Permagarden

Adult Education Training Resources

FROM THE AMERICAN PEOPLE

Promoting excellence in food security programming

The Technical and Operational Performance Support (TOPS) Program is the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) Office of Food for Peace-funded learning mechanism that generates, captures, disseminates, and applies the highest-quality information, knowledge, and promising practices in development food assistance programming, to ensure that more communities and households benefit from the U.S. Government's investment in fighting global hunger. Through technical capacity building; a small grants program to fund research, documentation, and innovation; and an in-person and online community of practice (the Food Security and Nutrition [FSN] Network), The TOPS Program empowers food security implementers and the donor community to make lasting impact for millions of the world's most vulnerable people.

Led by Save the Children, The TOPS Program is a consortium program drawing on the expertise of its partners: CORE Group (knowledge management), Food for the Hungry (social and behavioral change), Mercy Corps (agriculture and natural resource management), and TANGO International (monitoring and evaluation). Save the Children brings its experience and expertise in commodity management, gender, and nutrition and food technology, as well as the management of this 5-year (2010–2015), US$20 million award.

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Contents

Introduction

The training in permagarden

The *Permagarden 6-Day Training of Trainers Guidelines* provide guidance to staff and extension agents on delivering the 3-day training in permagarden for farmers with a participatory approach. The trainers must complete the 6-day training of trainers (ToT) in permagarden before delivering the 3-day training in permagarden.

Both trainings have been designed respecting the adult learning principles and rules and should be led using a participatory approach, as described in this document. Therefore, this document is a resource for trainers on adult learning and participatory training. It provides methods and tools to adjust adequately the training session plans.

Participatory training

Group work forms an important part of the participatory process of this type of training/ToT. Groups should contain between five to six members if possible, giving a total of four or five groups. Unless otherwise indicated in the Guidelines, the group membership should be changed at least every day, and groups should be encouraged to rotate the roles they are assigned.

In large group or plenary, question and answer should be used as much as possible, both to promote participation, and also to help localize and contextualize the material, especially in order to contextualize the training. Encouraging participants to give examples and experiences from their own work and region/area is therefore important to help to root the training in the local context. Inviting a local expert to make a short presentation can also help to contextualize the training.

A list of energizers and ice breakers that can be used between or during sessions to increase energy levels or provide light relief between topics is provided in this guide. It also includes suggestions for participatory recap and daily evaluation sessions.

At the end of each Training/ToT an evaluation should be carried out.

Additional guidance on planning and running a training course, including preparation checklists, can be found in the Sphere Trainer's Guide available for free from the Sphere website: www.sphereproject.org

The remainder of this document provides supplementary reference material to accompany the Adult Learning Sessions of the ToT.

Learning styles

Honey and Mumford (1992) described four main types of individuals, and their preferred ways of learning. The four learning styles are listed below and described in turn.

- Activists
- Reflectors
- Theorists
- Pragmatists

Activists

Activists like to be involved in new experiences. They are open minded and enthusiastic about new ideas but get bored with implementation. They enjoy doing things and tend to act first and consider the implications afterwards. Activists like working with others but tend to hog the limelight.

Activists learn best when:

- involved in new experiences, problems and opportunities
- working with others in games, team tasks and role-playing
- being thrown in the deep end with a difficult task
- chairing meetings and leading discussions.

Activists learn less when:

- listening to lectures or long explanations
- reading, writing or thinking on their own
- absorbing and understanding data
- following precise instruction to the letter.

Reflectors

Reflectors like to stand back and look at a situation from different perspectives. They like to collect information and think about it carefully before coming to any conclusions. Reflectors enjoy observing others and will listen to their views before offering their own.

Reflectors learn best when:

- observing individuals or groups doing something acting as leader or role-playing in front of others
- they have the opportunity to review what has happened and thing about what they have learned doing things with no time to prepare
- producing analyses and reports doing tasks without tight deadlines being thrown in at the deep end.

Reflectors learn less when:

- acting as leader or role-playing in front of others
- doing things with no time to prepare
- being thrown in at the deep end
- being rushed or worried by deadlines.

Theorists

Theorists adapt and integrate observations into complex and logically sound theories. They think problems through in a step-by-step way. They tend to be perfectionists who like to fit things into a rational scheme. Theorists tend to be detached and analytical rather than subjective or emotive in their thinking.

Theorists learn best when

- they are put in complex situations where they have to use their skills and knowledge
- they are in structured situations with clear purpose
- they are offered interesting ideas or concepts even though they are not immediately relevant
- they have the chance to question and probe ideas behind things.

Theorists learn less when

- they have to participate in situations which emphasise emotion and feelings
- the activity is unstructured or briefing is poor
- they have to do things without knowing the principles or concepts involved
- they feel they are out of tune with the other participants, e.g. with people of very different learning styles.

Pragmatists

Pragmatists are keen to try things out. They want concepts that can be applied to their job. They tend to be impatient with lengthy discussions and are practical and down to earth.

Pragmatists learn best when:

- there is an obvious link between the training topic and their work
- they have the chance to try out techniques with feedback, e.g. role-playing
- they are shown techniques with obvious advantages, e.g. saving time or money
- they have a role-model or credible expert.

Pragmatists learn less when:

- there is no obvious or immediate benefit that they can recognise
- there is no practice or guidelines on how to do it
- there is no apparent pay back to the learning, e.g. no time or money saved
- the event or learning is 'all theory'.

Most of us have elements of more than one learning style. Knowing which are your strongest and weakest styles will help you identify how you best learn. As a trainer, having an appreciation of the different styles will help you to design stimulating and effective training sessions.

Your learning style can affect your training style

As a trainer, be aware of how your own learning style may affect your choice of activity. Aim to appeal to all learning styles and pick a range of methods, not just those that you might naturally favor.

If you are an Activist you may be more likely to favor:

- a wide range of different activities
- brainstorming
- experiential activities
- games and role-playing
- group tasks
- icebreakers and energizers
- problem-solving activities
- unstructured "play-it-by-ear" activities.

If you are a Theorist you may be more likely to favor:

- analysis of information
- handouts with detailed background information
- presentation of theories, models, concepts, systems
- question and answer sessions
- relating the training activity to the relevant theory/model
- structured situations.

If you are a Reflector you may be more likely to favor:

- activities building on pre-course work
- exchange of information
- observing or using observers
- presenting research and analysis
- reviewing group activities to learn lessons
- showing videos and DVDs
- structured group discussions
- using video to record activities or role-plays.

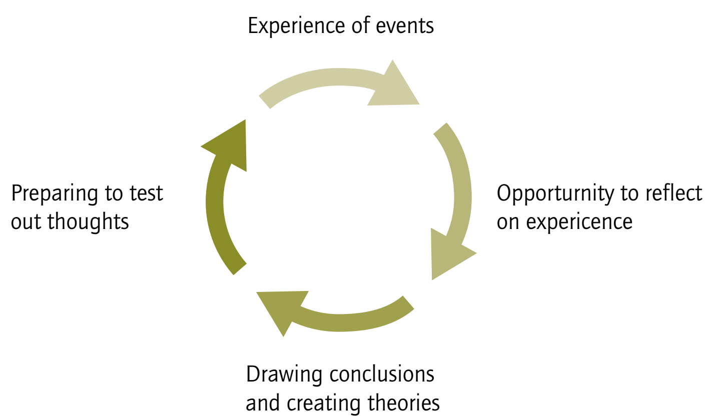
If you are a Pragmatist you may be more likely to favor:

- activities that have quantifiable end-result
- anything with an immediate, practical application
- case studies closely linked to people's experience
- demonstrations
- practical exercises that give participants the opportunity to try things out
- simulations of "real" situations.

Adult learning principles

Learning from experience – Kolb's learning cycle

As adults, we tend to learn from experience. And how we perceive and learn new things is influenced by previous experiences, education, background and culture. We like to have some control over what we learn and to be able to apply it to real situation. David Kolb's famous model of experiential learning (1975) is shown below.



By experience we mean learning from our own personal involvement with the structured event or incident as opposed to being told by the trainer what should be learned from it.

