

Tips for Planning and Setting up a Training Session

Before carrying out any training with your staff there are a few things to consider. Firstly, most agencies are very busy places where time spent together in training is a rare luxury. In order for training sessions to be most beneficial, participants will need to leave their busyness behind and realize that learning together is time well spent. Creating a space where participants can slow down enough to process their thoughts and emotions together, reflect individually and collectively and learning together requires setting up not only a physical environment but also an emotional environment that invites thinking together about your work. How can the physical and psychological training environment support those important considerations?

To successfully set up a physical environment for a training session, you should think about the following:

- Find ample space with tables, chairs and equipment (computer) to project a PowerPoint
- Plan and coordinate the training area. Ensure that the training area is reserved for the time you need to train.
- Classroom instruction needs to be in a reasonably quiet area free of distractions.
- Gather necessary supplies and training aides.
 - Equipment to support using a PowerPoint presentation and video clips
 - Paper or handouts you want to use

When thinking about the psychological environment of a training session, you should understand that reflecting and sharing together engages each participant in the process of growth. Peer learning is a powerful way to promote togetherness and enhance staff persons' experience of support in their job role. The reflective capacity of the work group is strengthened through an opportunity to process individual experiences together. Before engaging in a training think about how peer interaction can be supported and encouraged during the training.

It's easy to think about a specific training session as a separate event. However, training is only one method used to support staff members in growing, learning and finding additional meaning in their work. How will these trainings align with the other staff development and education offered through your agency? How will participants find additional opportunities to further consider these concepts and how to embed them into their practice? How can growth be sustained after the trainings?

Training sessions can be as short as one or two hours and/or can be carried out over a period of months. If you or your staff has not been engaged in trainings in the past, start with the suggestion of one training session a month.

When preparing your training session, keep in mind the following suggestions:

- Use Ice breakers if this is your first time bringing staff together for a training session. For some ice breaker activities, click the following link: http://insight.typepad.co.uk/40_icebreakers_for_small_groups.pdf
- Know your training topic. It is important that you know the subject you are going to train others on. Even if you have a lot of experience, check yourself. Review the training materials and be familiar with what you will be presenting.
 - Estimate how much time you will need for each section or block of training you plan to cover.
 - Rehearse before you start a training session and always do a walk-through of all instruction. This helps imprint in your mind what you will do with the trainees.
- Ask for feedback at the end of the training so that you know how to modify for the next session.