Emergency
ManagementBC

Instructional Techniques

Basic Training Guidelines

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"There is nothing training cannot do. Nothing is above its reach. It can turn bad morals to good; it can destroy bad principles and recreate good ones; it can lift (wo)men to angelship."
- Mark Twain

An excellent training session is nothing without an excellent trainer. This section covers basic guidelines and tips to help improve your training skills.

The following areas are covered:

The material used in this handbook is courtesy of Alameda County Public Health Department (www.acphd.org)

Adult Learning

Effective instruction involves understanding how adults learn best. Compared to children and teens, adults have special needs and requirements as learners. The field of adult learning was pioneered by Malcom Knowles. He identified the following characteristics of adult learners:

- Adults are autonomous and self-directed. They need to be free to direct themselves. Adult learners like to participate in the learning process. Instructors must actively involve adult participants in the learning process and serve as facilitators for them. Specifically, they must get participants' perspectives about what topics to cover and let them work on projects that reflect their interests. They should allow the participants to assume responsibility for presentations and group leadership. Instructors should act as facilitators, guiding participants to their own knowledge rather than supplying them with facts. Finally, they must show participants how the class will help them reach their goals (e.g., via a personal goals sheet).
- Adults have accumulated a foundation of life experiences and knowledge that may include work-related activities, family responsibilities, and previous education. To connect learning to this knowledge/experience base, instructors should build on their existing experience/knowledge and link the new material to what they know. You should draw out participants' experience and knowledge which is relevant to the topic. Instructors must relate theories and concepts to the participants and recognize the value of experience in learning. It is important to make sure material is applicable to the real world.
- Adults are goal-oriented. Upon enrolling in a course, they usually know what goal they want to attain. They, therefore, appreciate an educational program that is organized and has clearly defined elements. Instructors must show participants how this class will help them attain their goals. Goals and course objectives should be discussed early in the course. Instructor need to be aware of the learners' specific expectations.
- Adults are relevancy-oriented. Learning has to be applicable to their work or other responsibilities to be of value to them. Therefore, instructors must identify objectives for adult participants before the course begins. Theories and concepts must be related to a setting familiar to participants. Relevancy can be addressed by having participants choose projects that reflect their own interests.
- Adults are practical, focusing on the aspects of a lesson most useful to them in their work. Instructors must tell participants explicitly how the lesson will be useful to them on the job.
- Adult learners bring their own: self-confidence, self-esteem and self-perception. It is for these reasons the instructor should:
    - Provide positive feedback as well as suggestions for improvement.
    - Praise and encourage to build confidence.
    - Show respect for the individual; their learning needs, their ideas, their personal space and their right for privacy.
    - Provide stress-free opportunities for improvement and successful learning experiences.
    - Allow time to explore.

As do all learners, adults need to be shown respect. Instructors must acknowledge the wealth of experiences that adult participants bring to the classroom. These adults should be treated as equals in experience and knowledge and allowed to voice their opinions freely in class.

Motivating the Adult Learner

Another aspect of adult learning is motivation. At least six factors serve as sources of motivation for adult learning:

- ***Social relationships***: to make new friends, to meet a need for associations and friendships.
- ***External expectations:*** to comply with instructions from someone else; to fulfill the expectations or recommendations of someone with formal authority.
- ***Social welfare***: to improve ability to serve mankind, prepare for service to the community, and improve ability to participate in community work.
- ***Personal advancement***: to achieve higher status in a job, secure professional advancement, and stay abreast of competitors.
- ***Escape/Stimulation:*** to relieve boredom, provide a break in the routine of home or work, and provide a contrast to other exacting details of life.
- ***Cognitive interest:*** to learn for the sake of learning, seek knowledge for its own sake, and to satisfy an inquiring mind.

Barriers and Motivation

Adults have many responsibilities that they must balance against the demands of learning. These responsibilities may create barriers against participating in learning for adults.

Motivation factors can also be a barrier. What motivates adult learners? Typical motivations include a requirement for competence or licensing, an expected (or realized) promotion, job enrichment, a need to maintain old skills or learn new ones, a need to adapt to job changes, or the need to learn in order to comply with company directives.

The best way to motivate adult learners is simply to enhance their reasons for enrolling and decrease the barriers. Adults learn best when their "self" is not under threat. Instructors should encourage cooperation/collaboration and not competition. Do not single out learners let the adult learn to find a personal comfort zone. Instructors should understand why their students are enrolled (the motivators); they have to discover what is keeping them from learning. Then the instructors must plan their motivating strategies. A successful strategy includes showing adult learners the relationship between training and an expected promotion. In many ways, older users are less likely to explore technology.

Learning Tips for Effective Instructors

Learning occurs within each individual as a continual process throughout life. People learn at different speeds, so it is natural for them to be anxious or nervous when faced with a learning situation. Positive reinforcement by the instructor can enhance learning, as can proper timing of the instruction.

Learning results from stimulation of the senses. In most people, one sense is used more than others to learn or recall information. Instructors should present materials in such a manner that it stimulates as many senses as possible in order to increase their chances of teaching success.

Adult learners have their own learning styles. Some are visual learners, some auditory learners and some are kinaesthetic learners. Instructors should try to reach as many of these learning styles with each lesson. To accomplish this, the instructor must use a variety of training methods. When conducting the training the instructor should consider the following for each style:

- Visual learner – Use printed materials, whiteboard or any other visual aid to support your points. Make sure all your demonstrations are accurate, easy to understand and follow and seen by all.
- Auditory learner – Use a variety of audio visual aids and ensure you provide good supporting narration. Try to incorporate discussion groups and audio presentations, speak clearly and use words that are clear and easy to understand and off the appropriate level for the group. When using technical terms or acronyms always clarify them.
- Kinaesthetic learner – Try to use practical exercises and role plays. Ensure you allow enough practise time; these learners learn by trial and error.

