Special Olympics

VOLUNTEER
MANAGEMENT SERIES

Train the Trainer

TRAIN-THE-TRAINER INDEX

Using The Volunteer Management Series:

A Unique Perspective
The majority of literature in the field of volunteer management is written to educate the person designated as the organization's manager/coordinator of volunteers. This Volunteer Management Series offers a unique perspective, with tools to deliver this critical information to *all staff* who interface with volunteers.

To be truly effective, today's manager of volunteer programs must be able to share his/her knowledge about effective management of volunteers with the staff and leadership who work with volunteers on a daily basis. This shift in the role of the manager of volunteers towards staff empowerment is great theory, but is challenging to deliver. Managers of volunteers often have numerous hats to wear and are stretched to find the time necessary to design fast-paced, practical skills training. The Volunteer Management Series was developed to provide the manager of volunteers a time-saving tool that can be respectful of the time limits demanded by busy human service staff.

The series is based on the critical skills, attitudes and knowledge that Programs need to implement a volunteer program. The modules are primarily written for the manager of volunteers who wishes to deliver or enhance his/her in-house training but has not been able to address this need due to limited design time, expertise or training experience. These modules do all the work for you!

The Module Design
Each module singles out a specific generic topic such as interviewing, delegation or recognition and focuses the content around four key concepts.

Each module can be shared in one of 3 ways:

- Information sharing primarily presented by the trainer,
- A combination of information sharing and facilitation of group exercises and discussion, and
- A facilitated discussion surrounding one or all of the key concepts in the topic.

The modules may be expanded through additional activities or several modules can be grouped together for a retreat or seminar. For example, supervision of volunteers could include the supervision, delegation and performance review modules.

Module Components

Each module is separated into three sections:

1. Facilitator's Guide,
2. Copies of slide presentation
3. Participant Workbook (consisting of reduced-size copies of each slide with space for note taking and relevant handouts)

I. Facilitator's Guide

Introduction

Each module begins with information which introduces the topic to the trainer. Its primary purpose is to discuss why the topic is critical to good management of volunteers and how it relates to other management skills. This information may also be utilized to develop a marketing piece for the training; or it can be used by the trainer in the beginning of the session to share how these skills are crucial for success in working with volunteers.

Purpose and Learning Objectives

Sharing the overall purpose and key learning objectives of a training helps participants to understand what they can anticipate learning. It gives an immediate sense that the session will be a thoughtful, directed and careful use of time.

A significant way to evaluate the training success is to have participants fill out the evaluation form in the back of the Participant Workbook. One section of the evaluation lists the learning objectives which participants indicate were met or not met during the training session.

If you modify the workshop, you may need to change or alter the learning objectives so that they are in line with your training focus.

As trainer/facilitator, you may wish to design additional activities and discussion topics to determine whether participants achieved the established learning objectives. For example, you could expand the interview workshop with a role play to determine if participants use the four step process of interviewing.

General Notes to Trainers

These comments were written to provide extra guidance and ensure that the trainer is comfortable with the script and prepared for any potential difficulties that might surface in the seminar.

One-Page Trainer Overview of the Module

Many trainers find it useful to have a one page summary of their training which includes the major sections of the presentation, approximate time for delivery, and corresponding slides for each section.

If you are adapting or expanding this module, you will need to make changes in this overview form. You may also wish to write actual times (9:00 a.m.- 9:10 a.m.) once you know the exact time you will have. This way you can be cognizant of how you are doing time-wise.

The Volunteer Management Series modules are designed to be presented in roughly one-hour workshops If you intend to use them as a quick review of basic information, time is quite adequate. However, if you are dealing with a subject where your organization is struggling or having resistance, you will want to expand the time in some sections.

Trainer Script

This section, the heart of the training, is built on four key concepts.

Each script gives suggested opening introductory exercises, content and discussion questions, and activities regarding the four key concepts. In most of the key concepts, trainers will have the choice of:

A) presenting the information while utilizing the slides or
B) eliciting the information from participants through facilitation.

