



# Working with Emotional Debt Playbook



**Embrace the transformative power of  
unresolved emotional baggage and emerge  
stronger from transitions and loss.**

# Purpose

Our organizations and teams constantly accumulating emotional debt. This debt arises from unresolved feelings around significant transitions like reorganizations, departures (voluntary or involuntary), and other disruptive events. It can manifest as burnout, low morale, or difficulty collaborating effectively.

This workshop provides a space to address these challenges head-on. By creating a safe haven for reflection and shared experience, we can help teams process their emotional baggage and emerge stronger and more connected.

At the heart of this workshop lie the [NeuroAffective Relational Model](#) (NARM) [1] and a [Liberating Structure](#) [2] in development called [Griefwalking](#) [3]. NARM is a developmentally-oriented, neuroscientifically-informed approach for healing complex trauma on a personal and collective level, developed by Dr. Laurence Heller.

This workshop is ideal for teams and organizations that went through significant transitions or experienced loss. It creates a safe space to share experiences and practice forms of helping that need no immediate action but open up possibilities for a deeper connection.

I want to express my heartfelt appreciation to [Susan Tomasko](#) [4] for co-facilitating the first session and to [Peter Zylka-Greger](#) [5] for the ingenious idea of the [Shoe Shuffle](#) [6] to reduce the complexity of the original Griefwalking.

With the steps in this guide, you can run this workshop independently. But if you need help, do not hesitate to contact me at [christian@hofstetter-coaching.com](mailto:christian@hofstetter-coaching.com) or reach out to me on [LinkedIn](#).

**Let me know how it went!**

Christian Hofstetter





# Before the Workshop

## Group Size

This workflow is suited for group sizes from 4 up to 30. The bigger the group size, the more facilitators are recommended to hold the space.

## Intended Audience

This workshop is ideal for teams and organizations that went through significant transitions or experienced loss. It creates a safe space to share experiences and practice forms of helping that need no immediate action but open up possibilities for a deeper connection.



## Online Delivery

With decent preparation and slight adaptions, this workshop should also be possible in a virtual space. I have only facilitated this intervention with people onsite. Let me know your experiences if you tested it in an online setting.

## Material

- Pen and paper for participants to write on
- Place chairs in a circle. Put tables aside.



# Emotion in Motion



Based on the Soft Shoe Shuffle [6], this step encourages participants to share their thoughts and feelings about transitions and loss in a supportive and non-judgmental environment. The movement of walking around the room allows participants to circulate and connect with others who may have shared similar experiences. At the same time, repeating the statements provides a structure for sharing and listening.

## Invitation

"If you feel like sharing your answer to the question, raise your hand, and everyone will stand still. If the statement resonates with you, go and stand behind this person."

## Steps

- ⌚ 3min 1. Explain the following steps: "In a minute, when I'm done explaining, I will invite you to start walking around the room. One after the other, I will repeat the sentences from the previous step. At any point, if you feel like sharing your answer to my prompt, raise your hand, and everyone will stand still. The person who raises their hand shares their answer. If the statement resonates with you, go and stand behind them."
2. Invite everyone to start walking around the room.
- ⌚ 5min 3. Read the first statement from the previous step: "Yes, it is true that ...". Observe the group dynamics, and whenever you feel like moving on to the following statement, read it out loud.
- ⌚ 10min 4. Repeat the previous instruction for the next three statements: "It is hard because ...", "I will always remember and never forget...", and "Now that I have shared my thoughts and feelings, it may be possible to..."

## Facilitation Tips

- The potential for strong emotions in this step emphasizes the importance of a co-facilitator. This enables you to prioritize participant support and maintain a safe, compassionate environment.
- Our goal here is to focus on compassionate presence, not immediate solutions. Remember our working agreement to 'practice helping without immediate action' – resist the urge to problem-solve.



# About me



## Christian Hofstetter

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**Hi, I'm Christian. Let me help you and your teams reach your true potential.**

**My focus is on providing teams and organizations with tools and structures so they can drive change from within and act independently.**

