



NOTES TO THE FACILITATOR:

Thank you for facilitating the Recharge workshops. I hope you will find this to be a rewarding and inspiring experience.

This guide is a guideline of different elements. Feel free to use what you see fit. Also feel free to introduce your own thoughts and ideas, and make the workshops your own.

The Recharge Beyond the Bars Reentry game creates a space where the people in the group are truly one another's teachers and guides. The questions in the Recharge game are a tool through which players are led to uncover their deepest desires, values and goals, and to be supported in expressing their deepest fears, challenges and insecurities.

Questions I asked myself in designing this game are: How do we come together in ways that matter? Where along the way do we get feedback about our lives and the complexity of how experiences have affected us? Where are we taught about the power of emotions and how they influence us? In a world with so much deception, how do we find our way?

Blessings.

My Best,
Leslie Robinson

RECHARGE BEYOND THE BARS RE-ENTRY GAME WORKSHOP

GUIDE

- Most facilitators facilitate Recharge game play once to twice a week for one hour sessions on an ongoing basis.
- Have three to seven people at a game.
- Explain to the group that Recharge is a communication game to assist them in having enjoyable and important communication with one another.
- In a supportive atmosphere, Recharge will illuminate how each individual has been impacted by their incarceration experiences, as well as life experiences.
- Explain that due to these difficult experiences, they face unique challenges. We know that opening up and reintegrating after these experiences can be profoundly difficult work.
- We understand that those who have experienced incarceration understand one another, speak the same language, and are best at healing one another.
- EXPLAIN that this is a place where they can support one another and help each other to process what they are going through so they don't have to struggle all alone. Recharge is a valuable tool that if they are honest and real, can truly make a difference.
- Explain that it is understood that the idea of communication, following an extraordinary experience, trauma or even a long separation, as in an incarceration is a profoundly difficult challenge. It is widely understood that an interruption in the ability to communicate thoughts, feelings and beliefs often results in a sense of profound isolation and exclusion. Recharge was created in order to help to build bridges and to be an aide to help with these challenges.
- Explain that Recharge is a vital opportunity for participants to share who they really are, what they struggle with in their lives, process their thoughts and emotions, communicate authentically and openly, bond with one another in supportive ways, learn more about who others really are, reflect on their decisions in a non-judgmental atmosphere and reclaim their lives. How? Talking is the best way to heal and human beings are social beings who NEED connection with others.

Quote: "Recharge helps us to grow with and because of each other"

Inmate at Louisiana State Penitentiary

- The questions in Recharge range from fun and light, to more thought-provoking and complex, and everyone participates. There is no focus on outcomes, it is simply a place to be yourself.

- At the end of the workshop, choose a light question to end on something positive, and then ask if everyone is okay, if there is anything anyone needs.
- **OPTIONAL:** You may want to begin by having an introductory pre-session in order to build in trust amongst group members. For this first session, as the facilitator you may want to pre-choose a number of lighter questions and interactions, and a few of the more serious questions at your discretion. After this introduction session, participants will be prepared to play the game on an ongoing basis.
- **OPTIONAL:** You may want to open each session with a light question to open the workshop and to engage participants.
- **OPTIONAL:** With each question which is chosen, you may want to ask the group “Are we comfortable with this question? Or would we like to move on to something else?”

You might want to talk about

CHANGE & DISCOVERY

- Personal change happens through a journey of self-discovery. You need to find out more about yourself and discover how you may have been limiting your options.
- The only pre-requisite for starting this journey of discovery is that you are willing to learn. If you realize that there are things you have not yet understood about yourself and about life, then you can be open to exploration. Recharge will help you to understand yourself better. What you will learn might be unexpected and surprising, but that is the nature of discovery. Let yourself be open to new ideas.
- There is no one fixed way of achieving personal change. What you need is YOUR way, the answers that are needed are YOUR answers.
- The pre-designed questions in Recharge, designed in consultation with formerly incarcerated people, are here to assist you in the challenging task of self-understanding and awareness.
- Shifting our behaviors can take time, practice and patience with ourselves. Remember change doesn't have to be perfect. It just has to be in process, often a lifelong process.
- It is also **very important** that you have a compassionate way of responding to yourself as you explore. After developing compassionate self-awareness, not only can you understand and relate better to yourself, but you can think differently about your efforts to change. You might see how you sabotaged or derailed previous efforts; perhaps making it worthwhile to return to those methods - but with a different attitude or approach.

FACILITATION GUIDELINES:

Now for some facilitation guidelines. Once you start the game, the game is basically the facilitator.