Let's contrast the two styles in relation to the *Interview* module:

Presentation style: Trainer **presents** the reasons for the importance of the interview by using a transparency which lists client protection, staff and volunteer morale, and agency reputation.

Facilitator style: Trainer **asks** the participants to share why interviewing of volunteers is important. Trainer may record participant information and then add any reasons not mentioned.
Participant-based learning nearly always gets the best results. However, if the group does not have experience or information to share, you may need to present the data rather than facilitate the learning experience. Sharing of group ignorance can slow down the process and frustrate eager learners. One sign of an experienced trainer is to know the group well enough to determine if they collectively have the answers (they usually do) or if you are dealing with a topic about which the majority of the group have little information and therefore would appreciate a more structured presentation. The modules were developed to be flexible for either method selected.

Closing

After sharing the four concepts, brief time is allocated for some form of summary or "next steps" discussion. This allows you to bring closure or to point to further work to be done on this topic.

Expandable Activities

Ideally, you will have more than one-hour to present the information in the module. Suggestions in this section focus on additional related activities or discussions that could extend the workshop.

Participant Evaluation Form

Each module includes a participant evaluation form which can be used to determine the response and usefulness of the training and to gain a sense of whether learning objectives were achieved by participants. You may wish to adapt this form to gather additional or different information. If you have ample time at the close of the session, you may ask the participants to share their reactions and any suggestions for improvement in the seminar. It is particularly helpful for participants to share with others how they plan to apply what they learned.

II. Slides

For some trainers, overhead slides become their presentation notes. They help both the trainer and participants to stay focused on the main points of the presentation. Recording participant responses on blank transparencies or flip charts will also help to focus attention on key topics.

III. Participant Workbook

In this section you will find reduced-size copies of all the slides with a space for notes on each page. You will also find relevant handouts in many of the modules.

The handouts were purposely kept at a minimum since you will want to add any of your Program's pertinent forms, policies, procedures, etc., which deal with each topic. As an example, in the interviewing module you may wish to add a sheet of suggested interview questions for positions within your Program and/or a volunteer application form.

Designing a Staff Training Program:

There are many factors associated with a successful volunteer program. One concern essential to the success of every volunteer manager is ensuring that all staff are competent in the skills of supervising volunteers.

Managers often make the faulty assumption that if staff seem committed and enthusiastic about volunteer utilization, they must be proficient in it. Unfortunately, staff frequently receive very little support and training in the skills of working with volunteers. A volunteer program can be meticulously structured and pride itself on recruiting wonderful people, but if volunteers work with staff who are neither committed nor competent in utilizing volunteers, both the volunteer and the staff member will be unfulfilled and unsatisfied with the experience.

Let's take a closer look at the critical factors for building staff competency via a carefully constructed training program. To begin, ask yourself the following questions in relation to your Program:

1. What are the training needs (skills and knowledge) of staff who work with volunteers?
2. When are appropriate times to provide volunteer management education to staff?
3. What are the best methods by which a Program can provide volunteer management education to staff?
4. How can you stimulate staff interest in receiving skills training in volunteer supervision?
5. How can you provide educational opportunities if you are not a trainer?
6. How can you evaluate the impact of staff training?

The Training Needs of Staff Who Work with Volunteers

Train the Trainer

Training needs are best determined by asking two questions:

- What do staff members *need to know* to be successful in working with volunteers?
- What do staff *already know*?

Answering these questions will help identify the learning needs.

What does staff *need to know* to be successful working with volunteers?

Training programs are generally designed to affect one or more of the following types of learning: knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Knowledge:

Staff who work with volunteers may need information in the following areas:

- Trends impacting volunteering
- Policies and procedures for the volunteer program (for example, dismissal, risk management, performance review)
- Information about significant groups of volunteers working at the Program (for example, family members, athletes, senior citizens)
- Roles and responsibility of staff working with volunteers

Skills:

Staff who work with volunteers generally need skills in:

- Delegation
- Interviewing
- Recognition
- Supervision
- Job design
- Conflict resolution
- Communications
- Motivation
- Performance reviews

Attitudes:

It is important for staff to examine their attitudes regarding:

- The value of volunteers
- The importance of management functions
  (for example, performance reviews, risk management)
- Willingness to delegate
- Confidentiality
- Cultural differences

What do staff already know?