Try to reach the learning styles by using a variety of training methods and audio visual techniques. Encourage all participants to be involved in all exercises. Also keep the lesson concise and do not over use training aids. Do not make the lesson too busy, the saying "death by power point comes to mind".

There are four critical elements of learning that must be addressed to ensure that participants learn. These elements are:

1. Motivation
2. Reinforcement
3. Retention
4. Transference

Motivation. If the participant does not recognize the need for the information (or has been offended or intimidated), all of the instructor's effort to assist the participant to learn will be in vain. The instructor must establish rapport with participants and prepare them for learning; this provides motivation. Instructors can motivate students via several means:

- Set a feeling or tone for the lesson. Instructors should try to establish a friendly, open atmosphere that shows the participants they will help them learn.
- Set an appropriate level of concern. The level of tension must be adjusted to meet the level of importance of the objective. If the material has a high level of importance, a higher level of tension/stress should be established in the class. However, people learn best under low to moderate stress; if the stress is too high, it becomes a barrier to learning.
- Set an appropriate level of difficulty. The degree of difficulty should be set high enough to challenge participants but not so high that they become frustrated by information overload. The instruction should predict and reward participation, culminating in success.

Participants need specific knowledge about their learning results. Feedback must be specific, not general. Participants must also see a reward for learning. A reward can be simply a demonstration of benefits to be realized from learning the material. Finally, the participant must be interested in the subject. Adults must see the benefit of learning in order to motivate themselves to learn the subject.

Reinforcement. Reinforcement is a very necessary part of the teaching/learning process; through it, instructors encourage correct modes of behavior and performance.

- Positive reinforcement is normally used by instructors who are teaching participants new skills. As the name implies, positive reinforcement is "good" and reinforces "good" (or positive) behavior.
- Negative reinforcement is not normally used by instructors teaching a new skill or new information. It is useful in trying to change modes of behavior. The result of negative reinforcement is extinction -- that is, the instructor uses negative reinforcement until the "bad" behavior disappears, or it becomes extinct.

When instructors are trying to change behaviors (old practices), they should apply both positive and negative reinforcement.

Reinforcement should be part of the teaching-learning process to ensure correct behavior. Instructors need to use it on a frequent basis early in the process to help the students retain what they have learned. Then, they should use reinforcement only to maintain consistent, positive behavior.

Retention. Instructors should assist the learner in retaining the information. Participants must see a purpose for the information as well as understand and be able to interpret and apply it. This understanding includes their ability to assign the correct degree of importance to the material. If the participants did not learn the material well initially, they will not retain it well either.

Retention is directly affected by the amount of practice during the learning. Instructors should emphasize retention and application. After the students demonstrate correct (desired) performance, they should be urged to practice to maintain the desired performance. Distributed practice is similar in effect to intermittent reinforcement.
Research indicates that participants have an immediate retention of:
- 10% of what they read
- 20% of what they hear
- 30% of what they see
- 50% of what they see and hear
- 70% of what they say
- 90% of what they say and do

Transference. Transfer of learning is the result of training -- it is the ability to use the information taught in the course but in a new setting. As with reinforcement, there are two types of transfer: positive and negative.

- Positive transference, like positive reinforcement, occurs when the participants use the behavior taught in the course.
- Negative transference, again like negative reinforcement, occurs when the participants do not do what they are told not to do. This results in a positive (desired) outcome.

Transference is most likely to occur in the following situations:

- Association -- participants can associate the new information with something that they already know.
- Similarity -- the information is similar to material that participants already know; that is, it revisits a logical framework or pattern.
- Degree of original learning -- participant's degree of original learning was high.
- Critical attribute element -- the information learned contains elements that are extremely beneficial (critical) on the job.

Other factors the instructor should consider include the physical conditions to the learning situation. Adults will bring different physical conditions and challenges. To be prepared is essential and recognition of the physical conditions demonstrates professionalism and instils confidence in the instructor by the participants.

- Speeds of learning – Not all students learn at the same rate. Allow enough time to accommodate individual time frames for learning, however do not waste time dwelling on a subject. Get a good understanding of student's knowledge by asking questions and observing them. Try to keep the sessions at a pace aimed at the middle of the class. You can also provide a variety of resources, so that individuals may continue with their learning after the class session is over. Make sure ideas are mastered before covering new material; link new material to old.
- Physical – Try to avoid having students remain inactive for long periods of time. Try to allow adequate breaks; both in frequency and length. Make sure the environment is comfortable, in terms of; temperature, lighting, ventilation, sightlines, comfortable seating, adequate work space, etc. Variety, variety, variety.
- Visual acuity – Ensure the lighting levels are adequate. Make sure students can easiy see: each other, you and all training aids or audio visual presentations. Printing and diagrams should be neat, and large enough for good visibility. Make sure you do not teach to the training aid, try to face the students as much as possible, especially when speaking.
- Auditory acuity – Speak clearly, and at an appropriate speed. Check regularly for understanding. Avoid audio distractions, e.g. separate conversations, outside noises etc.
- Length of session – The more technical the topic, the shorter the session. e.g. 45 minutes maximum for new skills.

