Large-Group Facilitation: Foundations

THE TALKING THERAPIES UK PRACTITIONER SERIES



Large-Group Facilitation: Foundations

Delivering psychoeducation safely to large groups and webinar audiences

Foundation level · 8 hours of continuing professional development

TALKING THERAPIES UK

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First edition, 2026.

This manual accompanies the Large-Group Facilitation: Foundations course in the Talking Therapies UK Digital Classroom, from which its content is drawn and against which it is kept current.

This printing was set on 21 November 2026 from the course as it stood that day.

A note on the clinical material. Every case in this book is a fictional composite written for teaching. No real person appears in it, however disguised. Nothing here constitutes clinical supervision, and nothing in it replaces the judgement of a qualified practitioner working within their competence, their professional body's code and their local governance. Where guidance is cited it was current at the date of this edition; readers must check the standing of any guidance before relying on it.

Set in Poppins and Roboto, the Talking Therapies UK typefaces. Figures drawn by the Talking Therapies UK teaching-diagram engine.

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How to use this manual

This foundation course introduces large-group psychoeducation facilitation as a distinct skill from one-to-one or small-group therapeutic work. Delivering a session to a room, or a webinar audience, of dozens or hundreds of people draws on the accumulated UK evaluation evidence for this delivery model, including a systematic review and meta-analysis of Stress Control-style large-group psychoeducation for anxiety and depression (Dolan et al., 2021) and a randomised controlled trial of a community-based group guided self-help intervention for low mood and stress (Williams et al., 2018). You will study what large-group format can and cannot achieve, the structure of a typical Stress Control or Living Life to the Full-style course, and the two skills that matter most at this level: pacing content for a lecture-style format and managing a group's anxiety about disclosure before it ever becomes a problem in the room. The course assumes no prior facilitation training and is the natural counterpart to a large-group self-help programme.

This manual is the written form of a course taught in the Talking Therapies UK Digital Classroom. It is set at foundation level and carries 8 hours of continuing professional development for practitioners who complete the accompanying course and its assessment.

It is written to be read in order. Each part opens with what it is for; each chapter teaches one idea to a working depth and closes with the points worth keeping and a practice task that converts reading into something you do. The tasks are the part most often skipped and the part that most reliably changes practice, and several of them are designed to be taken to supervision rather than completed alone.

The figures are teaching diagrams rather than decoration. Each is the conventional form of a model you will meet in the literature and in supervision, drawn in one visual language across the whole series so that the shape of an idea is recognisable wherever it reappears.

Where a chapter draws on published work, the reference is named in the text and gathered in the further reading at the back. Terms of art are defined in the glossary, which is worth reading straight through once before you begin.

PART 1

The large-group psychoeducation model

Why large-group delivery is a distinct skill, and the evidence behind the Stress Control-style model.

CHAPTER 1

Why large-group delivery is a distinct skill

This lesson teaches the fundamental distinction between large-group psychoeducation, lecture-style delivery to a room or webinar audience of dozens or hundreds, and one-to-one or small-group therapeutic work. The evidence base is reviewed honestly: a systematic review and meta-analysis found Stress Control-style large-group psychoeducation effective for anxiety and depression at a population level (Dolan et al., 2021), and a randomised controlled trial found comparable benefit for a community-based group guided self-help format for low mood and stress (Williams et al., 2018). The lesson teaches what this format can realistically achieve, psychoeducation and skills teaching at scale, and what it cannot, an individualised therapeutic relationship or in-depth exploration of any one person's difficulties.

