

Module 0

Facilitating Adult Learning

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Facilitating Adult Learning

Facilitation is a conscious, deliberate planned effort to make process of doing things easy, pleasant and effective. To facilitate learning in adults, one need to have a good understanding of the preparing to conduct training, developing training objectives, designing training content, appropriate learning methods and understanding adult learning principles.

a. Preparing to Conduct Training

Most of the training programs are intended to update staff with new skills and improve performance. So facilitator should first;

- Identify differences between current performance actually exists before the training and desired performance
- Assess the reasons for the difference
- Focus training on the skill and/or knowledge needed to achieve the desired performance.
- Work with all partners to develop the training manual and process

b. Developing Training Objectives

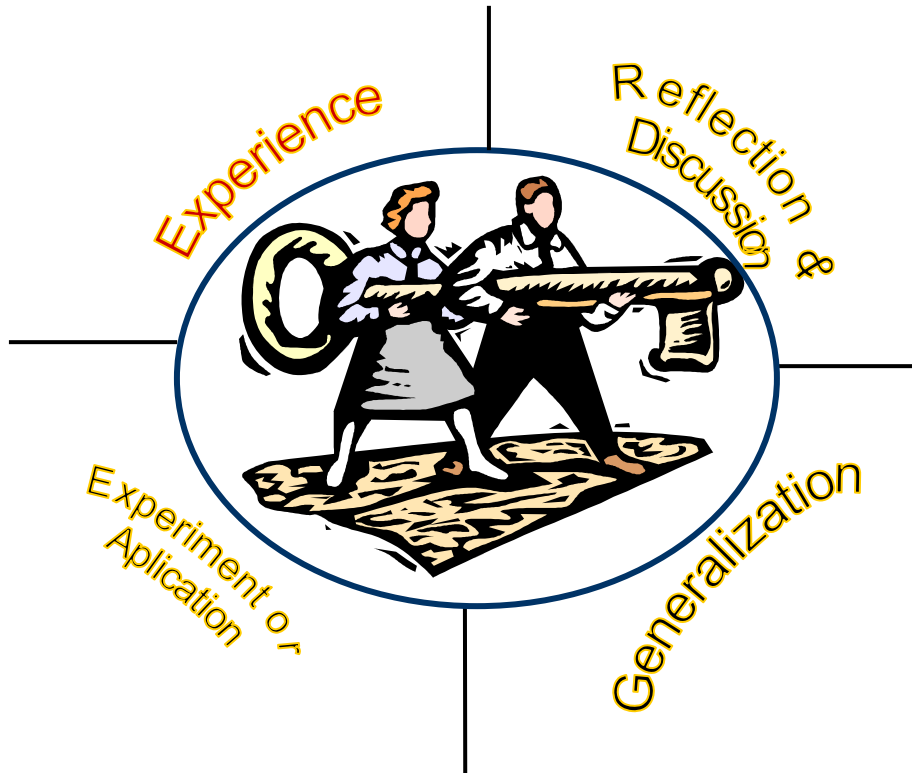
This is a way of looking at the behavior participants are expected to start experiencing at the end of the training. The facilitator is expected to identify the major tasks participants must be able to perform as a result of the training. According to the tasks identified, it is advisable to develop appropriately stated objectives. Some of the basic rules for developing task oriented objectives are:

- Making participants the subject of the objective
- Using action verbs that can be measured and observed
- Describing what the participants will be able to do at the end of the session
- Making objectives realistic

Example: *By the end of this session, participants will be able to state learning objectives appropriately.*

c. Designing Training Content

Whatever the content of the training may be, it should be designed using the Experiential Learning Cycle.



EXPERIENCE: The facilitator helps participants to develop new knowledge using their past **experiences**. It is gathering their **experiences** with the topic/task through games, exercises, and small group work or in a large group discussion.

REFLECTION/DISCUSSION: You may also provide opportunities for participants to **reflect/discuss** on their experiences so that they exchange opinions and learn from each other to generate data.

GENERALIZATION: By using the discussion and by making sense of the data they generated, they will arrive at a certain **generalization**. This is an agreement among participants on how the learning can be applied next time.

EXPERIMENTATION/APPLICATION: This is the **application/experimenting** of the new knowledge to test how it works in their “real world”, personal or professional situations which later will be an experience to reflect, generalize and apply.

d. Using Principles of Adult Learning when Training

There is a big difference between facilitating adult learning and teaching children. The following are some of the basic differences.

- **Self-concept:** children see themselves as dependant whereas adults see themselves as autonomous beings, capable of self direction. The relationship between learner and facilitator normally differs.
- **Experience:** children have few life experiences to bring to new learning activities while adults bring their previous life experiences. To deny or ignore their experience would constraint learning.
- **Readiness to learn:** children are viewed as gathering information and social skills in their schooling process which are prescribed by an external agent. Adult learners want to decide what and how they will learn based on their present social situation and the problem they face.
- **Time perspective:** children learn for the future, not for the present. Adults have problem-centered time perspective and from this come their desire to become better problem-solvers today.

Therefore, facilitators should bear in mind the following issues while planning to train adults.