Focus on adult learning theory carries the potential for greater success and requires a greater responsibility on the part of the teacher. Learners come to the course with precisely defined expectations. If they can be shown that the course benefits them pragmatically, they will perform better, and the benefits will be longer lasting.

Preparing for the Training

Effective trainings take practice and planning. This section offers tips on preparation activities:

Personal Preparation

The best trainings are no accident – they are the result of trainers spending hours familiarizing themselves with the material. Here are some guidelines to help you assess if you know the material well enough to deliver a powerful training:

➢ **Take the time.** The standard preparation time is three hours for every hour of training. It seems like a lot, but it's worth it in the end.

➢ **Learn the material.** Know the material inside and out and make your own notes about the information so you can use power point presentations as a resource, not a crutch, and can answer questions correctly. Unless absolutely necessary, do not read while presenting!

HINT: *Going over the recommended readings for your module will improve your content knowledge and the chances you will be prepared to answer unexpected questions.*

➢ **Use your own words.** The training will be more interesting for participants, and you will be more confident if you know the salient points well enough to be able to express them with your own unique style.

➢ **Use your experiences to illustrate the point.** Personalizing information with your own anecdotes or other tactics will enhance the impact of the slides and handouts.

Establishing Confidence

As the graph below illustrates, much of what is communicated during training is through the demeanour of the trainer. Trainers confident in both their words and their body language will be more effective in persuading the participants to trust the material. This section covers two important ways to make sure you are a confident trainer:

- ➢ **Demonstrating Your Credibility**
- ➢ **Minimizing Your Stage Fright**

7% Words

55% Body Language   38% Voice
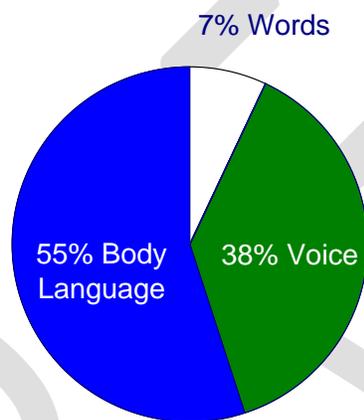
Demonstrating Your Credibility

There are seven common steps you can take to ensure the participants view you as a credible trainer. The steps are:

- ➢ Always be honest with the participants. If you don't know the answer to a question, don't make one up.

- ➢ Make your presentations balanced and as free from bias as possible.

- ➢ Make sure the audience knows you are knowledgeable about the subject.

- ➢ Raise questions about the information yourself.

- ➢ Support the information with your own facts and experiences.

- ➢ Cite authorities that are accepted by your audience.

- ➢ Invite questions from the audience.

Minimizing your Stage Fright

If you are afraid of public speaking, you are not alone. Public speaking can be very intimidating to someone not used to it. The following tips can help you overcome your stage fright.

> **Remember, you know the material.** Increase your confidence by reminding yourself that you are well prepared.

> **Release Tension.** One of the best ways to do this is take deep breaths. Breathe from your diaphragm and remember to exhale all the way. It also helps to exercise regularly, as unused energy my come out as anxiety.

> **Rehearse.** After you have mastered the material, practice the presentation until you feel confident. Before giving the presentation, visualize yourself succeeding. If you imagine success you are more likely to be successful.

> **Know the room and your equipment.** Finish testing your audio visual equipment and be completely set up by the time participants arrive.

> **Know the participants.** Talk to them as they arrive – it is easier to speak in front of people you are familiar with than a group of strangers.

> **Reassure Yourself.** The participants are not there to see you perform; they are there to learn the material. People are not scrutinizing you or waiting for you to make a mistake. Most likely, they want you to succeed because that means an interesting training session for them.

> **Re-frame.** Feeling nervous and feeling excited are very similar. Harness your nervous energy and turn it into enthusiasm.

> **Resist imitating another's style.** Be natural and relaxed. Only use others' techniques if you can do it without thinking. Concentrating on presenting like someone else takes your focus away from the material, which creates anxiety.

> ➤ **Practice in front of a video camera.** Replay and watch for "ums" and "ers" and other mannerisms that may annoy your students.

> ➤ **Know your first line and the transition to the main point.** Memorizing the introduction to the training can dissipate anxiety and help you begin with confidence.

> ➤ **Concentrate on the message, not yourself.** Try as hard as possible to turn your attention outward. Focus on what you are there to do: engage the participants in the material so they can learn.

> ➤ **Rest up and eat well.** Training requires a lot of energy, enthusiasm and focus. Being on your toes for several hours can be mentally and emotionally exhausting, so get plenty of rest and nutrition so that you are physically and psychologically alert.

Setting the Tone

Trainers have the opportunity to set the tone for the training. This section covers the following areas that will help you establish an open and honest learning environment:

> - **Greeting**
> - **Ice Breakers**
> - **Ground Rules**

Greeting

A person's first impressions of training can shape her or his whole experience. That is why it is important to finish setting up a few minutes early and be ready to greet participants as they enter the room.

- ✓ Introduce yourself
- ✓ Invite participants to help themselves to refreshments.
- ✓ Ask participants to create name tags
- ✓ Make sure they sign the participants' class list
- ✓ Clearly outline the objectives of the training session

Breaking the Ice

Ice breakers are short activities that get participants energized and feeling comfortable with each other. They also help set an enthusiastic tone for the training and can help ensure that participants are actively engaged. The following are tips to keep in mind as you decide what type of ice breaker to use:

- ▪ ***Know your audience.*** Before deciding which activities to use, consider physical abilities.

