

## **Training Tips -REPRODUCED FROM ICMA**

Training sessions need to be properly introduced, conducted, and processed. For learning to take place, instructors must effectively introduce the goals and objectives for each session, ask effective questions and guide group discussion, and provide closure at the end. Take the following steps:

**Prepare carefully.** Review the related content in the course textbook and the lesson outline and activities. Try to anticipate questions and difficulties that participants are likely to have. Plan ahead, but be flexible so that you can alter your plan to accommodate the needs of the group.

**Review objectives.** In most cases, each session should begin with an overview of the session objectives and activities. Explain what you expect participants to learn from each activity and how the objectives fit into course goals (discussed later in this section).

**Accommodate the adult learner.** Adults learn best when they are actively engaged and can apply what they are learning to their own experiences and situations. Provide ample opportunities for adults to integrate new ideas and concepts into their existing knowledge. Use interactive learning strategies; long lectures can detract from learning. Accommodate different learning styles by incorporating visuals (e.g., PowerPoint), engaging participants in the discussion, recording participants' comments on a flip charts, and so forth.

**Focus on real-life examples.** It is important to tailor course materials to the knowledge and experience of participants. Examples and anecdotes should be as up-to-date as possible and relevant to the audience and the key points you are making.

**Encourage discussion.** Guided discussions work best when all class members are actively involved. People typically respond best to open-ended questions that are challenging, thought provoking, and relevant to their experiences. Allow participants time to answer when you ask a question, but be prepared to continue yourself if you do not get the response you had anticipated. If you have trouble stimulating a discussion, consider asking participants to write out their answers to questions ahead of time or breaking the class into smaller groups. Participants usually are more candid when they know one another; icebreakers and small group exercises are included in the course to facilitate interaction. While you should encourage quieter members to participate, be careful to avoid putting anyone on the spot.

**Guide the discussion.** Discussions work best when the trainer facilitates participation. This means bowing out when the group gets going and reappearing when members have gone off on a tangent or need help reaching closure. If a comment is incorrect or inappropriate, it is your job to correct it without embarrassing the participant. Acknowledge the effort, reinforce correct portions of the comment, and clarify inaccurate information. It is important to know where you want your guided discussion to go before you start. Before the session, review the key ideas you want to come out of the discussion. Use the discussion questions suggested in the lessons as a guide, but feel free

to eliminate those that are extraneous or to improvise others to make sure that your group covers key points. Jotting down key ideas on a flipchart as you go along will help you stay focused and summarize the discussion.

**Give clear directions.** It is important to explain what is expected of participants for each activity. They need to know what they are to do, how they are to do it, and how much time they will be given. When breaking into small groups, allow time for participants to rearrange themselves and the furniture so that you have their full attention before giving directions. If you are working with printed materials, be careful to allow participants sufficient time to read them on their own. Remain available to clarify directions throughout the sessions.

**Facilitate learning.** Your responsibilities include guiding the group process by keeping things moving, including all group members in the learning process, providing feedback, keeping participants directed toward the designated goal, and helping the group sum up each session. When conducting small-group activities, don't be tempted to join as a participant. Instead, use this time to provide help where needed. Roam around the room and observe how groups are doing, refocus them on the task at hand, answer questions, and offer suggestions.

**Process information.** No matter how good the quality of a presentation or activity, it will be useless without processing it and reviewing what was learned. Make sure you allow ample time for questions and discussion after each presentation. When appropriate, use a flip chart to record ideas. Look for opportunities to help participants relate the content to their own experiences and situations.

**Provide closure.** It is often helpful to ask for questions at the end of the session to make sure that there are no loose ends. Be prepared to suggest additional resources for those who would like to explore a topic in more depth.

Look for ways to encourage participants to convert what they have learned into action. Use discussion questions and learning activities to inspire participants to reflect on their own situation, assess their strengths and weaknesses, and apply what they have learned.

You can also encourage participants to use new skills by ending the session with questions such as:

- What can you do when you return to your job to apply what you have learned?
- Who might be an ally in the strategies you might apply?
- What problems, if any, do you anticipate in applying the concepts you have learned?

**Be enthusiastic!** Your positive (or negative) attitude may quickly become the prevailing mood of the group. Enthusiasm fosters a positive learning environment.

## **Adult Learners - REPRODUCED FROM ICMA**

### **Adults learn ...**

- When they want to learn.
- What they feel a need to learn.
- If information is practical and realistic.
- By doing.

### **Adults learn best when ...**

- The learning atmosphere is comfortable and informal.
- Goals and objectives are clear.
- A variety of methods are used.
- They are actively engaged.
- Their ideas are valued and respected.
- They have opportunities to apply what they are learning to their experience.
- They recognize how what is taught will help them do a better job.
- They are challenged and encouraged (not embarrassed or downgraded).

