

Leaders' Guide: Week 2

Communication and Conflict Resolution

The key points this week are to:

- Host a really good 'Guest Check-In' - to set the tone for future weeks
- Remember you can start the video as soon as all guests have arrived
- Help guests understand good communication tools and how to apply them
- Take care explaining the listening exercise - guests are sometimes confused
- You will need to use breakout rooms for the listening exercise so please practice
- This is a good week to do a live personal story (guidelines attached)

1. Outline Timetable:

6.50	Leaders set up the zoom call
7.00	Welcome
7.15	Video - Welcome and teaser (5 mins)
7.20	Group discussion – 'What did you find helpful from last week?' (15 mins)
7.35	Video – Communication (20 mins)
7.55	Group exercise – 'How would the skills discussed in historical patterns of communication, facts and feelings or boundaries help you in your communication with your ex?' (15 mins)
8.10	Video – Good listening (5 mins)
8.15	Exercise in pairs - reflective listening (15 mins)
8.30	Comfort Break
8.35	Group exercise – 'What did it feel like when you were listened to?' (5 mins)
8.40	Video - Conflict Resolution (15 mins)
8.55	Group discussion – 'Which aspect of communication will help you in dealing with your ex?' (20 mins)
9.15	Video - Conclusion and personal story (10 mins)
9.30	Finish

- Video link https://youtu.be/nyW_pKrq7ol

2. Facilitating the session minute by minute

6.50pm Host sets up zoom call

- All login links are the same as last week. Only leaders log in separately using the RL host details:
<https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/d/1M5LTh6-n-8u7uqq6htWCkKvi51plpKqO/edit?usp=sharing&oid=103631104838551631266&rtpof=true&sd=true>
- Set helpers as co-hosts

7.00pm As guests join:

- Welcome them, thank them for coming and reassure them they are in the right place.
- Welcome any newcomers and check their tech
- Start relaxed conversation allowing the group to drive conversation if possible
- Check that the WhatsApp group is working OK for everyone

7.15pm (or as soon as the group is ready)

Video 1 - Welcome and Week 2 Teaser

- Explain to guests that we will now watch the first section of the video
- Ask them to switch off their video and mute themselves
- Share your screen https://youtu.be/nyW_pKrq7ol
- Play the video to the first 'pause' at the 3.10 minute mark

If you have low bandwidth then guests will need to access the video via a link. Instructions are attached as an appendix.

7.20pm Guest Check In (15 mins) Group discussion - *'How has your week been'* and *'What did you find helpful from last week?'* (15 mins)

- Explain we will shortly share how our week has been
- First summarise what was covered last week

- There is hope
- We spoke about our feelings
- We looked at the top 10 tips to get through
- We noted that if you feel overwhelmed then do get professional help
- Ask 'How has your week been' and 'Is there anything you picked up last week which you have been thinking about or put into practice'. Ask for a volunteer to go first.
- As guests reply thank them

7.35 Video 2 - Communication (20 mins)

- Watch the video from 03.10 to the next pause at the 20.58 minute mark

7.55pm Group exercise - *'How would the skills discussed in historical patterns of communication, facts and feelings or boundaries help you in your communication with your ex?'* (15 mins)

8.10pm Video 3 - Good Listening (5 mins)

- Watch the video from 20.58 to the next pause at the 26.09 minute mark

8.15pm Exercise in pairs - Reflective Listening (15 mins)

- Explain that guests are now going to practice what they have seen on the video. You will put guests into pairs in breakout rooms. One will listen and feedback and then they will swap round.
- Please explain the exercise once more to guests as follows. They often find it confusing and think they have to give advice.
 - We will put you into pairs.
 - You will take it in turns to be the listener and then the speaker.
 - Each member of the pair should think of a current issue and talk about it to their partner.
 - The listener should remember to reflect back the words their partner uses.
 - They should not interrupt, give advice, or refer it back to themselves. They should **just reflect back** what the person is saying
 - They then ask **what the most important thing the speaker has said**
 - And then ask if there is **anything they'd like to do about it**.
 - Take five minutes then swap over.
 - The idea is for the listener to LISTEN - they are NOT being asked for advice and should not give any!

