



PYE Third Thursday Assembly
April 20, 2017

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

Dear Assemblers! Hello, hello and welcome to this wild and wonderful online format! I'm excited to have you with us today, to engage with the topic of facilitating one-on-one conversations.

In facilitation, we create maps in our brains from the recordings that come in through our senses. We learn to rely on these maps. If we were chased by a tiger, the map would get us out alive. However, many of the maps we have stored might be outdated, when it comes to individual conversations. And that's exactly what we're exploring today.

Below you will find the goal, agreements, check-in, questions and case-studies to play with. Our session runs for 90 minutes. Let's get going!

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

GOALS for 20th Apr 2017:

1. To deepen our understanding of what facilitating one-on-one conversations is, and isn't.
2. To expand our range of tools to work with challenges in individual conversations.
3. To share our experiences, and seek support or learning from the group.
4. To play, and have a meaningful online time together.

To achieve these, here are some COMMUNITY AGREEMENTS to make our time together flow well. Please add what you need or want AT ANY TIME DURING



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THE PROCESS. Let the group know or privately message the facilitator if you are concerned that an agreement is being broken.

- 1) No put downs of self or others. Keep a positive, lift-up vibe. If the facilitator finds your comments aggressive or inappropriate in any way you will receive a personal message.
- 2) Be willing to entertain lenses and experiences different from yours. Listen to understand, and be willing to agree to disagree. However, don't hesitate to share your beliefs. This will make our conversations rich!
- 3) Show your presence, by **LIKING** and by responding. Ask questions, make comments, connect. The technical trick for a successful session- **REFRESH** your browser often, and so please scan the whole page for new questions every now and then.
- 4) When sharing stories, maintain **CONFIDENTIALITY** by not revealing names or personal information about others. Share from your own perspective, and asking permission before sharing someone else's.
- 5) Answer any questions in the **COMMENTS** below the question to keep the conversation organized and readable. Only open **NEW** questions in new threads, or check with the facilitator.
- 6) You can come and go as you please, take your time to respond, and basically enjoy the text-format. Doesn't matter if you are at work, waking up, or going to bed... we got you covered.

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

Check-In for 20th Apr 2017:

What is the most playful piece of wisdom you've given/ received? If it could take a form, what would it be?



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[Paul Lion](#) Go outside 😊:)

The form: a gentle warm breeze that tugs, kind of like the winds from Spirited Away.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Hi Paul! Welcome! I love those wise words, and the form... there flow, ease and possibility there 😊:)

[Arindita Gogoi](#) My coach told me (when I asked him for a feedback on my facilitation skills): You are worthy of love.

Form: A gentle drizzle that soothes your heart and soul.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Wow! That sounds healing, and expansive! Thanks, Arindita 😊:)

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) At one point I was really inquiring into my presence as a facilitator, and I had a colleague say: Nilisha, just be like club soda - you'll blend with everything!

Form: A leaf that is floating with the breeze, meandering, resting on things and people, lightly touching them with its flow.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) The first question is up, folks~

[Manjunath Anand](#) Hey Nilisha Mohapatra could u be more specific?? Is it in trainings or generally in life??

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Hi Manju! SO good to see you here. You can answer this however you want 😊:)

[Manjunath Anand](#) One of the training, a participant told that I bring positivity and energy. Also, she mentioned she was scared initially. Later she said I made her comfortable with my smile.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Beautiful reflections! You do have a presence that's joyful!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Do check out the case-studies, peeps!



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Question 1:

Let's start with some basics. How is having a one-on-one conversation different from facilitating groups (besides the obvious 😊:)? Go for the nuances.

[Paul Lion](#) clarifying question: is the facilitator part of the one-on-one or facilitating between two other people? Thanks

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) They are part of the conversation. Thanks for asking!

