How to prepare a case study

A case study works best as a group activity. The group size needs to be sufficient to generate a range of ideas, but small enough so that all learners get the chance to participate – four members is ideal.

Case studies require significant preparation. The first step is to identify a situation that can be used as a case study. Here are some examples:

- a case study which shows how ideas from young people have been put together into a cohesive programme could be used for a programme training session
- a set of unit accounts that have common errors in them could be used for financial training
- a description of an accident and the ensuing treatment could be used for First Response training.

Good sources of case studies are:

- your own experience, or that of other Trainers and Leaders
- websites such as www.girlguiding.org.uk and member forums
- magazines such as *guiding*.

The next step is to prepare the material describing the case study, which will be handed to the group. It is important to ensure that any information that might identify the source of the material is removed. This includes names of people, unit names, photographs and other personal details.

Case studies should include instructions for the group so they can refer back to them as they complete the task. Instructions should include:

- how long they have to complete the task
- how they will accomplish the task, such as by discussion
- what is expected as the final outcome, for example, notes which can be fed back to the group or answers to specific questions.

If appropriate, you may wish to prepare a number of different case study packs so you can give a different one to each group. If you do this, make sure the learning points of the case studies are the same.

How to use case studies

Decide how the groups will be formed and allow time for learners to get into their groups. Try to position the groups away from each other, at least out of easy earshot.

Explain the task and give clear instructions. Then give out the case studies. Remember that some learners may be less at ease with reading or writing than others so suggest that one member of each group volunteers to read out the material or take notes for the group.

While the activity is running, the Trainer should circulate to ensure that all groups are achieving the task, offer encouragement and ideas to flagging groups, to generally observe the activity and gauge how much longer the groups need.

Collect the material in after use to maintain continued anonymity, and for use in further sessions.

In order to promote the desired learning, there will normally be feedback of some sort.

In using case studies, it is very important that the Trainer ensures that the policies and procedures of Girlguiding are followed and promoted.

Feedback *Appendix*

DISCUSSION

What is discussion?

Discussion is a training method in which a group examines or explores a topic by means of a verbal exchange of views. It can take place in anything from small groups of just two or three learners to large groups involving all learners. It can also be linked with other training methods, for example case studies and role play.

When to hold a discussion

Frequently – discussion is one of the most useful and widely used training methods as it enables a group to exchange ideas and opinions informally about a specific subject. It can also be used in a one-to-one session. Discussion can be structured in a variety of ways, with the stimulus being carefully chosen with the aims and objectives of the training session in mind.

Prompting discussion

There are number of ways of starting a discussion and your choice will depend on the purpose of the training session and the nature of the group.

A question
This is the simplest way of starting a discussion. Questions must be straightforward and carefully worded – open questions usually work best.

Questioning techniques

A shared experience
A shared experience may form the basis of a discussion. For example, learners could discuss what they liked and disliked about the experience, and how it could be improved. Learners may be more open in their comments in smaller group discussions than in a large group.

A shared experience could be:

- a specific activity/event/role that every learner has experience or knowledge of
- an event/occasion/celebration/task that each member of the discussion group had assisted in the organisation of
- a video/book/audio prepared by another youth organisation
- a presentation or booklet of new programme material.

A video or audio clip

Video or audio can engage learners and act as good prompts for discussion. Bear the following in mind:

- the video or audio should be fairly short
- it should be clear and of good quality – test it before the session starts. It is also wise to have the discussion topics and questions on additional handouts in case of a technical problem
- find out if there are any learners who have a hearing or sight impairment as they may need additional assistance to participate.

How to prepare a discussion

Planning is important to ensure your discussion session runs smoothly.

- If discussing in sub-groups, plan the room layout so each group has its own space and will not interfere with other groups.
- Decide how long the groups will spend discussing – too much time can cause the discussion to become stale; not enough time means the group may only be able to skim the surface of the topic.
- You may want to appoint group leaders within discussion groups to support the process, for example, to challenge a particular side of the argument or to remain impartial yet pose questions to move the discussion on.
- Decide if you will develop the discussion at timed intervals, for example, after every three minutes of discussion you give the groups another piece of information or pose another question. Ensure a smooth flow of discussion by using additional questions with care to avoid confusing the group or disrupting good discussion.
- Decide how you would like feedback from the discussion to be recorded and presented to the wider group. This may depend on the topic choice, the preferences of participants in the group, the size of the discussion groups and the number of discussion groups in the session.

How to run a discussion

When using discussion as a training method your role changes from Trainer to facilitator, and your style from directive to non-directive. This time in discussion is not about the Trainer providing new information to the group, but ensuring that the group learns together and all are included.