- ▪ ***Be very flexible.*** Make sure you are using an ice breaker that can be adapted to the group if needed.

- ▪ ***Participate enthusiastically.*** Only choose ice breakers you are willing to be part of. Sharing something about yourself helps establish your credibility as well.

HINT: *There are many examples of ice breakers you can use in your training that can be found through an internet search. The following link has good suggestions for ice breakers to use with adults:* http://www.eslflow.com/ICEBREAKERSreal.html

Everyone must participate. If a participant is uncomfortable with the ice breaker, decide on another way she or he can share something with the group. One idea is to ask the participant to complete the sentence, "If you really knew me, you would know that I…" This is a simple and safe way to introduce oneself. The only exceptions to the participation rule are latecomers. However, as soon as possible after people arrive late, take a moment and ask them to say their names and any other information you feel they need to share for everyone to feel comfortable and equal.

Ground Rules

Before beginning the training, set some ground rules. Ground rules establish the way participants interact with one another during the training. You can also use them to defuse or redirect difficult situations by stating, "Please rephrase your statement taking into consideration our ground rules." The ground rules do not need to be extensive. Some sample ground rules are:

- ✓ Cherish diversity.
- ✓ Keep an open mind.
- ✓ Everyone participates; give priority to those who have not spoken.
- ✓ Return from breaks on time.
- ✓ Silence means consent.
- ✓ Be open and honest.
- ✓ We are all experts and we are all learners.
- ✓ Listen and process what others are saying.
- ✓ No side conversations.
- ✓ It is okay to disagree – but do not be disagreeable.
- ✓ There are no right or wrong answers; all responses are valued.
- ✓ Respect one another.
- ✓ No cutting off other speakers.

You can either allow participants to come-up with their own ground rules or prepare a list of ground rules in advance, which usually takes less time. If you devise the ground rules in advance, make sure to ask participants if there is anything they would like to add. This allows participants to feel that their voices are heard. Either way, make sure that the ground rules are posted in the room throughout the training, in case you need to refer to them.

HINT: *There may be additional information about ground rules you need to consider for your session. Please remember to keep an eye out for information on specific ground rules as you review the training material.*

Facilitating Discussion
Leading vs Directing

Training that is interactive is more effective than lectures because the participants' involvement and experiences are actually a part of the learning process. Actively engaged participants are more likely to recall and use the information outside of the confines of the training. However, leading an active training session is hard and requires some facilitation skills. For this reason, the next four sections cover some key facilitation skills that you will need to effectively lead an active and productive training session

The key to facilitating effectively is to remember that your role is to lead the discussion, not direct it. As a leader, you should focus on drawing ideas out of the participants, rather than dominating with your ideas and experiences. The following are tips to help you remember to facilitate rather than direct:

➢ **Be respectful of the participants.** Demonstrate this respect by calling them by their names and listening actively.

➢ **Be enthusiastic about the topic and the training program.** Display your enthusiasm by leaning towards participants when they are speaking.

➢ **Ask and encourage questions and idea sharing.** Do not use destructive language, such as, "That's wrong" when responding.

➢ **Be clear and direct.** This means give examples and avoid the passive voice, such as, "Evacuee behaviour has been revealed by considerable research" instead of "Considerable research has revealed evacuee behaviour."

➢ **Keep your own contributions during group discussions brief.** Let participants respond to questions and to one another first. If they answer a question completely, you, the trainer, need not add additional information.

➢ **Use silence to give participants time to think about an answer or response to a question before you give them "the answers."** Count to ten. If you don't get any responses from the participants, rephrase the question and count to ten again. Then, prompt the group with an answer and ask for others.

> 💡 **HINT:** *Breaking into smaller groups for discussion is a good way to give quieter participants a chance to share their ideas and ask questions they might be too nervous to ask in front of the entire group.*

➢ **Encourage the participation of people who have been quiet.** One way to do this is to state the participant's name first and ask the participant an opinion question with no correct answer. You can avoid putting the participant on the spot by asking a question you know she or he can easily respond to.

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Facilitating Discussion
Stimulating Dialogue

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Discussions actively promote active learning. However, interesting discussions that engage the group rarely develop by chance. This section offers tips in the following areas to help stimulate interesting discussions:

▪ **Asking Questions**

▪ **Responding to Incorrect Answers**

▪ **Answering Questions**

Asking Questions

It is incumbent upon the trainers to pose stimulating and intriguing questions or topics for discussion. Below are some tips for asking questions that yield powerful responses.

▪ **Use open-ended questions that encourage answers beyond yes or no.**
  Closed question: Did you like the training?
  Open-ended question: What did you like about the training?

▪ **Ask honest and relevant questions**. Begin by engaging participants around what they know.

▪ **Use "think back" questions.** When trying to engage participants in a discussion about their experiences, ask them to remember their past instead of imagining a hypothetical situation.

▪ **Ask clear and concise questions.** Make sure your questions only cover one issue at a time.

▪ **Use unbiased questions.** Phrase questions in a way that does not betray your opinion and that does not guide the participants to answer one way or another.

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HINT: *If no one is responding to your questions, remember to try and ask it a different way. If that does not work, try prompting the group with an answer.*

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▪ **Avoid asking "why."** When asked why they think something or feel a certain way, people can become defensive for many reasons; they might not have an answer, they might not want to share their answer, or they might feel as though they do not need to justify what they believe. Instead of asking someone why they believe something, try asking them what experiences led them to that conclusion, to give examples, or other strategies that will help draw out more information.