Some staff already have training in personnel management and need simply to transfer these skills, with some adaptations, to the management of volunteers. Other staff may have no formal education or experience in management and need basic skill development to work effectively with volunteers. Therefore you may need to design several adaptations of the training.

Keep the following in mind when designing your training curriculum:

- Designing an appropriate training program should involve extensive input from those who will participate in the training. Therefore, if possible and appropriate, include some staff on the task force to design the training program and include some staff in the delivery of the training.
- Conduct a formal or informal assessment of your current volunteer program and utilize the results to help develop your training.
- Identify areas of priority need - factor in the current issues and needs of your Program's volunteer program when selecting topics
- Design training that follows natural sequential learning. For example, deliver the job design module before recruitment.

Armed with identified learning needs, you can now begin to look for appropriate methods and times for delivering the training.

Occasions to Provide Volunteer Management Education to Staff

Each Program will have different opportunities that are particularly suited to its focus, structure, and size. Listed below are a few times when volunteer management training might be considered:

- When staff is newly hired
- When a new volunteer program is initiated
- During Program re-organizing
- At the first meeting of a committee or task force
- During staff meetings: Ask to provide in-service training at several meetings during the year or ask for a regular brief time to provide information and education on effective volunteer utilization at each meeting.

Methods to Provide Volunteer Management Education to Staff

Program variables such as: size, geography, maturity of Program, staff's level of expertise, etc., will guide you in determining the most appropriate methods of education suitable for your Program:

• **In-service training series**
- For the Program, department, or new staff
- Held multiple times a year on topics selected by a training task force (in conjunction with the training assessment results).

• **Orientation on volunteer program for new staff**
- One-on-one coaching with Manager of Volunteers or appropriate person
- Quarterly orientation sessions with new staff.

• **Video training with focus on the staff utilization of volunteers**
- Design and develop a video presentation specifically for your Program.
- Utilize college interns or professional videographers who could donate the in-kind service.
- Advantages to this form of training: Trained staff not required to design and present material each time it is needed; flexibility for those viewing the training

Train the Trainer

• Utilize existing resources on volunteer management

- Books and library resources can be very helpful in designing training. You can review material and distribute information that would be particularly useful to staff. Most authors in the volunteer management field are very generous in allowing material to be copied if it is for in-house use only, but be certain that you are honoring copyright laws when you distribute material.

•Newsletter tips

- When working with a large, geographically spread Program staff, newsletters can be particularly helpful.
- Also consider an e-newsletter
- To try: on a monthly basis, distribute tips and resources which can be added to the Volunteer Management Series binder

• Retreats

- an excellent way to provide competency training for staff

Stimulating Staff Interest in Receiving Training in Volunteer Management

Staff need to know that an impending training session will benefit them; it must be perceived as a solution to a problem. For example, rather than inviting people to a workshop on “Interviewing Volunteers”, invite them to learn the skills in designing interview questions. The following are some additional suggestions:

• Involve staff in the process of identifying skill/information gaps and designing methods to provide them. Utilize these same staff to sell the training to other staff.

• Make certain that the training is designed to solve staff identified problems. If you alone have defined the needs, your presentation will fall on deaf ears.

• Offer the same training topic twice so staff may select the most convenient time to attend.

• If you have a 3-4 part series, offer a certificate of completion suitable for framing. Write a letter for participant’s personnel file.

Train the Trainer

• Utilize staff in the training. A peer to peer educational exchange is generally more readily accepted. This is a wonderful way to recognize a staff person who models excellent leadership of volunteers.

• Involve some of your outstanding volunteers in parts of the training. For example, invite a panel of volunteers to share recognition practices that have been well received.

• Offer a lunch time series and provide lunch to participants.

