



National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence

March 19-21, 2015

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Guide to Adult Learning

“Tell me and I will forget. Show me, and I may remember. Involve me, and I will understand.” ~ Confucius, circa 450 BC

Objective:

The National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence is designed to promote critical discussions that will lead to changes in clinical or educational practice, research, advocacy and policy. The tips and tools offered in this document are intended to provide guidance to facilitate the crafting of presentations that recognize the varied needs and learning styles of adults.

Adult learners tend to be:

- Goal-oriented
- Experienced and knowledgeable
- Autonomous and self-directed
- Focused on relevance and practicality
- Varied in terms of learning styles
- Deserving of respectful treatment

Implications of these characteristics are summarized in the table below:

Participant Characteristics	Presenter Implications
Goal orientation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Identify participants' learning goals➤ Communicate presentation objectives➤ Display a clear agenda and time line
Experience and knowledge	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Acknowledge and incorporate participants' expertise➤ Encourage participant sharing of knowledge and experiences
Autonomy and self-directed learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Facilitate interaction and conversation among learners
Focus on relevance and practicality	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Communicate practical application of presentation content
Varied learning styles	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Utilize a variety of presentation methods and tools that engage participants actively and productively
Deserving of respectful treatment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Acknowledge participants' experiences and validate their viewpoints using respectful, non-judgmental language➤ Respect participants' personal space and sensitivities➤ Start and end on time



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Developing Learning Objectives:

Objectives are action-oriented statements that describe a set of results, outcomes or changes, generally expressed in terms of knowledge, attitudes and skills that can be expected from a specific action or effort. Objectives are designed to be tangible, specific, measurable, and action-focused. *Learning objectives* (also known as educational objectives, instructional objectives, or learning outcomes) refer to results participants can expect to achieve by taking part in a specific learning activity, for example, a presentation at a conference.

Well-constructed learning objectives can serve several important functions. They can:

- Help presenters by enhancing the likelihood that a conference session will be appropriately focused and well-organized;
- Help participants choose which presentations to attend by providing a frame by which the purpose of, and expectations for, a given session can be communicated;
- Help program evaluators by providing a measurable framework for sessions evaluation (often required for continuing education certification); and
- Help selection committees determine the value and placing of submitted abstracts.

How to develop learning objectives:

- While developing a presentation abstract (or any other learning or presentation activity), think carefully about what participants might value in regard to the three domains of knowledge, attitudes and skills
- Based on the above compose statements that describe, in specific and measureable terms, what specific new knowledge, attitudes and skills participants can expect to be able to master by taking part in the session
- Use active verbs such as *describe, identify, explain, articulate, acquire, adapt, modify, and incorporate*, and avoid vague verbs such as *know, understand, learn, grasp, and gain awareness*.

Example: At the end of this session, participants in attendance will:

1. Describe the educational objectives and course requirements for a prototype distance-education course on violence across the lifespan;
2. Identify the major strengths and limitations of teaching and learning about violence across the lifespan using a distance education format; and
3. Explain the approach to developing a distance education program about violence across the lifespan.

(For additional examples, see the [2012 National Conference on Health and Domestic Violence Program Book](#))

Tips for Developing Effective Presentations:

- **Plan ahead:** Consider your target audience and time frame and set reasonable, achievable goals. Craft an outline that begins with a general understanding of how learners will be different by the end of session. What will they be able to do differently as a result of knowledge gained, skills practiced or changes in perspective that occur in the session?
- **Anticipate the audience's needs:** It's important to acknowledge that some participants might feel triggered by the content of your presentation. To account for this, you might want to announce at the beginning of the presentation that people may step outside, or identify someone whom they can talk to



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for support. *(The NCHDV planners will have advocates/support staff on standby and a private room reserved for participants who would like to talk to someone confidentially).*

- **Pay Attention to Culture:** As you plan and then deliver your presentation, think about how cultural considerations, especially those that are intersectional* in nature, might impact the learning experience and comfort of participants from backgrounds or lifestyles different from yours and other presenters. Soliciting input and feedback from participants about this important area not only conveys inclusivity and respect, but also can help you become a better educator and presenter in the future. The Futures Without Violence [Culture Handbook](#) is a valuable resource for further exploration of this topic.
- **Be Concise:** Learning can be impeded by trying to make too many points or get through too many slides for the allotted time, by using fast-paced speech, and by leaving insufficient time for interaction with and reflection on the meaning of the material presented. The best presentations have defined and clear goals with sufficient time allocated to respond to the audience's needs.
- **Choose Effective Learning Activities:** Select case discussions, role plays, small discussion groups, brainstorming sessions, and other activities that most directly and effectively address the session's learning objectives.
- **Use Effective Presentation Enhancements:** Slides, handouts, videos and other presentation enhancements should be created and sized to fit the presentation, as well as the needs of the expected participants. Avoid slides that are text-heavy – try to present no more than three or four bullet points on a single slide. Lettering should be large, clear and bright or contrasting (*san serif* fonts are the most readable from a distance). Pay attention to color scheme and how colors project. Choose images carefully and attribute appropriately. Plan for no more than one slide per presentation minute. Make attempts to integrate strategies to facilitate learning for those with visual and cognitive disabilities.
- **Create Handouts that Add Value:** The best handouts amplify the main points of the presentation and provide participants with useful tips, tools and resources that can be accessed and utilized for self-directed learning. Try to include presenters' contact information as well as information relevant to permission/restriction for reproduction or further use.
- **Links to the Future:** Provide resource material for ongoing learning and exploration. In this way, participants who may be interested in learning more or developing their own scholarship or leadership capacity can become engaged in the material in an ongoing basis.
- **Remember, “Less is More”:** There is no need to try to “cover” everything in one presentation. Focus on how to convey two or three key messages well, in a way that leaves participants hungry to learn more and glad that they chose to attend and participate.

* Intersectionality is a theory, a methodology for research and a prism through which we can understand that people live multiple, layered lives derived from their identities, social history and the structures of power. The intersections of various identities produce substantively distinct experiences. Engaging with an intersectional analysis enables one to shape effective interventions, analyze social problems fully and promote more inclusive advocacy.