Use the following four types of questions at the appropriate times:

Types of Questions	Purpose/Description	Example
Introductory	To begin talking about the training topic. It is usually a broad question that gets people thinking about the topic.	"How would you describe an effective ESS response?
Transition	To move the discussion on to the key questions.	"Think back to 'Introduction to ESS' and the discussion on selecting an appropriate facility. What is there about this set up that makes this facility so suitable?"
Key	To get detailed information on the central topic of the training.	"What needs to be done to improve the flow of evacuees through the centre?"
Ending	To bring discussion to a close and to summarize.	"This discussion covered the best use of available facilities." "Is there anything else anyone would like to add before we move on?" "Next we will talk about what each of us can do to support one another during a response."

Responding to Incorrect Answers

Do not shut down a person who gave an incorrect response. This may freeze the discussion, as others will not want to risk responding for fear of being shut down. To minimize the potential for embarrassment, acknowledge the effort and then redirect the question to the whole group. For instance, you might say, "Interesting. I can see how you might come up with that idea. Who else has an idea?"

Answering Questions

As a trainer, one of the most common questions you will ask is, "Does anyone have any questions?" If, in response, you are asked questions you think the group can answer, redirect them to the group to encourage active learning. If you are the only person who can answer the question, use the following tips:

- **You're asked a question that you can't answer.** Don't be defensive or fake it, just say you don't know or ask to get back to the person later.

- **You're asked an extensive question.** Break the question down into smaller parts and keep your answer as concise as possible without omitting key details.

- **You're asked a question you already answered.** Try again and if the questioner still doesn't understand, but the rest of the group looks bored, ask to talk about it in more detail after the training.

- **You're asked a question you think is stupid.** Remember, not everyone is as familiar with the material are you are. Be patient.

- **You're asked a controversial question.** This is good; it means people are thinking critically. Take your time in answering; don't be pressured into saying anything you don't mean.

- **You're asked a hostile question.** Stay calm. Rise above it by sticking to the issues.

HINT: *Sometimes you may need a few seconds to collect your thoughts before answering a question. Several strategies for taking this time while staying engaged with the participants include repeating the question back to the participant, asking for clarification, or asking the participant to repeat the question because you are not sure if you heard it completely.*

- **You're asked a question you don't want to answer.** Say so, and, when appropriate, offer to meet with the person later to discuss your response. If everyone wants you to respond, you should consider the reasons why and how it may be either useful or detrimental to the training.

- **You're asked a closed question.** A closed question is one for which you can answer with a simple "yes" or "no." Instead of giving a one word answer, try to add some detail to let the questioner know that you don't think the question is inconsequential.

| **Facilitating Discussion** |
| *Active Listening* |

Active listening skills are essential for effective discussion facilitation. Active listening builds understanding and consensus in a group, as active listening skills include not only listening to content and feelings, but also responding in a way that enhances mutual understanding. This section covers the following active listening skills:

- ✓ **Encouraging**
- ✓ **Paraphrasing**
- ✓ **Mirroring**
- ✓ **Clarifying**
- ✓ **Reflecting**
- ✓ **Summarizing & Tracking**
- ✓ **Validating**
- ✓ **Stacking**

Encouraging

Encouraging is how you create an open space for people to participate without putting any one individual on the spot. Encouraging is especially helpful during the early stages of the discussion, while participants are still warming up. As people become more engaged, they do not need as much encouragement to participate. However, at times, some participants will not feel engaged by the discussion. It is your responsibility as the facilitator to convey interest and help them discover what aspect of the discussion holds meaning for them. You can do this through encouragement. Once you have a participant speaking, you can also use encouragement to get them to keep talking. The following are some encouragement techniques:

How to encourage	Examples
Don't agree or disagree.	"Who else has an idea?"
Use neutral words.	"Is there a perspective on this issue from someone from a different community?"
Use varying voice intonations.	"Does anyone have a "personal story" you are willing to share relating to this issue?"
	"Is this discussion raising questions for anyone?"
	"What was said at the end of the room?"
	"Can you tell me more?"

Paraphrasing

Paraphrasing is a fundamental listening skill. Paraphrasing has a calming effect, as it relieves speakers of their anxiety that they are neither being listened to nor understood, and it reminds the speaker their her ideas are worth listening to. Additionally, it provides an opportunity for the speaker to hear how her ideas are being heard so she can ensure that they are being interpreted the way she intended. The following are techniques to keep in mind:

How to paraphrase	Examples
Use your own words to say what you think the speaker said.	Preface your paraphrase with a comment like: "It sounds to me that you are saying…" "This is what I am hearing you say…" "Let me see if I understand…"
If the speaker's statement is one or two sentences, use roughly the same number when you paraphrase.	When you have completed the paraphrase, prompt for the speaker's reaction with a statement like: "Did I get that right?"
If the speaker's statement is very long, summarize it.	If the speakers do not feel they were understood correctly, ask for clarification.

Mirroring

When using mirroring, the facilitator repeats what the speaker said verbatim, capturing their exact words. As most people do not need such precision in order to feel that they are truly being heard, paraphrasing is generally preferred. However, there are instances in which mirroring is useful. For instance, a facilitator uses mirroring at the beginning of a training session, as the group often benefits from its trust-building effects. Additionally, facilitators can mirror when they feel they need to establish neutrality. Finally, mirroring speeds up the tempo of a slow moving discussion.

