

Facilitator Guide: Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Introduction: Why Relaxation Matters

You Say: "Stress and tension are a normal part of life, but they can build up. Today we're going to talk about a tool called **Progressive Muscle Relaxation**. It's a technique that helps you recognize and release physical tension by focusing on one muscle group at a time."

Key points to highlight:

- There are many variations of this exercise. Some versions focus only on one side of the body at a time. Others involve simply paying attention to the sensations in each area without tensing at all.
- Sessions can last anywhere from 10 to 30 minutes, depending on how much time and focus you want to give it.
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation involves **tensing and then relaxing** different muscle groups to calm the body and mind.
- It can help with **stress, anxiety, cravings, and sleep**.
- You can use this technique anytime, whether at home, before bed, or during a stressful moment.

Step 1: Explore the Idea with the Group

You Say: "You don't need anything special to try this—just a few minutes and a quiet(ish) place to sit or lie down. The idea is simple: tense a muscle group for a few seconds, then slowly release it. You can start with your feet and work your way up, or vice versa."

Ask the group:

- "Have you ever tried something like this before?"
- "Where do you tend to carry tension in your body—shoulders, jaw, stomach?"
- "When might be a good time to try this technique?"

Facilitator Quick Tips:

- Keep it casual and discussion based. No need to try this in the meeting as a group.
- Encourage participants to try it at home either on their own or using audio guides, apps, or YouTube videos.

Step 2: Encourage Reflection and Curiosity

You Say: "If this technique sounds useful, consider trying it once this week. Even a few minutes can help reset your nervous system."

Optional reflection:

- What part of this tool seems interesting or useful to you?
- How do you usually try to relax when you're feeling tense?

Summary

The **Progressive Muscle Relaxation** tool introduces a simple, body-based strategy to reduce tension and support emotional regulation. It's an easy, flexible practice that participants can explore on their own time.