The cycle of learning above involves four discrete sequential steps:

Concrete experience All learning commences with some experience of an event, incident, or occurrence. This may be naturally occurring, as with most life experiences, or artificially induced, as for instance, when the trainer introduces a role play into a course.

Observation and reflection Awareness-raising and personal learning start to occur when people have opportunities to reflect and think about the experiences they have gained. This can be assisted if the facilitator provides helpful structures for reflection.

Abstract conceptualisation Reflection leads to a sorting and understanding of earlier experiences from which the person can draw conclusions and generalisations. These help to order the experiences and provide a framework in which to learn about them.

Active experimentation Using this framework, new experiences can be planned which test out the conclusion, either to confirm the learning already achieved or to generate more evidence. Such testing out leads to more experiences in the real world which in turn set the cycle in motion again.

Core adult learning principles

- **Learners need to know**
  Why, what, how
- **Self-concept of the learner**
  Autonomous, self-directing
- **Prior experience of the learner**
  Life related, developmental task
- **Orientation to learning**
  Problem centred, contextual
- **Motivation to learn**
  Intrinsic value, personal payoff

Some characteristics of adult learners

- Adults need to know why they are learning something.
- Adults are motivated when learning contributes to their quality of life, and self esteem.
- Adults have greater knowledge and wider experience than younger learners.
- Adults like to be able to evaluate, challenge and question.
- Adults need to integrate new ideas with “old” ones if they are going to keep and use the new information.
- Adults can find it more difficult to relate to, remember and recall if what they are learning is totally new.
- Adults consider themselves independent.
- Adults are concerned with immediate problems.
- Adults enter learning situations with their own goals, motivations and needs.
- Adults learn better by doing something rather than just reading or discussing.
- Adults like clear “hands-on” instructions.
- Adults prefer training programmes that deal with a single topic and focus on applying it to problems.

Adults learn better when...

- they are involved
- the goals and objectives are realistic and important to them
- materials are structured to meet their needs
- the subject matter is connected to their daily activities
- learning is experience-based and results from doing and exploring something
- learning is in informal but organized environments
- materials are presented through a variety of methods with practical examples
- subjects are explained and supported visually
- activities and tasks are structured and clearly related to specific subjects
- problem-solving
- real, simulated or case study experiences are used
- there are opportunities to apply and practise what they have learnt
- structured, helpful feedback is given
- learning situations are co-operative and in groups
- not pressured, tested or judged
- there is time for reflection and short breaks between topics.

Selected training methods

The following list of training methods with brief descriptions does not pretend to be comprehensive – but provides additional information to support the module sessions. The methods listed below are predominantly the ones outlined in the session plans.

Brainstorming

Description

This is a useful technique for generating creative ideas, information and hopes and fears by encouraging participants' contributions in response to an idea, question or supposition. The results of brainstorms can be used in a variety of ways, ranging from ice breakers, idea creation, finding solutions, to assessing people's existing levels of attitudes, skills and knowledge.

It is important to clarify the use of the brainstorm for participants, so they know what to expect and can see the purpose of the exercise. The role of the trainer is that of facilitator, framing the exercise but only contributing ideas to spark the group.

All brainstorms should have a purpose, even if it is only a way of introducing a topic. Ideally brainstorms should be followed by an exercise that uses the information gathered in the brainstorm.

Considerations

- Define the topic/problem/issue as a statement or question.
- Clarify whether it is a controlled brainstorm (you will censor contributions depending on their appropriateness) or uncontrolled (you will take any idea no matter how wild).
- Give people time to think (and write if necessary) on their own, or in a pair or group.
- Summarise ideas/sentences into one word equivalents, check that any changes are approved by the person offering the contribution.
- Use the results from the brainstorm as a basis for any ensuing activity so participants understand the point of doing the brainstorm.

Tips!

- Set clear parameters before doing the exercise (controlled vs. uncontrolled)
- When doing an uncontrolled brainstorm do not to evaluate input as it is given.

Structured discussions

Description

Discussions are designed to initiate and focus debates or to emphasise key learning points. They can be conducted either in plenary or small groups, and should allow participants time to relate learning points to practise or vice versa.

Discussions in plenary need to be managed by the facilitator. However where discussions take place in small groups a facilitator should also be nominated to chair the discussion and ensure that tangents are not pursued too vigorously!

Structured discussions in small or plenary groups can be used to develop understanding. It is a useful technique for finding out how a group is responding to a contentious subject, or for covering all the angles on a particular topic. Discussions can be set up in different ways to achieve different aims, encouraging less talkative members of a group to talk, providing a competitive edge, targeting particular issues of a topic etc.

The facilitator generally initiates the discussions by asking pre-determined questions and only influences or controls the discussion to summarise points or if there is a need, such as a misunderstanding, rambling or irrelevant chit chat!

Some discussion regulator tools:

- A pre-arranged system whereby people indicate that they want to speak, and wait their turn to be asked.
- 'The conch system', whereby only the person holding the 'conch' (stick, ball etc.) can speak. They then pass the 'conch' to the next person to speak.
- Taking turns to speak in order, (e.g. round the circle, numbering etc.).
- Using cards with topic headings to discuss more than one aspect of a subject.

Considerations

- Do not be afraid to stop a discussion that is not productive or run with a discussion that occurs spontaneously.
- Formulate the discussion questions before the session as they are not easy to formulate on the spot!
- Discussions are a flexible facilitation tool and can occur at any time in a session.
- Discussions are an excellent way of stimulating interest and participation, gauging the feelings in the group and relating learning to practise.
- Discussions can provide instant feedback for the trainer.
- Discussions utilise the diversity in a group and can be challenging and thought provoking for individuals.

Tips!

- Regularly summarise and draw out the key discussion points.
- Be tough on people dominating the discussion.

Questions and answers

Description

Facilitators can use questions in a planned way to elicit information, encourage thinking processes and to assess levels of knowledge and understanding. It can be a direct and immediate way of clarifying, gaining factual information, allowing participants to share their experience or knowledge and it is an excellent way of starting discussions.

Although facilitators are often the one asking questions, and handling answers this should not always be the case. It can also be useful to throw questions from participants back to the group, and give the control to the group.

Considerations

There are a range of types of questions listed below that should be used needed: .

- **Open questions** allow learners flexibility in their answers and thus give the trainer a clearer idea whether a learner has understood a topic. These questions are often prefaced by who, what, why, how and when?
- **Closed questions** provide yes, no short answers. These are useful if you need facts i.e. is this an aim? However they are not generally useful for checking more complex understanding or learning i.e. Do you understand?
- **Reflective questions** to make people reflect on what is being said, through recapping or other.
- **Pick-up questions** to return to a previous point/discussion. These can be useful at quiet moments, or to encourage participants to make links between subjects.
- **Direct questions** these are normally directed at one individual with the purpose of inviting them to join in or wake up! Obviously these questions can be intimidating, although this may be the effect you desire, they can, however, also give someone the chance to shine when a trainer knows they will be able to answer.

Questions provide a direct and immediate way of clarifying and gaining factual information. When pre-planned, questions can be used to test understanding and levels of learning.

Tips!

Think of some key questions that will help you assess participants' understanding of the learning points before starting a training session.

Tips for selecting training techniques and methods

Appropriateness of the content Choose an activity that is applicable to the audience. Your objective is to involve all participants and not to exclude any one because they do not understand jargon or situations.

Relevance to the topic Ensure that the activity can be tied to the topic you are training. If the subject is not perceived as being relevant to the training it will be dismissed and the tone you have set will impede learning.

Relevance to the group The material must be relevant to the participants' capabilities. You should consider: knowledge, position or level, culture and language expertise.

Expectations of the trainees It may be hard to establish trainees' expectations prior to the training session, but the more you know about the intended audience the better you can select appropriate activities.

Familiarity of trainees It is useful to know where the trainees in the group are acquainted with each other before the training session. If they have not met before early activities should be selected in order for them to get to know one another.