- If a question in the Recharge game sparks a discussion, allow the discussion to continue for as long as you feel the dialogue is productive. Sometimes a question can spark a conversation that can continue for some time. This is fine. If you feel it is time to move to another question, simply ask the group to wrap up and to move to the next player.
- As a facilitator, you will set the scene and ensure that participants are clear about the ground rules and expectations for the workshop.
- By setting clear expectations and ground rules, you help everyone to focus and to feel safe. At the start of the workshop, and throughout, your role as facilitator is to ensure the workshop keeps progressing towards a successful outcome.
- Set the ground rules – What rules should participants follow? How will you ensure that people respect each others' ideas? You'll propose and seek agreement to these (below) at the start of the workshop.

GROUND RULES:

- **CONFIDENTIALITY** - It is important before starting, that participants agree what is said during the workshop, stays in the workshop. Some of the questions and interactions are intimate and personal, which can be threatening to comment on. However, it is such a level of intimacy in open and honest sharing that brings about new understandings, opens up shut down emotions, makes one feel human and alive.
- **RESPECT** – Participants must decide and agree they will make an effort to respect one another. That does not mean they always have to agree with one another, but they do need to listen non-judgmentally and give the respect they would want to have from others.
- Respecting the person you are communicating with and respecting his/her views even when they differ from your own, allows you to accept another person's point of view. Ask participants – Does that mean you necessarily have to agree with that person's point of view? PAUSE - The answer is NO.
- **ASK** - Why is respect important in communicating effectively? PAUSE for responses. Because it creates a safe environment and allows others to openly express their perspectives and feelings. When people are allowed this opportunity they feel respected and valued.
- Often we immediately reject another's perceptions, especially when our views are different. When our views are different from other people, we often find ourselves ready to challenge, dispute or we even hear these things as threats. This rejection may be unconscious. You may have grown up in a household where different viewpoints were

not welcome. We must remind ourselves to listen to the other person and to allow them to have their point of view.

- Simply put, if a person does not feel respected in a conversation, they will usually shut down or feel angry and bad. This workshop is a place where participants show the respect to others they desire, so that everyone remains open and involved.
- **ACTIVE ENGAGEMENT** – When it is your turn to speak, try to work towards full involvement. Try to express your thoughts and feelings as fully as you are able. Make a commitment to seeing the process through.
- **Active Listening** – It is important to focus fully on the speaker. ASK - What does focusing fully on the speaker mean? Explain that active listening is not the same as waiting for your turn to talk. Try to give the speaker your undivided attention. If you are preoccupied by other thoughts you may miss what they are really trying to communicate. Here is an opportunity to be understood.
- ASK – How does judging, blaming or criticizing interfere with active listening? PAUSE for responses. In order to actively listen to another person, it is important to set aside judgment and withhold blame and criticism so you can fully hear and consider their message.
- Effective communication does not require people to like or agree with each other's ideas, values or opinions. Our personal filters, assumptions, judgments, emotions and beliefs can distort what we hear. As a listener, your role is to understand what is being said. Showing interest goes a long way towards active listening and effective communication.
- It takes a lot of concentration and conscious determination to be an active listener. Old habits are hard to break and if your listening habits are as bad as most people's are, then there is a lot of habit breaking to do in this area.
- **BE AWARE OF TIME SPEAKING** – Ask participants to be aware of the other participants and to make sure they do not dominate the conversation. Let them know how much you value their contributions, and that it is important that each person has the opportunity to have equal time to speak.
- **NO ATTACKS PERMITTED** – Reinforce that this workshop is a valuable opportunity designed as a recognition of the profound challenges they face, and that this workshop is being provided to give them a safe space to have some of the most important conversations they may have during this time of incarceration. Attacks on one another will only be destructive and will take away this chance to value and understand one another.
- **LISTEN, ENGAGE AND INCLUDE** – Even though as the facilitator you are taking a neutral stance, you need to stay alert, listen actively, and remain interested and engaged. This sets a good example for other participants, and also means you are always ready to intervene in facilitative ways.

- Is everyone engaged? If not, think about how you can bring them in? How can you get better participation? It is important for group members to understand the difference between involvement and participation. Involvement is simply the act of being in something. Participation is best described as being actively involved. Let them know that for a group to be successful it is crucial that they are not just involved but **ACTIVELY** involved.

INTERVENTIONS: KEEP WORKSHOPS POSITIVE

- As a facilitator, the most difficult types of intervention are those involving conflict, anger and disagreement.
- Remembering your role, it's important to focus on the needs of the group, while considering the feelings and position of both parties involved in any disagreement.
- Be on the lookout for people who aren't participating fully. Questions to ask yourself are: Are they experiencing discomfort? What is the source of the discomfort? What can you do to bring them into the conversation?
- If there are obvious personal attacks, Step in and mediate immediately.
- Effective facilitators look for the least intrusive intervention first, so **reminding everyone of the ground rules** is often a good place to start. Whatever the issue, you can't allow bad behavior to continue so be prepared to take the steps necessary to stop attacks.

