

7 Preparing for the workshop and forming the group

7.1 Practical considerations

When preparing to facilitate a disability-awareness workshop, there are two key principles to bear in mind:

- The workshop must be relevant to the participants' needs and interests.
- The environment, the materials, and the activities must be accessible to all the participants.

7.1.1 Make the workshop fit the participants, not vice versa

Find out as much as possible about the participants before the workshop begins, and adapt the contents and approach to suit them. You have only a limited time, and disability awareness touches on all areas of life and human activity, so focusing on what is most immediately relevant to your particular participant group will help to ensure maximum participation and optimal learning. No matter how much you may want to, you can't do everything in a day, or two, or even twenty; it is better to be specific, make a few clear points, and get participants engaged and interested, so that they will transfer something from the workshop into real life.

Try to think yourself into the minds and motivation of participants. What is likely to be each one's particular starting-point and perspective on disability? Here are some general suggestions, based on our own experience, to start you thinking.

Health-care/ medical staff

For health and medical staff, the main motivators are often compassion and a desire to find a cure, to make people 'better', or to prevent them from becoming ill. But in their dealings with disabled people, medical and health-care staff need to understand that such attitudes, whether conscious or unconscious, may be very harmful. They also need to be aware that, by virtue of their professional training and privileged access to information, they may be perceived by disabled people as wielding power over them – a perception which

may lead to a lack of trust and poor communications. When health professionals have understood these potential problems, they are usually keen to explore appropriate ways of working.

Engineers Engineers are trained to be problem-solvers. They approach a structure by asking questions such as ‘How can we make the best use of this structure, and what resources do we need to make it work?’ If they understand that they can make significantly better use of a structure or facility by taking account of the needs of disabled people, they can then set about ‘solving the problem’ of making it accessible to all.

Accessibility is an investment that pays off for society in many ways. It allows disabled people to go where everyone else goes – and the more that disabled people are visible and participate in society, the more easily they cease to be ‘the unknown’, and attitudes towards them will change. For people with visual impairments, an accessible built environment means not having to depend on someone else to take them where they need to go. If the only person who can accompany them also happens to be the family breadwinner, an accessible environment can make all the difference between the family eating or not eating that day.

Although engineers sometimes complain that ramps for wheelchair users require more cement than steps do and therefore cost more, they usually appreciate the argument that steps cause far more accidents than ramps do, and that the cost of treating the injuries may be far higher than the cost of the extra cement. But while cost is a significant factor, there is a more fundamental issue: buildings are built to be used, and we all have the same right to use them. Choosing to make a building accessible to only part of the population (the non-disabled) is an arbitrary and discriminatory decision. Thus, a one-day introductory workshop to raise awareness of disability among NGO engineers (most of whom might be men and non-disabled) could start with the concept of equal rights (illustrated with statistics about the numbers of disabled people), before proceeding to consider the three ‘models of disability’ and then examining barriers to access, using relevant examples, to help the engineers to understand why disability is relevant to their work – whether they specialise in the provision of water and sanitation, or building and reconstruction.

Real-life situation studies, or working through actual building plans, are a good way of getting engineers to start applying their skills to the needs of disabled people; to examine myths, such as the ‘huge extra costs’ of ensuring accessibility; and to challenge the notion that accessibility is something ‘Western’ and not relevant in the context of

emergency aid or community development in poor countries. It is important to include a consideration of gender: getting engineers to think about the access needs of disabled women as well as those of disabled men.

- Distribution staff of humanitarian agencies** For staff of aid-distribution programmes, the main question is ‘How can we make sure that these supplies reach those most in need?’ Workshops should emphasise the rights of disabled people to receive aid; consider how to identify disabled people within target beneficiary populations, and how to assess their needs (some of which will be the same as those of non-disabled people, and some of which may be different); discuss how disabled people can be enabled to claim their entitlements and participate in relief programmes; explore how they might be represented at all stages of the programme; identify the barriers to equal access and discuss how they can be removed; and assess the potential role of DPOs in distribution programmes: how might national and international organisations learn from, work with, and support local DPOs?
- Women refugees** A workshop for the women’s committee of a camp for refugees or displaced people (most, perhaps all, of whom will be non-disabled) might also start with a consideration of rights, models, and barriers, but should focus on the problems confronting disabled women, disabled children, and carers in the camp, finding out their views and needs, and making sure that they are involved in everyday activities and decision making.
- DPO staff and members** A workshop with staff and members of a local DPO (all, most, or some of whom would be disabled, and most of whom might be men) again might include rights, models, and barriers, but should be based on activities which help to raise participants’ self-esteem or explore their own experience of impairment and disability, and move on to consider how they might raise awareness among the disabled and non-disabled public. It might also include discussion of gender-related aspects of disability.

7.1.2 Access! Access! Access!

If at all possible, workshop facilitators should contact participants in advance, to enquire about their access needs. If this is not possible, you should make sure that the physical environment is generally accessible, and be ready to adapt activities on the day. Check with the participants, either individually as they arrive, or as a group at the start of the workshop. The point is that all participants should be given the opportunity to participate and learn on an equal basis, and it is the facilitator's job to create the conditions for this to happen.

Accessibility of the physical environment

Here is a list of basic considerations. Environmental barriers vary from place to place, so it is always worth checking with disabled people what the most frequently encountered barriers in their community are. If in doubt, ask someone who is disabled to check out the space. For technical information, check the ISO Building Construction Guidelines (details in the Resources section at the end of this book). This list could be made into a handout for workshop participants.