- Adults tend to be highly motivated to learn when they are solving immediate personal or work related problems.
- Adults want to apply what they learn, often immediately.
- Adults want to preserve or even enhance their self-esteem.
- Adults are concerned with details. Even minor points have to be consistent with prior learning.
- Adults dislike sitting passively for long periods.
- Adults have trouble accepting information that contradicts or conflicts with their values and beliefs.
- Adults have acquired a wealth of information from their own life experience.

e. Using Appropriate Learning Methods

There are a variety of methods for imparting knowledge, attitudes and skills through training sessions. The following methods are common participatory approaches for adult learning:

1. **Short lecture:** This is a brief talk, used to introduce a session or topic or provide new information. It can also be used to summarize ideas given by participants after a group discussion or assignment. However, such talks by trainers should be kept to a minimum to allow participants as much time as possible to participate and share their own ideas.
2. **Small group discussions:** These are exercises in which participants are divided into groups of six to eight people to discuss an issue between themselves and come up with a common view point. Participants should be given a specific assignment to work on, time to complete it, and instructions on presentation. After the groups have presented their work, the facilitators

should summarize. Small group discussions are particularly good for training adults on clinical skills.

3. **Buzz group discussion:** These are brief discussions between two or three participants designed mainly to encourage participation. Participants just turn to their neighbors and discuss a given subject for a short time before sharing their thoughts and ideas with the group. This is particularly useful for preventing boredom during long sessions.
4. **Plenary or large group, discussion:** These are sessions in which the trainer engages the whole class in brainstorming about an issue, or in discussing the feedback from small group work. Large group discussion can be used to evaluate participants' understanding of the session. They can also be used as forums for debating controversial issues.
5. **Case studies:** For this method, participants are given the opportunity to share real life incidents from the community or clinic with others in the classroom. Where this is not feasible, fictional cases/incidents can be used for classroom discussion. After participants have discussed the case, they have to share their decisions with the rest of the class. The facilitator will then give a summary.
6. **Scenario and situation analysis:** For this method, participants are given case histories, scenarios or situations to analyze. They are asked to decide how such cases or situations should be managed and are asked to justify their decisions. Participants may work singly or in groups on these assignments, but a crucial part of the exercise is sharing their analysis with the class.
7. **Role play and drama:** For this method, participants are given a range of roles to play in mini dramas in order to give them insights into different people's situations and points of view regarding immunizations. They may for example, be asked to play the role of service provider informing client about immunization services, administering vaccines and recording of information. A role-play should be well planned; participants should understand the objective and know what it is they are expected to act. The rest of the participants should be given clear instructions on what to observe. After acting they should be given time to share their feelings and perceptions before their fellow participants give their comments. Besides allocating roles directly, trainers may wish to work together with participants on translating stories or actual case studies into dramas they can act out. **Role-play is the best method for teaching attitudes.**
8. **Story telling:** This is used to explore attitudes and values.

9. **Simulation games and exercises:** These are make-believe situations in which the trainer asks one or a group of participants to perform an exercise. These exercises are particularly effective in training skills. It is crucial that the trainer makes it clear exactly what skill is being taught.
10. **Demonstrations and return demonstration:** This is a very effective method in training skills. The trainer assembles all the needed equipment and materials, demonstrates how the skill is performed to the participants, advising them to observe carefully each step of the procedure. The trainer demonstrates with running comments to explain each step of the skill. The trainer after demonstration and clarifying doubts selects a group of participants to demonstrate, in turn, what they have observed (return demonstration). This is the time for the trainer to support the participants to learn the skill by clarifying any uncertainties and encouraging participants to ask questions. Return demonstration should be done immediately. The trainer should make sure that all participants get an opportunity to practice the skills. Participants should then be given opportunity to practice the skills in clinical areas.
11. **Field trips:** These are visits organized by the trainer to communities, Clinics, or outreach units where participants can observe different situations relevant to their training. The trainer should guide the participants as to what they should be looking out for during the field trip, and give them specific projects to write up and present in class afterwards. Projects can be done individually or in groups.
12. **Assignments:** Assignments can be in the form of homework, individual or group projects. Assignments give participants an additional opportunity to further understand the taught knowledge and skills. Good assignments build participants ability to be creative and innovative.

f. The Role of Facilitators

A facilitator helps participants to learn by means of individual and group discussions and role plays.

As a facilitator you have to be familiar with the materials being used for learning. It is the facilitator's job to guide participants through the modules, answer their questions, assign exercises and role plays, give individual feedback, lead group discussions and generally help the participants to complete the course successfully. A facilitator will not be expected to teach the content of the course through formal lecture. The duties of the facilitator are outlined below:

Instruct

- Ensure that each participant understands how to work through the materials and what he or she is expected to do in each exercise.
- Encourage the participants to ask questions or make comments. You should be available when the participants are working on the module.
- Respond politely to questions. For example, say: “Yes, I see what you mean” or “That is a good Question”. Avoid facial expressions and comments suggesting questions to be trivial or unimportant. Spend enough time with each participant to answer questions fully.
- Make clear any information that the participant finds confusing. Do not always wait for a participant to ask you for help. Instead, watch the participants while they are working and offer help to anyone looking troubled, starting into space, not writing answers or not turning pages.
- Evaluate each participant’s or group’s works, give correct answers, and give feedback as soon the task is finished.
- Provide guidance in group activities, such as discussions and role plays, to make sure that the learning objectives are accomplished. Group activities enable participants to practice using new knowledge and skills, and allow you to see whether a topic needs additional clarification and whether the participants need another opportunity to practice a skill.
- If Participants have difficulty with the language used in the modules, use local words and phrases that will help them to understand the concepts and ideas presented.