[Paul Lion](#) In my experience:

- there's room to go deeper into the topic because some long-time participants have a longer/trusting relationship with me than with some other members of the group. Also time is only split between two people.
- there's flexibility to focus on the two peoples' passions/interests as the conversation doesn't need to cover all interests.
- opening up questions becomes a helpful tool and silence is okay.
- consent around sharing my own stories or asking the participant to share or expand has been helpful.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) I'm enjoying the details! Love that you said silences are okay 😊:)
Taking this thread a little deeper - I hear there is a good flow of sharing and questioning. How else is your presence different?

[Arindita Gogoi](#) A one on one for me poses two situations - if it is with children then I have to be very cognizant of the code of conduct to ensure safety. If it is with adults then I need to understand if the one on one is going to invade boundaries. However, I am totally open to one on ones; my mind starts working extra during that time. I also feel challenged positively because



these one on ones allow me to get a more realistic feedback about the impact of my session. The other problem is time management because usually i use these breaks to reorient and prepare myself for the next session both materially and emotionally.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Ah good insight into the challenges! So I hear you are more present in one on ones, and have more opportunity to 'see' the other person.

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Yes, I do. I have gained immensely from my one-on-ones with my teachers and coach and i have observed that they've always been extremely patient and mindful throughout. That has helped me heal and learn so much. Hence I always feel that if facilitated well without losing a sense of boundaries, they can be extremely insightful for participants.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Ah! would you like to head over to question 2, and tell me a little more about boundaries?

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) More questions are up!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) For me one-on-ones are different from groups by the sheer opportunity they present for focus - on an individual's transformation, the possibility of amplifying their strengths, and for making them feel seen and heard. And a possibility of going really deep with coaching/discussions.

[Rekha Kurup](#) One on one conversations are focused and can really support a person go deeper in their exploration. It becomes a powerful space for transformation.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Yes, yes, yes! Welcome, Rekha!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) A follow up question, Rekha Kurup - what is it about this focus, that supports the deeper transformation?

[Rekha Kurup](#) Nilisha Mohapatra focused i mean tailored for that person and it supports the person to know that he or she is not alone in the journey. It helps build a deep bond of trust openness and empathy.

[Rekha Kurup](#) Even when I lead group therapy sessions, i do a one on one session at the beginning, mid way and at the end with each participant. I have seen the participants journey go deeper and evening the group setting they have a deeper sense of trust in their own process and engage more freely.



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[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Beautiful! I hear an ability in people to be more themselves in a one-on-one space. I also hear a difference in how you listen, that helps build trust and empathy. Would that resonate with you?

[Rekha Kurup](#) Nilisha Mohapatra definitely. Listening and holding space

[Manjunath Anand](#) During trainings or generally I spend time have one on one. It gives an opportunity to understand each other better also sometime the one who would not speak in big group may need space to share and express. This will be space for him/her. It also helps in changing the perception of individual.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Thanks for that! Is there anything you do that helps them express themselves, and change perceptions?

[Manjunath Anand](#) I tried to be myself also having casual talks

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Manjunath Anand Nice! By being yourself, you give them permission to be.

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

Question 2:

What challenges have you faced, while connecting with participants outside of the group process? What kind of boundaries have you had to assert?

[Arindita Gogoi](#) The biggest challenge has been time constraint. And hence not being able to cater to all. The second one is to ensure that it does not become a therapy or counselling kind of a session. Third challenge is to bring closure to such conversations without being abrupt.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Ah.. tell me more about the therapy or counseling piece. How does that show up?



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[Arindita Gogoi](#) Sometimes some participants start talking about their emotional state and give personal details which may not be contextual. Sometimes sessions trigger need to urgently problem solve. Sometimes during sessions on conflict someone may just come and tell me about a current conflict with a partner, spouse, co-worker and it seems as if they want me to reach to the bottom of it and nearly solve it for them. Sometimes taking a session on communication skills someone may just come and ask me what kind of job s/he should take up in future keeping in mind their personality and skills and qualifications. And I am no career counselor!

[Arindita Gogoi](#) I don't get frazzled by them, but i know that those side one-one-one sessions are not going to help solve the issue for them.

[Manjunath Anand](#) The challenge could be understanding what they are thinking and also at times it's difficult to spend more time with the person.