- Steps**
 - If there are a lot of steps, can a ramp be made (of wood or concrete)?
 - The angle of any ramp should follow ISO guidelines (or at the very least should not be dangerously steep).
 - Paint a white line at the edge of each step to improve visibility.
 - Add a handrail along steps or ramp, to assist people with impaired mobility or sight.

- Lift/elevator**
 - Is there one? Does it work? Is the electricity supply reliable?
 - Can a wheelchair fit inside the lift, with all the doors closed?
 - Buttons should be reachable from a wheelchair, and/or there should be room for someone who can reach the buttons.
 - Differentiate buttons by the use of Braille or by numbers drawn with a raised line.

- Doorways**
 - Check that doorways are wide enough for wheelchairs to pass through them.
 - Check to see if the floor under the doorway is flat.

- Toilet**
 - Is there space for a wheelchair to enter and turn? And for the door to be opened and closed while the person is inside?
 - Does the door open outwards?
 - Does the toilet have a seat? Enough space in front and beside it for transfer?
 - Are there handrails?
 - Are the toilet-flush mechanism, hand-basin, mirror, and door-lock at a level where they can be reached by someone sitting in a wheelchair?

- General**
- Put tactile or Braille labels at the entrance to each room.
 - Signs should be in large print.
 - Any visual information should also be provided verbally, and vice versa.
 - Check to see if parking space is available close to the building, and if the route from the car park to the building is obstructed in any way.
 - Paths leading to the building should be cleared of snow, ice, and mud.
 - Arrange for blind or visually impaired people to become familiar with the layout of rooms and facilities.

Accessibility of activities and materials

For people with physical impairments

- Focus on what people can do; for example, use an energiser that uses facial gestures or words, instead of a physically demanding game like Musical Chairs (which involves running from one chair to another).
- Be aware that for some people any movement, or certain movements, can cause pain. Find out if this is so for any participants in the group and modify the activity if that is the case.
- Don't assume that an active, interactive workshop necessarily requires a lot of movement, variety of pace, and noise. For many people, action and movement are totally unrelated concepts, and speed or noise (or lack of either) do not necessarily indicate levels of energy or vibrancy.
- Provide chairs, mattresses, tables, or work surfaces so that as far as possible all participants, facilitators, and interpreters work and communicate at the same height. For example, wheelchair-users tend to feel distanced and excluded from any activity that requires participants to draw on the ground. Instead, you might provide a table for everyone to use, or (if they are comfortable about it) wheelchair-users might transfer to a cushion or mattress on the ground.
- Ask if any participants need to lie down for part of the time, or transfer to different seating (to help to prevent muscle pain, or to prevent pressure sores).
- People with impaired mobility often feel the cold acutely. Check that the room temperature is comfortable for them.

For people with hearing impairments

- Use a sign-language interpreter (where applicable), and allow time for interpretation. Provide short breaks for the interpreter to rest.
- Speak clearly (do not shout).
- Assist lip reading: do not cover your mouth with your hands, or turn your face away so that your mouth cannot be seen.
- People should not pass in between the interpreter and deaf participants.

- Written displays and handouts, and other visual aids, should be used to reinforce what is said by facilitator and participants.
- If you show a video, use subtitles or provide an accompanying text that participants can read for themselves or have signed for them.

For people with visual impairments

- Always read out what is written and verbally describe what is drawn on flipcharts, handouts, diagrams, etc.
- Provide reading partners, to read out handouts used in the workshop and at home.
- Depending on the technology available locally, consider also the use of Braille, cassette tapes, and raised-line drawings.
- Use shapes, textures, and sounds in activities, instead of colours and other visual markers.
- Avoid games and exercises requiring visual co-ordination, such as catching a ball; use exercises involving verbal skills, music, and texture instead.
- Repeat readings as often as necessary (for example, you may need to keep repeating a list of questions to be discussed by small groups, or criteria to be prioritised in a diamond-ranking exercise).
- Include everyone in exercises that involve drawing or writing, by appointing one person in the small or whole group to draw or write for everyone else (including themselves).
- When dividing the large group into smaller units, make sure that visually impaired people are not left unsure of where to move to.

For people with speech impairments

- Allow as much time as the person needs for an activity. Encourage the group to respect each person's particular needs – as of right.
- Focus on what the person is saying, not his or her impairment.
- Consider using an interpreter, but it must be someone who understands the speaker(s) and will not 'put words into their mouths' by saying what the interpreter thinks the speaker should say.
- Encourage speech-impaired participants to write or draw their contributions on the flipchart, or to use a spelling board.

Preparatory questionnaire

If you do not know much about participants as individuals before the workshop starts (and even if you do), it is helpful to use a questionnaire to find out more about their interests and any access-related needs. If possible, you should distribute the forms before the first workshop.

HANDOUT 1

Preparatory questionnaire

Name of workshop:

If you are helping someone to fill in this questionnaire (because they cannot see, or do not write, etc.), please consult them and write down what they say.

1. Name:

Name of group/organisation:

Region:

2. Where and how can we contact you between sessions?

3. What is your role in the group/organisation?

4. Have you knowledge or experience of training or workshops?
(If so, what?)

5. What do you hope to gain from the workshop?

6. Would you like to be a trainer in future?

Yes

No

Not sure

7. Which aspects of training are you most interested in?
(Please tick as many or as few as you want.)

Section 1

- | | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Facilitation | Planning |
| How people learn | Motivating other people |
| Listening skills | Theory |
| Communication | Practice |
| Developing self-confidence | Others (please specify) |

Section 2

- | | |
|--|----------------------------|
| Human rights | Prevention of disability |
| General disability issues | Independent living |
| Disabled women's issues | The language of disability |
| Disabled children's issues | Others (please specify) |
| Attitudes to disability | |
| Barriers to disabled people's participation in society | |

8. Do you have any special requirements in order to participate fully in this workshop? Please tick as appropriate:

- wheelchair access?
- sign-language interpreter?
- diet (diabetic, vegetarian, etc.)?
- crèche?
- other (please describe)?

