Pause Signal Design

Trauma Stabilization | 30 minutes | 3-12 participants | Adults with appropriate facilitation

Purpose

Create several verbal and nonverbal ways to request a pause.

Materials: Paper or a printable handout, Pens or an accessible writing alternative, Optional blank cards or simple drawing materials

Invite and agree - 3 minutes

Name the purpose and the right to pass, observe, write, or use fiction. Agree that people share only their own experiences and do not promise absolute group confidentiality.

Introduce the example - 3 minutes

A participant wants a discreet way to stop an activity. Ask what is known and what is still a guess.

Practice: Planning workshop - 17 minutes

Create several verbal and nonverbal ways to request a pause. Sketch several possible responses, compare access and likely tradeoffs, and choose one adjustable plan with a backup.

Reflect together - 4 minutes

Which signal could others notice and respect? Ask what fit, what did not fit, and what would make the exercise more accessible. Do not interpret another person's response.

Choose a next step - 3 minutes

Invite one optional action, support request, or question to carry forward. Passing is a valid closing response. Confirm how to seek appropriate support outside the activity.

Facilitator fit and boundaries

Present-focused skills only. No trauma narratives, exposure, surprise touch, or requests to revisit traumatic events.

Offer observation, private writing, or a fictional example. Adapt instructions and group size to access needs. No client responses are collected by this page.

Original AI-assisted educational draft; independent clinical review pending. Version 1.0. Conceptual reading: TIP 41: Substance Abuse Treatment: Group Therapy, TIP 57: Trauma-informed Care in Behavioral Health Services. Source links appear on the online activity page.