Mirroring is not the same as mimicking. When you are repeating back the speaker's words, maintain a warm and accepting voice and use your own gestures regardless of the speaker's tone of voice and gestures.

Clarifying

Clarifying is a way of giving people the support they need to refine their ideas. It can be used to better understand what was said, to get more information, and to help the speaker see other points of view. It sends the speaker the message, "I am with you; I understand you so far. Now tell me a little more." Additionally, it lets the speaker know that their ideas are worth exploring and that the group will give the time needed to allow her to get their ideas all the way out. Clarifying is particularly useful in two circumstances: 1) when someone is having difficulty expressing an idea; 2) when someone thinks they are being clear, but the thought is actually vague or confusing to listeners. In order to decide whether or not an idea needs to be clarified, ask yourself, "Do I think I understand the core of what s/he is trying to say?" If the answer is "no," attempt to clarify. The following are techniques useful for clarifying ideas.

How to clarify	Examples
Paraphrase the speaker's statement and then ask a clarifying question.	The speaker says, "I think it is fair to say that most people would be uncomfortable with the change." The listener says, "So, you are saying most people would not like the change. Can you give me an example of what you mean?"
Restate a wrong interpretation to force the speaker to explain further.	Other clarifying questions include: "Can you say more about that?" "What do you mean by…?"
Use varying voice intonations.	Instead of asking a question, you can paraphrase the speaker, adding something like "Because…", "And…" or "So…" at the end of the sentence. "You are saying to wait, because…"

Reflecting

Reflecting is the act of telling a participant your interpretation of the basic feelings she expressed while speaking. A facilitator is using reflecting when saying to participants, "You seem upset," or "You sound very excited about all the possibilities." Reflecting allows you to show the participants that you understand how they feel. It also allows participants to evaluate their own feelings after hearing them expressed by someone else. Just as in mirroring, it is important to maintain a warm and accepting tone of voice rather than imitating the speaker.

Summarizing & Tracking

Summarizing is the work that facilitators do to review the progress of the discussion, pull together the important facts and ideas, and establish the basis for further discussion. Summarizing is not something to save until the end of the discussion. It should be used periodically throughout the discussion to ensure participants understand what is being discussed and the direction the discussion is moving. In order to summarize, facilitators restate the major ideas expressed, including feelings.

When several lines of thought exist simultaneously within the same discussion, facilitators use a summarizing technique known as tracking. The name tracking is very literal, as it means keeping track of the various lines of thought that are going on simultaneously. Tracking lets the group see that several elements of the topic are being discussed at once, and that all are treated as equally valid. Tracking relieves the anxiety felt by someone who wonders why the group is not responding to their ideas, as well as helps participants maintain clarity regarding what exactly is being discussed. The following are the steps for tracking.

How to track	Example
Tracking is a three-step process, the first and second of which are also useful for summarizing. First, the facilitator indicates that s/he is going to step back from the conversation and summarize it. Second, s/he names the different conversations that have been in play. Third, s/he checks with the group for accuracy.	"It sounds like there are three conversations going on right now. I want to make sure I am tracking them correctly. It sounds like one conversation is about roles and responsibilities. Another is about disabilities. And a third is about what you've learned by shadowing an experienced ESS worker. Am I getting it right?"

Validating

Validating is very simple and has a great impact. A facilitator is validating when acknowledging the worthiness of another person by saying something like, "I really appreciate your participation." This statement demonstrates that you value the participant's ideas, opinions, and feelings; as a result the participant is likely to remain engaged in the training.

Stacking

Stacking is a procedure for helping people take turns when several people want to speak at once. During a discussion, participants may become distracted as they compete for air time. Stacking lets participants know that they will have a turn to speak and frees-up the facilitator to listen instead of constantly trying to remember who has spoken and who is waiting to speak. Even though stacking is not considered an active listening technique, we have included it here because it helps both the facilitator and the participants maintain active listening.

How to stack	Example
First, ask those who want to speak to raise their hands.	(1) "Would all those who want to speak please raise your hands."
Second, create a speaking order by assigning a numbers.	(2) "Susan, you are first. Deb you're second and Bill, you're third."
Third, call on people when it is their turn.	(3) When Susan has finished, "Who was second? Was it you Deb? Go ahead."
Fourth, when the last person has spoken, the facilitator checks for additional speakers.	(4) After the last person has spoken, "Does anyone else have something to add?"

Facilitating Discussion
Difficult Situations

Regardless of your skill as a facilitator and the amount of preparation you put into the training, you will inevitably face some difficult situations. This section covers how to handle the following types of situations:

- **Discussion Dominators**
- **No Response**
- **Off-topic Discussions**
- **Side Conversations**
- **Skipping Ahead**
- **Interpersonal Conflicts**
- **Rambling Discussions**
- **Sensitive Topics**

Discussion Dominators

If someone is doing a lot of the talking it may prevent others from contributing their thoughts, which limits their active learning. Although it may seem intimidating, it can be very easy to reduce the amount of sharing coming from one participant.

> ✓ Wait for a pause in their speaking, such as when they take a breath, respectfully acknowledge the contribution, and thank them. You can say something like, "I really appreciate your comments."

> ✓ Then make direct eye contact with other participants and ask something like, "I'm very interested in hearing how other people are feeling about this issue" or "It's very interesting to get a variety of perspectives, and I would like to hear from other people as well."