Providing Educational Opportunities If You are Not a Trainer

If you are not an experienced trainer, you may choose one of several options:

- **If you wish to develop your training skills :**
  (1) Attend a train-the-trainer workshop
  (2) Read some excellent books on designing and delivering training, adult education, etc.
  (3) Begin with presentations to small groups to build your confidence and competence in this skill area.

- **If you do not wish to become a trainer yourself**, you can hire an outside trainer who specializes in volunteer management. Or you can hire or exchange services with another volunteer director in your area who is comfortable with training. You might also propose a partnership with another organization whereby they provide training either jointly with their staff or to your staff exclusively, in exchange for a service you will provide for them.

- One last suggestion would be to **incorporate volunteer management principles into other management training offered to your staff**. Since we encourage staff to use the same basic management principles with volunteers as they would with salaried employees, it may be possible to augment your organization's basic management training with information on working with volunteers. You would be seen as a resource person assisting in the training rather than taking full responsibility for it.

Evaluating the Impact of Staff Training

Three types of evaluation methods can be utilized to determine whether a training has been successful:

1. Initial Participant Reaction
2. Measurement of Learning Objectives
3. Behavior on the Job

Initial Participant Reaction

Initial participant reaction is the most common evaluation method used. Participants are generally asked to respond to an evaluation questionnaire, rating such aspects as quality of presentation, clarity of goals, physical location, etc. This method has very little to do with impact as there has been no time to try out new skills or use new information on the job. It does, however, have significance as whether or not staff see a benefit to devoting time to the topic. If they leave with a feeling of increased enthusiasm and a sense of being better equipped to do the job, there will be an increased buy-in and commitment to the volunteer program.

Measurement of Learning Objectives

This method examines whether the learning objectives were in fact accomplished. During the closing stages of a training, one can use review exercises that will indicate whether participants changed attitudes or learned new skills. Although indicative of probable benefit, it cannot be assured. Changed behavior on the job will be the significant indicator.

Each of the modules in the Volunteer Management Series has a set of learning objectives that will be met if participants absorb the key concepts upon which each module is built. Thus, if one of the learning objectives is to have participants know the four steps in interviewing volunteers, you can test this learning through an interviewing role play and feedback session.

Behavior on the Job

To determine real impact of training, one needs to allow time for participants to try out new behaviors. Then, follow up and assess the change. This type of evaluation is rarely done because of the time it takes to gather the information. A helpful question to include on an evaluation is: "What do I plan to do differently as a result of this training?" Simple follow-up questions you could ask participants, in person, via computer, or by survey are: "What are you doing differently since the seminar?" "What have you noticed to be the impact of your changed behavior, approach, attitude?"

A sample evaluation form is included in each of the modules associated with the Volunteer Management Series.

The Basics of Good Training:

The essential features involved in good training fall into four major categories:

- Principles of Adult Learning
- Training Design and Content
- Training Room Set-up
- Trainer's Delivery of Content

Principles of Adult Learning

Assuming that most staff you will be training are adults, it is important for you to understand features of adult learners which will guide you in both content design and in the delivery of that content.

(1) Adults determine for themselves what is important to learn and therefore are looking for relevant, useful information.

(2) Adults bring a broad base of experience and a need to validate information based on their past beliefs and experiences.

(3) Adults have many preoccupations outside of a particular learning situation and will be easily distracted if the information is not practical and well presented.

(4) Adults respond to positive, appropriate reinforcement. They are hesitant to show vulnerability and are particularly offended by "put downs." Trainers should avoid phrases like, "I think we already covered that, John."

(5) Adults generally have a preferred style of learning:
   - o Auditory (they like the lecture)
   - o Visual (they like the transparencies and handouts)
   - o Kinesthetic (they like the exercises and self-learning activities)

   A good trainer includes all styles so as to reach a diverse audience.

(6) Adults have significant ability to serve as knowledgeable resources to the facilitator and to other participants.

(7) Adults tend to be problem-centered and will feel satisfied only if their problem is dealt with and resolved. Try to uncover these issues prior to or at the beginning of a seminar.

