Team Dialogue Reset

A DIY 5-Session Workshop Guide

A practical, step-by-step resource for leaders to design and facilitate their own team workshops without needing an external facilitator, using a proven framework. Guide your team from reactive conflict toward intentional communication, shared understanding, and sustainable change.



How to Use This Guide

This guide is designed to help leaders independently plan, facilitate, and sustain their own team workshops. It serves as both a step-by-step facilitation roadmap and a practical team workbook. Each session follows a consistent rhythm that builds on the last, progressively shifting how your team experiences and responds to conflict.

1

Set the Frame

Establish safety and clarity before diving in

2

Engage the Exercise

Surface real dynamics through structured activity

3

Debrief the Experience

Translate insight into shared language

4

Capture Commitments

Anchor learning into everyday practice

Think of each session as a **reset point** — not a one-time fix, but a steady reorientation toward healthier patterns. The work compounds over time.

SESSION 1

Seeing the Pattern

Objective: Help the team recognize recurring conflict dynamics without assigning blame. The goal is understanding, not fixing—yet.

Opening Frame *(5–10 min)*

Introduce the idea that conflict is often patterned, not personal. Emphasize shared responsibility for understanding—not fixing—what's happening in the room and on the team.

Core Exercise: "Pattern Mapping" *(25 min)*

Ask participants to reflect individually: *"Think of a recent moment of tension on this team."* Then map as a group — What happened first? What followed? What tends to repeat? Capture responses visually on a whiteboard or shared doc.

Debrief Prompts

- What patterns are we noticing across different situations?
- Where do these patterns seem to escalate?
- What feels familiar about this?

Facilitator Note

Watch for language that assigns blame. Gently redirect to patterns — ask *"What tends to happen?"* instead of *"Who caused it?"* This shift in language is foundational to the entire workshop series.

Progress Tracker — Session 1

- [ ] Team identified at least 1 recurring pattern
- [ ] Language shifted from "person" to "pattern"
- [ ] Shared acknowledgment of pattern existence

SESSION 2

Understanding What's Beneath

Objective: Surface the underlying drivers of conflict including unmet needs, unspoken emotions, and hidden assumptions. Most surface-level conflict has deeper roots that, once named, become far easier to navigate.



Opening Frame *(5–10 min)*

Normalize that most conflict is not about the surface issue. Introduce the metaphor of *"what's underneath"* — the iceberg below the waterline that drives behavior.



Core Exercise: "Below the Surface" *(30 min)*

Divide into small groups. Each group takes one identified pattern and explores: What emotions might be present? What needs might not be met? What assumptions might be shaping behavior? Groups report back to the full team.



Debrief Prompts

What surprised you about what's underneath these patterns? How do unmet needs show up in team dynamics? What assumptions might we need to challenge going forward?

Facilitator Note: Encourage curiosity over certainty. This session is about exploration, not being "right." If participants struggle to identify emotions or needs, offer a simple list as a reference prompt.

Progress Tracker — Session 2

- [ ] Team identified at least 2 underlying drivers
- [ ] Participants expressed perspectives beyond their own
- [ ] Increased empathy observed in discussion

SESSION 3

Rebuilding Communication

Objective: Practice clearer, non-reactive ways of engaging in dialogue. Communication is a skill, not a personality trait — and like any skill, it improves with deliberate practice.

Opening Frame *(5–10 min)*

Introduce communication as a learnable skill, not a fixed trait. Emphasize that clarity reduces conflict — not because it removes emotion, but because it reduces misinterpretation and assumption.

Core Exercise: "Say It Differently" *(30 min)*

Provide common reactive statements, such as: *"You never follow through."* Ask participants to reframe using this structure:

- **Observation:** "I've noticed…"
- **Impact:** "It affects…"
- **Invitation:** "Can we…?"

Practice in pairs using real or hypothetical examples. Rotate partners if time allows.

Debrief Prompts

- How did it feel to reframe your message?
- What changed in how the message was received?
- Where might this be useful in real situations?

Facilitator Note

Model tone and pacing throughout this session. Participants will mirror what they see. If you speak with care and clarity, the room will follow. This is one of the most skill-buildable sessions in the series.

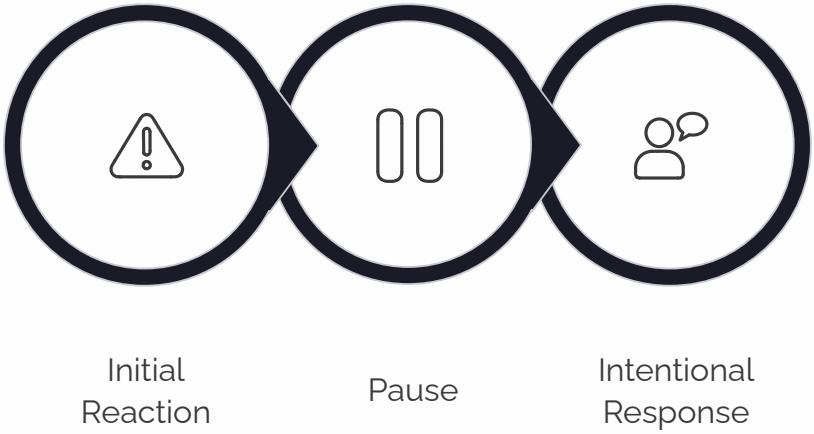
Progress Tracker — Session 3

- [ ] Participants practiced at least one reframe
- [ ] Reduced use of blame-based language
- [ ] Increased clarity in communication attempts

SESSION 4

Navigating Tension in Real Time

Objective: Build the capacity to stay grounded and intentional during conflict. The goal of this session is not perfection — it is presence. Teams that can stay regulated during tension make far better decisions and recover more quickly.



