Mentoring New Facilitators in the Adult Groups

Please keep these strategies and concepts in mind as you mentor incoming facilitators in the adult groups. In addition to the on-going group(s) they will join, new adult facilitators will also shadow other adult groups to learn from their peers and consider ways they can integrate their own style into their current group(s).

- Delegate Responsibilities
    - Have your new co-facilitator lead something new each night, starting with smaller pieces like centering and building up to bigger pieces like asking the Sharing Circle Question

- Preparedness
    - Model effective time management by beginning and ending group on time.
    - Ensure that both you and your co-facilitator feel comfortable setting the tone and mood for the evening.
        - Know what the kids are doing, have your music ready, set up the physical space of the room to reflect a safe place to do their grief work, etc.
    - Demonstrate how the rules help with effective time management.
        - Help your new co-facilitator learn how to disrupt the person speaking too long. This is not interrupting, it is allowing all to participate. Disrupt by acknowledging what is being said and saying thank you so they shift their focus from self to the group. Also, pose their thoughts back to them and connect their thoughts back to their children.
    - Acknowledge what may be difficult, such as:
        - Tough questions from the participants. Turn such questions back to the group for their thoughts. You might ask, “What do all of you think?” or “Has anyone had an experience which would shed some light on that?” Remember, people often ask difficult questions not because they are seeking an answer, but because they want permission to verbalize it without judgement or someone trying to “fix it.”

        - If you resonate with something a participant says, process through it in post-group, not with the participants.

- Use the Sharing Stick
    - Tu Nidito has always used a Sharing Stick in all of our support groups. This is common practice among many organizations like Tu Nidito around the country.
    - The Sharing Stick allows facilitators to <u>trust the process</u>
        - The person holding the Sharing Stick is assured of the freedom and power to speak what resides in their heart without fear of reprisal or humiliation. Only the person holding the stick can speak and all others must remain silent and respectful. When each group member takes the Sharing Stick, they accept the responsibility of speaking their truth from the heart. In speaking their truth they honor the others who sit within the circle. As each member waits their turn, attention is directed toward the person with the stick; everyone who wishes to speak is honored, heard and respected. There is no blame or judgment because the speaker is simply speaking their thoughts, perceptions and feelings. As the Sharing Stick is used every one has the opportunity to learn the power of their words, the ability to honor themselves and others, and hold that all is sacred.
        - If a participant passes, that is their truth as we ask you to respect that. If they do not wish to speak or feel that they cannot speak from the heart, they may pass the stick to the next person. Even if you believe you have a great rapport with a participant and feel you could get them to open up if you invited them to share, this may not be what they want. Remember, they passed for a reason. Trust the process.
        - We are not fixing or rescuing participants
        - We are not inquiring for our own curiosity's sake

- Notice Body Language and Non-Verbals
    - Help your new co-facilitator be aware of body language- both group participants' and their own. The attentive listener tends to lean slightly forward or sideways while sitting. Help them notice those who may appear fidgety, agitated, bored, angry or apprehensive to share.

- Feedback (Feed-Forward)
    - As rapport is built between yourself and your co-facilitator, ask one another for constructive feedback.

- Give your new co-facilitator constructive feedback on a regular basis so they can build on their current skills.