

Conference Facilitator's Script

1. Preamble

Welcome. As you know, my name is _____, and I will be facilitating this conference.

Now introduce each conference participant and state their relationship to the person/s who caused harm or to the person/s harmed.

Thank you all for attending. I know that this is difficult for all of you, but your presence will help us deal with the matter that has brought us together. This is an opportunity for all of you to be involved in repairing the harm that has been done.

**This conference will focus on an incident that happened on _____ (date),
at _____ (location),
when _____.**

(State the nature of the harmful incident without elaborating.)

**It is important to understand that we will focus on what _____
(name/s of person/s who caused harm) did and how that unacceptable behavior has
affected others. We are not here to decide whether _____
(person/s who caused harm) is/are good or bad. We want to explore in what way
people have been affected and hopefully work toward repairing the harm that has
resulted. Does everyone understand this?**

**_____ (person/s who caused harm) has/have admitted their part
in the incident.**

Say directly to the person/s who caused harm: **I must tell you that you do not have to participate in this conference and are free to leave at any time, as is anyone else. If you do leave, the matter may be handled in another way, such as**

_____.

This matter, however, may be finalized if you participate in a positive manner and comply with the conference agreement.

Say to the person/s who caused harm: **Do you understand?**

2. Person/s Who caused Harm

We'll start with _____ (person/one of the persons who caused harm).

Have the person who caused harm respond to each of the following questions. (If there is more than one person who caused harm, have each respond to all of the following questions.)

- **What happened?**
- **What were you thinking about at the time?**
- **What have you thought about since the incident?**
- **Who do you think has been affected by your actions?**
- **How have they been affected?**

3. Person/s Harmed

Have the person harmed respond to each of the following questions. (If there is more than one person harmed, have each respond to all of the following questions.)

- **What was your reaction at the time of the incident?**
- **How do you feel about what happened?**
- **What has been the hardest thing for you?**
- **How did your family and friends react when they heard about the incident?**

4. Supporters of Person/s Harmed

Have each respond to all of the following questions.

- **What did you think when you heard about the incident?**
- **How do you feel about what happened?**
- **What has been the hardest thing for you?**
- **What do you think are the main issues?**

5. Supporters of the Person/s Who caused Harm

Have each of the supporters respond to all of the following questions.

- **What did you think when you heard about the incident?**
- **How do you feel about what happened?**
- **What has been the hardest thing for you?**
- **What do you think are the main issues?**

6. Person/s Who caused Harm

Ask the person/s who caused harm:

- **Is there anything you want to say at this time?**

7. Reaching an Agreement

During this stage of the conference, allow enough time for participants to ask questions and seek clarification as needed in their discussions.

Ask the person/s harmed:

- **What would you like from today's conference?**

Ask the person/s who caused harm to respond.

At this point, all the participants discuss what should be in the final agreement. This includes ideas from the person/s who caused harm about how to make things right. Solicit comments from all participants.

It is important that you ask the person/s who caused harm to respond to each suggestion before the group moves to the next suggestion, asking:

- **What do you think about that?**

Then determine that the person/s who caused harm agree/s before moving on. Allow for negotiation.

As the agreement develops, clarify each item and make the written document as specific as possible, including details, deadlines, and follow-up arrangements.

As you sense that the agreement discussion is drawing to a close, say to the participants:

- **Before I prepare the written agreement, I'd like to make sure that I have accurately recorded what has been decided.**

Read the items in the agreement aloud and look to the participants for acknowledgment. Make any necessary corrections.

8. Closing the Conference

Before I formally close this conference, I would like to provide everyone with a final opportunity to speak. Is there anything anyone wants to say?

Allow time for participants to respond. When they are done, say:

Thank you for your contributions in dealing with this difficult matter. Congratulations on the way you have worked through the issues.

If the conference is being held in person:

Say: **Please help yourselves to some refreshments while I prepare the agreement.**

Allow participants ample time to have refreshments and interact. The informal period after the formal conference is very important.

If the conference is being held online:

Say: **I will type your agreement into a document and send it to each of you.**

The facilitator/s should decide upon a closing that will begin to rebuild relationships similarly to the in-person breaking-of-bread. This could include one of the following:

1. Leave the Zoom room open for people to chat or enter into breakout rooms. Facilitators should stay available.
2. Do a sequential closing circle, asking a question such as:
 - a. I came into this conference feeling _____, and I am leaving feeling _____.
 - b. One thing I learned, realized, or was surprised by in this conference is _____.