9. What is your first language?

Other languages?

10. Additional information/comments?

Thank you completing this questionnaire. It will help us to prepare a workshop better suited to you.

Please return the form to {name and address} by {date}.

7.2 Introductions, icebreakers, and energising exercises

Some of the following exercises are for use at the start of the day, to introduce facilitators and participants to one another and to create a positive atmosphere. Others may be used at the start of the next day, or after lunch, or at any point where the group seems to have lost its energy and needs to be refreshed. Many of the exercises can be used directly or indirectly to help to raise participants' self-esteem.

7.2.1 'Find someone who ...'

Time 10–15 minutes

Preparation Prepare a list of numbered statements, or make up your own. Write them on a sheet of paper, with spaces for the answers, as in Handout 2, and make copies for each participant.

Process Give each person a copy of the handout, but also read out the statements to the whole group.

Ask them to go around the room and find, for each of the statements, one person who matches the statement.

They should write down the person's name against the number of the relevant statement. If someone cannot read and/or write, they can work with a partner who is literate.

They should find a different person for each statement.

Allow five minutes for this stage. It doesn't matter if they can't find a match for each statement in the time allowed: they can finish the activity during the break.

Once back in the whole group, ask people to name a few examples of new things that they had learned about other members of the group.

Facilitator's notes This is good for using with a group of people who do not know each other at all, or know each other just a little. It is a good icebreaker, which starts people talking to each other and makes them feel more comfortable to talk/participate in the whole group. By limiting the time allowed and inviting participants to finish the exercise in the break, you give them something to talk about outside the session, which is especially helpful for people who are shy or who do not know each other at all before the workshop.

Option For people who are not literate, you could use drawings instead of written statements to represent each point that you want them to find out about.

HANDOUT 2

Find someone who ...

- 1 likes the music of [a popular local artist or group]
 - 2 has attended a workshop before
 - 3 would rather listen than speak
 - 4 had a bad dream last night
 - 5 likes vegetables better than meat
 - 6 has a skill or knowledge which you want to have
 - 7 wants to change the situation of disabled people
 - 8 likes communicating to large groups
 - 9 believes that disabled people need rights not charity
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7.2.2 ‘Open the day’

Time 30 minutes

Process Ask participants to work in pairs.

Each participant has to show his/her partner how s/he is feeling today, using a sound or a facial expression or a gesture, but no actual words.

They have five minutes to do this, and then they will have to rejoin the whole group, where each person in turn will show the rest of the group his/her partner’s sound or gesture (NOT his/her own).

Ask people to demonstrate to the whole group what their partners are feeling.

Facilitator’s notes This activity is a lively way to start a session, but it is also good for getting people to start thinking about feelings – other people’s feelings as well as their own. It can be used as an introduction to a session about non-verbal communication or about responding to feelings. Or in a session concerned with people’s right/need to express themselves/speak for themselves, it can be used to lead into a discussion of when it is OK and when it is not OK to speak on someone else’s behalf, instead of allowing them to represent themselves.

7.2.3 Paired interviews and introductions

Time 30 minutes

Process Ask participants to work in pairs. They have five minutes to interview each other and find out the following information: their partner's name, where s/he comes from, and the nicest thing that has happened to him/her in the last month.

Back in the whole group, they introduce their partner to the rest of the group, and share the information that they have learned about him/her.

Facilitator's notes This is good for use with participants who do not know each other (and whom you do not know). It can start the day on a positive note, and it can start people thinking about others (not just themselves). If someone introduces himself or herself and not their partner during the feedback, this will indicate to you that this person is maybe not used to listening and/or following instructions, or maybe s/he is very self-absorbed and not used to working as part of a group. Extra support for this person may therefore be necessary.

Option Change the questions to fit the group better, or to form an appropriate lead-in to the next activity that you have planned. But don't require them to ask too many questions, because the introductory exercise is supposed to be a quick, energising way of getting people to be comfortable together. If it is too long, it becomes slow and boring.

7.2.4 Name game

Time 30 minutes

Objectives To help participants (and you) to remember everyone's name. (It is good to use with people who know each other at least a little, but if this is the first time they've met, and if it's a big group, it will be too difficult)

To create energy in the group (after lunch, for example).

Process Ask everyone to sit in a circle, so that they can see each other (and you).

The first person in the circle (you can start, or choose someone else) has to say their first name and a word that describes them (an adjective). The word they choose should start with the same letter as their first name (for example, 'Jolly Jeton').

The next person has to do the same for him/herself and then say also the first person's name and word. The third person then has to do it for him/herself, and for the second person, and the first person.

This continues with each new person in the circle saying his/her own name and word, plus those of the people who were before him/her.

Options The word that a person chooses to describe him/herself does not need to start with the same letter. It could be any word that they like or one that they feel suits them. This variation is especially suitable if there are people in the group who are not literate.

The word that people choose can be the animal that they think is most like themselves. (This variation works well with people who know each other and can laugh together, but not with people who are likely to be offended easily.)

