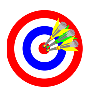
SUPERVISION OF SEX OFFENDERS IN THE COMMUNITY: A Training Curriculum

User's Guide

This *User's Guide* previews the format of the "Content and Teaching Notes" components of the curriculum and explains the participant materials and slides provided. It also offers some hints for training techniques and methods.

The following icons are used to help guide you through the materials:

This icon indicates the beginning of a new lecture topic.



This icon indicates a Learning Activity. When you see this icon, you should remember that this is an opportunity for breaking the audience into groups, and you should consider the best composition of the group for this activity.

This icon indicates a question that the presenter might like to pose to the group. In most instances, the questions are a follow-up to the lecture content, and in other instances, the questions are presented as an alternative to the lecture format.

Other useful symbols include:

➢**Use Slide #**-- these appear alongside the relevant text. With a few exceptions the slides provide illustration or additional detail, but do not introduce any new information. They are designed to reinforce points made in the text. The slides are stored in a PowerPoint format. This allows them to be used with an LCD projector or printed out and copied onto transparencies for use with an overhead projector. In addition, they can be printed out as handouts with three or six slides per page and copied for distribution to participants.

🕮 **Refer to Handout** – this is used for all types of handouts--exercises, illustrative materials and reference handouts. These materials can be duplicated for inclusion in a packet given to participants to use during the training.

Time Allotment:

Summary Schedules are provided at the beginning of each section. They provide a table of contents for each of the Sections, with a recommended time allotment for each topic within the Section. They also include a brief summary of the subject matter and a brief description of the Learning Activities. The amount of time allotted for each portion of the training also appears at the heading of each section, within the section at each new topic, and at the Learning Activities within each topic.

The times allotted for each section and for each topic within the section assume the use of the Learning Activities but are MINIMUM times. There are no breaks included, and minimal time for sharing the outcomes of small group exercises with the larger group. Question/Answer periods are also not directly included. Trainers are encouraged to schedule breaks every 2 – 3 hours and to provide whatever mechanism for questions suits their presentation style.

Most of the material is presented in a way that is very easy to abridge, if necessary. We recommend that you do so according to the needs and interests of your particular audience.

Learning Activities:

What we are calling *Learning Activities* is any opportunity for participants to engage with the material or with each other in an active way. These are spread throughout the curriculum and take many different forms. If time limits require that portions of the training be cut, trainers should make every effort to include as many of the Learning Activities as possible. They are as essential to the mastery of the field as the lecture topics.

The most common form of activity in this curriculum is the use of discussion questions. With 25 participants or less, presenters can choose to engage the entire group in discussion, or break the group down into smaller groups. (With more than 25, a large group discussion can be unwieldy and inadequate to the goals of the Learning Activities.) There are advantages and disadvantages to each.

With a <u>single group</u>, the presenter can
- moderate the discussion,
- dispel any misinformation that comes up, and
- maintain a clear sense of how well the group is absorbing the new information and ideas.

<u>Smaller groups</u>
- allow everyone greater opportunities to participate (a plus for people who resist talking in large groups),
- but can allow myths and misinformation to be reinforced unless a knowledgeable facilitator is available to work with each group.

The disadvantages of small groups can be reduced by having the trainer rotate from group to group to answer questions. You might want to consider recruiting more experienced participants to facilitate each small group, if training staff are not available to fulfill this role.

Logistics
These pedagogical issues have a practical side as well.

- Is the room arranged to allow for small group discussions (around tables, for example)?
- Or will participants have to get up and move to other rooms each time?
- Will you want the same groups throughout each Section?
- Will you want different groups ?

Presenters are encouraged to think through the logistics of the Learning Activities in advance of each Section, because in some cases where time or space is limited, it may be beneficial to combine the interactive portions into fewer activities rather than spread them throughout the session.

Another consideration for the Learning Activities is the *composition* of small groups. If the participants are mixed in terms of their levels of knowledge, experience, and field of practice or expertise, trainers should consider whether small groups should be mixed or should attempt to group similar participants together. Again, there are advantages and disadvantages to both.

In a mixed group,

- less knowledgeable participants can learn from the more knowledgeable ones, and
- cross-disciplinary groups can mirror the kinds of management teams and sharing of perspectives that the curriculum encourages.

With more homogenous groups, like groups of more experienced participants or practitioners of the same discipline,

- discussions may go more deeply more quickly because of shared assumptions,
- but groups of less experienced professionals will need more guidance.

Trainers may want to consider using both options at different times throughout the five sections.

Case Study

This curriculum uses a *Case Study* as a learning activity throughout the first three sections of the Long Version of the curriculum. There are discussion questions provided and these are referenced at the relevant sections of the section. Presenters are encouraged to become familiar with the Case Study, and make any amendments that are deemed necessary to make the case relevant and realistic to their audience. Participants should be discouraged from finding ways to distance themselves from the material (e.g. "it would never happen like that here so why even talk about it").

