

Training methods

This chapter details a range of training methods. Which ones you choose to use in your sessions will depend on the following factors:

- the purpose of the training session
- the nature of the group
- the size of the group
- the environment in which the session is taking place
- the time available
- the resources and facilities available
- your preferences and skills.

When all these are considered, it becomes much easier to choose the appropriate methods.

APPROACHES TO TRAINING

Training methods can generally be divided into two main approaches: directive and non-directive.

Directive training

The directive approach involves the Trainer choosing what material to give the learners and how to give it to them, based on the training needs, aims and objectives.

Non-directive training

In the non-directive approach, the Trainer allows the learners to find their route through the session, guiding them where and when necessary.

Each style has its advantages.

Advantages of the style

Directive

The Trainer can be sure that all the necessary material is delivered.

The Trainer can plan carefully and feel in control of the timing of the session.

The Trainer knows where the session is going so can have visual aids and equipment prepared in advance.

Non-directive

By participating more, the learners are likely to retain more of the learning.

The learners can air their concerns/needs/questions.

The learners can learn from each other as well as from the Trainer, so there is a bigger learning pool.

In practice, most sessions will be a combination of both types of training method.

The rest of this chapter describes a number of training methods.

The directive ones are:

- demonstration and instruction
- games
- icebreakers
- presentations
- handouts.

The non-directive ones are:

- brainstorming

- case studies
- discussion
- role play
- team building.

Of course, there is some crossover between these classifications. For example, a pace-changer that is concerned with learners choosing stimulating pictures would be more non-directive than directive.

DEMONSTRATION AND INSTRUCTION



What is demonstration?

This is a training method during which the Trainer shows the participants how to do something by actually doing it herself so that the participants are able to follow the process through from beginning to end. For this training method to be effective, there needs to be time for imitation and practice by the participants after the demonstration, with the Trainer giving instructions as necessary.

When to use demonstration

Demonstration is appropriate for practical skills where learners will benefit from an accurate model from which to learn. Examples include:

- pitching a tent
- first aid - the recovery position
- craft activities
- cooking
- learning a game.

Size of group

The simpler the skill, activity or procedure the larger the group can be, but if participants are to see and hear clearly, then, providing there is little or no distracting background noise, 15 to 20 would be the maximum. If there are more participants than this, or you are in a noisy area, the group should be divided and extra demonstrators or knowledgeable assistants should be brought in to the session.

Who will demonstrate

The person demonstrating may be:

- the Trainer working alone
- a participant who has the skill already
- an 'expert' who the Trainer has brought into the group to work alongside her
- a group of Trainers working together
- a group of girls or young women brought in to demonstrate because it is more appropriate that they do so.



How to prepare a demonstration

It is important that you plan, prepare and practise for the demonstration before the training session. The Trainer or demonstrator should be able to perform the activity or procedure well, without the need to refer to instructions or supporting material. For example, if it is a game, you should have played it before, know how to organise it and

know its limitations. If it is a knot, you should be able to tie it correctly without hesitation.

- Break down the skill, activity or procedure into stages and practise demonstrating each stage. Also plan the verbal instructions you will give while demonstrating.
- Prepare sufficient good quality, clean equipment, put together in such a way that the participants are able to access it without wasting time. Think about how they might prepare materials for their own learners to use.
- Have examples of the completed object where appropriate. You may also need examples of each stage of the demonstration so that you can move smoothly through without, for example, having to wait for glue to dry.
- Plan the time so that the demonstration moves smoothly, and the participants have time to practise and take notes in their own way.
- If you need working surfaces and/or safety equipment, for example appropriate fire extinguishers if demonstrating stove lighting indoors, check the venue or ask the Training Organiser beforehand.

 Health and safety

- Prepare sufficient supplies of templates, sets of instructions and copies of forms for each participant.