7.2.5 Guessing game

Time 30 minutes

Preparation Write up on a flipchart or a board a list of things to guess (see below).
Give out one blank sheet of paper and one pen per participant.

Process Ask participants to get into pairs (ideally with someone whom they don't know well).
Without talking to each other, they have five minutes to look at their partner and guess the following about him/her: favourite food; favourite film star; age; one unfulfilled ambition.
They should write down their guesses on a piece of paper. (If anyone in the group cannot write, they can do this exercise verbally.)
After five minutes, they reveal their answers and check how accurate they were.
Back in the whole group, ask for general feedback from participants: how accurate were they? Was it easy to guess? Or hard? Why?

Option You can use this game as a lead-in to work on non-verbal communication and assumptions. After the general feedback from participants, ask them what they think this game showed them. Someone will probably say (or you can if necessary) that it shows how we all make assumptions about people, just from looking at them and through non-verbal communication. We do this all the time, and some of our assumptions might be correct; but many will be wrong, and this is not a reliable method of making judgements or communicating. The activity is especially relevant for non-disabled people, who may be tempted to make automatic assumptions about people with impairments, their capacities and their needs, rather than taking the trouble to find out directly from the disabled person.
You can change the things that participants have to guess, and/or make the list longer.

7.2.6 ‘Darling’ game

Time 30 minutes

Objectives To re-energise a group (for example, after lunch or after an exercise which required a lot of intellectual energy). It generates laughter and so helps people to relax. But don't try it with groups for whom it would be culturally inappropriate, or with people who do not know each other well enough to feel comfortable.

Process Ask participants to sit in a circle so that they can all see each other. Tell them that the purpose of this game is just to have fun.

The first person says to the second, *‘Darling, I love you. Do you love me?’*. The second person turns to the third and says the same thing, and so on around the whole group.

The only rule is that they are not allowed to laugh. If anyone laughs, then the whole game has to start from the beginning again. (Don't apply this rule too strictly after the first few times!)

No specific feedback is required.

7.2.7 What I like about you

Time 30 minutes

Objectives To create a good spirit of support and solidarity.
To build individuals' self-esteem.

Preparation For each participant, have ready one blank sheet of A4 paper, one safety pin, and some coloured pens.

Process Give each participant a sheet of blank paper, a safety pin, and coloured pens.

Each person should pin the sheet of paper to a partner's back.

Participants have 15 minutes to approach everyone in the group and write (or draw) on the paper on their back the thing that they like about that person.

When everyone has written/been written on, they take off their sheets and read what people have written/drawn about them.

If used on a capacity-building course or for the training of trainers, this can lead into discussion of the value of positive feedback.

7.2.8 What I am proud of myself for

Time 30 minutes

Objectives To raise people's self-esteem. In many cultures, people are not encouraged to think or speak positively about themselves. Disabled people particularly can be influenced by the negative attitudes of others towards them. It can be helpful for people to have time and space to consider and express the good things about themselves.

To increase confidence and sharing within the group.

Process Ask the participants to spend five minutes in quiet reflection, thinking about themselves and their reasons to be proud of themselves.

Before they start to do this, tell them that afterwards you want them to get into pairs, with someone they feel comfortable talking to, and share with their partner what they are proud about and why. They will not have to share this information with the whole group.

After they have thought for five minutes, they have ten minutes to share and discuss their feelings together.

Back in the whole group, if anyone really wants to share their own reason (not their partner's) for being proud about themselves, they can.

Otherwise, just ask for general feedback on the exercise: how did it feel? Was it difficult/strange to think about yourself in this way? Do you think it's good to do this? Why?

7.2.9 Positive feedback

This exercise leads on from the previous two, if you are trying to build up people's self-confidence and mutual trust over a period of time. Or it can be used separately.

Time 20 minutes

Objectives To increase trust and understanding within the group.
To raise self-esteem and develop the ability to discuss positive feelings openly.
To introduce the idea that we all need positive feedback sometimes.
To illustrate the role that positive feedback plays in strengthening motivation (building people up, instead of knocking them down).

Process Ask people to work in pairs and to say three things that they like about their partner.
There will be no specific feedback to the whole group, unless some people want to share with everyone, but this is purely optional.
They have ten minutes for this.
Back in the whole group, ask for general feedback: How did the exercise feel? Was it hard/easy to express positive things directly to their partner? Why is it important as group members (or facilitators) to be able to do this?

Option This exercise can lead into a discussion or further activities about the need to recognise and value each person's contribution to society; and to illustrate that groups can be stronger if they consist of people with a range of strengths and skills – which should be seen as a bonus, not a threat.

7.2.10 Name-badge exercise

Time 20 minutes

Objectives To learn each other's names.
To find out something about each other.
To focus on positive things.

Preparation Provide blank sheets of paper, of various colour, coloured pens, and scissors; plus one safety-pin per participant.

Process Ask each participant to take a sheet of coloured paper (whichever colour they like), some pens, and a safety pin.
The participants should make their own name badges, cutting the paper into any preferred shape, and surrounding their name with drawings of things that they like.
Reassure participants that this is not an art competition!
They have ten minutes to do this.
They pin on their badges and all go around looking at each other's badges.

Options If you have more time, ask participants to share with a partner and explain why they chose what they drew.
Or each person can share his or her reasons with the whole group.

7.2.11 My life pie-chart

Time 20–30 minutes

Preparation Have ready one blank sheet of A4 paper per participant, plus coloured pens.

Process Tell participants that you want them to spend a couple of minutes thinking about themselves and their lives – who they are and what they do.

