

GROUP FACILITATION AND MANAGEMENT

Many trainees may have experience facilitating groups, but not necessarily facilitating groups with a structured, manualized curriculum. This creates an additional challenge of having to manage a group and remain on task to the curriculum activities. Therefore, in addition to introducing the Street Smart intervention, this training also aims to assist trainees in learning how to utilize group management and facilitation skills in order to effectively implement the program. The following are examples of issues that might arise within a Street Smart group session and possible ways to address them.

Trainer Note: A handout version of this form is also included in the Appendices section. It should be distributed to the trainees to assist trainees in their preparation for teach-backs.

PARTICIPANT SEEMS WITHDRAWN, RESERVED, OR “TOO” QUIET

- Do exercises in dyads or triads to encourage interaction with other group members
- Do a go-round
- When doing a role-play, draw them into the action by setting the stage near the “quiet” or non-participatory youth
- Have them participate in non-verbal ways
- Have one facilitator “check in” with them after the group

PARTICIPANT TALKS TOO MUCH OR MONOPOLIZES THE GROUP

- Go back to ground rules and make it clear that everyone should participate
- Do not interrupt the speaker; however, if member pauses, thank them for their input and either keep moving with the curriculum or ask others what they think about the subject (not about what the participant was saying)
- When there is a pause, paraphrase what they are saying and link it back to the session
- When there is a pause, link it back to what another participant has said, validate the group (for being on point), and link it back to curriculum
- Suggest: “Let’s hear from some of you we haven’t heard from very much.”

PARTICIPANT ALWAYS SHOWS UP LATE AND/OR LEAVES EARLY

- Set-up the room to minimize distractions when latecomers arrive. Let the co-facilitator deal with their entrance (as opposed to the one presenting at the moment)
- Start and end on time
- Speak to member privately (not in front of the group)

- Find out if there is a problem outside of the group that needs to be addressed
- At the beginning of each session, thank all members for being on time
- Review the ground rules, stressing the importance of being on time
- Start promptly with the lottery

PARTICIPANT CHALLENGES INFORMATION PRESENTED

- Defuse confrontation by thanking the individual for bringing up their concerns, make sure to give them a token, decide whether or not to discuss the matter further, and then keep going with the curriculum
- If appropriate, ask other members to share their perception or comments on the issue
- Remember to not allow other members to jump on this participant (Remind everyone of the ground rule to agree to respect differences and thank that participant for bringing up a different perspective)
- Do not allow yourself to be drawn into an argument with the member—see it as an opportunity to clarify any misconceptions
- If necessary, ask if their concerns can be discussed further after the meeting.
- Summarize what has been said, including concerns (e.g., “on this issue we said..., and we also heard that for some, it was difficult to believe that”)

CONFLICTING OPINIONS AND/OR OPINIONS BETWEEN TWO MEMBERS

- Clarify whenever necessary
- Link the discussion (and opposing views) to the session and move on
- Summarize what is being said by the entire group, including everyone’s ideas equally (e.g., “on this issue we said..., and we also heard that for some, it was difficult to believe that...”)
- If the conflict is personal, do not ask other group members for comments
- Do not allow members’ arguments to disrupt the group
- If needed, speak to those involved privately

PARTICIPANT ASKS A PERSONAL QUESTION OR OPINION

- Acknowledge the question, then ask group for their opinion
- Generalize the question to link it to a relevant teaching point and/or to emphasize important aspects of the intervention
- Rephrase the question so that you can answer it (if appropriate)
- Use humor to deflect the question, “wow, well that took me by surprise...”
- Break the question down further and link the subject back to the session or Street Smart. For example:

Youth: “When was the first time you had sex?”

Facilitator: “do you mean what were the circumstances, like was I in love or not, or do you mean how old I was....?” (allow participant to

answer)...”I ask because a lot of people have opinions about when is the right time to have sex for the first time. What do you think is important when thinking about having sex for the first time?”

THE GROUP SEEMS INACTIVE OR TOO QUIET

- Do exercises in dyads or triads to encourage interaction and participation
- Facilitator--pick up pace and energy
- Do a go-round to obtain Feeling Thermometer readings
- Examine facilitation. Facilitator may be “lecturing too much” or “preaching”. Stick closer to curriculum (avoid over-processing)
- Find opportunities within the curriculum to get the group up and moving (i.e. with role-play make stage so everyone has to move)

PARTICIPANTS DON'T WANT TO DO ROLE-PLAYS

- Try calling it by different names (skit, scene, movie)
- Have a box of costumes for them to use dress up and get in character
- Change format of role-plays (unscripted vs. scripted)
- In the beginning of the program, identify the participants that thrive on attention. Select these members to do the first role-plays. In later sessions, have them coach other participants in doing role-plays
- When helping participants prepare for role-plays, facilitator can review the role-play (some participants are better at hearing it than reading it) and give them ideas on how to make it fun
- When you are inviting youth to join program, include role-plays as part of your description so youth aren't caught off-guard

FACILITATORS RUN OUT OF TIME TO DO ALL THE ACTIVITIES IN THE SESSION

- Examine how prepared facilitators are prior to the session
 - Is time being used to set up that could be used to facilitate activities?
 - Are all newsprints prepared ahead of time?
- Start on time (often, facilitators start a little late to accommodate the “late” participants or wait for everyone to settle down)
- Explore facilitation around this issue
 - Collect data: Have co-facilitator (not facilitator presenting) keep track of time (written) it takes to finish exercise. How long did it take and how does that compare to suggested time in curriculum?
 - After each session, provide feedback on how they can conduct the session more efficiently. Helpful feedback to address this issue could include suggestions on how to increase the pace and energy levels of the sessions.

- Note if there are particular exercises that seem to always take longer. Does it take longer only with one particular facilitator or in general? Is this because of your population (and may be an indication of a need for adaptation or tweaking) or is it a training issue? Request technical assistance around this activity.

USING THE MATERIAL TO HANDLE CHALLENGING SITUATIONS

Trainers should take every opportunity to use the tools of Street Smart during training, including when they have found themselves in difficult or confusing situations. This helps the trainer regain control, provides a moment to think and reinforces how the tools and techniques of Street Smart work.

- Use tokens liberally to allow yourself the time you may need to think, or consider a contribution or challenge from a participant. This also reinforces the more nuanced use of tokens as it excellently defuses most potentially challenging situations (giving a token of appreciation to a boisterous youth often has a calming effect without judgment or embarrassment.)
- Use terminology found in the curriculum to respond to difficult situations (e.g. “wow, we really have a lot of pros and cons about this”);
- Model the thermometer when you’re feeling uneasy (e.g. “I just realized my thermometer is at a 65 right now. Let’s do a quick go round and see where everyone else is at”... Or “these subjects can bring people’s thermometers up...”)
- Refer back to ground rules (in a pleasant manner) if necessary