 Handouts

How to run a demonstration

- Make sure all participants can see and hear clearly and have sufficient resources to practise with.
- Check whether participants want or need to sit if the demonstration takes more than a couple of minutes.
- Ensure there is sufficient Trainer/instructor support for everyone to have assistance if required.
- Do not spend too much time demonstrating. Make sure there is enough time for participants to practise the activity.
- Help the participants put the activity into context of their own role in guiding, for example:
 - a Commissioner helping a Leader to complete a camp application form

□ a Leader taking a group of girls through a skill she has learned.

- Make sure verbal instructions are clear and audible, and that they are given from the learner's viewpoint, not that of the instructor (that is, if the instructor is facing the group, left and right may need to be reversed).
- Tell participants where they can obtain the relevant materials.
- Help participants embed the learning from the demonstration, either by providing handouts, templates, examples of materials, or lists of sources, or by encouraging them to take notes, photos or video recordings.

Sometimes it might be useful to break the demonstration down into sections, allowing the participants to watch a short demonstration, try it for themselves, reflect on the experience, and repeat the process.

GAMES



What is a game for training purposes?

In terms of training, a game is an activity which is primarily for entertainment or fun but which also has a learning outcome. It may involve a competitive element. Here are some types of games that may be used in training:

- brain games such quizzes and other activities that are thought-provoking
- physical games, including sports
- team-building games

- cooperative games
- board games
- singing games.

When to use games

Games are often a great way for participants to learn subconsciously and can make slightly dull topics more fun and memorable. They can be used in many ways, for example:

- as icebreakers, energisers or pace-changers
- as activities for learners to take away and use in their guiding roles
- to encourage groups to mix
- as 'wrappers' for some learning, for example a game of Trivial Pursuit with questions relating to the training topic(s).

How to prepare games

- Ask yourself what the learning outcome of the game is.
- Make sure you have played the game beforehand so you know where any difficulties might arise.
- Think about how you will explain the rules of the game.
- Make sure you have all the necessary equipment and resources.
- Find out if participants have any particular needs. If the game involves physical activity, you may want to make it optional so anyone who cannot take part is not made to feel uncomfortable.



Health and safety

- Be careful about asking adults to play games designed for girls. Get a feel for the group first. Some groups will find it fun but others may feel silly.

How to run a game

Here are points to remember when running a game.

- If physical activity is proposed, ensure that the playing area is clearly defined, large enough and free of obstacles.
- Make sure participants know how long it might be expected to take.

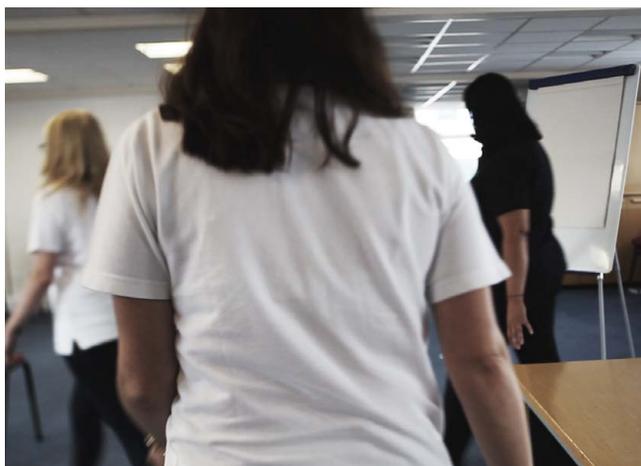
- Ensure that participants understand the aim and the rules.
- Consider having a dry run.

Observe the game and make interventions if you feel there is a problem, particularly if it is losing its impetus.



Health and safety

ICEBREAKERS



What is an icebreaker?

An icebreaker is a short, fun activity, often but not exclusively a game, normally used at the start of a session as a warm-up or sometimes as an introduction to a new section of the training. It helps the learners relax and creates a positive group atmosphere as well as helping the learners get to know one another and feel comfortable as a new group.

An icebreaker can also be an invaluable tool for the Trainer. It enables you to observe the learners, look for those who are struggling to participate or those who might dominate, and prepare to take suitable action should it be needed.