No Response

Every facilitator has stood before a group that stares at them blankly after asking what was thought to be a very simple question. Even questions that stimulated the most interesting discussions with one group can fall completely flat with another. In this kind of situation, it is helpful to try to understand why participants are not responding.

- ***Did you ask a question that was difficult for the participants to understand?*** If so, rephrase or reword the question in a way that ensures that salient issues are explored.

- ***Do you think you might have asked a sensitive question*** *(i.e., something that people are afraid to answer honestly because it might make other people angry)?* Please see the last part of this section for ideas on how to handle sensitive topics.

- ***Are people tired of talking about the topic and/or do they have no more to say about a topic?*** In this case, it may be important to simply state, "Is there anything else that you would like to share? [pause] If not, we can move on." If you, as the facilitator, think you haven't gotten all of the information you want on that topic, rather than trying to force the issue, just be aware that there may be an opportunity to elicit salient information through probing that occurs with respect to other questions.

- ***Are participants bored of discussions and need more stimulating activities to get them thinking?*** Even though ESS training can be filled with engaging activities, it might not be enough. For instance, there may be times when you are conducting a training session after a particularly exhausting week for many of the participants and so they are dragging. Instead of trying to force the training as you planned it, transform the discussions themselves into activities.

> **HINT:** *The following website has a lot of good suggestions on how to turn discussions into activities:*
> *http://www.businesstrainingworks.com/Onsite%20Training%20Web/Free%20Articles/PDFs/Active%20Training%20and%20Teaching.pdf*

- ***Are people feeling uncomfortable about talking?*** This typically occurs at the beginning of a training session and is less likely to occur when the facilitator is able to set a comfortable tone and put people at ease in the beginning. If you sense that the group is not warmed-up enough, you can try another ice breaker or jump straight to an activity. If, however, this continues to be an issue during the training, talk about easier topics, things that you think participants may be more familiar with or comfortable talking about, or, perhaps, things that you know are particularly interesting to them. If no one responds to a question, and you aren't sure exactly what the problem is, it's okay sometimes to just wait it out. Be quiet for a moment and allow people time to think. Often, someone will speak up, either to answer the question or to ask a question that allows you to better understand the silence.

Off-topic Discussions

When the group begins to talk about issues not relevant to the training, you might take advantage of a pause and say, "Thank you for that interesting idea. Perhaps we can discuss it in a separate session. For the purposes of exploring further the specific topics that are the focus of this discussion, with your consent, I would like to move on."

Side Conversations

One of the best ways to handle a situation in which some people are having a private discussion is to address it before the training begins, when you set ground rules. Stress that it is *very* important not to have side conversations because it interferes with individual's full participation in the group discussion.

Do not stop the discussion abruptly. Unless a side conversation is so distracting it absolutely cannot be ignored, do not interrupt a speaker in order to ask others to quiet down; this may make speakers lose their train of thought and can disrupt the flow of the discussion. Instead, wait until the speaker has finished and respond to the person first. Then, you might respectfully remind people of the ground rules and ask that people finish their conversations and rejoin the larger group discussion.

> **HINT:** *This kind of disruption may also signal that it is time to take a break, and you may want to suggest no more than a five minute break. It will be important to make sure people know at what time the training will continue and be proactive about bringing people back together so that the training can continue.*

Skipping Ahead

When a participant skips ahead, providing information relevant to topics you have not yet covered, you can use probes to gently return the person to the topic at hand. You do not want to interrupt participants; rather, let them finish their thoughts and remain an active listener. Acknowledge what was said and that it was an interesting point and that you would love to hear more once the group gets to the topic. Once you get to that topic, acknowledge that relevant information has already been shared, paraphrasing what the participant said. Ask the participant if there is anything else to add on the topic and then ask the group for feedback on the point. Make sure that all group members have an opportunity to explore the issue more fully, if need be.

Interpersonal Conflict

If two or more people in the group begin arguing with each other in an unproductive manner, you must confront the situation before it spirals out of control. You can try to defuse the situation with

humour, or give the participants an easy way out of the argument by reframing what they are saying and moving on. If this does not work, direct the whole group to the ground rules. If one group member continues to target attacks at one person, ask that person specifically to respect the ground rules. If the conflict continues, address the problem directly, asking for any underlying reasons that might be fuelling the conflict. Finally, if that does not work, speak to the person or persons involved separate from the group.

> 💡 **HINT:** *Again, this kind of disruption may also signal that it is time to take a break. During the break, go and talk to the participants involved in the conflict and see if there is something you can do to calm them down and resolve the conflict before the break ends.*

Rambling Discussion

In order to get through the whole training, some discussions need to be curtailed, even when they are productive and interesting. When a discussion has gone on for too long, you can jump in when someone takes a breath and comment on the quality of the discussion, but add that it is time to move on. Summarize the key points and offer to resume the discussion later if there is time. (Congratulate yourself on successfully engaging the participants!)

Sensitive Topics

Introducing sensitive topics is one of the trickiest aspects of facilitation. The following tips can help you prepare the participants and maximize their sense of safety discussing the issue.

> 💡 **HINT:** *Assess your own biases for how they may make some participants uncomfortable with your facilitation of the topic. Are you assuming things? What is your tone like? Are you being culturally sensitive? How would you feel in the place of the participants?*

- ▪ ***Pilot test questions.*** If you know a particular question may bring up sensitive issues, check with others to see how they perceive it and if there is a better way to ask it.