Previous exposure to activities Participants who are 'expert trainees', that is they have attended several training sessions, may have seen most activities. You need to be aware of their experience to avoid them being 'blasé'. Some activities for example, case studies and role-plays can be used over and over; whereas specific games or activities for a particular outcome should not be repeated.

Confidence levels of trainees Many participants lack confidence initially in training programmes. They do not want to embarrass themselves. They need time to build confidence and trust with colleagues and trainer.

Willingness to participate The trainees' willingness to participate is often tied to their level of confidence. People are more likely to participate in a relaxed non-threatening environment. But you should also be aware of why trainees are attending training. If they have been forced to by managers and they are unwilling attendees, this will obviously influence their willingness to participate.

Ability to complete Activities must be able to be completed during the time available. It is very frustrating to get involved in an experiential situation and then be told you have run out of time to complete the situation. In order to be fully prepared to run an activity, trainers should 'dry-run' the activity with colleagues to have an accurate feeling for time and possible outcomes.

Ability to solve Activities, especially case studies and role-plays must be able to be resolved by the trainees. If they are presented with problems which they are unable to resolve either individually or collectively then you will set them up to feel frustrated and the learning experience will be a negative one.

Briefed All activities must be presented with clear, precise instructions. For activities which involve participants adopting a 'role, such as role-plays, scenarios, games, the roles to be played must be clearly explained.

Debriefed For all methods of active or group learning the activity must be comprehensively debriefed for maximum learning. Often the activity must be debriefed on several different levels, personal, immediate, applied to the real work situation. The handouts on Debriefing provide more specific hints.

Working with groups, pairs and individuals

Individual work

This method can be used independently or in combination with any of the methods explained below. Individual work is when participants work on their own, typically on short questions or self-tests which demand personal responses or reflection. The methods allows for:

- Individual input encouraging everyone to participate.
- Individual time for quiet reflection.
- Feelings or behavior which they don't wish to reveal to others but which they do want to remember for themselves.

Round-the-table

The benefits of round-the-table input and discussion are that it:

- Takes less time than group work.
- Allows participants to contribute personal examples.
- Ensures wider sharing of experiences.
- Allows the facilitator to control the process and therefore the time.

How to do round-the-table

- Ask for responses around the table starting at one end and moving to the other in progression.
- Ask for volunteers to respond.
- Make it clear when the topic is sensitive that it is up to them to choose the issues that they want to disclose.
- Acknowledge everyone's contribution, either by the raising of hands or a simple nodding of agreement. Sometimes when common responses are anticipated or occur, it may not be necessary to get a response from everyone. However, it is important to acknowledge responses. People will soon lose interest in activities if they feel their efforts are going unrecognised or un-rewarded.

Pair work

Participants work with their immediate partner, working logically from one side of the table. (A group of 3 may be necessary depending on numbers).

Benefits of pair work:

- People feel less vulnerable discussing in pairs than in plenary session.
- It helps to build up trust and understanding before organising group work.
- Helps individuals to gain confidence.

How to do pair work

- Ask people to "talk to their neighbour" or group participants in two's or three's.
- Invite the groups to share their ideas, views and opinions on a specific topic.
- Circulate around the groups.

Snowballing

Snowballing is simply a term that means that the discussion gets bigger as you involve more people (in the same way as a snowball gets bigger when it is rolled in snow). The benefits of using the snowballing technique are that it:

- demands everyone's participation
- allows everyone to contribute
- generates ideas because of the sharing of ideas in the paired and/ group discussion
- it focuses responses because of the peer monitoring.

How to do snowballing

- Pose a question and allow participants to consider the question individually.
- Have participants discuss the same question and their individual responses with a partner.
- Ask pairs to join and consolidate and present their responses as a group.
- You may or may not need a plenary discussion to allow for a full group summary.
- Give very clear instructions about what is expected as outcome.
- Give very clear time limits and stick to them.

Buzz groups

Buzz groups differ from syndicate group work in that they meet for a short time, about 5 minutes. The entire group is divided into small groups of 3 or 4 people who talk quickly about a topic. There is then a buzz of discussion around the room. If you plan to use buzz groups frequently, arrange the seating so that it facilitates this.

Benefits of buzz groups are:

- Results are quick.
- Short discussion on a topic energizes people.
- They can be used spontaneously.

How to conduct buzz groups

- Plan carefully the exact question or topic you want them to discuss.
- Give precise details of what you expect from their discussion.
- Limit responses to no more than 3.
- Stick to time limits.
- Get responses from all groups.

Small groups

Experienced participants can often be allowed to form their own work groups. However, guard against homogeneous groups where more mixed groups are desirable. Simply 'count off' the participants into small groups, i.e. 1, 2, 3, (or 4 if 4 groups will be required.) if the groups do not need to be balanced in any way.

Considerations for small group work

- Number the groups and allocate them a working space. This may be in the same room, but in the case of lengthier, more complex tasks it is advisable to have groups work in separate rooms if they are available.
- In general it is preferable to re-assign groups to allow participants to work with different people, especially in a 3 to 5 day workshop; although, you will want to keep the same group working through several related tasks.
- The optimum number for group work is 5 or 6. The minimum is 4 (3's can work if you have no alternative, but people feel more exposed and less of "a group.")
- The maximum is probably 8. Beyond 8, it becomes difficult for everyone to contribute effectively and timing becomes a problem.
- When language is an issue, more time may have to be allowed for tasks and the ensuing discussions to be translated - often into and from more than one language.
- Even where this is the case, it is important to allow and encourage everyone to contribute. Encourage everyone to contribute to the discussions.
- Insist that everyone takes on the roles of reporter and presenter. It is important for you to enforce this at the beginning as some groups will appoint the most outspoken person or most skilled in the working language as the presenter and this can result in only their opinion being expressed.
- Control the dominance of one group over another.

Practical considerations

Most group work involves presentations using flipcharts to present the key points. Flipchart paper as well as large felt-tip marker pens must be available to all work groups. Flipcharts must be available in the main training room for the work-group presentations as well as short presentations by the facilitator or invited speakers. It can be useful to display the results of group work presentations as they allow participants to view them at a later time and also allow the facilitator to tie in points throughout the seminar. Use masking tape or 'blue tack'. The quality of a presentation can be improved by its readability. Instruct groups to produce large legible text. Perhaps the best way of doing this is by creating a flipchart with some basic hints.

How to do group work

- Give clear instructions about the makeup of the groups.
- Clearly allocate groups a work space and materials.
- Give clear instructions to the group about the task.
- Prepare a handout if different groups will work on different tasks.
- Use a flip-chart or board if the groups work on the same task.
- Include clear instructions about recording and reporting.
- Insist that all participants are responsible for each role at some time.
- Set clear time limits.
- Assign a time keeper.
- Give instructions about the readability of the flipcharts.

Tuckman's 5 stages of group development

You can't expect a new team to perform well when it first comes together

Forming a team takes time, and members often go through recognizable stages as they change from being a collection of strangers to a united group with common goals. Bruce Tuckman's Forming, Storming, Norming, and Performing model describes these stages. When you understand it, you can help your new team become effective more quickly.

Stage 1 Forming

In the Forming stage, personal relations are characterized by dependence. Group members rely on safe, patterned behavior and look to the group leader for guidance and direction. Group members have a desire for acceptance by the group and a need to know that the group is safe. They set about gathering impressions and data about the similarities and differences among them and forming preferences for future sub-grouping. Rules of behavior seem to be to keep things simple and to avoid controversy. Serious topics and feelings are avoided.

Stage 2 Storming

The next stage, which Tuckman calls Storming, is characterised by competition and conflict in the personal-relations dimension and organization in the task-functions dimension. As the group members attempt to organize for the task, conflict inevitably results in their personal relations. Individuals have to bend and mould their feelings, ideas, attitudes, and beliefs to suit the group organization. Because of "fear of exposure" or "fear of failure," there will be an increased desire for structural clarification and commitment. Although conflicts may or may not surface as group issues, they do exist. Questions will arise about who is going to be responsible for what, what the rules are, what the reward system is, and what criteria for evaluation are. These reflect conflicts over leadership, structure, power, and authority. There may be wide swings in members' behavior based on emerging issues of competition and hostilities. Because of the discomfort generated during this stage, some members may remain completely silent while others attempt to dominate.