An icebreaker should:

- involve all learners
- be interactive and fun
- be quick and simple to set up

- need little explanation
- ideally be linked to the main training objectives (although it can sometimes be a random activity).

An icebreaker should not:

- make any learner feel uncomfortable or embarrassed
- expose gaps in the knowledge of any learner.

How to use icebreakers

Be sensitive to how an icebreaker is working and ensure it does not continue after the participants have ceased to have fun. Watch out for any learner who is not participating fully, or seems not to be enjoying the activity, as this might indicate the need to offer her additional encouragement as the training develops.

Variations on a theme

Energisers and pace-changers are similar to icebreakers.

Pace-changers

Pace-changers can be the same activities as icebreakers but are used during a session to speed up or slow down the tempo.

The main reasons for using pace-changers are:

- to alter the mood of a session - perhaps to lighten the atmosphere after a serious discussion, or calm down after a lively debate
- to provide a smooth transition between sections of a session
- to change the group dynamics, for example, to re-establish group communication if the members have been working in sub-groups, or to create sub-groups for the next activity.

Possible pace-changers:

- music and readings - these can have a very calming or really energising effect if chosen well (remember copyright constraints with music)
- games and quizzes.



Copyright

Energisers



Energisers are short activities designed to revitalise energy dips in participants and re-enthuse them for the next part of the training. Energisers are beneficial when:

- the group is ‘running out of steam’
- it’s late in the day and there is still important material to cover
- it’s straight after lunch and a little nap would go down a treat!
- the group has been sitting for a long period of time, perhaps for a presentation, and needs some physical activity.

Energisers work best when they allow participants to use their minds and bodies in a totally different way. This can often mean physical movement so you need to ensure that everyone will be able to participate



Inclusivity

Ideally, an energiser should be linked to the training theme and have a learning point that relates to the session, but if the group agrees, it can also be chosen ‘just because’.

Ideas for energisers:

- quick games, but care should be taken to ensure that they are appropriate for adults
- sometimes a breath of fresh air (literally) will do the trick - a brief walk, or opening a window.

For icebreakers, pace-changers and energisers, there are many useful websites, including the Girlguiding site.



[Girlguiding website games and activities](#)

PRESENTATIONS



What are presentations?

A presentation is a lecture or talk to a group in which the Trainer conveys the same information to everyone at the same time. It can be accompanied by visual images such as PowerPoint slides or photographs, by video or audio clips, or be delivered using simply the Trainer’s tone of voice and body language to engage the audience.

A good presentation consists of:

- a concise introduction
- the presentation itself where the points are made in a logical order and linked together
- a short summary which refers back to what has been covered.

Put simply, you should tell them what you are going to say, say it and tell them what you have just said.

When to use a presentation

A presentation is a good technique to choose when a number of facts or important information needs to be conveyed to the learners. If a presentation is prepared well, then the Trainer can ensure that all the learners are offered the same information and this information can be repeated a number of times to ensure learning.

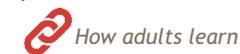
A presentation is more appropriate for larger groups, although there are some situations where it can work well with a small group or an individual. An example of

this might be a video clip embedded in an e-learning module. Examples of when a presentation could be used successfully:

- a safety talk about using a piece of adventurous equipment
- a roll-out of a new aspect of the girls’ programme
- delivery of the facts about First Response.

How to prepare a presentation

Ideally, creating a presentation which involves appropriate visual and/or audio input in support of the words of the presentation, will better facilitate learning.



How adults learn

- Start by listing the key facts that need to be delivered.
- Think about how you will reinforce these points during the presentation.
- Prepare prompt cards to help your talk run smoothly and ensure you don’t miss out any vital information.
- Prepare and test any visual/audio aids in advance - see the resources section for more information. Have a back-up plan in case of technical problems at the venue.



Resources

- Practise your presentation and time it to make sure it is not too long.

