

Adaptation Journeys

Discussion Guide



Purpose

This guide provides a reflection framework for practitioners, funders, researchers or anyone interested in adapting violence against women (VAW) prevention programming.



It's designed to help participants:

- 1 **Reflect** on their own adaptation experience.
- 2 **Surface** assumptions or weak spots.
- 3 **Identify** practical ideas for avoiding pitfalls and applying learning in their own adaptation.

Format

This guide can be used in many ways. For example:

WORKSHOP

During a workshop, or with a large group, dividing participants into smaller groups and assigning each a different Pitfall/Learning.



SESSION SERIES

A series of 1 hour sessions with a small group to explore one Pitfall/Learning at a time.

EXPLORATION

Use an additional 30 minutes for optional exploration of "Tips" or "Signposts."

Preparation

Here are multiple ways to pick pitfalls:



SELECT A PITFALL

Prior to the session, if working with a small group, select one pitfall from [Adaptation Journeys](#) and review it carefully. Consider the relevance of this pitfall and learning to where you are in your own adaptation process.

USE A POLL

Alternatively, with a small group, use a quick poll (try [menti.com](#) for free electronic polling) or write each pitfall on a flipchart and ask them to 'vote' by choosing the top pitfall they wish to discuss in the day's session.

PARTICIPANTS PICK

If you have more time for preparation, you can suggest that participants review the pitfalls in advance and ask them to choose the pitfall(s) that resonate more with their experiences. Once they send their choices, select the pitfall(s) that are most relevant to the group.

REVIEW ALL

Review all Pitfalls / Learnings if working with a large group.

Steps

- 1
- 2
- 3
- 4



STEP 1: INTRO

Building a shared understanding

Gather colleagues virtually or in person.

20

MINS

INSTRUCTIONS:

1 **If using this in a small group:** Share the pitfall (give link, photocopy, project) and allow for a few minutes of silent reading. Remind participants that today, we'll just be exploring 1 pitfall. This process can be repeated for each pitfall in follow up discussions.

2 **If using this in a large group or during a workshop:** Divide participants into 7 groups and give each group a different Pitfall and copies of the Discussion Guide to support their group work.

1

2

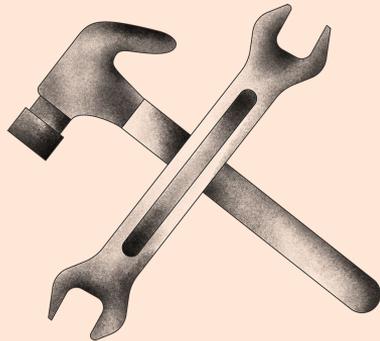
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STEP 1: PART 1

The Pitfall

Keep this focused on understanding, not judging.



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ASK:

Q1

What was the core challenge or pitfall?

Q2

What pressures or constraints shaped what happened?

Q3

Whose perspectives appear central?
Whose may have been missing?
What were the implications of this?

1

2

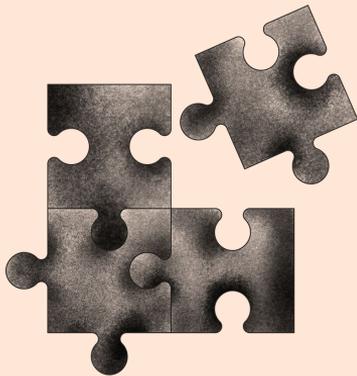
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STEP 1: PART 2

The Learning

Keep this focused on understanding, not judging.



MINS

ASK:

Q1

What was the key learning?

Q2

How did this learning strengthen their adaptation process?

Q3

What biases or assumptions may have made it difficult to learn this earlier?

1

2

3

4

STEP 2

Reflect on your own experience

Shifting to your own adaptation efforts.

Encourage reflection, not defensiveness.

Note: If conducting these discussions in a workshop where all pitfalls are covered or in the final session of the series of pitfall discussions, ask: What pitfalls have we encountered in our work that aren't included in the Adaptation Journeys and how have we overcome them? Record these and make time to hold a full discussion on these pitfalls, using this guide.



