



FACILITATOR AND DOCUMENTER GUIDEPOSTS

- **Hold Space with Intention:** Be intentional in how you show up and hold the space. Holding space is what we do when we walk alongside a person or group on a journey through liminal space. We open our hearts, offer our support, and let go of judgment and control so that the group can trust their own wisdom.
- **Co-Create a Brave and Safe Space:** Cultivating a brave space invites the women's funds to express themselves, challenge each other, and work together toward generative conflict. This is not an easy task; it requires the ability to hold strong emotions and set firm boundaries. But it is possible if there is a willingness to try. At the same time, a brave space requires a sense of safety: sharing personal feelings, thoughts, and perspectives should not open the person to being attacked, belittled, or othered. Even if someone disagrees, they can do it respectfully, pointing their disagreement toward the opinion rather than using it to diminish the person or their belonging.
- **Challenge the Group:** The opportunity for the women's funds in this space and process is to engage deeply, ask the hard questions, and do the work required to transform the systems, practices, and structures that we seek to change and challenge. It is easy to stay in the safe zone and reach for the easy answers, the easy path, and the comfortable solutions. That also means maintaining the status quo. There is an opportunity to use the space to challenge the women's funds to go further and take the road less traveled.
- **Understand the Power Structure:** Any time a group comes together, a power structure or dynamic emerges. To hold a brave space for a group, we need to understand the power structure that may be present and how the participants may be inclined to uphold that power structure. If some of the women's funds in a group feel marginalized by the power imbalance, their silence and discomfort may impede the emergence of possibilities and solutions. Pay attention to the group dynamics and how the group works together. Address any abuses of power that harm other people.

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- **Move Toward Generative Conflict:** It is quite likely that as the women’s funds move through a topic, individuals in the group will hold different or opposing views. Because we have not learned how to deal with conflict, it is easy to respond to it very quickly and in an adversarial way. Instead of avoiding conflict or being combative, we have to move toward generative conflict, which the Wildfire Project defines as conflict that generates “*more possibilities, greater connection, and fuller expression.*”¹ Ask follow-up questions if it feels like things are being left unsaid, invite the group to say what they mean, and say the truth even when it's hard, including fears and doubts.
- **Bring In Joy:** This process invites the women’s funds to be creative and bold and to co-create. Sometimes, things will get intense and difficult. But it doesn't have to be hard all the time. Finding ways to bring in moments of joy and connection will help to release some magic and creativity.
- **Be Responsive to the Group’s Needs:** Work with the group to define a schedule for regular meetings that will move you toward the deliverables of each phase. Give the group options regarding the frequency and length of their gatherings. Remain flexible and responsive in working out schedules and moving at the pace of the group.
- **Share the Work:** If the group’s dynamics are challenging and you can't quite figure out how to support them to work through it, reach out for support when you need it. The other facilitators could be a resource for thinking together, strategizing, and exploring potential solutions.
- **Work Closely with the Documenter/Facilitator:** Work closely with your documenter/facilitator to capture the session and reflect back to the group what you are hearing. Taking time to debrief the session may help surface insights that only one of you may have noticed. This will help to guide planning for the following session.

¹ The Wildfire Project. (2019, September 25). Six elements. Retrieved from <https://wildfireproject.org/six-elements/>

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Please visit the Fenomenal Funds website for more tools and resources:

<https://fenomenalfunds.org/grantmaking/collaboration-grants/tools-resources>