You will often find that group discussions soon gain momentum and need little intervention from yourself. However, discussion is sometimes slow to start and this could be for a number of reasons. For example, the subject could be unfamiliar or too far ahead of the learners' existing knowledge, or the participants may be shy in a group situation. A Trainer must be able to quickly recognise the problem and give extra support and guidance, such as by asking open questions about the topic to encourage a response, or rephrasing the question so that participants are clearer about how to join in.

Circulate – be aware of the atmosphere during the discussion period. Don't let the learners digress from the topic of the discussion. Ensure all learners are joining in – try to bring quieter members of the group into the discussion, and check that no one is dominating and imposing her views on the rest of the group.

Keep an eye on timing but also be flexible – if the groups appear to be enjoying the discussion and finding it beneficial then you may opt to extend the time allocated. On the other hand, if the discussion has dried up more quickly than expected you may choose to bring it to a close earlier than planned.

Feedback from discussion

The purpose of the feedback session is to help participants make sense of the learning so far. This is a crucial part of the training and will have limited effectiveness if rushed, so make sure you leave enough time for it.

When taking feedback after a group discussion, the role of the Trainer is to facilitate the flow of comments from learners, for example by:

- paraphrasing
- checking for meaning
- giving positive feedback to contributors
- expanding where needed
- stepping up the pace
- mediating between different opinions
- consolidating
- summarising.

Decide on the best method of feedback in advance. This will depend on factors such as the size and type of group and the time available. Here are some examples.

- Visual displays of flipchart notes that can be pinned up or laid out on tables - other groups can then walk round and read them.
- Verbal feedback from each group representative.
- Feedback from one or more sub-group, given verbally to the Trainer by group members, and summarised by the Trainer for the rest of the group.
- A short presentation.
- A pitch along the lines of the television programme 'Dragon's Den'.

As a Trainer, you can encourage lively debate while also being in control of the feedback session, and be prepared to field any unexpected or off-topic responses. Possible issues can be identified early as you move around the groups, noting any groups or individuals who may raise a challenging point.

Different types of discussion

Panel discussions

A panel of three to four people (usually invited or selected because of their particular experience or knowledge) can come together to discuss a topic in front of an audience. The panel may discuss one or more topics. These could be prompted by pre-planned questions, or possibly questions from the audience.

If you choose to use this method:

- brief the panel on the topic(s) and provide them with information on the type of questions they may be asked by the audience
- provide the panel members with sufficient notice in case they wish to prepare any particular information/data
- ensure that the question/topic is relevant to the panel and gives all members the opportunity to contribute
- brief the audience about the topic of discussion and the nature of a panel discussion
- be prepared to lead and control the discussion, and provide encouragement and support.

Fishbowl discussion

This method enables the participants to observe and evaluate as well as interact and participate in a discussion.

Usually four to five chairs are arranged in an inner circle. This is the fishbowl. The remaining chairs are arranged in concentric circles outside the fishbowl. A few participants are selected to fill the fishbowl, while the rest of the group sit on the chairs outside the fishbowl.

In an **open fishbowl**, one chair is left empty. In a **closed fishbowl**, all chairs are filled. The Trainer introduces the topic and the participants start discussing it. Those outside the fishbowl listen to the discussion without comment.

In an open fishbowl, any member of the outside group can, at any time, occupy the empty chair and join the fishbowl. When this happens, an existing member of the fishbowl must voluntarily leave the fishbowl and free a chair. The discussion continues with participants frequently entering and leaving the fishbowl. Depending on how large the group is you can have many group members spend some time in the fishbowl and take part in the discussion. When time runs out, the fishbowl is closed and the Trainer summarises the discussion.

In a closed fishbowl, the initial participants speak for an agreed amount of time, for example three minutes. When time runs out, they leave the fishbowl and a new group of volunteers from outside the fishbowl enter it and continue the discussion in the direction they want it to take. This continues until time is up overall and once the final group has concluded, the Trainer closes the fishbowl and summarises the discussion.

While the discussion itself may be useful and interesting, participants often say the greater learning benefit is in being in the outer circle and the insights they gain from listening and seeing the discussion unfold without the distraction of also having to speak.

For this method to be effective :

- plan the discussion topic, ensuring it is an interesting subject that will provoke a good response
- present the topic and the fishbowl process clearly to both the inner and outer groups
- provide the observers with additional information on their personal aims and objectives while in this role
- ensure that during a closed fishbowl discussion both groups remain separate and that no observers join in the discussion
- carefully manage and present the debriefing and feedback of the exercise, bringing together the experiences of both groups
- ensure that no participant is left upset or embarrassed by the feedback given by the observers.

ROLE PLAY

What is role play?