In order to progress to the next stage, group members must move from a "testing and proving" mentality to a problem-solving mentality. The most important trait in helping groups to move on to the next stage seems to be the ability to listen.

Stage 3 Norming

In Tuckman's Norming stage, interpersonal relations are characterized by cohesion. Group members are engaged in active acknowledgment of all members' contributions, community building and maintenance, and solving of group issues. Members are willing to change their preconceived ideas or opinions on the basis of facts presented by other members, and they actively ask questions of one another. Leadership is shared, and cliques dissolve. When members begin to know-and identify with-one another, the level of trust in their personal relations contributes to the development of group cohesion. It is during this stage of development (assuming the group gets this far) that people begin to experience a sense of group belonging and a feeling of relief as a result of resolving interpersonal conflicts.

The major task function of stage three is the data flow between group members: They share feelings and ideas, solicit and give feedback to one another, and explore actions related to the task. Creativity is high. If this stage of data flow and cohesion is attained by the group members, their interactions are characterized by openness and sharing of information on both a personal and task level. They feel good about being part of an effective group.

The major drawback of the Norming stage is that members may begin to fear the inevitable future break-up of the group; they may resist change of any sort.

Stage 4 Performing

The Performing stage is not reached by all groups. If group members are able to evolve to stage four, their capacity, range, and depth of personal relations expand to true interdependence. In this stage, people can work independently, in subgroups, or as a total unit with equal facility. Their roles and authorities dynamically adjust to the changing needs of the group and individuals. Stage four is marked by interdependence in personal relations and problem solving in the realm of task functions. By now, the group should be most productive. Individual members have become self-assuring, and the need for group approval is past. Members are both highly task oriented and highly people oriented. There is unity: group identity is complete, group morale is high, and group loyalty is intense. The task function becomes genuine problem solving, leading toward optimal solutions and optimum group development. There is support for experimentation in solving problems and an emphasis on achievement. The overall goal is productivity through problem solving and work.

Stage 5 Adjourning

Tuckman's final stage, Adjourning, involves the termination of task behaviors and disengagement from relationships. A planned conclusion usually includes recognition for participation and achievement and an opportunity for members to say personal goodbyes. Concluding a group can create some apprehension - in effect, a minor crisis. The termination of the group is a regressive movement from giving up control to giving up inclusion in the group. The most effective interventions in this stage are those that facilitate task termination and the disengagement process.

Adapted from:

Tuckman, B. (1965) *Developmental Sequence in Small Groups.* Psychological Bulletin, 63, 384-399.

Tuckman, B. & Jensen, M. (1977) *Stages of Small Group Development*. Group and Organisational Studies, 2, 419-427.

Introduction from Elizabeth Eyre and the Mind Tools Team. Text developed by Centre for Service and Leadership.

Dealing with difficulties

General rules

Following are some general rules that you may find useful when confronted with challenging behavior in a workshop. It is important to de-link behavior from the person; they are often behaving in a difficult way because of a specific reason such as anxiety or a misunderstanding.

- **Anticipate** From the moment you start the workshop observe and listen to participants to anticipate potential troublesome behavior.
- **Let the group manage the individual** Often it is not necessary for a facilitator to intervene as the group will also be annoyed and manage the individual themselves.
- **Work the break** It is important to make contact with participants in the breaks. It also makes you more accessible to people, they bring up issues with you personally rather than in plenary.
- **Encourage humour** It is a wonderful way of diffusing anger, and makes for a more informal, safer learning environment.
- **Depersonalise the role of the facilitator** It is easy to take negative comments personally, remember you are performing a role; negative comments are normally about an issue – not you.
- **Simple design** Keep the design of your workshop simple, people do not like to feel they are constantly being asked to 'jump through hoops', they need to understand why they are doing things and what the outcome will be.
- **Drop the plan** If you need to, be prepared to change tack completely if you see the needs of the group are not being met.
- **Allow complaining** Then draw a line. Once people have had sufficient opportunity to air grievances or doubts move the group on to look at positive solutions and don't allow people to slip back into the complaining stage.
- **Introduce ground rules** These can be useful for bringing people to order.
- Understand that there is often a good reason why someone is behaving in a difficult way; make it your business to find out why.
- **Maintain the learning environment** Ensure that timing is observed, the room is kept clear and tidy, lighting is as good as possible, people have regular breaks and energizers where required.
- **Introduce a device for dealing with difficult issue** Such as a 'parking lot' or a session specifically to answer concerns and questions.
- **Trust the group** They will often manage the problem very effectively. Remember most people are reasonable!

Challenging behavior

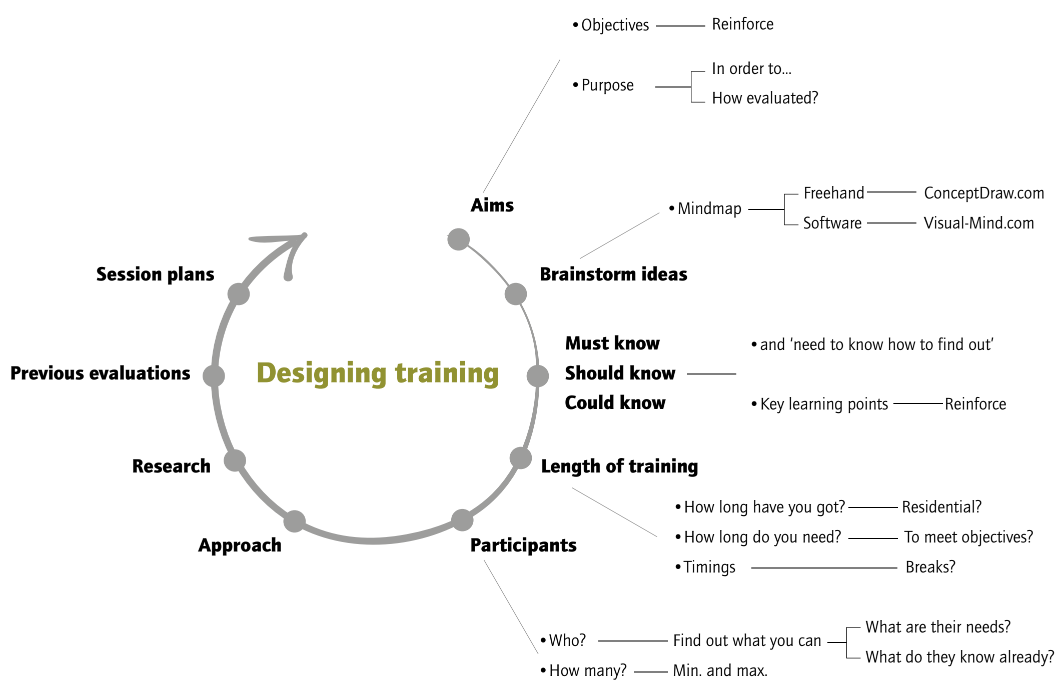
Below are some 'types' of behavior and suggested strategies for the facilitator to deal with them. It is important when an individual is challenging you to understand how the behavior makes you feel, as this will make you better equipped to handle the situation.

Designing and planning training

When designing training, start with your aim and objectives. Keep referring back to these to make sure that the training you are designing will achieve these.

Next, brainstorm ideas. Put down everything you could include in the training and the different ways in which you could go about it. Be guided by your objectives but allow for creativity; you can rule things out later. You could use a mind map like the one above.

When you have a list of potential topics, work out from these what it is the trainees must know, should know and could know. There may also be things that they don't need to know, but need to know where to go to find it out. Sorting out potential topics and information in this way will help you decide what to cover and what you can afford to leave out. Remember that people remember only so much from a training session, so focus on the *must knows* and *should knows*. You can include *could knows* if there is time – they provide the 'frills' and can make the training more enjoyable but recognise they may not be remembered after the training. Your *must knows* become your key learning points and should be reinforced throughout the training.