Motivate

- Demonstrate enthusiasm for the subject matter of the course and for the participants’ work.
- Praise and complement each participant for correct answers and improvements in performance.
- Prepare in advance and use energizers between sessions as appropriate.
- Encourage the participants to explore how the modules can be applied to the activities of their own health facilities and how the skills they are learning can help them to improve their immunization work.

Manage

- Ensure that all the participants have access to supplies and materials when they need them.
- Ensure that there are no obstacles to learning, such as excessive noise, poor lighting or insufficient work space.
- Monitor the progress of each participant.
- Ask assistance from facilitators or the course coordinator if you encounter problems.

Specifically, the role of the facilitator is to:

- Begin discussion

- Encourage full participation
- Ensure every aspect is considered
- Keep the group on track
- Keep the atmosphere constructive
- Ensure each contribution is given fair consideration
- Summarize discussion
- Record conclusions and agreements
- Creating the right climate
- Resolving frustration during discussions
- Concluding the discussion

If you encourage the participants' learning, ask for and answer their questions, and give them appropriate feedback, they are likely to follow your example in their relations with other health workers and community members.

g. How to Prepare to be a Facilitator

To prepare to facilitate the work of one or more participant you should:

- Read the modules and complete exercises.
- Read and study the contents of this guide
- Think about the sections that participants may find difficult and about questions they may ask.
- Prepare to help with difficult sections and answer questions
- Consider how the skills taught in the modules might be applied in the health facilities where participants are based.
- Plan questions to ask the participants in order to encourage them to consider how the skills can be applied in their health facility.
- Acquire the instructional materials and supplies listed in the checklist on page 15-16, and bring them to course meetings.

h. Characteristics of Good Facilitators

For facilitators to effectively carry out their roles, positive attitude is required at all times. Negative attitude kills good facilitation. But those who are supportive, fair, considerate, responsible, devoted, humorous, knowledgeable and critical can make good facilitators.

i. Understanding and Handling Participant Behaviors

Adults have a lot of experience and a unique behavior which will be reflected during discussions in training. These behaviors may affect the process either

ways, positively or negatively. To avoid such problems, help every participant develop with the group, be respected and keep the process constructive, the facilitator has to work out positive ways of handling behaviors and managing 'conflicts'. The following are some of commonly observed behaviors and corresponding methods of handling them.

1. **Overly Talkative:** *The participant in this case may be an 'eager' or simply a "showoff".*

Don't be embarrassing or sarcastic: you may want to call on their participation later. Slow them down with some difficult questions or interrupt them with "this is an interesting point; now lets see what the group thinks..."

2. **Highly Argumentative:** The learner may have a combative, confrontational personality or wants to "heckle".

Keep your own temper in check and don't allow other group members to get excited. Try to merit one of his/her point, and then move on. If not possible talk with the person during the break to find out what is bothering him/her.

3. **Rambler:** They talk about everything except the topic at hand...

When they stop for breath, thank them and refocus their attention by restating the relevant points, then move on.

4. **Personality Clash:** This is when two or more members clash. Such a clash may divide the group into factions as each party gathers support from other members.

Emphasize points of agreement and minimize disagreement if possible. Draw their attention back to the objectives. Ask direct question on the topic and bring positive members into the discussion.

5. **Won't Talk:** This person may be bored, indifferent, timid, insecure or may feel superior to the group.

Depend on what is motivating the individual. Arouse interest by seeking the person's opinion. If you think that the individual feels superior, ask for his/her view. Indicate your respect for their experience or wisdom but don't overdo it. First time s/he talks, compliment him/her. Be sincere.

6. **Ask for Your Opinion:** There is nothing wrong with participants seeking your own personal opinion on a topic. It becomes more difficult when you feel that the person is trying to test you or to put you on the spot.

Avoid solving trainee's problem for them. There are times when you must give a direct answer. Say, "first, let's get some other opinions about that" Then call on another individual by name.

7. **Wrong Subject:** This person does not ramble but is simply off base.

Take the blame yourself with "something I said must have led us away from the topic". Restate the last point given. Above all, don't embarrass the individual.

8. **Inarticulate:** Not able to put their thoughts into proper words. They may follow the discussion but not able to convey their own idea.

Don't say "what you mean is..." or "can someone help "Dawit" out here?" Say "let me paraphrase that" and then express what you think that Dawit tried to say. Get an agreement with him that is the real message and it is understood. Avoid changing the words but simply rephrasing.