WORKSHOPSKILL · FACILITATION KIT

Same Boat — Facilitator Run Sheet

Folder: `same-boat` · Category: conflict · 6–16 people · 20 min · offline + online · print props · tool pack

License: CC BY 4.0

CONTENTS

Objectives
Why “both lose” flips it
How to run it
Failure modes
Facilitation notes
Props in this folder
How to run this debrief
The four debrief questions
When to use this activity
Setup
The card
Variations
Put it on the wall
Agent version
Read the shared card
Failure modes of the debrief

20	6–16	print props
MINUTES	PEOPLE	SETTING

Same Boat — Facilitator Guide

Two groups at odds each get five minutes to write down what they will **both** lose if the dispute keeps running — not what the other side is doing wrong, what you share as the cost. They read each other's lists and the overlapping items go on one "same boat" card. The move from "against them" to "beside them, facing the same problem" is the whole technique.

Objectives

By the end of the activity, participants will have:

1. Named, in concrete terms, what both sides lose if the dispute keeps running.
2. Put those shared losses — not the other side's faults — on one card sitting between them.
3. Committed to one shared loss they will act on together this week.

When to use this activity

- Two teams, functions or sub-groups have settled into blame and the argument loops the same three grievances.
- The conflict is real but the framing is positional — everyone can name the other side's faults and nothing of the shared cost.
- You have twenty minutes and can seat the two sides apart but in one room (or two breakout rooms that reconvene).

Why "both lose" flips it

Blame points backward at each other; a shared loss points forward at a problem neither side wants. Naming something you will both be worse off for forces the two groups to look at the same object instead of at each other — the smallest concrete reframe from adversarial to joint.

Setup

Space: seat the two sides apart but in one room (or two breakout rooms that reconvene to compare). A wall or board between them will hold the shared card.

Materials per side: one write card and a pen — each side lists what you **both** lose if this keeps going.

Materials for the room: one large "same boat" card and one "still different" card from `same-boat-prop-cards.pdf`.

Grouping: the two actual sides of a live dispute, 6–16 people total. Too hot to share a room? Run the writing in separate rooms and reconvene only to compare.

Roles: each side writes together, then reads its list aloud; you hold the "both lose only" rule and the clock.

How to run it

Time	Phase	What you do
0–2	Frame	State the rule: describe only what BOTH sides will lose, no "they do X". Write it down.
2–7	A writes	Side A, apart, lists what you both lose if this keeps going — money, time, trust, a launch, a relationship.

Time	Phase	What you do
2–7	B writes	Side B does the same at the same time, apart from A.
7–14	Compare	Each side reads its list aloud. Anything that appears on both goes on the shared “same boat” card.
14–18	Reframe	Around the shared items only: what would change if you treated that as the problem, not each other?
18–20	Bridge	Each side names one shared loss they will act on this week, together.

The card

Write the overlapping items on `same-boat-prop-cards.pdf`’s large “same boat” card and leave it up between the two groups. By the end it should hold three or more losses neither side can pin on the other. Use the “still different” card to hold the real disagreements you are not pretending away.

Failure modes

- **A side writes “what they’re doing wrong.”** Interrupt gently; the rule is only shared losses. Re-read it before writing.
- **No genuine overlap appears.** If nothing matches, the disagreement is being described too abstractly — force concrete costs (a date, a sum, a name).
- **A win feels implied.** This is not “we agreed” — it is one object both can see. Keep it at “same boat, different oars.”

Variations

- **Two rooms:** run the writing in separate breakouts, then reconvene only to compare and build the card.
- **Remote:** each side writes in a private doc; share the two lists on one screen to find the overlap.
- **Shortened (12 min):** one round of writing plus the compare and a verbal bridge — skip the written reframe.
- **De-escalation on a live thread:** paste the two lists into the argument itself; the overlapping items often reset the tone on their own.

Facilitation notes

- The strongest moment is when a side hears its own hidden worry read aloud by the other side.
- Name one shared cost concretely to seed the first list if the room freezes.

Put it on the wall

Print `same-boat-activity-poster.pdf` (A3) to put the run of show, the “both lose” rule and the reframe prompt on one wall while you facilitate.

Props in this folder

- `same-boat-prop-cards.pdf` — poker-spec print sheet (63.5 × 88.9 mm, bleed and cut guides): a large “same boat” shared-loss card, a per-side write card, a “still different” card, blanks, branded backs

- `same-boat-run-sheet.pdf` — the print edition: this run sheet + the debrief, bound as one A4 document with bookmarks (`-Letter.pdf` is US Letter)
- `same-boat-activity-poster.pdf` — the whole reframe on one A3 wall sheet
- `same-boat-guide.md` · `-debrief.md` · `-start-here.md` — the facilitator guide, the debrief, the one-page start here
- `same-boat-license.md` — what you may do, how to rebrand, what shipped when
- `SKILL.md` · `same-boat.zip` — the machine-readable manifest, and the whole folder in one download

Agent version

Every file in this folder has a stable public URL — an AI agent can fetch the cards, the debrief and this run sheet with three curl commands (see `SKILL.md`). The paper version needs nothing but two write cards, one shared card and a pen each.

Same Boat — Debrief

> You did not resolve the conflict. You put one thing in front of both sides that neither can blame on the other — and that is where resolution starts.
>
> Use with `same-boat-guide.md`. The bridge line at minute 18 is the compressed version; this sheet is the full one.

How to run this debrief

- Keep the shared "same boat" card **visible between the two sides** while you talk — it is the object you are debriefing around, not a recap of the argument.
- Count the overlaps out loud. Three or more is a working boat; fewer means the costs were named too abstractly.
- End on one concrete shared loss each side will act on this week, with a name and a date against it.

Read the shared card

1. **What actually overlaps.** Items on both lists are the joint problem, in both sides' own words. Count them; three or more is a working boat.
2. **What surprised each side.** The worry one group held silently that the other just said out loud — name it; that is the turn.
3. **What did not overlap.** Real disagreements survive here. Keep them on a separate "still different" list so nobody pretends they are gone.

The four debrief questions

- Which shared loss did both sides put down almost in the same words — and why does that one matter?
- Where in the last month did the two of you describe the problem as each other, instead of as something in front of you?
- What is the one concrete object (a date, a sum, a launch) both of you would rather not lose, that you can name out loud?
- What changes if you take the shared cost first and argue about the "still different" list after?

Failure modes of the debrief

Failure mode	Why it happens	The rescue
It reads as forced agreement	A shared cost looks like capitulation	Reframe: same boat, different oars — naming a joint loss is not agreeing on everything.
It snaps back to blame	Old habits return mid-discussion	Put the physical card between the sides and read the shared items aloud again.
Real issues get papered over	The shared list absorbs everything	Keep the “still different” list visible; do not erase genuine disagreement.