On a separate sheet of paper, identify the *must knows*, *should knows* and *could knows* for your training session. Use this information to help write your key learning points.

Must know	Should know	Could know

Tips for designing training

1 Maximise action and interaction
2 Sign post
3 Vary pace and rhythm
4 Chunk content
5 Map the participants' world
6 Give participants' choice
7 Surface objections
8 Balance theory and practice
9 Design in feedback
10 Design in closure

Source: CIPD Training Essentials, Hardyman '96

From a need, to an aim, to an objective

It starts with a need.

A training need is the gap between the current level of knowledge and skills, and the desired state – i.e. what someone needs to know or be able to do. Identifying and assessing training needs involves:

- Clarifying the desired change.
- Identifying the trainees or potential trainees.
- Assessing their current knowledge, skill or attitudes.
- Starting to determine the best training approach (if, indeed, the solution is training).

Clarify the purpose

Part of assessing the need is clarifying the purpose. Why training? Clarifying the purpose will help you set aims and objectives for the training.

To get a purpose, ask Why?

Note that when asking the question 'why', you will sometimes arrive at reasons. For example, asked why people need training in stress management, you may be told that it is because people work in a highly stressful environment– this is a good reason but it doesn't in itself tell us why there should be training. A good purpose starts with words like 'to', 'in order to' or 'so that'.

The purpose, in this example, may be 'to help people remain effective in highly stressful situations'.

State the aim

Having clarified why you are doing the training, state what you want the training to achieve. This will be a broad statement of intent and is the first stage to setting the objectives. In the example above, the aim is likely to be something like 'to help people take steps to minimise stress, and to recognise and deal with stress when it occurs'. In many cases, the purpose and aim will be very similar.

Now that you have an aim, you can set some objectives.

Writing training objectives

Training objectives are specific statements of what a participant should be able to demonstrate in terms of skills, knowledge or attitude at the end of a training session or course. Having training objectives helps us to plan; we know what we must include in the training session and what we can afford to leave out.

Objectives serve the following purposes:

- They relate the content of the training to the knowledge, skills and attitudes identified in task analysis, which is based on the desired job performance of an individual.
- They make planning and implementation of training focused, effective and efficient.
- They are standards by which training can be evaluated.

SMART objectives

So that the training objective is clear about what we want to achieve and gives us something to evaluate against, make sure it is SMART.

SMART objectives are:

- **S** pecific What, specifically, do we want the trainee to be able to do.
- **M**easurable We will be able to judge whether we have succeeded.
- **A** chievable It is possible given the time and resources available.
- **R** elevant It fits with the aim of the training and relates to other objectives.
- **T** imebound It is within a given timeframe, e.g. 'By the end of the session...'

When writing a SMART objective, be careful about the words you use. Some words and phrases are vague, difficult to measure or open to interpretation.

Avoid using these words or phrases, which are vague and hard to measure

Appreciate	*Have a grasp of*
Be aware of	*Have a working knowledge of*
Be familiar with	*Have faith in*
Be interested in	*Improve Know / Really know*
Believe	*Realise*
Enjoy	*Understand*
Have a feeling for	

Prefer these words, which are specific and easier to measure:

Compare	*List*
Conduct	*Participate*
Construct	*Select*
Demonstrate	*Solve*
Describe	*Specify*
Design	*State*
Differentiate	*Write*
Explain Identify	

Examples of SMART objectives

- By the end of the session, participants will understand what a SMART objective is.
- By the end of the session, participants will appreciate how to write SMART objectives.

Examples of not very SMART objectives

- By the end of the session, participants will be able to state what SMART stands for in the context of writing training objectives.
- By the end the end of the session, participants will be able to write a SMART objective.

Session planning

Review the context of the session

Does it link with the preceding sessions? Was the objective of the last session actually achieved'? Do any points from the last session need to be covered again in this session? Was there enough time, can the time be increased or the number of objectives reduced? Review the level and number of your participants, both will affect the type of work you can do.

Define the aims and outcomes/objectives/targets

Every planned session must have its outcomes/objectives clearly stated. Every outcome/objective must be achievable within the time stated.

Plan the Introduction

Refer to participants' previous experience or to previous course sessions. Introduce the objectives and explain its relevance so that participants know where the session is taking them. Indicate how learning will be assessed.

Plan the Learning Strategies

1. Analyse the knowledge, skills and attitude components in the objectives.
2. Select an appropriate methodology for each component.
3. Plan the resources needed, such. as visual aids, handouts, stories, exercises projector.
4. Order and time the activities: Some things need to be done in groups, some individually, some can be done at home, and some require visits or special facilities.

Plan the Summary

There are many ways you can summarise key points with a group: asking concept questions, reviewing the main points in plenary, putting the main points on a handout, or writing them up on a flipchart.

Plan the Follow up

Most sessions need to be followed up by participants outside the training programme in order to consolidate their learning. This is particularly true if there is a gap between training sessions. This might consist of directed reading, practice or a project that would apply the learning.

Plan the Assessment

Some form of assessment of whether individual participants have achieved the learning objectives should be built into each session. It may come during the session by writing, by observation, by questioning and discussion. It may come later at the end of the session or the course but should be planned now to help you focus on the students outcomes/targets.

Write a session plan

This is to help you get things in a logical order, and so that someone else can take over your work if you are prevented from doing it.

Energizer toolkit

Ideas for starting a new day or new session

- **3 lies about me** In small groups, each person thinks of three facts about themselves, one of which is untrue. The rest of the group have to guess which is the lie.
- **Bring something from home** In plenary or groups, each person describes something from their home or home area that they would like to share with the others.
- **Circle introductions** Participants stand in a circle (those with poor memory should start) each person says their name, and the names of the people before them, until the last person is calling out the names of the whole group.
- **Describe each other** The names of all participants are written on individual cards and placed in a hat. Participants take turns to take a card, then they describe the person named, while the others have to guess who it is.
- **Self-portrait** Each participant draws a picture of themselves on A4 card or paper; the results are put into a hat then taken out one by one and participants guess who it is.
- **Shaking hands** Participants stand together in the centre of the room, quite close together. They each reach out their right hand and find someone to shake hands with. Still holding on with their right hand, they then reach out with their left and find a different person. Holding on with their left, they release their right hand and find someone new to shake hand with using their left hand. This process continues until everyone has shaken everyone else's hand (or the group gets in a complete tangle!).
- **Telling story** In groups (or plenary), each person says one word or one sentence (building on the previous one), in order to tell a story.

Ideas for energizers and wake-up games

- **1+1=2** Using arms, make the sum 1 + 1 = 2 (individual arms, then crossed, then parallel, continue up to 8.
- **As and Bs** Ask everyone to pick someone to be their 'A' person (or assassin, or lion) and someone to be their 'B' person (or friend, or shepherd), without telling anyone. On the word go, all participants have to move as close as they can to their 'B' person/friend/shepherd, whilst keeping away from their 'A' person/assassin/lion. After a while, ask them to switch over, so that their assassin becomes their friend, and vice versa, and play the game again.
- **Bring me** In teams, participants race against each other to be the first to bring to the trainer whatever they call out (e.g. a black shoe; a pair of glasses; a red pen; a blade of grass etc. etc.). Teams may wish to select a 'runner' at the beginning.