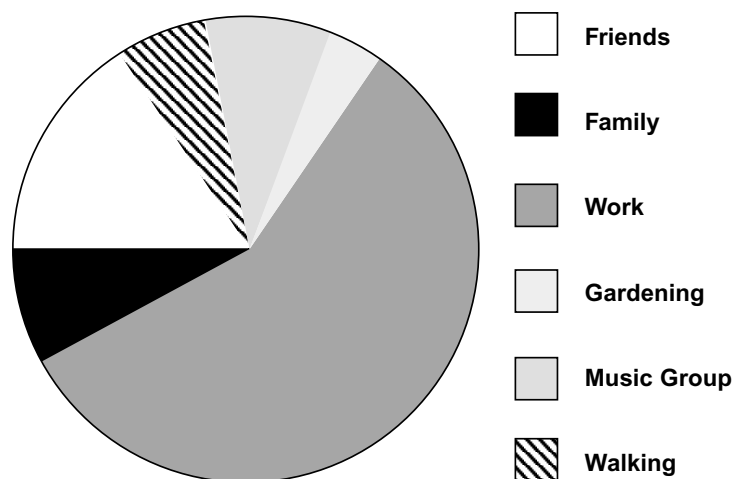
Their task is to represent the various parts of their life in a pie-chart, which they will then explain to a partner (not to the whole group).

They should choose as their partner someone in the group whom they don't know well, or haven't worked with very much so far.

Before they start that, draw a large pie-chart on a flipchart or chalkboard, with pieces of the pie labelled with different parts of your own life, as an example of what to do.

Give out the paper and pens, remind participants that they have a couple of minutes for thinking time, then five minutes for drawing, then five–ten minutes for sharing the results.

Back in the whole group, ask people what they thought or felt about the exercise? Did they learn something new about their partner? About themselves? (Seeing things about ourselves, represented in a visual form, can often be quite revealing.)



7.2.12 Wallpaper exercise

Time 30 minutes

Objectives To help participants to share something about themselves and to learn about the others in the group.

To encourage the group to focus on positive things about themselves.

Preparation Have ready a piece of paper and coloured pens for each participant.

Process Ask participants to spend 15 minutes drawing a picture of themselves doing something that they like to do.

Depending on the time available and the number of participants, feedback can take the form of sharing the drawing with a partner or with the whole group in the round.

Then display all the pictures as wallpaper.

7.2.13 Gesture energiser

Time 10 minutes for options (a) and (c); 30 minutes for option (b)

Process Divide participants into four groups.

Each group should choose one gesture or facial expression, such as a smile, a frown, a look of surprise, etc. Go around the room and make sure that no groups make the same choice.

Bring the whole group back together, sitting in a circle, but with small-group members next to one another.

When you say GO, all the groups should start performing their gestures or making their expressions simultaneously. But the point of the game is for everyone to end up doing the same thing, so they have to start gradually copying the gestures or facial expressions of other small groups.

The game ends when everyone in the whole group is doing the same gesture.

- Options**
- a. This can be done simply as an energiser, with no specific feedback.
 - b. Or it can be used to lead into discussion, considering issues related to difference and diversity, bringing out a variety of learning points, such as:
 - the powerful effect of peer pressure, encouraging people to conform to group norms;
 - the fact that sometimes it is not good to be, act, or think the same as everyone else;
 - the contrary fact that it is sometimes hard to give up one's own ideas and accept other people's, especially if they belong to a different social group.

This could then lead into the 'Know Your Apple' exercise (9.3.6), which develops these issues further.

- c. If group members have impaired sight, the small groups could choose a sound to perform, instead of a gesture.

7.3 Expectations and priorities

This section includes workshop activities which can be done to increase your knowledge of the participants; to increase participants' understanding of what they may gain from the course; to help both you and the participants to understand the group's needs and priorities; and to help them to come together and form a group identity.

7.3.1 Hopes, concerns, contributions, and needs

Time One hour

Objectives For participants and facilitators to share their feelings – both positive and negative – about the workshop or course.

To help them to get to know and understand each other.

For facilitators to obtain information to help them to modify plans and adapt activities to match the participants' particular characteristics.

Process Explain that you want to find out more from the start about participants' feelings and thoughts about the workshop, and to share with them your feelings and thoughts, so that you can make sure during the workshop that you respond as much as possible to what they want/need.

Divide them into groups of four and ask them to discuss their **hopes** and expectations: what do they want to gain from the workshop? And any **concerns** or anxieties they may have. And the **contributions** that they will make to the workshop. And the personal **needs** which will have to be met in order for the workshop to be successful for them. Write the four key words on a flipchart.

The facilitators and interpreters should also do the exercise, as a separate group.

After 30 minutes, bring the whole group back together and ask each small group to report back in turn.

Allow time for questions and comments. Conclude by explaining that during the workshop or course you will try to respond to all the points raised in the discussion – but be honest about any expectations and needs that you will not be able to meet. Write up their answers on a flipchart and keep them safe.

Return to the lists at the end of the workshop, as part of the evaluation process. Check which expectations have been met, and which were not; these may form the basis of a future workshop.

7.3.2 Setting priorities

Facilitator's notes On a long course it is especially important for facilitators to understand participants' priorities, to enable the content to be adapted accordingly. Often, for reasons of geography or other factors, it is impossible to meet all the participants and discuss their priorities before the course begins. The pre-course questionnaire (Handout 1) includes a section on this topic, but it is worth also spending time on it in one of the first sessions. Facilitators constantly need to balance the needs of individuals with the needs of the group. Explaining this as part of the feedback on the exercise below can help the group both to understand the facilitator's role and to start thinking beyond their own needs to the needs of others in the group.