Because the Case Study is essential to the mastery of the subject matter, trainers are encouraged to allow sufficient time for participants to become familiar with the case.

We have suggested introducing it at the end of the first section with some very general questions about the participants' familiarity with sex offender cases. Another option would be to require that participants read the case between sessions -- whether it's over lunch on the first day where they could then discuss the questions, or as "homework" before the next section.

While the Case Study is not incorporated into the Brief or Medium Versions, trainers may find it useful to review the Case Study and questions, and draw examples that can be used in their presentation. It could also be used as a "homework" assignment for those who are interested.

Evaluations

We have included an evaluation form for the very end of the training that is designed to assess how well the curriculum meets its stated goals and objectives. There is room on the evaluation form for “Additional Feedback to the Presenter(s).” If you have a standard evaluation form that you use, we encourage you to include that in the participant materials in addition to the one we’ve provided. If you don’t have a standard evaluation form that you use, and don’t wish to create one for this purpose, we invite you to use the space on the form provided to request that your audience respond to a particular question, or to simply leave that area open for them to respond as they will. We request that you send us copies of these completed forms so that we can monitor the effectiveness of our training materials. You can send them to the attention of:

Tom Talbot, Senior Manager
Center for Sex Offender Management
8403 Colesville Rd., Suite 720
Silver Spring, MD 20910

Some Training Techniques and Terms

Question and Answer: Some presenters are comfortable having participants interrupt with questions. Others prefer to have participants hold questions until the end of a section or other specified period. In part this is a matter of preference, but it also can be a matter of time, since interruptions can throw off a schedule and training participants can sometimes get caught up in an individual problem at the expense of the group. The trainer’s familiarity with the material is also relevant. The more familiar the presenter is with the material and with the curriculum itself, the less disruptive it may feel to be interrupted. Another option to consider is handing out index cards with the participant materials and asking participants to write their questions and turn them in. The presenter can then go through these during breaks and decide when and how it’s most appropriate to respond.

Gathering Input from the Group: In any group there will be some participants more willing to contribute than others. If a trainer simply allows the normal dynamic of a group to unfold—with some participants dominating—other participants may not have the opportunity to make important contributions or ask questions. One technique for "leveling the playing field" in a group training setting is to use a "round robin" technique. This involves going around a group and asking input from each person in order without interruptions. Usually, these are recorded in a way that allows everyone to see and remember what's been said. The process can continue until no one has anything more to add, with individuals passing when they have nothing new to contribute, or it can be limited to a certain number of cycles through the group. For some purposes, just generating a list will be sufficient. For example, if you're using nominal round robin process to evaluate a meeting, the organizer can take the list and process it independently. If the list is going to be used for additional purposes within the training – for example, if you are creating a list which you will then have to prioritize – it is necessary to include time for the group to work with the list, eliminate duplication, order sub-topics under their larger concepts, etc. This process is an excellent way to solicit everyone's participation, make sure everyone feels heard, and to minimize the impact of individuals or factions that tend to dominate.

Recording: Writing on newsprint, a dry erase board, or overhead is a very simple but sometimes overlooked technique for reinforcing learning. For visual learners, it is essential. Trainers can invite a participant to serve as a recorder for a particular activity if the process of writing would detract from effective facilitation. Asking small groups to name a recorder to capture the main points of their discussion can help to keep the small groups focused on their task.

Small group activities: We've mentioned above some of the pros and cons of breaking your audience into small groups, as well as some considerations for the composition of the groups. A quick way to create random groups, and to encourage participants to engage with people outside their immediate circle, is to have participants count off to whatever number of groups you want to create.

Introductions/Ice Breakers: You can ask people to give their name, title, and agency, but sometimes a creative introduction process can set the tone for an informal, interactive training session. In a group where everyone knows each other – or where everyone knows at least one person in the room well – ask participants to share something that no one in the room knows about them. (If someone says "I knew that," then they have to come up with another one!) With a group of strangers, invite them to share the cartoon character they most identify with. If the group is relatively small (or if you break it down into small groups), ask people to give two true statements and one false statement about themselves. The others have to guess which one is false. Or, you may take a more traditional route and ask each participant to say a few words about their expectations for the training.

There are many other ways to "break the ice" at the beginning of your training—use your imagination. Although some individuals feel reluctant to introduce such informal or seemingly "non-substantive" elements into a training event, the goal here is an important one. The goal is to create an environment where attendees feel welcome to "participate" by expressing their own reactions, asking questions, providing insights from experience, and voicing challenges to the materials presented. This will make the training experience much more meaningful and will assist participants in “mastering” the material and truly understanding its relevance for their own work.