- **Counting to 50** Sit or stand in a circle. Take turns to count to 50 out loud, one number each, but replace each 7 and multiple of 7 with a clap instead of speaking (7, 14, 17,21,27,28 etc.). If you make a mistake, start again.
- **Cross the room on newspapers** Participants split into equal teams, and line up in parallel, facing the rest of the room. Each person is given a sheet of newspaper to stand on, and the first person in each team is given an extra piece of newspaper. At the word 'go', the first person in each team puts the extra paper down in front of them and jumps onto it. The rest of the team move forward one by one, each moving onto the newspaper vacated by the person in front of them. The last person in the team then picks up their original piece of paper (now vacated) and passes it forward to the front of the team, where the team leader places it in front of them and moves forward again. The team that reaches the agreed 'finish line' on the other side of the room is the winner.
- **Earthquake** Ask participants to form groups of three. Two people from each group face each other and touch hands above their heads, making the roof and walls of the house. The third person stands between the other two (i.e. in the 'house'). When the trainer (or another participant, delegated to be the caller) calls out 'WALLS', the two walls separate and form another house around an inhabitant. The people in the houses do not move. When the trainer calls out 'PEOPLE', the people run inside another house, and the walls stay where they are. When the trainer calls out 'EARTHQUAKE' everyone changes places, and if they wish they can change from being a wall to a person, or vice versa. The caller then tries to fit in as a wall or person, leaving someone else as the caller.
- **Form groups** Use as an energizer while forming random groups for next exercise): ask participants to organize themselves as quickly as possible into groups or 3/4/5 people.
- **Fruit salad** Participants sit in a circle, with one participant left standing in the middle. The trainer goes round the circle assigning names of fruit in order (e.g. apples, oranges, mangoes, pineapples), until everyone has a fruit, including the person in the middle. The person in the middle calls out the name of a fruit and all the people with that name have to change places, while the middle person tries to take a seat. Participants cannot return to the seat they just left. The one left in the middle then calls out another fruit and the process is repeated. If 'fruit salad' is called out, everyone has to move. Other, topic-linked names can be used instead of fruit, for example species of livestock (cows, goats, chickens, camels etc.) with 'livestock' as the term for everyone to move.

- **Mad chicken** Stand in a circle and chant from 1 to 8 with the right arm thrusting up and out with each number. Repeat for the left arm, then right leg then left leg. Then repeat for a count of 4, then 2 then 1, each time getting faster and faster.
- **Pass the banana** Participants stand in a circle close together. One participant stands in the middle. A banana is passed from hand to hand behind participants' backs, while the person in the centre tries to guess where it is.
- **Rank in line** Ask participants to line up across the room according to a ranking criterion (e.g. age, length of service in their organisation, height). Depending on the criterion, they may be asked to do this without speaking (e.g. height).
- **Songs from each country** Participants share songs or dances from their own country.
- **Spell coconut** Stand in a circle and ask participants to spell the word 'coconut' with their bodies. Raise one arm over your head and the other towards the ground then bend over to the side for 'C'; raise both arms to touch over your head for 'O'; C again; 'O' again; bend down with arms out towards the floor for 'N'; raise both arms above your head for 'U'; stretch arms out to each side for 'T'.
- **Spot the leader** One person is sent out of the room and the remainder stand in a circle and choose a 'leader'. The leader does various physical actions which the others have to copy (e.g. clapping, rubbing head, tapping etc.). When the absent person comes back in, they have to guess who is the leader by watching the participants, while the leader tries to change action without them seeing.
- **Stand up if you...** Using a prepared list of questions, ask participants to stand up quickly if what you say applies to them. The last one to stand is out, leaving a decreasing number of participants until only one is left. Example questions could be: stand up if you... wear glasses; have children; like chocolate; are wearing black; are left handed; are over 40 years old; have worked for less than one year with their organisation; arrived by plane etc.
- **Tangle game** Participants stand together in the centre of the room. Each person holds out their hands and takes the hands of two others. Without letting go, the group has to untangle itself. Alternatively, one or two participants can be kept out of the tangle and asked to untangle them, either silently or using instructions.
- **True or false** One end of the room is designated as 'true' the other as 'false'. The trainer calls out statements and participants move to the relevant

end of the room, depending on whether they think it is true or false. Those who run to the incorrect side are out. For example: Kenya is the capital of Nairobi; today is Wednesday; there are x people in this room etc. This activity can also be used to review the previous session or day, by using relevant sentences from that day/session.

- **Zip, zap, zop** Participants stand in a circle and take turns to say 'zip', 'zap', 'zop' (one each) as fast as possible. Those who make a mistake or are too slow are out.

Ideas for recap and learning review

The following techniques can be used for a brief recap of the previous day, to start a new day, or for a quick recall of key points learned before moving on to the next session.

- **Balloons** Participants write comments on a small piece of paper and put them into balloons. The balloons are blown up (and can be played with!) before bursting and the comments read out.
- **Choose your corner** The four main topics or sessions covered that day (or the previous day) are listed, one each on a flipchart, and hung around the room, one in each corner. Participants are asked to go to the corner of the topic that most interested them. Groups then brainstorm the key things they have learned from that session/topic, and write them on the flipchart. Feedback can be briefly taken from each corner.
- **Bus stop** Like *Choose your corner* only participants are split into four groups and allocated one of four topics. They spend two minutes there noting the key lessons, then each group moves on to the next 'bus stop' and does the same thing until all four corners have been visited, then brief feedback can be taken.
- **Paper on the floor** Participants write a key message or learning point onto coloured cards (one per card) and place them on the floor or on the wall. Each participant then picks up a card randomly and reads it out to the others.
- **Quiz** Prepare a short quiz of questions about the topics covered the day before. This can be done simply in plenary, with participants calling out the answers; or in table teams, writing the answers down then seeing who got the most correct; or other methods.
- **Snowball fight** Participants write a key message or idea onto A4 paper (one idea per paper); crumple up the papers and use them for a snowball fight for a while, then everyone unfolds and reads out one piece of paper.
- **Tossing the ball** Stand in a circle and throw a ball to one participant and ask them to share a lesson learned today or a key thought; they then throw the ball to someone else until everyone has spoken.

- **What Happened Next?** Participants are asked to construct the "story" of the previous day by each participant adding one line at a time. This continues with each additional participant adding another line until everyone has contributed and the previous day have been described. There are many variations to this game but it highlights the value of listening to others. Also, you may use this as an energizer at any moment of the workshop by allowing them to build a story while sitting in a circle (e.g., Bill woke up and stepped out into the snow...).
- **Songs, Posters, And Poems** This technique offers an enjoyable and creative way of encouraging participants to synthesise their thoughts or develop key messages from a presentation or a previous exercise, or the previous day. It also provides a way of considering the potential for developing this kind of technique for advocacy or promotion work in general. Each small group is asked to develop key messages or summary points about one session from the previous day and then to develop these points into a song, a poster or a poem. It is important that the facilitator allows a realistic amount of time for the preparation of these communications and that enough time is allowed for the presentation of the finished pieces.
- **Card sorts** Prepare a set of cards, each one containing one item or topic from the day before. Sets of these cards are given to small groups who, through discussion, sort them into the order they were treated the day before. Options: (1) Sets can also be given to individuals who, having sorted their cards, compare their choices with another individual in the group. Or, (2) you can ask each group to prepare their own set of cards, stick them on the wall, one below other, and the compare all the products on their understanding of the day before. Cards may be done with text, drawings. Maximum 15 minutes. Option 1 will take a bit more. Option 2 will take 20 minutes at least.

Ideas for evaluation

The following are suggestions for short evaluations, for example at the end of the day during a multi-day workshop, to enable the trainers to check progress and make adjustments as necessary, or for a qualitative review of the whole workshop. They should not replace a more formal evaluation (best written) where participants can comment in detail on the workshop.

- **Act out** In groups, act out one thing that went well, one thing that could have gone better.
- **Balloons** Participants write comments on a small piece of paper and put them into balloons. The balloons are blown up (and can be played with!) before bursting and the comments read out.