(8) Adults have set habits and tastes. For example, some need caffeine, some want health food, some are offended by profanity, and some environmentally-concerned participants are distressed when handouts are not printed on both sides. Effective workshop leaders accommodate as much as possible these adult habits or tastes. If not, the evaluation form will not relate whether they gleaned anything from the workshop but rather what offended them.

(9) Adults function best in a collaborative environment and like to share in the planning and presentation of the workshop. This is particularly true if the training is in-house.

Along with this need to understand basic adult learning principles, one must also pay close attention to the needs and level of knowledge of your particular workshop participants. If you have some experienced staff who may not need basic training in volunteer management topics, you might involve them in the delivery of the training or, minimally, use a facilitated style of learning where these staff can share their experiences.

The staff training assessment should guide you in your selection of topics. Remember that adults want practical information that can solve their problems. Often as they struggle with finding solutions to their problems, they begin to realize that the solutions are connected to increased knowledge and skills in areas they had not identified as a problem. For example, staff may not define delegation as a problem but may discover in problem solving that a probable cause of repeated disappointments in volunteer follow-through may be related to their own skill and ease in delegation to volunteers. When this “a-ha” occurs, they often initiate a request for training in this area.

Training Design and Content

The Volunteer Management Series has done much of this work for you, however, trainers are encouraged to adapt the material to the needs of their Programs or to develop new topics that may be of particular use to your staff. The following are a few recommendations as you prepare to design and/or select your content:

- Good training design begins with the assessment of the learning needs of anticipated participants. Your content should be built around the gap between what staff needs to know to be successful and what they already know.
- After the topic(s) are chosen, it is important to specify key learning objectives that deal with knowledge, skills and attitudes. Learning objectives describe what a participant should be able to know or do or feel at the conclusion of the seminar.
- Select a moderate level of content. Avoid the tendency to include everything you know about a given topic – the result is often a rushed session where little is retained. The best approach to developing a lean curriculum is being selective – choosing the need to know before the nice to know. When the content level is kept moderate, the trainer can lead activities that experiment with and reflect upon what is being presented.
- Provide printed resources that will be utilized and/or shared (for example, handouts, activity sheets, training manual for participants, in-house forms). These resources greatly enhance learning if they are well done and tie closely to the presentation. If handouts are distributed and no acknowledgment is given to them, they are infrequently read or utilized.

A typical sequence for training is:

Beginning of training:

Purpose of session
Learning objectives and key concepts
Introductions, ice breakers

Middle of training:

Content developed around key concepts, done in logical fashion and building from theory to application, knowledge to skill. Selected training activities/learning methods varying from passive to participant phases:

- lectures
- role play
- slides
- flip chart
- group activities
- panel discussions
- brainstorming
- case study
- dramatization

Occasional breaks and energizers if session is longer than 90 minutes

End of training:

Review and summarize content

Have participants process experience: “What will I do differently when I return to my job?”

Conduct an evaluation to get a sense of the participant’s perceived value of the session. True evaluation occurs if you can arrange a follow-up form whereby actual impact can be recorded. For example: “As a result of the workshop in interviewing, I now see its value and have arranged to give half hour screening interviews to volunteer candidates in my department.”

Training Room Set-up

Managing the training's physical environment is not always completely in your control, but there are several key factors that are critical to a seminar's overall success:

Size

- Consideration should be given to the size of the group and type of relationship you want to promote between yourself and the group.
- A small group in a very large room will feel cold and impersonal, so it is best to create your corner by using room dividers, plants, etc.
- Cramming too many people in a room can create visual and comfort problems. If the tables can be situated in a horse shoe pattern, you can create a more intimate environment.

Seating Arrangement

- Chairs and tables should be arranged so that everyone can see the facilitator and the space where he/she will be training.
- Common seating set-ups are herringbone (tables slanted towards the center) or round tables where seats are placed so that everyone can see the trainer.

Lighting

- Natural lighting is always favorable, but if there are too many windows (with good views!) day dreaming may interfere with participant productivity.
- Pay attention to lighting so that participants can take notes and transparencies or other media are clear. Avoid turning down lights as day dreaming may turn into real dreaming!

