

Activity 3: Debriefing Classroom Content for Educators and Learners

This tool provides guidance for how to prepare for and conduct a debriefing session aligned with the CRGBA Framework.

Description:

Debriefing is meant to provide a safe, constructive space for sharing ideas, reflection, reviewing what went well, venting frustrations, and challenging assumptions. When discussing challenging content, including colonial violence, intergenerational trauma, and the legacies of colonial occupation, it is useful to incorporate regular individual and group debriefing to give educators and learners emotional space and boundaries where necessary and to facilitate reflection and self-care.

Aligned with Concept 5, a trauma-informed approach (Bowen & Murshid 2016), this activity is a useful tool to support educators and learners in meeting their emotional and relational needs during the learning process. Debriefing also facilitates effective self-reflection and continued learning for both the educator and the learner.

Preparing for a Debrief

Honour your emotional and relational needs.

Debrief in pairs, as a group, or both. A good debriefing partner is someone who you feel safe sharing feedback with, and who is knowledgeable and grounded enough to support you in critical reflection. If you're debriefing due to an intense feeling or emotional response that you are experiencing as a result of the lecture content, it's a good idea to choose someone who can honour your feelings, and who can provide support in a strengths-based constructive way.

Honour your physical needs.

It's important to be comfortable when debriefing. Try to make sure your physical needs are met (e.g. hydrate, eat some food, etc.), get into a comfortable position, minimize distractions, and give yourself enough time to fully debrief the content you need to address.

Debriefing Questions

Not all questions will be applicable. Debriefing isn't necessarily a linear strategy – the following are some guiding questions to help facilitate the debriefing process for you and your debriefing partner. You are encouraged to adapt this activity to fit your needs.

Venting/Releasing Strong Feelings:

- How do you feel about the outcome/what happened today?
- How did you feel during the [learning activity]?
- Did you feel engaged, involved, or present during the activity? If not, what was getting in the way of being present for you?

- Where do you think this [emotional response] came from?
- Were there any emotional triggers present?

Critical Observations:

- What content/discussions/themes stood out for you?
- How did others respond?
- Were there any external or internal influences present?
- What other observations did you make?

Learning/Reflection:

- What went well, and why? How did this feel?
- What did not go well, and why? How did this feel?
- How do you feel the participants felt in the learning space?
- What would you have done differently?
- What surprised you? What did you not see coming?
- What are your biggest takeaways from this experience?
- Were there any emotions, thoughts, or assumptions present during the [learning activity]? What does this mean for future learning outcomes?

Next Steps:

- Are there any barriers that can be removed, or changes that can be made, for next time?
- What supports do you need either from the facilitator, from yourself, or others?
- Are there any other emotions, thoughts, or assumptions that you should plan to address in the future?
- Do you need any kind of aftercare?