[Arindita Gogoi](#) With children the biggest issue is I am professionally bound by obligations where I cannot further personal interaction with the child once the program gets over and i have to politely refuse further interactions on social media or email. And that kind of is hurtful for the child who looks up to furthering the one-one-one. To not being able to be available beyond a certain time frame also breaks my heart somehow.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Hmm I hear you, Arindita. I've felt the same challenge too. How much of our availability supports their empowerment, and at what point do we hinder growth?

[Arindita Gogoi](#) I think if we do not have continued and systematic presence in the child's life, we might even disrupt a current growth process by abruptly showing up once in a while. Secondly with the current social media space, I usually do not filter myself much and I tend to present my blacks and whites and greys as they are. I am cognizant of the fact that beyond facilitation practice we are still human and have our own strengths and weaknesses. And many a times i feel that's a very confusing space for the child to come in terms with. Once they've become young adults and adults, the situation changes. But with younger ones I think it is best to keep away if we are not in their daily scheme of affairs.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) thank you for sharing your thoughts with such depth!



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[Paul Lion](#) Neat question to reflect on (thanks for it!).

I live in the neighborhood of many of the youth I work with, so I see them all over the place all the time. Due to our relationship in program (which is happily authentic, open, and representative of our shared reality outside of program) we engage in similar ways outside of program. We say hello to each other and engage in activities together (such as family gatherings, concerts, sports). These interactions are all with their families, though, except for some of the high school youth, in which parents/guardians are aware that we are spending time together. Boundaries that support this are based in consent and understanding of needs. If I can't make a concert, I let the child know that and my reasoning's. If a child wants to hang out and I don't want to, I explain that. Same with the opposite dynamic (if I invite them to something and they don't want to).

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) That's helpful to know - sharing boundaries and needs with clarity. If you are willing to share, have you ever had a situation where the youth or you have been disappointed because of expectations not being met, or triggered? I ask coz often when there is free flow interaction, it is challenging to draw lines!

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

Question 3:

What are your go-to tools/ skills to engage participants one-on-one?

[Arindita Gogoi](#) I learnt about the 4-sentence rule. So that the conversation stays short and crisp and the person is able to be specific about their topic. Secondly, I try to then encourage 'I' communication so that the participant knows that s/he is purely speaking about their own experience and there are no generalizations.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) The 4-sentence rule - could you share a bit more?

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Try to express your thoughts in 4 sentences. Ask yourself this simple question: What do I 'really' want to say? And not What do I want to say?



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[Arindita Gogoi](#) Also this helps in keeping the interaction short so that others get a chance to have their one-on-one too!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Ah brilliant! I'm going to steal that one.

[Paul Lion](#) - consent: asking if they want to share about things deeper; if it's okay if I share an experience/offer suggestion/ask for clarification; checking in around if they want to move around / do something different.

- drawing games: back and forth turns, adding more details to help facilitate a discussion.

- nature: meandering through woods, meadows, rocky areas, water ways to get those expanding nature stimuli supporting the process of expression.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) I love the consent idea.. something that I learnt from my coach, is the practice of asking '5 levels of Why', to dig deeper into emotions, thoughts, especially when someone is feeling triggered.

[Paul Lion](#) neat yeah, and in my experience before that deeper share, doing a mini check in / consent (e.g., "are you open in this moment to explore where those feelings might stem from?") is helpful.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Paul Lion So helpful! No pushing them, but inviting! Thank you for that.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Since we're speaking of different ways of listening, and holding space, here are two super insightful articles:

What is holding space?: <https://heatherplett.com/2015/03/hold-space/>

Listening in the cracks: <https://onbeing.org/blog/listening-in-the-cracks/>

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Lovely articles!

[Manjunath Anand](#) Nice articles..!!!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Hope you find them helpful!



[Manjunath Anand](#) Yeah absolutely

[Manjunath Anand](#) Especially for our kind of work it makes huge difference I did share with our leads groups

[Rekha Kurup](#) Tools that nourish Creativity, active imagination, Mindfulness and playfulness

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Playfulness! I often forget that one when a moment gets serious.