Acoustics

- Consideration must be given to ensure that everyone can clearly hear the trainer and that participants can hear one another.
- Utilizing a microphone may be necessary in large groups.
- Always repeat a participant question or comments if he/she is not in hearing range of others.
- Prior to training, always check acoustics for the person who will be seated furthest from you.

Temperature and Ventilation

- The best way to deal with participant comfort is to set the room at a temperature which is comfortable for most participants.
- If you are training in a room which tends to be hot/cold you might remind staff of this so that they can dress accordingly or dress in layers.
- Occasionally parts of a room are a different temperature due to heat and air-conditioning vents. If you know this to be the case, you may want to alert participants to these conditions before they get situated.

Seating Comfort

- This is not always in your control, but you need to remember that learning and interest decrease rapidly when participants are in hard chairs. Think of ways to allow learners to move around, stand up, etc. There is nothing more disturbing after a workshop than to read evaluations which spend most of the time referring to the unsatisfactory climate and environment factors.

Food and Beverages

- The rule of thumb is to have variety if you are doing seminars for over 90 minutes.
- It is best to let participants know in advance by a flyer, E-mail, etc., what will be served. Then, they can attend to their own needs if necessary.

Audiovisual and Equipment Aids

- Having good equipment can support a good training program but poor equipment can be a major distraction.
- Make certain a day or two ahead that you have the equipment needed to present your training.
- Always have an extension cord and an extra light bulb on hand - just in case!

Restrooms

- This is generally an issue if your training is over 90 minutes and you are selecting an off-site location for the training. You may need to lengthen your breaks if restrooms are limited in number for the size of the group.

Traffic Flow in the Room

- The room should be arranged so that the registration table, refreshments, exit doors, display tables, etc., are at the back of the room so that you and the participants are not distracted.
- Ask participants to sit in front seats so that late comers can slip into the back without causing commotion.

Name Tags or Identification

- If people in your training session are unknown to you or each other, place their first names (in big print) on a tented paper name card in front of them.

Trainer's Delivery of Content

It is one thing to know information, quite another to effectively communicate it to a group. Listed below are several qualities and skills for successful delivery of a training:

- Variety in Training Methods
- Participant Interaction
- Flexibility
- Pacing and Transitions
- Natural Humor
- "Been There" feeling
- Effective Use of Equipment and Visuals
- Organized Training Space
- Presentation and Facilitation Skills

Variety in Training Methods

There are numerous training methods from active to passive that can be used to introduce or reinforce a concept or skill. These methods are based on a single or combination of senses: sight, sound or hands-on. The key is to match methods with the type of participants involved and to provide variety related to the learning outcomes desired.

Common training methods include:

- structured warm-up exercises
- presentation of content (lecture)
- demonstration
- film/video
- small group discussion
- questionnaires
- role plays
- games
- case study.

Research has shown repeatedly that only 10-percent of information shared orally will be retained after three-days. When participants are shown visuals as well as being told, they will retain nearly 65-percent of the information.

Whatever methods are selected, it is important to design feedback so that participants acknowledge the learning and begin to apply it to their own work . One of the simplest feedback mechanisms is to ask participants to summarize the major concepts learned. Rather than each group sharing their entire list, ask them to add items which have not been previously mentioned. Rotate the feedback order during the session so that more groups get "floor time."

Participant Interaction

As previously mentioned, adults learn best by sharing their ideas, experiences and responses with one another. Therefore, even in workshops as brief as 55 to 90-minutes, one should aim to facilitate rather than teach most concepts. For example, rather than telling participants the qualities of a good interview, ask them to recall a time when they were interviewed well and have them share the skills and qualities of the interviewer. You can actively record the information on flip charts or transparencies and then add any traits which are notably missing.

At the early stages of training, using the facilitated approach may feel more difficult as you must be able to rephrase and summarize "on your feet" and you must keep the group focused on the task at hand. New trainers tend to gradually move from mostly presentation (it's safer, and you can prepare and control it) to a combination of presentation and facilitation. Comfort with the information and additional training experience seem to make the difference.

