Large-Group Facilitation in Practice

THE TALKING THERAPIES UK PRACTITIONER SERIES



Large-Group Facilitation in Practice

Running a multi-week programme end to end, in person and online

Practitioner level · 9 hours of continuing professional development

TALKING THERAPIES UK

First edition · 2026

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First edition, 2026.

This manual accompanies the Large-Group Facilitation in Practice 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 practitioner course teaches the end-to-end delivery of a multi-week, Stress Control-style large-group programme, in person and by webinar. You will study the full session arc such a programme typically follows, from physiological psychoeducation about stress and low mood through to assertiveness, sleep and relapse prevention, and the practical skill of co-facilitation, dividing content delivery and room management between two facilitators so that neither task is neglected. The course then teaches the specific adaptations webinar delivery requires, camera-off audiences, chat moderation and technical contingencies, and how to handle visible distress in an audience without the one-to-one containment a therapy session would offer, including a clear, discreet route to individual support that does not derail the session for everyone else. It is intended for practitioners who have completed large-group facilitation foundations or hold equivalent working knowledge.

This manual is the written form of a course taught in the Talking Therapies UK Digital Classroom. It is set at practitioner level and carries 9 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

Delivering a multi-week programme

Structuring the full course arc, and working effectively with a co-facilitator.

CHAPTER 1

Structuring the full course arc

This lesson teaches the full session-by-session arc of a typical six-session Stress Control-style programme: understanding stress, anxiety and low mood physiologically, unhelpful thinking patterns, behavioural activation and avoidance, relaxation and anxiety-control strategies, sleep, and assertiveness and confidence, closing with relapse prevention. The lesson teaches how to sequence this content so each session stands reasonably well alone, since many services run an open or rolling-attendance model in which not every attendee is present for every session, while still building cumulatively for those who attend throughout.

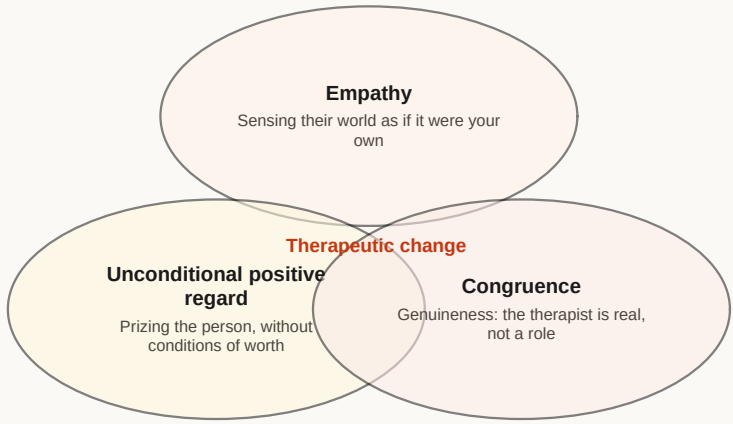


FIGURE 1.1 Rogers' core conditions

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

- A six-session content arc from physiology to relapse prevention
- Sequencing content so each session stands reasonably alone
- Supporting rolling or open attendance without losing cumulative benefit
- Balancing stand-alone clarity against week-on-week continuity

PRACTICE TASK

Write a one-paragraph summary of session three in your arc that would make sense to someone attending for the first time that week.

CHAPTER 2

Co-facilitation and division of roles

This lesson teaches working with a co-facilitator: one facilitator typically leads content delivery while the other manages room logistics, monitors the group or the webinar chat for signs of distress, and handles latecomers or technical issues without interrupting the flow. The lesson teaches when co-facilitation is necessary rather than optional, driven mainly by room size and webinar chat volume, and how to hand over smoothly between facilitators mid-session without disrupting pacing.

Points worth keeping

- Dividing content delivery from room and chat management
- When co-facilitation is necessary rather than optional
- Handling latecomers and technical issues without disrupting flow
- Smooth mid-session handovers between facilitators

PRACTICE TASK

Draft a simple role split for a two-facilitator webinar session of eighty attendees, naming who owns content and who owns chat monitoring.

PART 2

Format adaptations and handling distress at scale

Adapting content for webinar delivery, and responding to distress without individual containment.

CHAPTER 3

Adapting in-person content for webinar delivery

This lesson teaches the specific adaptations webinar delivery requires: presenting to a camera-off or largely camera-off audience without the visual feedback an in-person room provides, moderating a text chat alongside spoken delivery, using polls and reactions in place of an in-room show of hands, and planning for technical contingencies such as a dropped connection or muting issues without losing the session's pacing.

Points worth keeping

- Presenting without visual feedback from a camera-off audience
- Moderating chat alongside spoken delivery
- Polls and reactions in place of an in-room show of hands
- Planning for technical contingencies without losing pacing

PRACTICE TASK

List three visual cues you rely on in an in-person session, and write what you would use instead on a webinar with cameras off.

CHAPTER 4

Handling distress in an audience without individual containment

This lesson teaches how to respond when a participant becomes visibly distressed in a large room, or disengages or leaves a webinar: the realistic limits of what a facilitator can safely address live in front of a large group, and a clear, rehearsed route to discreet individual support, a break-time conversation, a follow-up contact method, or a crisis-line reminder kept visible on screen, that supports the individual without derailing the session for everyone else present.

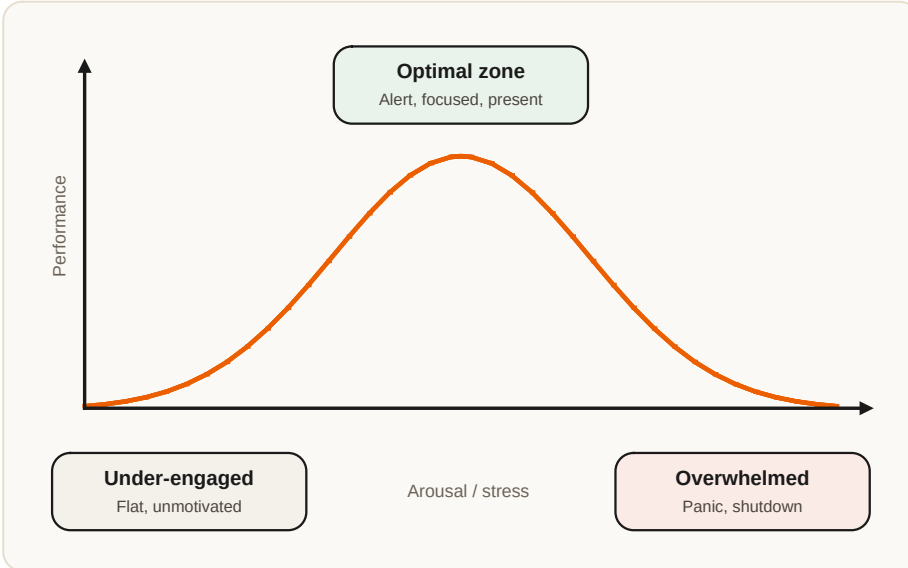


FIGURE 4.1 The arousal–performance curve

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.

Points worth keeping

- Realistic limits of what can be addressed live in front of a large group
- A rehearsed, discreet route to individual support
- Using breaks and follow-up contact rather than pausing the whole session
- Keeping a crisis-line reminder visible without making it the focus

PRACTICE TASK

Write the exact discreet message or action you would use if you noticed one webinar attendee become visibly distressed in the chat.

The end of the sample

This is a free sample of “Large-Group Facilitation in Practice”, 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.