

## Facilitator Training: Frequently Asked Questions

### 1. Why are ground rules so important?

Ground rules (or “agreements”) create an environment where the participants have authorship of the group culture and thus accountability around their behaviours. Since they develop the ground rules together, they won’t be “obeying” the facilitator’s rules but rather sharing group agreements, ultimately self-enforcing around them as well. These ground rules can be helpful beyond facilitation sessions in terms of framing your entire trip; this is a great way to set general guidelines and expectations for your trek in order to ensure that the trip runs as smoothly as possible.

### 2. What are some tips for getting the 'conversation' started in the pod or full group sessions?

The longer the participants know each other, the easier this will get. When the group is just getting to know each other, keep introductions relatively brief so that the process doesn’t become longer than peoples’ comfortable attention span. In the early conversations, particularly for debriefs after programming, you can ask questions like, “What do you know now that you didn’t know when you woke up this morning?” or “Which of the statements that you heard today resonates most for you?” or quickly review the agenda or program that just happened and ask, “How was that for you?”

### 3. What are some tips about pod design and implementation?

We recommend keeping the same groups for each pod session so that familiarity is created. Make sure you that you don’t decrease the amount of time allocated to progressive pod times. The more people know each other, the longer they will tend to speak. In the early sessions, you can offer a few trigger questions to guide pod conversations. Remember, they won’t need external facilitation unless the topic or process is particularly tricky. In later sessions, they can easily debrief on their own and will be less likely to follow questions you offer. Offering a key theme for each pod session - creating a progression between them - can be very powerful. While we strongly suggest that you run pod sessions or some form of facilitated conversation every day during your trek, we also recognize that this may be difficult given the packed nature of these trips. Still, we urge you to try and implement as many facilitation components into your itineraries as possible, especially after high-intensity experiences (e.g., Yad VaShem).

### 4. What techniques help foster group conversation?

- (a) Paraphrase - summarize the trends that are being stated in the room.
- (b) Validate - repeat a key phrase or perspective after someone speaks.
- (c) Name - put words to things that aren’t being said but are being communicated in other ways (“I can see that we’re pretty tired” or “I think we might need some outside air”).

(d) Pause - let 10-15 seconds of silence pass in the room so that energy can become settled and reflective.

**5. How do you make sure everyone's voice gets heard?**

Not everyone's voice needs to be heard at every session or conversation, but all should be heard at some point. Some people will feel more comfortable speaking in large groups than others. Make sure to offer different types of structures - full group, pods, pairs - to support a range of conversation styles. Note who is never talking. Maybe check in with them privately. Ask the "anyone else" question even if the frequent speakers have their hands up. Pause for a second before calling on anyone - it's not always the fastest hand raisers who should have a voice. Watch for silence in addition to listening to what's being said. Make sure there is not too much you as a facilitator.