Flexibility
Being organized and prepared are admirable qualities in a trainer, however, situations often occur that require you to change plans or adjust your schedule (for example, equipment breaking, participants struggling with a concept longer than anticipated). The ability to be flexible comes with the confidence derived from continued experience.

Transitions and Pacing of Material
The energy of your audience will fluctuate. These variations should, to some degree, guide you in decisions concerning the methods and content you cover.

Some generally-accepted guidelines include:

- Early morning is generally the best time for a short, punchy, quick delivery.
- Midmorning is an optimal time for group involvement.
- Late morning is a good time for tough work since it is when people are generally most alert.
- After lunch is important for participant involvement which will help them re-energize and overcome post-lunch lethargy.

One of the most important skills in a training is making transitions from one concept or topic to another. It is helpful if the participants know the flow of the day up front. Illustrating linkages between concepts can also help people see how the individual segments of training fit together. While unseasoned trainer may plan and even write down transition segments of the workshop, it will become more natural after you have more experience with the materials.

Natural Humor
Responding spontaneously to humor in the group is considerably more effective than planned jokes. If people can laugh and learn simultaneously, you will have a rewarding and fun training session. Humor is harmful when it is sarcastic or somehow makes participants feel stupid or inept.

"Been There" Feeling
Nothing separates effective trainers from theorists more than the genuine qualities of an authentic person who has stood in the shoes of those they train. If you do not have volunteers directly reporting to you, you will have a difficult time truly appreciating the challenges of leading volunteers. Theory is important but it must be followed with concrete, practical suggestions as to how participants can

diminish the barriers and problems they experience in this work. Trainers should prepare personal stories to establish credibility and connection with the audience.

Effective Use of Equipment and Visuals
Be as assertive as you can about the need for proper equipment and good placement of the teaching aids. Your excellent presentation can be ruined if attention is not devoted to this. Numerous studies have shown that visuals increase the effectiveness of presenting, as measured by retention, anywhere from 38-percent to 200-percent.

Some tips to keep in mind:

- In writing supplementary slides or transparencies, use the 7 by 7 rule - no more than 7 lines of type, no more than 7 words per line. Keep it simple!
- When presenting material, maintain eye contact with the audience. Avoid reading the material from the screen or turning your back to the audience.

<u>Flip charts:</u>

- Flip chart recording is particularly helpful in small groups when you are capturing audience response.
- For larger groups, you will need to limit yourself to 10 lines of 2” high letters using a 1/4 inch thick magic marker.
- Alternate colors are good for emphasizing key points or moving through sequential lists.
- When recording, strive to use participants’ exact words. This can be done by asking: “Does this capture what you said?” “Can I paraphrase that by saying...?” or “Would you summarize that idea in a phrase or two for our record?”
- Use abbreviations liberally
- Always face the group and stand to the side of the flip chart when recording.
- Consider having someone act as the recorder while you are gathering information from the group.

Organized Training Space

A major consideration in room arrangement is the presenter's workspace. It is a reflection on you as a professional. Participants will expect you to be organized, calm and in control of your materials and equipment.

A few tips:

- Have a separate table for handouts, name tags, extra note paper, pencils, etc., near the training room entrance.
- Have your notes where you can see them but participants cannot. The best deliveries seem spontaneous and "live."

Presentation and Facilitation Skills

There are hundreds of books and websites written on the subject of training. For those of you interested in professional development in this area, I would highly recommend that you spend some time exploring additional resources. Keep in mind however, that much of learning comes from trying out your skills, evaluating your own performance and improving each time you present.

For beginning trainers it is often easier to start by presenting the material and utilizing the script provided to you as a model. Each time you present, gradually elicit more information through a facilitated participant discussion rather than giving the answers. Facilitation generally takes longer than presentation, but ultimately results in a more receptive audience and in greater retention and utilization of the material discussed. Once you feel comfortable with the material you are presenting, you are likely to gain a greater confidence in your training abilities.