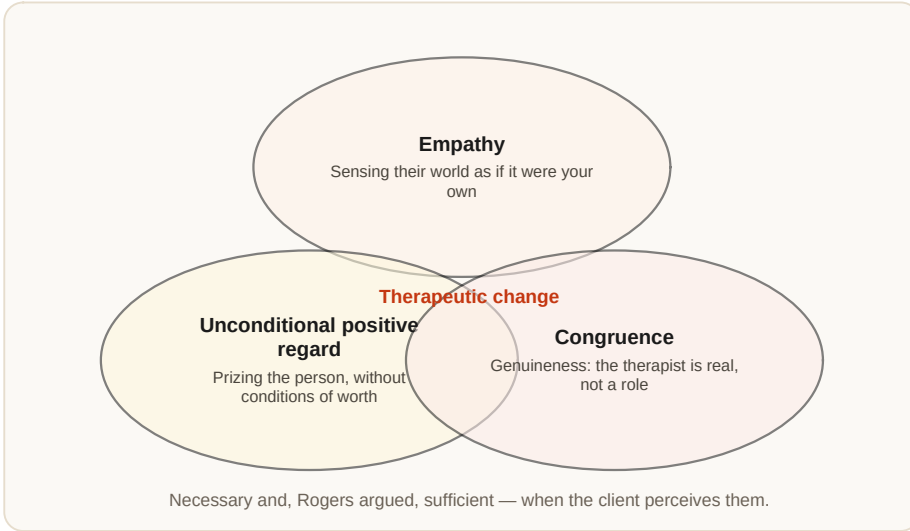


FIGURE 1.1 Rogers' core conditions

Person-centred therapy holds that when the therapist offers empathy, unconditional positive regard and congruence, and the client perceives them, the conditions for constructive personality change are present. They are ways of being, not techniques to perform.

Points worth keeping

- Large-group psychoeducation defined against one-to-one and small-group work
- The evidence: Dolan et al. (2021) on Stress Control-style delivery
- Supporting evidence: Williams et al. (2018) on community group guided self-help
- What the format can and cannot realistically achieve

PRACTICE TASK

Describe, in your own words, the single biggest practical difference between facilitating a room of two hundred people and running a six-person therapy group.

CHAPTER 2

The Stress Control and Living Life to the Full model

This lesson teaches the structure of a typical Stress Control or Living Life to the Full-style course: a multi-week, didactic programme combining short taught segments with brief whole-room practice rather than personal disclosure, a content sequence that builds from understanding stress and low mood physiologically through to specific coping strategies, and printed or take-home materials that extend the live session rather than duplicate it. The lesson also teaches the closed-course and rolling-attendance models, both used in UK practice, and the trade-offs between them.

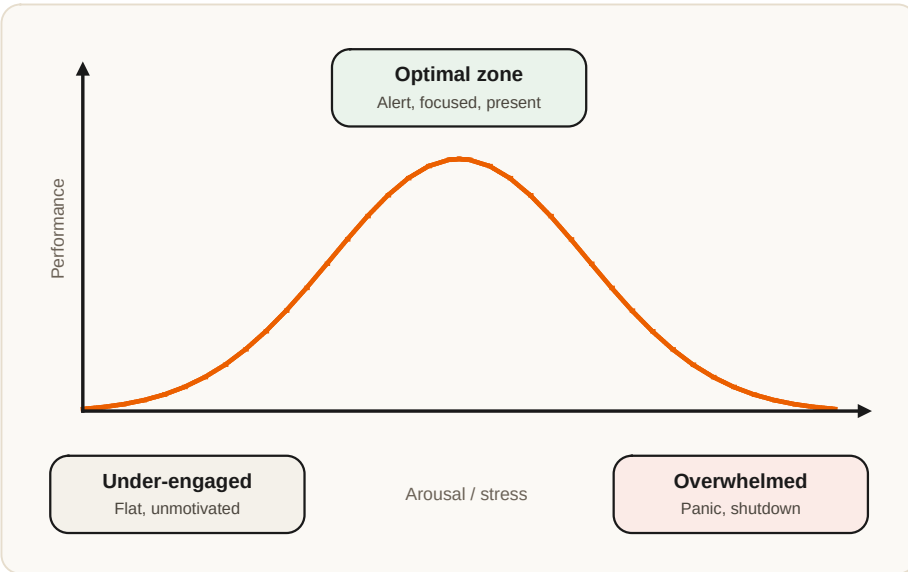


FIGURE 2.1 The arousal–performance curve

The Yerkes–Dodson relationship: performance rises with arousal up to an optimum, then collapses as arousal becomes overwhelm. Clinically it explains why some activation helps engagement while panic prevents it, and why grounding aims for the middle of the curve, not the bottom.