- You will send them a message when they have 30 seconds left and they will then be automatically brought back to your zoom session.
- The chat function remains open for any questions.
- Check guests understand what they have to do. This exercise is on page 12 of the workbook if guests want to refer to it.
- Paste this into the chat:
 - Listeners remember to ask the speaker:
 - “What is the most important thing you have said?”
 - “Is there anything you would like to do about it?”
- Put guests into breakout rooms for 10 minutes with a 30 second reminder
- Send them a message at the 5 minute mark suggesting they swap over

8.30pm Comfort break (5 mins)

8.35pm Group exercise - ‘What did you feel like when you were listened to?’ (5 mins)

- Encourage guests to say how it made them feel and understand what a powerful tool it is
- Perhaps write how they feel in the chat or use the Whiteboard function
- Or you may want to read out or refer guests to this extract from the book (see page 70)

“What constantly surprises me is the reaction of people who have tried out this skill..... I felt valued; it clarified things in my mind; I felt that I was interesting; I felt understood; I felt empowered to act; I felt respected; I felt important; it was healing; I came to a conclusion on an issue; It felt refreshing; I felt affirmed; I felt worth something.

It is amazing to get such responses merely from having a person listen to you and repeat what you have said. Responses such as, “I felt important” and “It was healing” show the real power of just being listened to. This tool also works in other environments where something is important, complicated or tense. at work, with kids, with friends, and it really helps – give it a try!”

8.40pm Video 4 - Conflict resolution (15 mins)

- Watch the video from 29.09 to the next pause at the 42.05 minute mark

8.55pm Group Discussion - *'Which aspect of communication will help you in dealing with your ex?'* (20 mins)

9.15pm Video 5 - Conclusion and Personal Story

- Watch the video from 42.05 to the end

Or

9.20pm Personal Story Live

We encourage you to replace some of the pre-recorded personal stories with your own leader/helper live stories. This allows you to present more detail about the hardest things you have had to cope with and the tools and skills that helped you. The best way to give these stories is for one leader/helper to be interviewed by another leader/helper. It is helpful if you can tie your story in with the content of that evening's session as this deepens understanding of the subject.

We suggest you make this about 5 minutes long and allow 5 minutes for questions. Practice beforehand.

We suggest you ask/answer the following:

- **In brief (30 secs), what was your background?** (i.e how long did you know them / how long were you married/did you have children / where did you live / anything general that gives context?)
- **What happened to you?** (the lead up to your relationship breakdown / what caused your relationship breakdown / what happened thereafter)
- **What were the hardest or biggest issues you experienced?** (Ideally relate these to today's session)
- **How did you deal with these issues?**
- **How do you feel now?**
- **If there was one thing that you would say to someone going through separation and divorce, what would it be?**

To give your personal story you do not need to be fully recovered from all your issues. Honesty and vulnerability about your issues and how you have dealt or are continuing to deal with them can generate real hope for guests.

It is very important that you follow the guidelines in the 'Telling Personal Stories Live ' handout (copy attached).

9.30pm Goodnight

- If you have time ask guests what they thought of the personal story
- Thank guests for joining and take any questions
- Encourage guests to stay in touch during the week via WhatsApp
- Reassure guests that they can keep in touch with you by sending an email
- Explain the login for next week will be the same as for today and but they will get a reminder email
- End the zoom call

Out of hours chat

You are welcome to invite guests to stay longer for a more informal chat. Some leaders/guests enjoy this and some are exhausted, so see what works for you and your group.

9.35 Leader/helper debrief

- Once guests have logged off the call, discuss whether there is anyone you are concerned about or want to get in touch with during the week.
- Does anyone need tech help?
- Discuss what went well or could be better and if there is anything you want to try or do differently next week.

Most importantly leaders check in with your helpers, either this evening or later in the week. What did they find challenging? Is there anything they want to talk through?

Appendix 1

Instructions for showing the video by sharing a URL link

You will need these instructions if your bandwidth will not support sharing your screen. You will need to give guests the link to the video via the chat.

Explain these instructions all the way through to guests and make sure they understand them before you start the film (and they go off-camera).

