



ELEVATE ADOLESCENCE PROGRAMS

FACILITATOR *Training*



SELF-REFLECTION
RESOURCE PACKAGE

FACILITATION ATTRIBUTION ERROR

DEFINITION:

The Fundamental Attribution Error is the tendency to assume that someone's behavior is caused by who they are (their character, personality, or attitude) rather than what's happening around them (their circumstances, environment, or stressors).

In other words, we often overestimate internal causes and underestimate external factors—especially when judging others.

Behavior is often a message—not a label. As a facilitator, your ability to pause and wonder why can make all the difference.

FACILITATION ATTRIBUTION ERROR

EXAMPLES IN FACILITATION:

- *“She’s disengaged or doesn’t care.”*

Maybe consider: She might be anxious, processing deeply, or unsure of the topic. A teen snaps back with attitude during a check-in.

- *“He’s being disrespectful.”*

Maybe consider: He might be overwhelmed, tired, or reacting to something that happened earlier. A youth is late or misses sessions repeatedly.

- *“They’re unreliable.”*

Maybe consider: They may have family responsibilities, lack transportation, or feel unsafe in the group.

HOW TO AVOID THE FUNDAMENTAL ATTRIBUTION ERROR AS A FACILITATOR:

Assume Positive Intent (or Unseen Struggle): Start from curiosity, not judgment.

Ask yourself: “What else might be going on for this person right now?”

Ask Before Assuming: A simple check-in like “Hey, I noticed you seemed quiet today—anything you need?”

Name the Behavior, Not the Character:

Say: “I noticed you stepped back from the activity,”

Instead of: “You’re being avoidant.”

Reflect on Your Own Biases:

Which kinds of behaviors trigger quick judgments in you?

What assumptions do you make without realizing?

Model Grace and Flexibility:

When you respond with patience and openness, you teach the group that mistakes are part of learning—and safety matters more than perfection.

MIRROR MOMENTS MAP

Sometimes, group behavior reflects something back to us—a belief, bias, or emotional trigger we didn't know we were carrying. These are your "Mirror Moments." This self-reflection tool helps you track, unpack, and grow through the moments that challenge you most as a facilitator. Use it after a tough session, or anytime you notice yourself reacting more strongly than the situation seems to warrant.

MOMENT THAT HOOKED ME

What happened?

Describe the situation or behavior that triggered a strong emotional or internal reaction.

MY IMMEDIATE REACTION

What was my first instinct—emotionally, mentally, or physically?

What did I feel or want to do in that moment?

BELIEF OR BIAS UNDERNEATH

What assumption might I have made about the participant or group?

What internal narrative showed up—about them or about me?

WHAT IT MIGHT BE REFLECTING

Is this behavior reflecting a value, insecurity, or past experience of mine?

What might it be mirroring back to me that I haven't fully explored?

MY VALUES-ALIGNED RESPONSE

If I paused and led with care, curiosity, or humility—what would a values-aligned response look like?

WHAT I WANT TO TRY NEXT TIME

How will I use this insight going forward?

What's a small shift I can make in my future facilitation?

Reminder: *Mirror moments aren't failures—they're opportunities. Every time you reflect with honesty, you deepen your impact and grow your presence as a facilitator.*