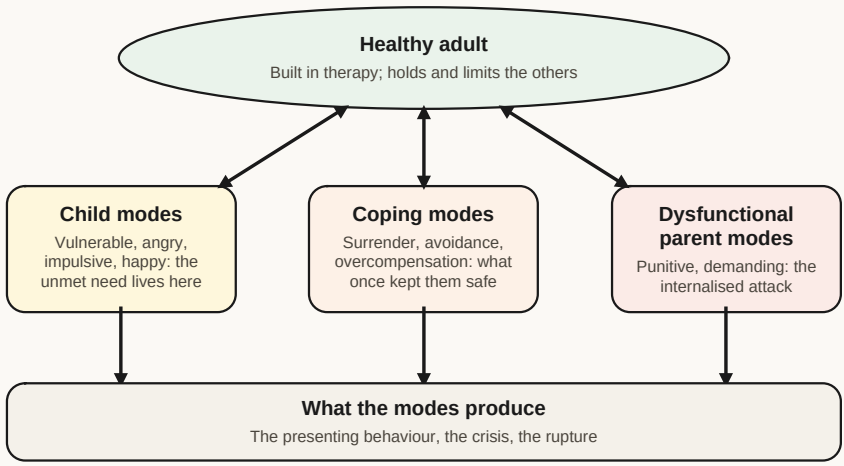


FIGURE 2.2 Schema modes

Schema therapy describes a mode as the emotional state and coping response active at a given moment. Grouping the modes makes the work in the room legible: the child modes carry the unmet need, the coping modes are what once kept the person safe, the internalised parent modes carry the attack, and the healthy adult, built over the course of therapy, is the part that eventually holds and limits the other three. What presents in the consulting room is the product of the three mode classes, which is why the crisis is read as a mode and not as a diagnosis.

Points worth keeping

- Multi-week, didactic structure with brief whole-room practice
- A content sequence building from psychoeducation to specific strategies
- Take-home materials that extend, rather than repeat, the live session
- Closed-course versus rolling-attendance formats

PRACTICE TASK

Sketch the session-by-session content sequence you would use for a six-week large-group programme, in one line per session.

PART 2

Pacing, structure and managing a room

Structuring content for a lecture format, and managing disclosure anxiety before it becomes a problem.

CHAPTER 3

Pacing and structuring content for a lecture format

This lesson teaches the practical craft of structuring content for a room or webinar of dozens to hundreds of people: clear signposting of what is coming next, content delivered in short, clearly bounded chunks, timed segments that keep the whole session moving, and whole-audience techniques such as a show of hands, a poll or a shared breathing exercise used in place of individual discussion, which does not scale to this size and risks losing the room if relied upon.

Points worth keeping

- Clear signposting of structure throughout the session
- Content delivered in short, clearly bounded chunks
- Timed segments that protect pacing
- Whole-audience techniques in place of individual discussion

PRACTICE TASK

Take one piece of psychoeducational content you already deliver one-to-one and rewrite its structure for a room of a hundred people.

CHAPTER 4

Managing group anxiety about disclosure

This lesson teaches how to address, proactively, the anxieties many people bring to a large group: fear of being asked to speak, fear of being singled out, and fear that attendance itself signals something about them. The lesson teaches setting expectations explicitly at the very start of a session, that no one will be asked to share personal information, using anonymous methods such as written responses, an app or a poll for any interactive moment, and framing attendance itself as a sign of engagement and self-care rather than exposure.

Points worth keeping

- Naming disclosure anxiety and addressing it at the outset
- Explicit ground rules: no one is asked to share
- Anonymous methods for any interactive moment
- Framing attendance as engagement, not exposure

PRACTICE TASK

Write the exact opening script you would use in the first two minutes of a session to set expectations about disclosure.

The end of the sample

This is a free sample of “Large-Group Facilitation: Foundations”, and it ends here.

Everything you have read here is from the opening of the book, set exactly as it is printed in it. The rest follows in the same way, chapter by chapter, with its worksheets, its examples and its reference list.

The full book is on sale in the Talking Therapies UK shop. A copy is yours to keep, as a PDF and an ebook, licensed to you by name: a short line saying so is printed at the foot of each page of the PDF and on the title page of the ebook.