

## TOOL

# Steps to Facilitate Adaptively When Things Go Wrong

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# Steps to Facilitate Adaptively When Things Go Wrong

## **Purpose**

A facilitation tool to help you respond skillfully in the moment when challenges arise—so you can protect trust, psychological safety, and learning.

## **Why It Matters**

When something goes wrong in a session, how you respond matters more than what happened. Adaptive facilitation allows you to stay grounded, assess what's needed, and take intentional action rather than reacting in ways that shut down learning.

## **When to Use**

Use in the moment when tension, disruption, or harm occurs—or anytime a session isn't going as planned.

## **How to Use This Tool**

- Follow the steps in the table (from The PD Book) to slow down and assess before acting
- Focus first on your own regulation, then on the needs of the group
- Identify what's within your control and influence, and choose a response accordingly

# Steps to Facilitate Adaptively When Things Go Wrong






Step		Actions
1. Slow down.		Take a breath. Notice and name what you're feeling. Tend to any triggers that evoke a response in you.
2. Consider the context.		Consider who is in the room. Determine if any harm has occurred and who was harmed. Determine participants' levels of trust in you and levels of trust with each other. Consider what you can control and influence
3. Assess the stakes.		On a scale of 1–10, determine the level of urgency the situation poses to trust, psychological safety, and learning.
4. Determine how to proceed.		Identify what is within your spheres of control and influence. Consider what actions you can take in the moment and what will take more time. Make a plan of action. Implement your plan (while letting go of the outcome).
5. Follow up.		Check in with participants, organizers, co-facilitators, and any others with whom follow-up is needed.

Figure 7.2. © Elena Aguilar, Lori Cohen, *The PD Book: 7 Habits that Transform Professional Development*. Jossey-Bass, 2022

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