When preparing a presentation using PowerPoint or a similar software tool, it is important to follow the guidelines that ensure the presentation is suitable for all users. Commercial guidelines can be helpful, and logos and branding guidelines can be found on the Girlguiding site.



[Microsoft PowerPoint guidelines](#)



[Branding guidelines](#)

How to deliver a presentation

Check that the learners are comfortable and will remain so for the duration of the presentation.

Ensure distractions are minimal, for example, that the group is facing away from a window if there is a lot going on outside, or that they can’t see tables with activities set out to be used later.

Make sure that all the learners can see the visual aids, adjusting interior lighting to suit, if possible, if image projection is involved. Ensure they can hear you and any audio material clearly. Ask the group about this before you begin.

Ensure that you can see all the learners, so you can evaluate their reactions and responses. Do they understand? Are they bored? Note their body language and respond accordingly to keep them engaged.

Be aware of your delivery - keep interest by varying the tone and pitch of your voice, making eye contact with the group as often as possible and avoid reading directly from the visual aids.



Variations on a theme

Presentations that involve more than one Trainer can be effective in adding variety - the change of voice can break up the presentation and support greater learning.

TRAINING HANDOUTS

What is a training handout?

Training handouts are hard copies of additional information used to support learning before, during and/or after a training session.

Why use handouts?

Handouts are useful to reinforce learning, provide additional information, summarise the key points, give further instructions and clarify procedures.

Advantages of using handouts

- Learners are not too busy writing to listen to you and others.
- They can be prepared before the session.
- You can add information you do not have time to cover in the session.
- They allow learners to have an accurate record of information covered in the session which they can look at in their own time.

- They are suitable for use with any size of group.
- They can be used as a session summary.
- They can help participants share their learning with others.

Disadvantages of using handouts

- It is difficult to make handouts about some topics.
- You cannot be sure the learners will use them.
- Any extra information not covered in the session could be misinterpreted and therefore used incorrectly.
- Creativity and adaptability can be limited if every activity is written down.
- It is not very environmentally friendly to produce large numbers of paper handouts.



Types of handout

Background and case study notes

These are usually detailed notes on the training subject that can be used before the training session as background reading, during the training session to support exercises and activities, or after a session to provide additional information when there has not been enough time to cover everything. Case study notes can help participants apply their learning.

Training event and session outlines

These provide participants with an overview of the subjects that will be covered during the training event. They are particularly useful if the training event lasts more than one day. Outlines can also be used to promote your training event or session to future participants by detailing what will be covered, and what learning opportunities will be provided. Provide extra copies at the event or session in case participants have forgotten to bring them along.

Brief profiles of Trainers, guest presenters and/or speakers

It might be helpful to provide participants with information about the experience and credentials of Trainers, guest presenters and/or speakers delivering the training session.

List of participants

Providing a list of participants can help everyone to interact quickly and work together during the session. With express permission from the participants, you could also include personal contact details so that participants can share their continued learning experiences and developments after the event.



A set of the PowerPoint presentation slides

There are advantages and disadvantages to this. By providing a minimal amount of information, and used effectively as a visual aid, they will serve as memory triggers for key learning points and reinforce learning. Copies of such slides can be used by participants to make their own notes during the session. Also, having copies of PowerPoint slides can be extremely useful as a back-up if the technical equipment to project the slides fails to work during the session.

However, if the slides are detailed the participants might read ahead and not concentrate on the current discussion or activities.

Care is needed in preparation of these handouts - font size which is good for projection may become unreadable when printed six slides to a page.

Exercise and activity instructions

Exercise and activity instructions enable participants to check their understanding of verbal instructions you may have given. If you have certain exercise or activity instructions that you regularly use it might be worth laminating them to save both time and resources in the future and to collect them in at the end.

However, it can also be useful to provide participants with their own copies to take away so they can make notes during the activity, and capture feedback. You will need to allow enough space for this.

