure that each person has a copy of 1 case study, and that each table has 1 of 5 case studies.

### UN Convention on the Rights of the Child

You can offer participants the handout of rights or have a printed poster on hand or project relevant excerpts. Here are other resources you may find valuable to study or use:

- Original, full text:  
[www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx](http://www.ohchr.org/en/professionalinterest/pages/crc.aspx)
- Child friendly language:  
<https://resourcecentre.savethechildren.net/library/un-convention-rights-child-child-friendly-language>
- Video - *Rights of the Child Segment 1 - What are Children's Rights*  
[www.youtube.com/watch?v=COjVj9czgrY&t=227s](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=COjVj9czgrY&t=227s) through to 3:32

### Writing a Persuasive Letter

Explain that letters mailed to Ottawa offices *do not* require a stamp.

## **Planning My Next Steps**

Post 1-2 sheets of blank flip chart paper on the wall with the title “Our Commitments to Write for Action”. Markers will be needed.

Offer a moment of silence and encourage everyone to write a next step or commitment up on the wall. This can be as basic as dropping the completed letter in a mailbox or as dedicated as contacting a new member of Parliament every day (as one of my acquaintances does to discuss an issue close to her heart). Anything is completely fine, as it comes out of what they have learned today.

Once everyone has had a chance to write, assemble in a horseshoe in front of this wall. Go around the horseshoe reading the commitments aloud as a liturgy. They do not need to read their own but can be read in the order they appear.

## **Closing**

Thank and commission the group.

# 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."

# 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..

## Appendix: Quotations Handout

<p>What does God require of you but to do justice and to love kindness and to walk humbly with your God? (Micah 6:8)</p>
<p>Open your mouth for the mute, for the rights of all who are destitute. Open your mouth, judge righteously, defend the rights of the poor and needy. (Proverb 31:8-9)</p>
<p>So, whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law and the Prophets. (Matthew 7:12)</p>
<p>How terrible it will be for those who make unfair laws, and those who write laws that make life hard for people. They are not fair to the poor, and they rob my people of their rights. They allow people to steal from widows and to take from orphans what really belongs to them. (Isaiah 10:1-2)</p>
<p>Is not this the fast that I choose: to loose the bonds of injustice, to undo the thongs of the yoke, to let the oppressed go free, and to break every yoke? If you offer your food to the hungry and satisfy the needs of the afflicted, then your light shall rise in the darkness and your gloom be like the noonday. (Isaiah 58:6-10)</p>
<p>Happy are those who are concerned for the poor; the Lord will help them when they are in trouble. (Psalms 41:1)</p>
<p>The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because he has anointed me to bring good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to let the oppressed go free, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favor. (Luke 4:18-19)</p>
<p>To say nothing is saying something. You must denounce things you are against or one might believe that you support things you really do not. (Germany Kent)</p>
<p>It can be difficult to speak truth to power. Circumstances, however, have made doing so increasingly necessary. (Aberjhani)</p>
<p>Election days come and go. But the struggle of the people to create a government which represents all of us and not just the one percent - a government based on the principles of economic, social, racial and environmental justice - that struggle continues. (Bernie Sanders)</p>
<p>It is certain, in any case, that ignorance, allied with power, is the most ferocious enemy justice can have. (James Baldwin)</p>

## Appendix: Quotations for Display

*Below is an offering of biblical and other quotes. You may wish to adapt these or offer other quotations depending on your workshop context and who participates. It is suggested that you display these quotes in a visual format during your workshop (for example, attractively printed on pages that you hang in the workshop space, in a PowerPoint presentation, or other ways).*

There is no fear in love, but perfect love casts out fear; for fear has to do with punishment, and whoever fears has not reached perfection in love. (1 John 4:18)

Learn to do good; seek justice, rescue the oppressed, defend the orphan, plead for the widow (Isaiah 1:17)

In everything do to others as you would have them do to you; for this is the law and the prophets. (Matthew 7:12)

Is not this the fast that I choose:  
to loose the bonds of injustice,  
to undo the thongs of the yoke,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
and to break every yoke?  
Is it not to share your bread with the hungry,  
and bring the homeless poor into your house;  
when you see the naked, to cover them,  
and not to hide yourself from your own kin?  
Then your light shall break forth like the dawn,  
and your healing shall spring up quickly;  
your vindicator shall go before you,  
the glory of the Lord shall be your rearguard.  
Then you shall call, and the Lord will answer;  
you shall cry for help, and he will say, Here I am.  
(Isaiah 58:6-9)

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,  
because he has anointed me  
to bring good news to the poor.  
He has sent me to proclaim release to the captives  
and recovery of sight to the blind,  
to let the oppressed go free,  
to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.  
(Luke 4:18-19)

Definitions belong to the definers not the defined. (Tony Morrison  
(<https://quotes.thefamouspeople.com/toni-morrison-3079.php>)

Anybody who's involved in social justice is continually told that these kinds of demands are impossible, unreasonable, require 20, 50 years. But that is a political choice. Waiting means that people will continue to die. If we were genuinely determined as a society to rethink safety, this is something that could begin to happen right now. Black communities have been decrying police killings for generations. We're rejecting the notion that we need to wait any longer. (Robyn Maynard, *Policing Black Lives: State Violence in Canada from Slavery to the Present*  
<https://torontolife.com/city/do-i-believe-we-can-have-a-police-free-future-in-our-lifetime-absolutely-policing-expert-robyn-maynard-on-how-defunding-would-work-in-practice/>)

What we said to people was, "We don't need you to feel that you are connected to this history. We need you to feel that you are part of the future and that you're a part of the solution, and therefore we have to talk about what your role is going to be going forward . . ." We ran into a lot of the people at the beginning, aboriginal and non-aboriginal, who said reconciliation is never going to happen. My (response was) you don't have to believe that it is going to happen. You have to believe that it should happen.  
(Senator Murray Sinclair, [www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/05/30/justice-murray-sinclair-shares-vision-for-truth-and-reconciliation](http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2015/05/30/justice-murray-sinclair-shares-vision-for-truth-and-reconciliation))

As you move through this world advocating for what you believe in, do it with love and an open heart, not with anger and a closed heart. (Jenn Bruer, *Helping Effortlessly: A Book of Inspiration and Healing* [www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/68156924](http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/68156924))

Election days come and go. But the struggle of the people to create a government which represents all of us and not just the one percent—a government based on the principles of economic, social, racial and environmental justice—that struggle continues. (Bernie Sanders  
[www.brainyquote.com/topics/justice-quotes](http://www.brainyquote.com/topics/justice-quotes))