In role play, participants learn by acting out the roles involved in a particular situation to give them greater insight into the underlying issues. The way in which the situation is resolved in the role play is then analysed and evaluated by the group members. The learners should respond spontaneously to the situation, not act out a pre-scripted scenario.

When to use role play

Role play is a great method to get learners thinking about how they would personally respond to and work out solutions to problems.

How to prepare a role play

Choose a situation to represent the training topic. In most cases, the best examples will come from prior knowledge of the learners' needs, your guiding life or from other Trainers. For example, a Commissioner may be able to help you put together a role play about handling an angry parent.

Be aware that the roles should not be too far removed from the participants' own experience, for example, adults cannot think themselves into the reactions of a child.

Identify the key roles' characteristics and the discussion points they are likely to prompt.

Decide whether to work with the group together or in smaller groups and prepare handouts/information cards for each sub-group/participant. These should provide notes on the scenario and characteristics of the role they have to play. They should cover:

- the situation the character finds herself in
- what the character is like
- the emotions being experienced by the character
- other characters involved in the situation
- external factors affecting the situation.

Identify possible discussion points for the feedback session.

How to run a role play

With care! Some learners are self-conscious about being put on the spot. Encourage and support learners who may be uncomfortable with this technique but do not make someone take on a role if they don't wish to. They could become an observer instead and still participate in the exercise.

As the groups discuss the scenario and the possible outcomes, you should be aware of any that may need additional support or guidance, for example:

- any groups that are slow to start
- any groups with participants who are reluctant to be involved
- any individuals who are over-dramatising rather than responding to the scenario
- any individuals who may be identifying too closely with a character role and who may need additional support at the end of the session
- any individuals who are being over-controlling and dictating to the rest of the group.

In addition, watch for any learner who at the end of the role play does not move on from their role, and support them to come out of role. It may be, for example, that their character was an angry one and they have remained angry in the subsequent training.

It is good practice to plan a pace-changer activity at the end of the role play, to ensure that everyone is out of role.

Feedback and evaluation of role play

Feedback discussion is crucial to bringing out the learning and making the exercise worthwhile. Therefore, ensure there is enough time left for a controlled and well-facilitated debrief.

It is important to encourage the training group to think about their own experiences while they evaluate the role play. Have they have been in a similar situation to the one played out? Can they relate to the scenario? How would they personally feel if they were in a particular character's shoes? Has this exercise encouraged them to make changes to their own practice?

Variations on a theme

Fishbowl observation

Using the format of a fishbowl discussion described earlier, the training group is split into two groups: a small group of participants in the fishbowl and observers who will watch the participants. You decide on the objective of the observation group either alone, or in collaboration with the rest of the group.

Discussion

You can inform them of the full details of the characters and the scenario so they can observe from an informed position. Or you could withhold the information and ask them to look out for particular interactions or characteristics, for example, ask questions such as 'What method of leadership was being used?', 'How did the approach of the Leader alter the situation?' or 'What effect did the actions of Role A have on the confidence of Role B?'.

Before each role play ensure that all observers fully understand their objectives and have a clear view of the role play action. Take care to ensure those with hearing or sight impairments are in a suitable space to fully participate in the exercise.

Tag role play

A small number from the group of learners are asked to be participants while the others are asked to be observers. The participants are allowed to let the action develop, yet if one of the observers believes she is better able to deal with the situation then she can tap the participant on the shoulder and take her place.

In preparing this type of role play, you need to decide whether both participants and observers are to be told the situation details, or whether only the participants are to be given this information. You should also be prepared for the reactions and responses of the training group as these could differ from those expected.

This method is best used with small training groups so that everyone feels secure and supported. It is crucial for the Trainer to be in control of the session and fully aware of how all members of the group are dealing with and reacting to the scenario. Notice and support any participant who seems vulnerable or embarrassed or upset if she is tapped on the shoulder and her role taken over.

TEAM BUILDING

What is team building?

The purpose of team building is to help develop the team so it is more effective.

Teams can be any group of people working together to achieve a common goal.

When to use team-building activities

Team-building activities are normally used in training which focuses on teams that work together – examples are District or Division Teams, Unit Teams, Patrol Leaders and Sixers.

They can be used at any stage in the training, even as icebreakers. However, they are often activities which allow the group to go through various stages of group life – that is, they are longer activities in which the group has time to attempt a task and analyse their performance afterwards.

Group theory

Examples of team-building exercises are:

- team-communication exercises
- problem-solving exercises, for example construction-type activities
- trust exercises
- planning exercises

It is sometimes possible to give teams a taste of the girls' activities by allowing them to try them as a team. An example is a wide game – it allows Leaders to experience the activity and also helps build the team.

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