You need to

- Paste the video link in the chat
- Ask guests to turn off their video and mute themselves
- Guests should click on the link
- DO NOT close zoom
- The film generally opens simply by clicking on the link. On some devices, the guest will need to copy and paste the link into their browser. In some cases, they need to highlight the link and then right-click and open URL
- The film can take a few minutes to load.
- When they reach the first blue PAUSE HERE prompt they should pause their video, leave the film open and return to the zoom call. This is most easily done by minimising the film screen
- Ask guests to switch their camera back on (but stay on mute) once they have finished watching their first section. Check everyone is happy with these instructions and has successfully accessed the video before asking guests to watch the first 15 minutes of the video up to the prompt clearly marked on the video (atminute mark).
- Let guests know that if they have any difficulty during the film they can contact you via the chat function
- Reassure them that if they are unfamiliar with the tech it will become clear

If a guest accidentally stops rather than pauses the video they will need to restart and fast forward to the appropriate place. Minute markers are given in the timetable in these notes to help with this.

Appendix 2

Telling Personal Stories Live

The online course gives an opportunity to share personal stories; our own and those of previous course attendees. These personal stories of healing and restoration are the lifeblood of the course. By being honest and open about the hardest things we have had to overcome we can breed a spirit of openness among course guests.

We have 2 opportunities for this on the course

1. Leaders and helpers can give a very brief introduction to themselves during week 1 as part of the guest introductions
2. At the end of each evening during the 'Personal Story' session either via a pre-recorded video or live with one of the leader/helpers interviewing another

1. First night leader/helper introductions

Please prepare and rehearse your introduction carefully. It should be a maximum of a minute long. There is no template for this. It is for you to describe yourself and also to model the type of introduction which is helpful for other guests to give. It is fine to show vulnerability by mentioning something you found/find difficult. It can also be helpful to include something non RL related. If others do the same this can be the basis for non RL chat at times.

Most importantly please read and follow the **'Important Considerations'** guidance below. We practice these first night introductions during the training evening.

2. Personal story live

If you are comfortable doing so, we encourage you to replace one of the pre-recorded stories at the end of each course session with your live story.

We suggest you make this about 5 minutes long. A useful format is to ask one of the other helpers to interview you and then invite questions from the group. Consider picking a week where your experience fits with the content of the evening. We suggest you answer the following:

- **In brief (30 secs), what was your background?** (i.e how long did you know them / how long were you married/did you have children / where did you live / anything general that gives context?)
- **What happened to you?** (the lead up to your relationship breakdown / what caused your relationship breakdown / what happened thereafter)
- **What were the hardest or biggest issues** you experienced? (Ideally relate these to today's session)
- **How did you deal with these issues?**
- **How do you feel now?**
- **If there was one thing that you would say to someone going through separation and divorce, what would it be?**

Important considerations when telling your story

- Restored Lives is about our guests - not us. Personal stories are not an opportunity for you to voice your situation or vent your opinions. Think carefully about what bits of your story are helpful to your audience.
- Focus on the key issues that you came up against and how you tackled them, rather than a chronological recount of your marriage and divorce. Do give a quick contextual background, but limit this to 30 seconds.
- You do not have to 'have all the answers' or be 'completely restored'. In fact, honesty about where you are now, even if you feel that you are a work in progress, is really helpful for guests to hear.
- Be mindful of the audience - this means not being 'overly Christian' and being inclusive in what we say. For example, when asked what helped you you might want to refer to your faith helping you in the same way as you might refer to having a trusted friend or seeing a counsellor. Remember the course is for people of all faiths and none. It is also for people from all backgrounds, incomes, etc. So make sure that the key themes in your story are not lost on people because of audience preconceptions.
- When talking about our ex we need to be respectful and not put them down or purposely diminish them in the eyes of someone who might know them in what is a public setting.
- Make sure you protect your ex's identity, changing his/her name or other details if need be. For example, John a builder from Croydon could become Paul a plumber from Barnet.

- Tell the facts in such a way that they are uncontroversial. A good test is to ask yourself 'Would I be comfortable telling my story in this way if my ex was in the room'?
- Do feel free to speak openly about how you responded to what happened: what you experienced, felt or found difficult, plus what helped, etc. This part of the story is really important. It is about us, and not about the ex.