Worksheets and quizzes

Worksheets and quizzes can be used individually or in small groups, and can be collated to provide a workbook. Worksheets and quizzes can be used as a warm-up activity, to assess the current level of understanding of a topic, or to provide a structure for the participants to do their own

research and fill in their answers on the sheet provided, or towards the end of a session to check what has been learned. Always provide the answers during the session or as an additional handout.

Interactive handouts

Handouts that encourage some action by the participant are likely to result in more effective learning. To commit information to memory, it can help if the learners write it down in their own words within about 30 minutes of receiving the information. By providing a handout that has text free space within it at appropriate points, the learner can add to it her own notes during the session and this helps connect the content of the session to the learners' own thoughts on the topic.

Diagrams

A diagram can provide a useful visual aid to reinforce learning points.

Useful articles

Articles from the World Association of Girl Guides and Girl Scouts (WAGGGS), Girlguiding, the media or books/magazines might be useful to support the training session. It is important to reference your source and ensure that you are not breaking any copyright laws by providing the article as a handout.



Copyright

Glossary

If the training subject is particularly technical, or covers an area of expertise where a lot of jargon may be used, it might be useful to provide a glossary of terms. It can be a good idea to leave some space on this type of handout for participants to add additional words, jargon, terminology or acronyms.

Bibliography (publication list)

A bibliography provides participants with a list of useful publications for background or more detailed information on the topics covered in the training. A good bibliography will be well-organised into sections and provide full information about authors, publishers and dates of publication. Increasingly, documents now include Quick Response (QR) codes which are a type of barcode that can be read using smartphones and dedicated QR reading

devices, that link directly to text, emails, websites, phone numbers and more. You may want to include these codes in your handouts to give participants a shorthand link to a bibliography or other point of reference. An online search will provide links to websites offering free QR code generators, or use the one below.



BeeTagg

Webliography

A webliography is a list of URLs or websites which are relevant to the subject of the training. As with bibliographies, webliographies need to be well organised and it is very useful to annotate them. Websites can change or disappear so it is vital that you check your webliography regularly to ensure you are handing out accurate information.

Handout formats

Think about whether you will print on recycled paper, in black and white or colour. You may wish to laminate them for future use. Can you provide copies via email on request after the session?



Environmental considerations

When and how to use handouts in the session

At the start of the session always tell trainees whether or not there are handouts and, if there are, think about when is best to provide them. You might not want to give them out before a demonstration in case they are too busy reading them to watch.

To save you both time and resources, and help the environment, you might want to offer to email the handouts to participants. Make sure you either take their email addresses or give them yours before the end of the event. You could offer to post copies to those participants without easy access to email or have a few printed copies to give to such participants at the event.

Tell participants periodically during the session which things are on handouts - it can be infuriating to expect things to be on a handout and then find just the thing you wanted is not there, or to spend time writing notes only to find it is all on a handout. Give them out as they are needed during the session or at the end, perhaps leaving them by the door.

Ensure that you do not offer handouts when a reference to

a source is adequate. This may be a website address, or similar. There is no point in downloading and printing material that is available to the learner when, and if, they need it. It may also be updated before the learner wants to use it.

Disability awareness

If you have participants in your training session with certain disabilities or learning difficulties such as visual impairments or dyslexia, you may need to provide your handouts in a more suitable format for them. Check this point with your Training Organiser and/or the learner before the event so that you have the time to prepare suitable handouts as required.



Inclusivity

Designing handouts

When designing your handouts for training sessions, try to consider how the participants might use them during or after the event.

Collect examples and ideas from trainings that you attend and from other Trainers. Review them to decide what you like best about them and why.

Layout and design are important. No matter how good the content, an A4 page of closely typed notes is difficult to read quickly and boring to look at. It will be improved by clear headings, appropriate use of white space, illustrations, and the right size and choice of typeface and line length.

Handouts should be:

- clear
- legible
- attractive to look at
- relevant
- concise
- lively
- accurate.