DEALING WITH ANGER – CONFLICT

When someone is angry, ask:

- What has angered you? / What has hurt you about what happened?
- What about this feels familiar?
- What do you need or want?
- Listen without interrupting. Reflect back what you hear. Stay neutral and be empathetic.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION STEPS:







If a conflict occurs during the workshops – here are some rules and ground rules to guide you.

1. **STOP**. Don't let the conflict get worse. The less angry someone is, the easier it will be to solve the problem.
2. **SAY** what the conflict is about. **ASK** - What is causing the disagreement? What does each of you want or not want?
3. **THINK** of positive options. How could you meet each other's needs and be fair?

4. **CHOOSE** a positive option each of you can agree on.

If you still can't agree, ask someone else (the facilitator) to help resolve the conflict.

RULES:

-  Agree to resolve the conflict.
-  No name calling.
-  Take turns talking. Don't interrupt.
-  Be clear and truthful about what is bothering you and what you really need.
-  Listen to the other person. Be sure you understand how he or she sees the problem.
-  Use your brains, not your hands.

RECHARGE INSTRUCTIONS - - LET'S GO!!

- This game has questions and interactions. The game cards contain the questions and interactions. The number cards contain the numbers (1-6).
- You will see a gear symbol in front of some of the questions on the game cards. The questions with the gear symbol are designed for the presently or formerly incarcerated person(s) to share different aspects of their incarceration experiences.
- All questions without any symbols in front of them are questions about your life experiences.
- All the **interactions** have a puzzle piece symbol in front of the interaction. This lets you know this is an activity which ALL players **engage in together**, all at the same time.

LET'S GO! Each player picks a number card. The player who chooses the highest number card goes first. Each player takes 7 chips from the chip carton.

- The first player picks a number card from the number card deck, then picks a game card from the game card deck, and reads the question or interaction on the game card indicated by the number on the number card out loud. For example, if you choose number 1, you will read question number 1 on the game card out loud, etc.
- The first player then **answers** the question they just read out loud.
- Then, all players, one by one, answer **this same question** clockwise around the circle. When everyone in the circle has spoken, this game card is then placed on the bottom of the deck.
- If the number card has a player land on an interaction (puzzle piece) rather than a question, ALL **players engage together** in this interaction.

- The next player, going clockwise around the circle, then chooses another number card and game card, and so on and so on.
- If you feel moved by another player's answer or interaction, you can appreciate them by giving them one or more of your chips. The player who ends up with the most appreciation chips at the end of game play is the winner!
- Feel free to alter the rules for your particular group, so you feel most comfortable.

If a question or interaction does not appeal to a participant, feel free to pass on it, and simply move to the question or interaction above, or below, the number you have chosen.

THERE ARE NO RIGHT OR WRONG ANSWERS

A person can express as much or as little as they are comfortable with. Speak only to your comfort level. It is important that everyone agrees there will be no repercussions when one speaks their truth.

This is designed to be a Conflict Free zone. If a question becomes stressful, please feel free to immediately roll the die again, and move on to another question or interaction.

FOLLOWING RECHARGE GAME PLAY:

- You might want to have an open discussion regarding anything anyone may wish to discuss about anything that came up during the workshop.
- A creative way to open up this discussion might be:
To ask participants to say a word which describes the experience they had during the workshop. You can also ask if there was anything that came up that they would like to have the whole group talk more about. You could ask the group if each participant will say one or two sentences about their experience.
- Another creative way to open up discussion is to write emotions on separate folded up sheets of paper (ie: on one piece of paper the word **anger**, another the word **fear**, another **joy**, another **love**, another **power**, another **truth**, another **freedom** – and then have each person choose a folded up piece of paper and talk about how that word relates to the experience they had during the workshop. Feel free to use whatever words you would like.

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:

- Decreased feelings of depression, anxiety and isolation.
- An overall increase in social/emotional well being.
- Better understanding of the changes participants need to make in their lives and greater motivation in general.
- Discover new and expanded ways of relating and increased life skills.
- Decreases in acting-out behaviors.
- An increase in positive and effective communication.
- Feelings of belonging, support and closeness with other participants.
- Greater desire to engage in positive ways.
- Decreases in incidences of conflict among participants.
- Feeling more confident and ready to reenter society.