Time One hour

Preparation Make copies of Sections 1 and 2 from question 7 on the pre-course questionnaire (Handout 1).

Bring some sticky 'Post-it' notes in three different colours; or small pieces of paper in three different colours, plus drawing-pins or Blu-tack.

You will also need a blackboard and chalks, or some large sheets of paper.

Process Introduce the activity by explaining that participants have already stated their individual priorities for the course (on the questionnaire), but you want to get an idea of the whole group's priorities. This will give you and them a better understanding of what is important to the group as a whole.

Divide people into four groups. Give out some Post-it notes of each colour to each group, with pens and copies of sections 1 and 2 from question 7 on the questionnaire.

Ask them to work as a group, and decide as a group which of the topics in sections 1 and 2 they definitely want to cover (YES), which they definitely don't want to cover (NO), and which they are not sure about (UNSURE). They should discuss the reasons for these choices. There is no minimum or maximum number of topics that they are allowed to allocate to each category.

Put up three large sheets of paper (or divide the blackboard into three equal areas). Label one with a Post-it of one colour with YES written on it, another with a different-coloured Post-it with NO written on it, and another with a third coloured Post-it with UNSURE written on it.

Participants write the topics on Post-it notes of the relevant colours, to denote Yes, No, or Unsure. They have 20 minutes to do this. One person from each group should be prepared to report back.

Bring the whole group back together. The representatives of each small group take turns to present their priorities, sticking all their 'Yes', 'No', and 'Unsure' labels on the corresponding sheet of paper or area of the board, reading out the topic as they go, and saying briefly why they chose to put it in one category rather than another.

Give time for comments or questions. You can develop a discussion with the following questions.

Discussion Are there any surprises (for you or the participants)? If necessary, find out more about participants' choices.

How do people feel if their own priorities are not shared by the rest of their small group? Draw attention to the need to balance the needs and priorities of groups and individuals. How do participants feel about that?

Describe briefly how you intend to use the information from this exercise to plan the rest of the course. If you aim to spend most time on high priorities and less time on low priorities, be clear about this, otherwise you will cause confusion, and participants will think that you are not keeping your word. If there is a topic that as the facilitator you feel is important to include, but the group does not (or vice versa), you need to discuss this and negotiate what to do.

Sum up.

7.3.3 Agreeing guidelines for working together as a group

The following exercise is designed for participants who are new to workshops (or other types of facilitated group work) and need plenty of time to talk through the issues. For groups who are experienced workshop participants, the exercise may be shortened to a brainstorm, followed by a discussion of the suggestions leading to amendments, additions, and deletions by consensus.

Time 10 minutes – one hour

Objectives For the group to decide what guidelines to set for itself.
To gain collective understanding of the reason for each guideline.

Preparation Draw up a rough list of elements that you consider necessary for working together as a group.

Process Explain that you want participants to agree on a set of guidelines, to help you all to work together productively and harmoniously. Guidelines can help people to work better together, in a way that is fair and respects everyone's needs and contributions. Guidelines can help people to feel safe within the group, to establish boundaries, and to remind the members how they want to be or act (which is especially useful during difficult times).

Divide people up into groups of four or five, and ask them to make a list of all the things they think should be included in the guidelines.

After 15 minutes bring everyone back together, and ask each small group in turn to share their suggestions.

Write up their suggestions on flipchart paper or a blackboard. Each time another group makes the same suggestion, indicate this with a tick.

Check your own list, to see if there are any items that the groups have not identified, but that you want them to consider. Consult the participants: should these suggestions be included in the final list, or not?

Discuss the guidelines, allowing time for questions and comments. Does anyone think that any of the guidelines should be amended, or removed from the list? How do other people feel about that?

Make changes to the list according to the consensus of opinion. It is not enough to take a vote and adopt the view of the majority: it is important (both for the formation of the group at this early stage

and for later adherence to the guidelines) that all the guidelines are acceptable to everyone.

Discuss who is responsible for making sure that the group observes the guidelines (it should be everyone!) and how participants want to deal with situations where guidelines are not respected.

A final agreed list should be written up neatly on a large sheet of paper and permanently displayed in the workshop room, and/or the list should be typed up and copies given to participants in the next session. Or the group might want to start each workshop by reading their guidelines.

They might be interested to see copies of a set of guidelines drawn up by a disability-awareness workshop in Kosovo (Handout 3).

Facilitator's notes Some groups/facilitators include 'having fun' as one of the rules or guidelines. Others do not – not because they don't think that workshops should be enjoyable, but because they think that this is something that one cannot make a rule about. This is a matter of personal choice.

HANDOUT 3

Group guidelines for a workshop in Kosovo

- Confidentiality: no personal information shared in the workshop should be repeated outside the workshop.
 - Respect: respect and recognise differences of race, culture, sexuality, religion, etc. (and don't assume that they do not exist). Respect the opinions of others.
 - Listening: everyone has a right to be heard.
 - Personalised knowledge and feelings: speak in your own name; say 'I', not 'they/we/she'.
 - Acknowledge emotion.
 - Responsibility: we are all responsible for creating a safe environment; we are each responsible for our own learning.
 - Avoid destructive criticism of others or oneself. Criticism or comments must be constructive, sensitive, and specific.
 - Say when you don't understand.
 - Take risks.
 - Respect people's right to opt out of an activity. If it doesn't feel right for them, they shouldn't do it.
 - Everybody should try to be punctual.
 - Allow time for people with speech impairments to speak.
 - There should be enough time for breaks and smoking.
 - Language: use terms that everyone can understand. Speak as clearly as possible. Don't use abusive or offensive terms.
 - Accessibility of information: always say aloud anything that you write down, and use large print on flipcharts, so that people who have impaired sight or hearing or are not literate can participate. Allow time for this.
 - Allow time for interpretation (sign language, foreign language, personal assistance).
 - Use reading/writing partners.
 - Photographs may be taken if everyone agrees.
 - No interruptions when people are speaking.
 - Don't patronise others.
 - Give of yourself.
-