<b>Characteristics of Young Learners vs Adult Learners</b>	
<b>Young Learners</b>	<b>Adult Learners</b>
Captive audience	Voluntary learners
Subject-centered	Problem-centered
Dependent learners	Independent learners
Inexperienced	Experienced
Teachers prescribe content	Learners decide content
Grouped by age or ability	Grouped by interest or need
Concerned with learning for the future	Concerned with using knowledge now
Subordinate to the teacher	Equal to the teacher/trainer

### ***Sample Questions – REPRODUCED from ICMA***

Sometimes the toughest part of being a trainer is stimulating discussion. Here are a few general questions that might help get a discussion going or guide it to where you want it to go.

#### ***Questions for clarifying issues or discussion***

- As I understand it, the problem is \_\_\_\_\_. Does anyone have additional thoughts or ideas about this issue?
- Would anyone care to suggest facts we need to better understand the issues involved here?
- We've heard from some of you. Would those of you who have not spoken like to add any ideas?
- What other issues related to this problem should we discuss?
- Would someone care to sum up our discussion on this issue?

#### ***Questions for case studies or ethics scenarios***

- How would you define the problem or ethical dilemma?
- What are the possible options? Which would you recommend?
- What factors contributed to the problem encountered?
- How could this situation have been prevented?
- What would you do if you were in charge?
- What should be the next steps?
- Would you (hire this person, approve this expenditure, approve this policy)? Why or why not?
- What advice would you give to the person in the case study?
- If the person in the case study worked for you, what would you do?
- What are the benefits and the disadvantages of the approach that you have recommended?
- If this approach is implemented what are the likely consequences?
- What criteria would you use to judge success of the approach?

### ***Training Challenges - Reproduced from ICMA***

*As a trainer, what can (or should) you do about each of the following situations?*

1. There are very different levels of experience in the group.
2. A participant arrives in the middle of your presentation; after introductions have been made and the agenda has been discussed.
3. Participants are hostile and attack the topic, the organization or the trainer.
4. A participant questions your knowledge or experience.
5. The group appears to be bored or withdrawn.
6. A small group misunderstands the instructions and answers a different set of questions than you had expected.
7. One person monopolizes the discussion.
8. When you ask a question to begin a group discussion, you are met with total silence.
9. Several participants need to leave the training early.
10. Participants see no ethical dilemma in the scenarios they have been given.

## **Dealing with Problem Participants- REPRODUCED FROM ICMA**

**RAMBLER**, who gets off track or talks about issues unrelated to the topic at hand

- Look for a pause to interject with a question about how what the person is saying relates to the topic at hand.
- Remind participants of the objectives and time constraints.
- Redirect with something like, "Your point is interesting, but we seem a bit off the subject."
- Help the rambler link back to the discussion, e.g., "I'm sure we all have experiences dealing with a difficult citizen, but how does that relate to unethical behavior?"
- Let the person know that he or she will have an opportunity to bring up unrelated points later in the workshop.

**DOMINATOR**, who monopolizes the conversation.

- Direct questions "to those from whom we haven't heard yet."
- Gently interrupt when the dominator is speaking.
- Remind people that you'd like them to be brief, so that you can finish on time.
- Suggest to the dominator that you'd like to get another opinion.
- Avoid making eye contact with the dominator so that he or she does not have an opportunity to interject.

**INTERRUPTER**, who interrupts others, breaks into others' comments, and fails to listen in eagerness to get his or her idea across

- Ask, "How does your idea compare to what X has just said?"
- Say, "Please let X finish, then we'll hear your comment."
- Suggest, "To make sure we are all on the same page please listen to X's position before you state yours."
- Raise your hand to signal "stop" and encourage original speaker to continue.

**RELUCTANT PARTICIPANT**, who is hesitant, shy, and silent most of the time

- Use pairs and small groups.
- Place reluctant participants in groups that do not include immediate supervisor or higher-ups.
- Privately talk with the reluctant participant and encourage him or her to speak.
- Politely ask, "What has been your experience?"
- Ask open-ended questions that are non-threatening.
- Give positive feedback when the reluctant participant does participate.
- Never force participants to speak when they do not want to.
- If the entire group seems withdrawn, conclude the discussion and move on to a new activity or take a short break.

**ARGUER**, who constantly disagrees with the trainer and participants

- Let the group deal with person, e.g., "Does anyone want to respond to that?"
- Avoid getting into a debate or argument; don't get emotional.
- Simply state, "I understand your opinion."
- Use humor to deflect any hostility or antagonism.
- Be patient.

**SIDE CONVERSATIONS**, taking place during a presentation or guided discussion

- Use nonverbal cues to signal that it is disrupting, e.g., a hand on the arm or shoulder of one of the participants, a finger to the lips, or a slight shake of your head.
- Tactfully engage the participants in the larger group discussion by directing a question to one of them (avoid putting them on the defensive or embarrassing them with a question they cannot answer, however)
- Redirect the side conversationalists by stating, "Could we have just one discussion please?"



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**Government Employee Training**

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**GOVERNMENT  
ETHICS**

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Program # 22941G  
Running time: 11 minutes

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