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ASK:

Q1

Where might this pitfall be quietly present in our own work?

Q2

In our adaptation, what tends to drive our decisions most strongly (e.g., evidence, funder expectations, timelines, organisational values, community priorities)?

Q3

What are the implications of this? *If relevant: is any repair or recalibration needed?*

1

2

3

4

STEP 3

Applying learnings in your Adaptation Journey

Focus on actions that can strengthen
your adaptation process.

Capture 1 or 2 concrete commitments.



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ASK:

Q1

What conversations should
we be having but aren't?

Q2

Who needs to be more involved
in adaptation decisions?

Q3

What are one or two small but
meaningful changes that would help
us avoid this pitfall and proactively
apply the learning in the future?

1

2

3

4

STEP 4

Summary and closure

Every adaptation involves uncertainty, trade-offs, and learnings.



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SUMMARISE:

1 Thank the group for participating. Remind them that adaptation is not about avoiding mistakes, but about regularly reflecting (internally and with communities), questioning assumptions, listening to those most affected, and making thoughtful decisions.

2 Summarise any action points decided on during the discussion, who will be responsible and by when they will report back to the group.

3 Share the date for the next Pitfall discussion, clarify any prep work needed.



Extensions

Optional small group discussions on **Signposts** and **Tips**

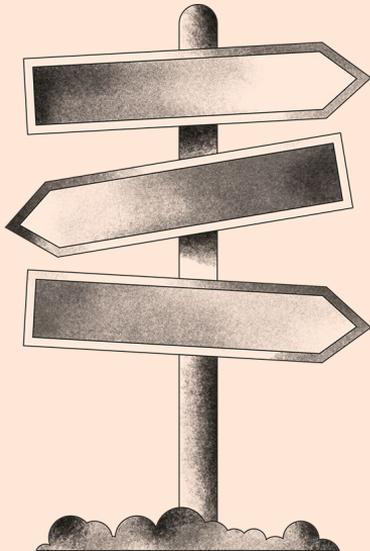


OPTION A:

Exploring the Signposts



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INSTRUCTIONS:

A

B

1 Divide participants into 3 small groups:
Caution Points, Speed Bumps, Green Lights

2 Ask each group to review their Signposts.
Use 20 minutes to discuss:

- Why are these signposts important?
- Where might we encounter or overlook them in our work?
- What are early signs we are off track – or on the right track?

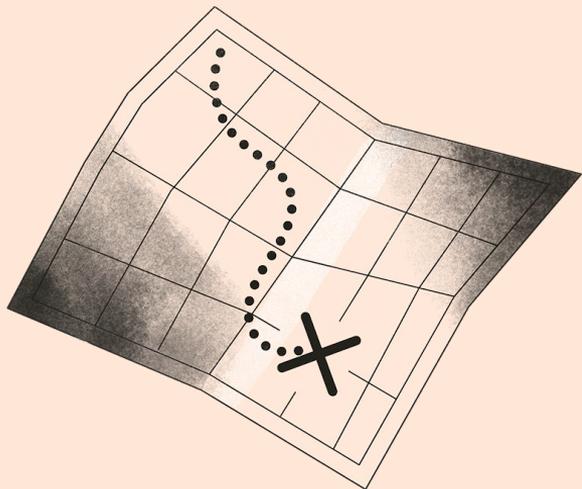
3 Ask groups to report back one key insight about adaptation signposts.

OPTION B:

Exploring the Tips



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INSTRUCTIONS:

1

Divide participants into 4 small groups by audience: Funders, TA providers, practitioners, researchers.

2

Ask each group to review their [Tips](#).

Use 20 minutes to discuss:

- Which of these tips do we genuinely practice?
- Which feels difficult? Why?
- What structural or relational barriers prevent us from applying them?
- What practical tip, if applied, would improve our adaptation?

3

Ask groups to report back one key insight about adaptation signposts.

A

B

 adaptationjourneys.com