Beware of copyright infringement - don't photocopy or copy items from books, magazines, songs, music, prayers and so on.



Copyright

Alternatives to handouts

As well as emailing handouts to participants, there are other ways to provide handouts:

- CD, DVD or USB device
- address of a website where the handout is available for download
- free smartphone or iPad apps, such as Dropbox or Evernote.

BRAINSTORMING



What is brainstorming?

Brainstorming is a quick and simple technique used to gather a number of ideas about a topic in a short period of time. It usually lasts no more than a few minutes. The Trainer invites the group to think of as many ideas on a given topic as they can. All suggestions are written up, without any changes, for the rest of the group to see. The suggestions usually trigger ideas for more contributions to the list.

When to brainstorm

Brainstorming is suitable for use with a large or small group of learners. It is often used early in a session to introduce a topic, test prior knowledge, stimulate thinking and generate ideas that can be taken forward in the rest of the session.

How do we prepare a brainstorming session?

Consider the following factors to ensure the technique is effective.

- Select the topic and word the brainstorming question carefully. You want the participants to react instantly

and start calling out ideas, so the wording should be clear and simple.

- Think about how you will record the ideas and present them to the group. If you have a training group of ten participants or fewer, you may wish to act as the scribe and record the responses on a flipchart as participants call them out. With a larger group, it may be more effective to split them into a number of sub-groups and have them present their ideas back to the rest of the training group. You can then collate all the subgroups' suggestions on one flipchart.
- Prepare resources in advance. Flipcharts work best, but any large sheets of paper are suitable. Use thick, coloured pens so the ideas can be read easily from a distance. Also ensure there are suitable work surfaces. Physically able participants may be able to work on the floor, but other participants may need tables or other work surfaces. Give out paper to groups before you give them the topic so they can start writing down the ideas straight away.
- Think about the time available and how you will make sure the brainstorming does not overrun, especially if groups will be feeding back their ideas. The total session should last no more than five to ten minutes.
- How will you use the brainstormed ideas to further develop the training session? The brainstorming will be much more effective and beneficial to the participants' understanding of the session if they can see the link between the topic brainstorm and the aims and objectives of the entire training session.

How to run a brainstorming session

During the brainstorm, all suggestions and ideas should be accepted and recorded. There should be no comment or discussion as this will interrupt the flow of ideas.

Ensure any sub-groups select a scribe before beginning. It should be someone who is confident about writing down a lot of information quickly. Make sure the scribe understands she should also contribute, and that she should write down all ideas that are suggested. Warn the groups when they are running out of time and stop the session after the allotted time.

After a brainstorming session

The group may go on to refine the list or clarify points raised, depending on the original purpose for drawing up the list. Make sure there is a smooth transition into the next activity and participants can see the link.



CASE STUDIES



What is a case study?

A case study is an example featuring a situation which has occurred in real life, and which can be used as a training tool to draw out a number of learning points. It will often, but not necessarily, involve a problem-solving situation. The usual elements of a case study are:

- a description of the situation
- questions to prompt discussion and lead learners towards possible solutions and/or lessons that may be learned
- a feedback mechanism for learners to offer their ideas and solutions and for the Trainer to share the real life outcome, as appropriate.

When to use a case study

Use a case study in any training session where working through a real life example will benefit learners.

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.



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.



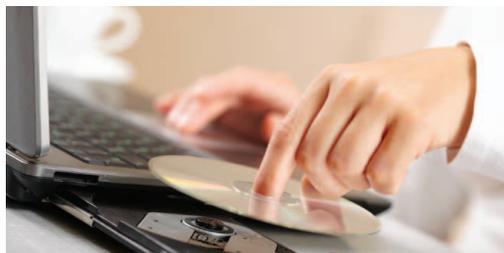
A shared experience

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 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.

USEFUL REFERENCES

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- Myers Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI) - personality types
- Bruce Tuckman - forming, storming, norming, performing

Web-based collaboration tools

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