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

Case Study 1:

You're facilitating a two-day training with a group of teachers, where they share their life stories with the group. One of the teachers gets triggered by this process, feels like you've disrespected him, yells in front of the group, and storms out. This of course affects the group. How would you bring this person back?

[Manjunath Anand](#) It's very interesting point I am curious to hear from other group members.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Me too! What comes to your mind when you think of this situation? What do you think is happening for the person who walked out?

[Manjunath Anand](#) I think may be some old memory would have triggered. That person doesn't want to be part of it.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Right, there is possibly some pain, some anger. What can we do to make it safe for the group, and him again?

[Manjunath Anand](#) Having one on one would definitely help. In one of the training, during river of life a participant didn't want to sit while sharing since she had faced many



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obstacles in her life. I took about 30 mins to just sit with her . in that time we didn't talk a word but eventually she shared some story if her life.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Yes! That's a powerful way to address it. Giving them their own time and space. Sometimes I've been curious about the depth the facilitator is holding, and if sharing their own life's story sets the container for the group to access their own depth.

[Rekha Kurup](#) I think in this process what is most important for the facilitator is to not take the response personally. Hold space for the participant hurt and listen to what they have to say. There is some disconnect in the situation for both the facilitator and the participants- some Trust or boundary got compromised. It might be something that the facilitator never knew of but what is important is that the person thought this boundary Existed and that needs to be honored and held. I would definitely apologize even if I will not what I did wrong and would encourage the person to talk about what happened And what made him Or her feel that she was disrespected. Listening in non judgmental space is a powerful acknowledgment for the other

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Absolutely.. holding the curiosity around what is happening for them. It is not an attack for sure. thanks for the detailed response, Rekha! So appreciate it.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) How to hold the group when one participant is so triggered?

[Rekha Kurup](#) Talk honestly about it and hold space for ones own process by sharing it

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Yes! And I think allowing space for others who want to take a step back too.

[Rekha Kurup](#) Nilisha Mohapatra definitely

[Arindita Gogoi](#) I would perhaps not wait too long or wait for a break to bring him/her back. I might give an engaging assignment to the group and try to have a conversation with the person who stormed out. I'd keep a certain time limit for that conversation to come to a closure and if that does not happen, I'd apologize (earnestly because I don't seem to have done it deliberately) and invite him/her for the session that is about to begin.



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[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Very respectful! Balancing the group and individual needs.

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

Case Study 2:

While co-facilitating a youth camp, one of the campers has an anxiety episode, and an emotional breakdown. She wishes to speak to her mom daily, and that is against the agreements of the camp. She also reports extreme self-doubt, disengagement from the experience, and has consistent crying spells. How would you hold a conversation with her?

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) It would be amazing to have your insights on this one! It's real!

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Oh boy! Quite a common scenario for us...

One of the things I've found useful is to share a personal story. Lay bare a little part of our vulnerable side. Maybe talk about my own experiences of feeling isolated or disengaged and how I did cope with it. And then ask why does she think she is feeling emotionally stressed out. There is a concept we learnt called Challenge by Choice where you give an alternative challenge to the participant in case they're unwilling to follow the path of the current challenge. In this case I'd like to ask her what would make her feel better if there was no choice of calling up home. And facilitate a decision making which would be her own but also that does not break campus norms. That way I feel there could be a better buy-in from her side because she is exercising her choice and gaining a sense of control. To begin with, I'd also then organize a session of sharing with other participants, as a group speaking and sharing about life and that familiarization might increase trust and help her cope up better.

[Paul Lion](#) Process as opposed to specifics:

- through observation, notice where physically in the camp she feels most comfortable.
- recognize which facilitator might be most appropriate to respond (maybe not me as a large man).
- be very aware of physical space and how she can maintain control (e.g., ability to leave when



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she wants, not be trapped, have space to do what her body needs to support expression, etc.).
Keep awareness of how I affect space.