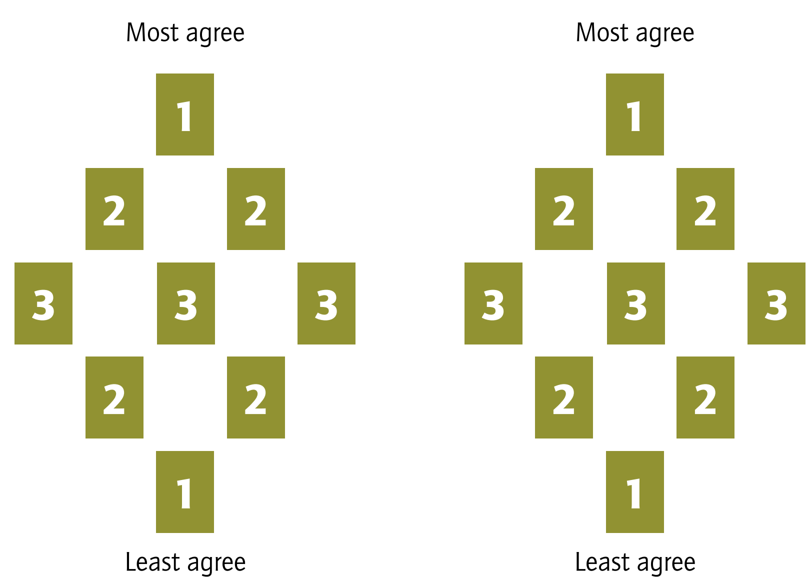
- **Graffiti wall** A piece of flipchart can be left on the wall, with a pen nearby, so that participants can add comments or observations on the workshop. This technique can be extended so that several flipchart papers are spread out around the room with different questions, e.g. how could this workshop be improved? What did you like most today? What is missing from this workshop? etc.).
- **Moodmeter** Using a piece of flipchart, draw a line with a happy face at one end and a sad face at the other end. Participants are given one sticker each and asked to place in on the line to reflect their mood (this can be done each day, with different coloured stickers, to chart the change of mood through the workshop). This method can be expanded so that more than one moodmeter is prepared, each one covering a key objective of the workshop.
- **Stand to score** One end of the room is labelled 'good' or 'excellent' and the opposite end is labelled 'poor'. The trainer reads out key statements (e.g. the objectives of the day; or basic evaluation criteria – ' the content of the day was useful', ' the methodology of the day was helpful' etc.) one by one, and participants move to the place in the room that reflects how positive or negative they feel about that statement or objectives.
- **Tossing the ball** Stand in a circle and throw a ball to one participant and ask them to share a lesson learned today or a key thought; they then throw the ball to someone else until everyone has spoken.
- **What went well** Cards or papers of two colours are distributed, and participants note down what went well on one colour (one idea per card), and what could have been done better on the other colour. Cards are collected and can be read out if wished.
- **Talking wall** The talking wall is a group exercise that provides opportunities for all participants to respond to open questions or statements from the facilitator, to evaluate a session, to record attitudes to a given topic, or to comment on a given aspect of the training session. The exercise is conducted in such a way that all comments are public for others to read and supplement in an interactive way. Several flip-chart sheets are prepared as posters by the facilitator in advance. Each poster contains an open statement printed at the top (e.g., "What I think is missing from this workshop is..."). The sheets are placed around the walls of the room where everyone can read them. Each participant is given a marker and invited to walk around the room adding appropriate comments to each sheet. Alternatively, each person may be given a supply of post-it stickers and a pencil and asked to write comments on separate stickers that are then posted on the most appropriate sheet. Everyone should be encouraged to read the comments written by others. This technique is thought-provoking and good fun to do for virtually all groups.

- **Feedback rounds** Rounds provide a quick and simple method of gathering an instant reaction from all participants to the current state of the course or group. At a suitable point in the programme – usually at a natural break or between exercises or before moving on to a new topic – the facilitator announces that s/he would like to hear from all the participants how the course (or the most recent part of it) is going. The idea is to receive quick, impressionistic responses, not analytical or detailed answers.
- **Clap, clap, <word>** Everyone stands in a circle and is given one minute to think of one word (only) that summarises how they feel as a result of the training session. Start a round by clapping hands twice and asking the first person to say their word; then clap twice and the next person says their word, and so on around the circle. Get a good rhythm going: Clap, clap, <word>, clap, clap, <word> ... going right round the group. If time allows: Stop the clapping and ask each person, in turn, to explain briefly why they chose their word. End with another round of clap, clap <word> (repeating their chosen word).
- **Continuum cards** These can be used to check participants' views of the workshop. The facilitator should write pairs of cards and set them out as a continuum on the floor with a few metres between the cards. Examples of pairs would be: very interesting / very boring; very relevant / not relevant. Participants are given a blank card and asked to vote (anonymously as far as the facilitators are concerned) by placing their card on the appropriate place on the continuum.

Some less quick methods

- **Checklist** Checklists are used by a group of participants either to remind them of key points about a subject or to rate themselves against a set of criteria. They serve as a useful reference point and a summary of important factors being considered by the group. Most checklists are prepared in advance by the trainer or facilitator. A checklist lists headings in some sort of order without going into detail on each one. Each item on the list should be self-explanatory and act as a trigger or a reminder to the reader. It can either act as a simple self-assessment sheet where the user of the list can tick off items from the list that have been collected or completed, or it can be used for participants to measure their abilities against a set of established criteria. To be effective, checklists should not be too long, or they simply become memory exercises. It may be used by the facilitator to reinforce points made in a presentation and given to participants for them to assess which points in the presentation already form part of their workload.

- **Fishbowl Exercise** This technique is used in situations where participants listen, initially without comment, to the viewpoints or arguments that another group may hold on a given topic. In such an exercise, a small group of participants is asked to sit in an inner circle whilst the remainder of the group is asked to form a larger circle around the outside of the small group. The members of the small group are "the fish in the bowl", and the members of the larger group are the observers of the fishbowl. The small group is asked to discuss a topic or an issue. The role of the observers is to listen to that discussion. In some cases, observers may be asked, in the next stage of the exercise, to join the fishbowl group and contribute to the discussion. In other cases, the next stage may be a plenary where the observers discuss their reactions to what they have heard. Participants may then be invited to come together for a plenary session.
- **Diamond ranking** A further variation of the card sort is best used when the facilitator has more control over the number of options available since it requires exactly nine items to be ranked or prioritised. One of the difficulties with ranking exercises is that people often want to give two or more items the same rank placement. Diamond ranking recognises that there is often a most preferred and a least preferred item and that the others are bunched up in the middle. The facilitator will have prepared sets of nine items on separate cards to be prioritised. Small groups are given a set of the cards and are asked to rank them in a diamond shape (see below).



The single items at the top and the bottom of the diamond are the most and the least preferred; the two items below and above these are the next in order; the three items across the centre are of middle order importance, with little to differentiate between them. This exercise is useful for those occasions where it is not easy/possible to rank strictly in order of preference sequentially.

- **SWOC Analysis** SWOC stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Constraints – these four headings provide a structured way of reviewing any situation or event. By way of example, if we consider the question "How do we apply our new learning?", this may generate the following questions. Strengths: What are we good at doing? What have we gained? Where are we confident? Weaknesses: Where are we vulnerable? What else do we need to do or learn? Opportunities: How will we now use what we have learned, gained, or done in the future? Can colleagues or counterparts benefit from what we have learned? Constraints: What might undermine this learning? What support is required to make sure our plans happen? This technique works best when participants work in small groups, each with a poster-sized version of the SWOC grid. They then complete each quadrant of the grid with their ideas. The finished versions can then be displayed, compared, and discussed.

Strengths	**Weaknesses**
Opportunities	**Constraints**

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Tips on using the flipchart

Flipchart paper as well as large felt-tip marker pens must be available to all work groups. Flipcharts must be available in the main training room for the work-group presentations as well as short presentations by the facilitator or invited speakers.

There are several advantages of using a flipchart. Here are just a few:

1. Flipcharts do not need electricity - You don't need to worry if the bulb will burn out or worry that you forgot the extension cord.
2. Flipcharts are economical - They do not require you to use any special films or printers to produce them.
3. Colour can be added very easily - An inexpensive box of flipchart markers allows you all the creativity you want.
4. Flipcharts allow spontaneity - Any last minute changes can be easily made.

When preparing your charts, it is best to first design your charts on paper first before drawing them on the actual flipchart pad.

Try, if you can, to prepare your flipchart pages in advance. This means participants do not have to wait while you try to draw things on the page.

Leave one blank page, at least, between each prepared page. That way you can add extra details or jot down audience comments without having to flick through several pages to reach a blank sheet.

If you need to draw diagrams or charts, or mention dates or figures as you deliver your talk create light pencil outlines on the page in advance. The audience will not be able to see your pre-drawn illustrations – but you will and your finished drawing will look more professional as you can copy the marks.

