

# Gather the Men: Suggested Agenda

9am Guidelines / Agenda Review

9:10 Introduction round

9:30 Intro to Life Balance

10:00 Introspection – walk

10:30 Lead-Ins (Dyads) and reflection

11:30 Introduction to the Thinking Environment

12:00 Lunch

12:30 “Not Myself” exercise

1:00 Just the Tip Exercise

1:30 “What’s the Worst” Exercise

2:00: Break

2:15 Supporting another

3:00 How to Survive

3:30 Personal commitment to “walk a mile”

4:00 Balancing Engaging Men work

4:30 Reflection / Evaluation / Celebration

*Note: Most exercises are from the Man to Man Toolkit*

# Life Balance

Indicate what percentage of your awake time you give to these three dimensions of your life. Give examples of what you do.

1. "Me" time – meeting your own needs, having fun, introspection, healthy activities, etc.

/100

2. Relational time – time spent with friends, partners, family. Building closeness, cooperating, shared activities, etc.

/100

3. Work time (paid and volunteer). Time you spend earning money, volunteering in the community, etc.

.../100

## **Ending Violence against Women and Girls – Balancing the Levels**

Indicate what percentage of your time you give to this issue falls in each of the three levels. Give examples of what you do.

**Self-Work** – Introspection, education, reading, challenging assumptions, planning

/100

**Work with others** – Building allies, speaking to other men, interrupting men engaging in any level of violence against women and girls in day to day life, strategizing actions, mentoring young men, etc.

/100

**Community work** – building organizations, creating publications, volunteering with local organizations, advocating for policy changes, leading workshops,

.../100

How does this relate to the Life Balance exercise?

**Thinking Environment:** [See Appendix 3 and Kline (1997, 2009) for details.]

Nancy Kline (1997, 2009) has applied the ten aspects of the Thinking Environment listed in Appendix 4 in many venues – not-for-profits, corporate boardrooms, individual coaching, couples counselling, etc. Many of the norms and pressures of our culture interfere with our thinking instead of enhancing it. Her research and practice have demonstrated what needs to be done to enable the creative thinking power of all present to be unleashed and shared. Working on eliminating violence against women is going to take a synthesis of all our best thinking and strategy.

The ten aspects of a Thinking Environment are mostly simple, familiar things that we instinctively see as useful, but that we rarely see used well in group environments. We explored the resistance to using them in this workshop and then practiced especially the Attention aspect. While these skills are simple, they are not easy to master, as they are in opposition to how groups usually run, and they require the creation of a different culture around how we meet and work together. They also tend to be very different from how men have been conditioned to operate. The creation of a Thinking Environment is not about finding ways to sharpen just your own mind – it is about how to create an environment such that all those who are around you think better. This reversal of the way in which masculine conditioning trains men – to use tools that advance their own power – and instead to use skills that empower those around them is a key reason this is so effective in disrupting masculine conditioning.

Consider the table below. Note that these suggest stereotypical ways in which men tend to be conditioned in our Western culture, not inherently how men are. [This is why we use the term “masculine conditioning” instead of “male conditioning”. As Michael Kaufman (1993) has said, “Masculinity is not in our genes, it is in our imaginations.”] So this is not intended to be a put-down of men, but to demonstrate how men have been (without their consent) conditioned into patterns of behaviour that tend to shut down creative thinking. We are not interested in “training men to think like women”, but rather to discover ways in which all humans work best together, and train men and women how to use these skills and processes together to work collaboratively to create a better world.

	<b>Thinking Environment</b>	<b>Male Conditioning</b>
1.	Attention	Take over and talk
2.	Establish equality	Assume superiority
3.	Be at ease	Control
4.	Appreciate	Criticize
5.	Encourage	Compete
6.	Supply accurate information	Withhold or dissemble
7.	Feel	Toughen up
8.	Create diversity	Deride difference
9.	Ask Incisive Questions	Know everything
10.	Humanize the place	Conquer the place

It was beyond the scope of this training to cover all aspects of the Thinking Environment and we focussed primarily on Attention, without which the others do not work well.

Attention is very different from just listening without interruption or listening in order to figure out how you will respond. It is being truly interested in what the person will say next, and committed to discovering their point of view. It is not a passive process or a blanking of your mind.

# The White Ribbon Campaign Pledge

I pledge never to commit, condone or remain silent about violence against women:

**Signed:**

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

# Ground Rules

Ground rules are agreements about how group members will interact with each other during a workshop. Ground rules help set the tone of the workshop and create an equal, respectful and considerate environment.

To be effective, ground rules must be clear, agreed-to, and followed. Ground rules do not have to be extensive; they may be as simple as “treat each other with respect” or “everyone has an equal voice.” Below are some examples of widely used ground rules. It is often helpful to ask participants to help establish ground rules through brainstorming.

## **The facilitators are not the experts.**

- Although the facilitators are not “experts”, they do know a great deal about the subject because they have spent time reading and thinking about it.

## **Respect confidentiality.**

- Everyone should feel safe to openly discuss his views and not fear that the information shared will be discussed after or outside the workshop.
- What is said in the group stays here, unless everyone agrees to change that.

## **Expect and be willing to recognize, explore and value different perspectives.**

- It is important to respect each others’ opinions, listen, and avoid judgment. Different life experiences prompt different perspectives. All are equally important to hear even if they are unusual.
- This does not mean convincing each other of the “rightness” your positions; but instead to work toward mutual understanding of your respective positions.
- Do not be afraid to challenge one another by asking questions, but refrain from personal attacks -- focus on ideas. If you are offended, say so and explain why.

## **Be aware of your own assumptions.**

- Don’t assume everyone is sexually active or is heterosexual.
- Since the majority of violence against women is committed by men, be prepared that there may be aggressors or perpetrators in the group – be aware of this when you speak about aggressors.

## **Speak from your own experience.**

- Sometimes this is phrased as speaking in an “I” voice.
- Avoid speaking for others or assuming that our personal experiences represent those of all others who share our respective backgrounds.

## **Feel free to ask anything.**

## **Share all relevant information.**

- Participants have a right to speak as well as the right to pass.
- Personal disclosures of any kind are not required.