7.4 Working together: establishing group guidelines; communication; respect; participation

The following exercises may be used in the following contexts and for the following purposes:

- with new groups, to develop understanding of and commitment to group processes, and equal participation of all members; and/or
- at any stage where participants are finding equitable communication and participation difficult; and/or
- to teach trainers or facilitators about group processes, and their responsibility to foster open communication and equitable participation; and/or
- to raise awareness of the disability and/or gender issues that are featured in the exercises.

7.4.1 Mapping for Mars

(adapted from *The Oxfam Gender Training Manual*)

Time One hour

Objective To appreciate the importance of acknowledging and encouraging expression of a diverse range of perspectives and views

Preparation Sort out participants into groups (see facilitator's notes below).
Prepare large sheets of paper and pens.

Process Explain to the group that you are a humanitarian/development worker from Mars. You have come to their region or country ('X') for the first time and you want to learn about X. You want them to tell you the most important facts about life in X.

Divide participants into small groups of four or five people, according to their geographical origins and other factors such as disability and gender, or other criteria that will ensure that the members of each small group have strong characteristics in common.

Ask each group to use flipchart paper and pens to draw a big map of X; they should all draw the same village, region, town, country, or continent.

Explain that each group is to draw on their map five–ten of the most important things about life in X for them: things that they want you to know, so that you can explain to people in Mars what life in X is like. Ask them not to use writing, because you do not read earthscript: they should use only symbols and drawings. They have 15 minutes.

Bring everyone together. Ask one member of each small group to present their map to the whole group, explaining what the symbols mean.

Then ask the whole group to decide which map is best. Explain that you will take the best one back to Mars. If the group cannot decide, choose the map of the most vocal small group.

Then ask those whose maps were not chosen how they felt about their maps being left out. Point out that the numbers of people in the room whose ideas are not represented are greater than the numbers of those whose ideas are represented on the chosen map.

How can this problem be resolved? Allow a discussion to develop.

**Facilitator's
notes**

This exercise can be done either as part of a workshop on any topic, to promote the participation of all members and respect for different ideas; or with people who are learning to be trainers, to help them to understand their responsibility to allow and encourage contributions from all the participants, and to value their different opinions.

If some or all of the participants are learning to train, during the drawing part of the exercise you should go around to the groups and point out:

- the importance of ensuring that everyone is at the same level – whether on the ground or on a table – so that, for example, wheelchair users or people working in a lying position are not distanced from the activity;
- the need to appoint one person to do the drawing for everyone else, if one or more participants is blind or partially sighted;
- for the same reason, the importance of making sure that all the drawings are described verbally, during the drawing time and during the presentations;
- the importance of using symbols, not words, in order to include people who are not literate;
- the importance of letting the participants do the discussion and analysis, while the facilitator observes;
- the opportunity that this gives the facilitator to observe group dynamics, including leadership, disputes, excluded individuals, etc.;
- the opportunity that this gives the facilitator to listen to people's process of analysis.

Emphasise to participants that the quality of the drawing is not important: it is what is portrayed that is significant. Once symbols are explained to us, we can remember and understand them.

Often one group's map will include information that is not on the other groups' maps. Women will highlight different things from men, disabled people will highlight different things from non-disabled people, etc. It is important in the feedback stage to emphasise that the wider the range of perspectives, the more the whole group learns, so everyone must have the space to contribute, rather than permitting a situation where certain individuals are vociferous and dominant. This principle applies to the contributions of individuals and of specific groups, such as rural/urban people, men/women, disabled/non disabled, young/elderly, etc.

Some groups may be resistant to being divided according to criteria of gender and/or disability. Or you may be concerned not to cause potential competition or division between certain groups of participants. If this is likely to be the case, consider carefully how you make up the small groups. For example, in Kosovo we sometimes grouped members by sex only, not by disability (even though the exclusion of disabled people and their opinions from discussion was the main point of the exercise), to avoid creating a divisive sense of 'us' and 'them'. The maps produced by the small groups of men (mixed disabled and non-disabled) generally did not show the existence of disabled people at all, and presented cultural, historical, and political concerns. The women's groups (mixed disabled and non-disabled) were more likely to include disabled people and things that were important to them, as well as practical elements of everyday life, hopes for the future, and political concerns.

If it seems best not to group people according to their disability or their lack of it, you can still bring out the main points that you want to communicate, by considering what participants did not put in their drawings, as well as what they did include. In the discussion you might ask the participants how complete an understanding they think that people in Mars will have of X, if the map does not contain information about disabled people or women. Keep emphasising the value of learning from the experience and ideas of each participant, not just those of a few vocal people.

One solution to the problem of partial information is to take all the maps back to Mars, so that all perspectives would be taken into account. Each one has its own story to tell, and, like pieces of a jigsaw, fills a fuller picture. There is no one best map: all are needed.

7.4.2 Listening exercise (1)

Time 30 minutes

Objectives For all participants to experience not being listened to.
To develop understanding of which people in society are likely not to be listened to.