- Notice if fidgets (physical tools for grounding) would be helpful
- Notice feelings (as mentioned above) and guess at needs for both the participant and self.
- Lots to do before even interacting verbally 😊:D
- Ask if it's okay if I join her in the space. See how things shift. Ask if it's okay if I ask her questions. Again, bring in the consent so that hopefully she feels in control. If she says no to anything then I back off. If she continually says no I ask if there are times that she would be okay. If she doesn't want to talk then maybe another person or perhaps written approach.
- If conversation is happening, put a big emphasis on leaving space for her to express. Asking questions related to feelings and needs based on nonviolent communication practices (helpful tool for me).
- Restating her responses if that seems appropriate.
- If it seems appropriate, ask her if there are steps that she can take to meet her needs (alternative to calling Mumma).
- Continue feelings, needs, requests to meet needs cycle until a small step can be agreed upon.
- "Is it safe enough to try" is a helpful tool too. It asks the participant if we could try something small in hopes of shifting into a different state.

Ooof good question ❤️

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) WOW you amazing people! I'm honored to witness your process! So much wisdom in these reflections. And quick responses! Love the theme of allowing room for the young person to make their own choice, with a gentle push towards some action. I imagine this situation calls for lots of silence as well.

[Paul Lion](#) ❤️

*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

Case Study 3:

You're facilitating a workshop with staff of a non-profit, around how to be powerful and compassionate leaders. At the end of day 2, a participant seeks a 20-minute window with you, to help him be a better manager. However, he was one of



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the most reserved people in the room, and you haven't seen him participate much. How would you work with him?

[Rekha Kurup](#) I would actually discuss with the person about all the qualities that were discussed about powerful and compassionate leader in the session so far. So that I know that I know that the person knows. Then would go into deeper honest question and assessment of the participants relationship with these qualities - how she or He shows up or is unable to show up in it. Will also, bring it to the context of the workshop. I always feel asking the right questions are key that support the participant To arrive at their own answers. I have not seen anyone embody this more powerfully than Charlie Murphy.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) I love that approach. Staying aligned with the goals/ intent of the workshop! I like the analogy of a relationship to the qualities. Allows room for evolution.

[Arindita Gogoi](#) First thought: Great!
Secondly: I'd love to hear from him about whether he feels the workshop has allowed him to reflect upon his own qualities and conduct. What are the skills and attitudes he feels he would like to embrace to strengthen his own work. And I'd be curious to know if he feels safe in the environment at the workshop to express himself freely. Why or why not. And rest would depend on if there is something specific he is looking for during the one-on-one.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Powerful approach - digging beneath the behavior to know what's really going on.

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) My two cents, adding to both Rekha and Arindita - closing the conversation with skills, strengths I see. I believe this is the moment for that participant to feel seen and heard by the facilitator, and be invited into their learning zone. Both his and mine reflections are key.

[Arindita Gogoi](#) Totally agree!



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*[Nilisha Mohapatra](#)

Alright dear ones! This brings us to the end of our time today... there is so much more to explore with you all! Thank you for such honest, vulnerable sharing, and your questions. Made my Thursday so rich and fun! I'm around for the next 20 mins to continue the conversation, in case anyone wants to.

We'll share a PDF transcript of the chat soon. Also, please share your ideas about topics for future assemblies. We'd love to hear!

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) And here are the two articles I shared earlier on:

Listening in the cracks: <https://onbeing.org/blog/listening-in-the-cracks/...>[See More](#)

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) And this is a beautiful talk about listening as an act of love:
<https://onbeing.org/.../david-isay-listening-as-an-act.../>



[David Isay — Listening as an Act of Love -](#)

"The soul is contained in the human voice," says David Isay, founder of StoryCorps. He shares his wisdom... onbeing.org

[Paul Lion](#) Thank you Nilisha and PYE 3rd Thursday Assembly team 😊)

[Nilisha Mohapatra](#) Thank you, Paul! I appreciate the depth and detail of your reflections! So helpful! Hope to see you here again.