This three-stage model gives participants a concrete, repeatable process for managing reactivity. The "pause" is not passive — it is the most active and skilled moment in the sequence.

Core Exercise: "Pause and Choose" *(30 min)*

Present a realistic scenario — or use a recent real team example. Participants role-play all three stages: the initial reaction, the regulation pause, and then the intentional response. Rotate roles so everyone experiences each position. Debrief after each rotation.

Debrief Prompts

- What did you notice in your body during the role-play?
- What helped you pause instead of react?
- What made the response feel more intentional?

> **Facilitator Note:** Create psychological safety. Remind participants this is practice, not performance. Role-play can feel vulnerable — honor that openly.

Progress Tracker — Session 4

- [ ] Participants identified personal reactivity signals
- [ ] Demonstrated ability to pause before responding
- [ ] Practiced at least one intentional response

SESSION 5

Sustaining the Shift

Objective: Translate five sessions of learning into ongoing team agreements and behaviors. Change happens through consistency, not intensity — this session builds the scaffolding that holds progress in place after the workshop series ends.

Opening Frame *(5–10 min)*

Reinforce that the work done across sessions is only as durable as the agreements made today. Real behavior change requires specificity — vague agreements rarely hold beyond the room they were made in.

Core Exercise: "Team Agreements Lab" *(30 min)*

As a group, define the following together:

- 2–3 communication norms
- 1–2 conflict navigation agreements
- 1 accountability practice

Example Agreements

> "We will ask for clarification before assuming intent."

> "We will address tension within 48 hours."

Debrief Prompts

- Which agreements feel most realistic to uphold?
- What might get in the way of maintaining them?
- How will we revisit these over time?

Facilitator Note: Push for specificity. The more concrete the agreement, the more likely it is to survive first contact with reality.

Progress Tracker — Session 5

- [ ] Clear team agreements documented
- [ ] Accountability mechanism identified
- [ ] Shared commitment to revisit and refine

Ongoing Team Progress Tracker

Use this tracker between sessions or after the full series to monitor meaningful shifts in your team's dynamics. These indicators are designed to be observable in everyday interactions — not just in workshop settings. Review these regularly as a leadership checkpoint.

Pattern Awareness

- [ ] Team can name recurring conflict patterns
- [ ] Conversations reference patterns instead of individuals

Communication Quality

- [ ] Increased use of clear, non-blaming language
- [ ] More questions asked before assumptions are made

Conflict Navigation

- [ ] Tension addressed earlier rather than avoided
- [ ] Reduced escalation in challenging moments

Trust and Safety

- [ ] More perspectives shared openly
- [ ] Evidence of mutual validation in discussions

Facilitator Reflection Guide

After each session, take 5–10 minutes to reflect on your own experience as the facilitator. This practice is not optional; it is what separates a leader who delivers a curriculum from one who truly guides a team's growth. Your self-awareness in the room shapes the team's willingness to take risks, be honest, and engage.



Breakthroughs

What moments of breakthrough did I observe? Where did I see a shift in the room — in language, posture, or energy? What made that moment possible?



Struggles & Resistance

Where did the team struggle or resist? What topics felt charged or avoided? What might that resistance be signaling beneath the surface?



My Response to Tension

How did I respond when tension arose in the room? Did I move toward it or away from it? Was I able to stay grounded and model what I was asking of the team?



What to Adjust

What might I do differently in the next session? Is there a timing change, a reframe, or an exercise modification that would better serve where this team is right now?

Notes

Closing Integration

This work is less about teaching teams how to avoid conflict and more about helping them move through it differently. At the start, conversations may feel slower, more deliberate, and even uncomfortable. That is not a setback. **That is the reset.**

> Over time, what once felt like friction begins to feel like flow. Not because conflict disappears, but because the team has learned how to meet it — together, with clarity, and with intention.

As you move forward, remember: this is not about getting it perfect. It is about staying in the practice. The five sessions you've completed are a foundation, not a finish line. Every conversation your team has from here is an opportunity to apply what you've built together.

If you find yourself wanting deeper support — whether to facilitate your next workshop, navigate more complex dynamics, or embed this work more fully into your team or organization — professional partnership is available.

Ready for More?

Reach out when you're ready to take the next step. Whether it's a follow-up workshop, one-on-one leadership coaching, or a deeper organizational engagement — we're here to partner with you.

Lowe Insights Consulting

Expert facilitation, conflict navigation support, and team development partnership. Visit us to learn more and get in touch.

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