- ▪ ***Address the issue from the beginning.*** Do not surprise participants with a sensitive topic and acknowledge that it may be harder to talk about the topic than ignore it. Letting people know that the training will delve into sensitive areas can help participants prepare. A good time to do this is while the group is setting ground rules - it is helpful to encourage participants to devise rules that will help them feel comfortable talking about sensitive issues.

- ▪ ***Pick an ice breaker that really encourages trust.*** Low physical activity ice breakers, like sharing the origin of one's name, can help keep the energy at a calm

and thoughtful level once the sensitive topic is broached. Additionally, it is helpful to pair positive and light ice breakers, such as, "What is one fun thing you did over the weekend?" with heavy discussions. Doing this ensures that the whole session is not emotionally difficult for the participants.

- ▪ ***Gradually build up to sensitive discussions.*** Do not attempt to engage the participants in a sensitive discussion with the first question. Groups need time to get to know each other and form trust.

- ▪ ***Be prepared to change plans.*** If participants are very upset or are simply not responding, you may have to change your plans. When participants are not responding try rephrasing the question or asking a slightly different question. You can also try moving to a different question or a less sensitive topic, and returning to the difficult issue later. Either approach may make it possible to pose a less controversial question to the group. You can use these techniques, as well as trying another ice breaker, when participants are upset.

- ▪ ***Use breaks to check in with people.*** It is helpful to break after addressing a sensitive topic, especially if some participants seemed upset during the discussion. It is very important to check in with all participants, but especially those who seem upset. Make sure to check in with these participants face to face, rather than ignoring them and their feelings.

- ▪ ***Be willing to share your own opinions and experiences when appropriate.*** If you struggle with something the group is struggling with, your comments might make them feel more comfortable sharing their thoughts. However, remember that the discussion should focus on participants' ideas, not yours.

Ending

It is important to provide closure in order to ensure participants leave feeling positive. This section covers two aspects of ending:

▪ **Debriefing**
▪ **Closing**

Debriefing

Debriefing after the training is essential to getting feedback from participants on the training. It is not only beneficial for the instructor, who can use the feedback to improve subsequent training, it is a good chance for participants to express their thoughts so that they feel their voices are truly heard. Some guidelines for successful debriefing include:

Make the objective clear. Make sure that they understand that debriefing is used for you to gain an understating of participants' reactions, suggestions and ideas for what went well and what did not, and how the training can be improved. They can comment on the clarity or flow of content at this point, but comments rehashing a participant's ideas regarding the topic should be redirected.

Keep the discussion focused. Ask for constructive feedback related to the current training only.

Encourage feedback. Tell participants how much you value their observations and ideas, thanking each person for any debriefing comments they contribute.

Debriefing should not be optional for participants. Make sure that you debrief within the time scheduled for the training so that participants do not leave before they have given you their feedback.

Closing

After debriefing, thank the group for their participation and say good bye. Instead of immediately collecting your materials and breaking-down the room, position yourself in a place where participants can access you. There may be participants who have questions or comments they did not want to share with the group, who want to thank you, or want to have personal contact with you for some reason. Validate their needs by being available, as this will send them off feeling personally connected to the training.

QUOTES

"I think, therefore I am (Cogito, ergo sum.)" - Descartes

"The art of teaching is the art of assisting discovery." - Mark Van Doren, poet

"It is by teaching that we teach ourselves, by relating that we observe, by affirming that we examine, by showing that we look, by writing that we think, by pumping that we draw water into the well." - Henri-Frederic Amiel (1821-81), Swiss philosopher, poet.

"Learning without thought is labor lost. Thought without learning is intellectual death." - Confucius

"I have never let my schooling interfere with my education." - Mark Twain

"What I hear, I forget.
What I see, I remember.
What I do, I understand."
- Confucius

"When you know something, say what you know. When you don't know something, say that you don't know. That is knowledge." - Confucius

"To know yet to think that one does not know is best;
Not to know yet to think that one knows will lead to difficulty."
- Lao Tzu

"Wisdom lies neither in fixity nor in change, but in the dialectic between the two." - Octavio Paz

"The road to wisdom?-Well, it's plain and simple to express:
Err
and err
and err again
but less
and less
and less."
- Piet Hein, Danish inventor and poet

"Education is what survives when what has been learned has been forgotten." - B. F. Skinner

"Training is everything. The peach was once a bitter almond; cauliflower is nothing but cabbage with a college education." - Mark Twain

"Retention is best when the learner is involved." - Edward Scannell, University Conference Bureau, Arizona

"I never teach my pupils; I only attempt to provide the conditions in which they can learn." - Albert Einstein

"It's all to do with the training: you can do a lot if you're properly trained."
- Elizabeth II, Queen of Great Britain

"The only kind of learning which significantly influences behavior is self-discovered or self-appropriated learning - truth that has been assimilated in experience." - Carl Rogers

"You cannot teach a man anything. You can only help him discover it within himself." - Galileo Galilei

"The only real mistake is the one from which we learn nothing." - John Powell

"Knowing is not enough; we must apply.
Willing is not enough we must do." - Goethe

"Live as if you were to die tomorrow. Learn as if you were to live forever." - Gandhi

"I cannot teach anybody anything, I can only make them think." - Socrates

"The teacher if he is indeed wise does not teach bid you to enter the house of wisdom but leads you to the threshold of your own mind." - Kahlil Gilbran, poet and painter

"The real voyage of discovery consists not in seeking new lands, but in seeing with new eyes." - Marcel Proust, French novelist

"The mediocre teacher tells. The good teacher explains. The superior teacher demonstrates. The great teacher inspires." - William Arthur Ward