Preparation Work out instructions for partners A and B. Suggested topics for A are given below and should be adapted to suit local circumstances.
You may need to write down the instructions and provide copies of them, for participants with impaired hearing.

Process Ask people to work in pairs. One person is A, the other is B.
Either bring all the As together and explain their role to them (where Bs can't hear), or give them written instructions. Do the same with all the Bs.

Partner A: Your role in this exercise is to talk to your partner and tell him/her all about what you did this weekend, or about your favourite music and why you like it.

Partner B: In this exercise your partner is going to start telling you about something. Your role is NOT to listen, and make it clear that you are not listening and not interested, by using any non-verbal (non-spoken) ways you can think of (such as yawning, fidgeting, looking away, etc.).

After five minutes, stop the exercise. Ask participants to exchange roles and repeat the exercise in their new roles.

Bring the whole group back together. Facilitate a discussion, using the following questions to draw out learning points:

- What did it feel like to be partner B, not listening to A?
- How did the As react? (Some may have got angry, others were perhaps intimidated and stopped talking.)
- How did Bs feel about that reaction?
- What did it feel like to be A and not to be listened to?
- Are there some (groups of) people in our community who are often not listened to? Who? Why? What impact does that have on them? And on the rest of the community?
- What can we do to make sure that we listen to (and learn from) each other? Suggested answers:

- Allow time for everyone to have their say; create different types of opportunity for people to contribute (through small-group work, work in pairs, drawings, role plays, etc., not just whole-group or round-table discussions).
- Say what you want to say, but realise your responsibility to respect other people's right to express themselves.
- Hear what the other person is saying: concentrate, focus on the speaker, do not fidget, do not think only about what you're going to say in response.
- Acknowledge what the speaker says, showing that you accept his or her viewpoint, or at least respect his/her right to hold it, if you disagree with it.
- Use body language to show that you are listening.
- Be aware that our ability to hear what is being said may be affected by our perceptions of the person who is talking, or the way they talk.

Finally, the exercise should be repeated, but this time the participants should practise good listening habits.

**Facilitator's
notes**

We often have a false perception that certain people do 'all the talking'. (In an evaluation of a meeting held in New York, the men at the meeting felt that the women had done about 80 per cent of the talking, whereas the actual figure was 30 per cent.) A common reaction of listeners, either when they mistakenly perceive that someone is doing all the talking, or if someone really is dominating the discussion, is to switch off and stop listening.

Another common misconception is that people with speech impairments automatically also have learning difficulties and have nothing worth saying, which is a misconception in itself.

For group purposes, it is therefore helpful to check how our perceptions influence our listening, and to realise that if we are one of those who tends to talk a lot, we may be heard more if we talk less.

It also happens that, irrespective of how much they do or don't talk, when certain people start speaking, others stop paying attention and start up private discussions. Whether or not people pay attention is often determined by the speaker's sex, social status, or self-confidence and presentation skills. Either way, the group should commit themselves to supporting and hearing each other.

As the facilitator, you should quietly observe the group during several different discussions and activities and note down how many times each person contributes, whether he or she is listened to, and the identity of the speaker in each case: whether male non-disabled, male disabled, female non-disabled, or female disabled, etc. This can help you to build up a more accurate picture of actual communication patterns within the group, detect potential problems, and work out what kind of support to give to whom. If you do it at some stage before this listening exercise, it can also help you to decide how to focus the exercise.

However this exercise is adapted, it is important not to single out participants who either dominate or don't talk much, or aren't listened to when they do. For this reason, questions about who does/does not get listened to should refer to the community, not to the workshop group itself.

7.4.3 I respect you/You respect me

(adapted from *Learning to Listen* by Jane Vella, published by the University of Massachusetts, 1980)

Time One hour

Objectives To encourage participants to reflect on their feelings of respect and disrespect.

To differentiate between constructive and destructive group behaviours.

Process Explain that the exercise offers an opportunity to think about the importance of respect in working together as a group (and as the facilitator of a group).

Participants take ten minutes to think and reflect about times in their lives when they have felt respected and not respected (slighted, insulted, put down). Tell them they can go outside, or to another room, but that they should be alone and quiet with their thoughts. Encourage them to reflect on their childhood and adulthood, their personal lives and their working lives.

Inform them before they start that they will not be expected to share personal information with the whole group.

After ten minutes, ask participants to form pairs and discuss their feelings. They should talk about the times when they felt they were not respected, and then about the times when they did feel respected. What happened? Why did it happen? How did they feel?

Back in the whole group, start a discussion by asking for the high points from the paired discussions. Do not require anyone to discuss anything too personal or embarrassing.

You can draw out learning points with the following questions.

Questions What do you think this exercise shows us about respect?

What does respect have to do with being part of a group (or facilitating a group)?

Why?

How can we disagree with someone, or give them advice, but still maintain our mutual respect?

Facilitator's notes To work together in a group to accomplish individual and group aims, it is necessary for all the participants to respect each other; and to take into account their own feelings and the feelings of others. Being

respected is important to all of us – parent or child, woman or man, disabled or non-disabled person, urban or rural person, teacher or student – whatever our nationality or religion. We are all cheered or saddened by what others say (or don't say) to us or about us. We can be encouraged or discouraged to share our ideas, experiences, and knowledge with others, depending on whether we feel respected or not.

As group members (or facilitators) we can give criticism and advice or disagree with others in two ways: destructively – which causes pain and reduces people's self-respect; or constructively – which builds up people's self-confidence.