

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.