Make sure you have a conclusion page at the end of the flipchart. You can then turn to this at the end of your presentation and summarise what you have said.

Your first page should either be blank or have a 'title page', such as the subject of your presentation. In this way, your first page of text will not distract your audience.

Use the 7 x 7 rule: no more than 7 words on each line, no more than 7 lines per sheet

On each page that you have written some key points leave plenty of space. This means you can add in comments from the audience (in a different colour) as you go through your talk.

Use big letters (but not capitals, unless you have a very bad handwriting!) so that your audience can read your writing. Each character should be at least three inches tall.

Reserve bright colours for charts and diagrams. Text should be in a dark colour, such as black or blue, so it can be easily seen. Avoid pink, orange and yellow for text. Avoid using too many colours. Using one dark colour and one accent colour works best.

If you write on the flipchart as you go through your talk, stand to one side so people can see what you have written. Or write, then turn and talk to avoid talking to the flipchart with your back to the audience.

After your presentation has finished go back through your flipchart pages and prepare some notes based on what was added during the talk. You can then give this information to the people who were present so they have a record of the event.

Adapted from: Lenny Laskowski "11 Tips for Using Flipcharts More Effectively"

Tips on constructive feedback

Feedback is one of the most effective ways of learning more about ourselves. It has been said that the last thing we learn about ourselves is the effect we have on others.

Constructive feedback increases self-awareness, offers options and encourages self-development so it can be important to learn to give and receive it. Constructive feedback can contain both positive and negative feedback and it is therefore important to learn to give feedback skilfully. Destructive feedback is that which is given in an unskilled way and which leaves the recipient feeling bad. The other disadvantage to this type of feedback is that the recipient is likely to reject what has been said.

Giving skilled feedback

Before

1 **Be clear about what you want to say in advance, practise if necessary**

State the purpose of what you are about to say.

If you are not absolutely clear about what it is you're going to say it is easy to forget the main message or deliver a confused message. Giving feedback is often as difficult as receiving it.

It is important to explain the purpose of what you are about to say so the recipient understands that you are not simply making gratuitous comments. This will also enable them to understand that feedback is a two way process and that they have a right to respond.

2 **Encourage self-assessment**

It can be very helpful if you can encourage an individual, through using gentle probing questions to identify a pattern of behavior for themselves rather than by telling them. This can cut down your hard work and also means the individual is more likely to commit to change as they feel they have ownership of the problem.

During

3 **Use the positive/negative sandwich**

Most people need encouragement, to be told when they are doing something well. When offering feedback it can really help the receiver to hear first what you like about them or what they have done well.

Our culture tends to emphasise the negative. The focus is likely to be on weaknesses more often than strengths. In a rush to criticise we may overlook the things we like. If the positive registers first, negatives are more likely to be listened to and acted up.

It is useful to apply the sandwich throughout giving feedback, prefacing each negative with a positive and ending on a positive note so the recipient does not feel totally disillusioned.

4 **Be specific**

Avoid general comments which are not very useful when it comes to development. Statements, such as "Could do better" or "Reasonably good" may be pleasant or dreadful to hear, but they do not give enough detail to be useful sources of learning. Pinpoint exact what the person did which led you to use the label.

5 **Be descriptive rather than evaluative**

Give the person specific examples of what you saw or heard and the effect it had on you, rather than merely saying something was 'good or bad', etc.

6 **Select priority areas**

Don't save it all up and give the person one huge bumper bundle, especially if there is considerable negative feedback to be given. This is not only likely to alienate the recipient entirely, but also may mean they will never again value any feedback you give them.

7 **Offer alternatives**

If you do offer negative feedback then do not simply criticise, suggest what the person could have done differently. Turn the negative into a positive suggestion.

8 **Own the feedback**

It can be easy to say to the other person "You are….," suggesting that you are offering a universally agreed opinion about that person. It is important that we take responsibility for the feedback that we offer. Beginning the feedback with "I think…." or "In my opinion…."is a way of avoiding the impression that we are telling the person a "universally agreed judgement" about themselves.

Finally

9 **Leave the recipient with a choice**

Gain commitment to change where agreement is reached. Feedback which demands change or is imposed heavily on the other person may invite resistance, and is not consistent with the belief that each of us are personally responsible for choosing what we do. It does not involve telling somebody how they must be to suit us. Skilled feedback offers people information about themselves in a way which leaves them with a choice about whether to act on it or not.

It can help to examine the consequences of any decision to change and identify appropriate ways forward for the individual. Gaining commitment by encouraging the individual to repeat back to you any planned change can help to reinforce commitment to that change.

10 **Recap on good points**
End on a cheerful note by reminding the recipient that it's not all bad!

Remember

Failure to give negative feedback can result in:

1. no change in the person's behavior because they have never heard that it is causing difficulties
2. an enormous confrontation in the future as things build up until we blow up
3. problems in our continuing relationship with the person which naturally develop when we are aware of something and they are not, or when we are trying to keep something from them.

Remember feedback should be non-judgmental, clear information to another person about how their behavior affects you.

Giving feedback is not an end in itself, but the beginning of a new agreement between two people.

Receiving feedback

If you are on the receiving end of feedback you can help yourself by:

1. **Listening to the feedback rather than immediately reacting or arguing with it**
   Feedback may be uncomfortable to hear, but we may be poorer without it. People may think things without telling us and then we may be at a disadvantage. Remember that people do have their opinion about you and will have their perceptions of your behavior, and it can help to be aware of those. However do remember that you are also entitled to your opinion and you may choose to ignore it as being of little significance, irrelevant or referring to behavior which you wish to maintain.

2. **Be clear about what is being said**
   Avoid jumping to conclusions or becoming immediately defensive. If you do people may cut down their feedback or you may not be able to use it fully. Make sure you understand the feedback before you respond to it. A useful technique can be to paraphrase or repeat the criticism to check that you have understood it.

3 **Check it out with others rather than relying on only one source**

If we rely on one source then we may imagine that the individual's opinion is shared by everybody. In fact, if we check with others we may find that others experience us differently and we will have a more balanced view of ourselves which can keep the feedback in proportion.

4 **Ask for feedback you want but don't get**

Feedback can be so important that we may have to ask for it if it does not occur naturally. Sometimes we do get feedback but it is restricted to one aspect of our behavior and we may have to request feedback we would find useful but do not get.

5 **Decide what you will do as a result of the feedback**

When we receive it we can assess its value, the consequences of ignoring or using it, and finally decide what we will do as a result of it. If we do not take decisions on the basis of it then it is wasted. In the final analysis it is always your choice whether to accept or reject the feedback.

Finally thank the person for giving the feedback. We might benefit from it, it may not have been easy for the person to give, and it is a valuable practice to reinforce in any organisation or relationship.

Remember

There are three types of criticism: justified criticism, unjustified criticism and put downs.

When dealing with justified criticism

Don't	Deny criticism
	Get defensive
	Counter criticise
Do	Listen
Respond	by asking for more direct specific information

When dealing with unjustified criticism

Don't	Take the bait
	Deny the criticism
	Get angry
	Counter criticise
Do	Listen
Respond	to what is said – not what is implied

Crumple buttons These are criticisms usually based on truth which are so painful that we crumple inside. On the surface you may act angrily but inside you are feeling dreadful. The way to deal with these is to identify your crumple buttons and 'de-sensitise' them by repeating them to yourself.

Put downs These criticisms are not really criticisms at all. They are not designed to be helpful, only to hurt and humiliate you. Put downers are usually insecure and they boost themselves by putting others down. Often they operate in groups, looking for a victim, someone who they can repeatedly put down in order to get laughs from the audience. Put downs may be disguised as jokes or even as compliments.

When dealing with a put down:

1. Recognise the put down.
2. Expose the sender using negative enquiry:
   - **a** "What exactly are you trying to say?"
   - **b** "Was that designed to be helpful?"
3. Keep your voice calm and assertive and try not to let anxiety show in your body language. Most importantly don't become the put downer's victim.