

## Preparing for a Training Session

Effective training sessions don't just happen. Ensuring that everything goes smoothly means starting your preparations at least a month ahead of time and keeping track of details right up to the minutes before a session begins. Use this handy checklist to get yourself ready.

### A Month or More Before

**Reserve a room**, keeping in mind that the space must be accessible to participants with disabilities. Select a room that's the right size for your session; a huge room destroys intimacy and a tiny room is uncomfortable. Also check that the room is adequately heated or cooled, lighted, and ventilated. If you'll be using an overhead projector, try to find a room with a dimmer switch so that you won't be speaking in total darkness. And locate the nearest electrical outlet to see if you'll need an extension cord.

**Develop the materials you'll use** to guide yourself through the session. You might need to highlight or notate a trainer's guide, for example, or develop a set of notecards for the session.

**Reserve equipment**, such as flip charts, VCRs, or overhead projectors.

**Start practicing.** Run through the entire session in your mind. Once you're sure that your ideas flow smoothly, rehearse the session aloud. Practice answers to anticipated questions.

### A Week Before the Session

**Practice working with the equipment** you plan to use during the session to avoid embarrassments like not being able to figure out how to run the VCR. Create a backup plan in case your equipment does malfunction despite your preparation.

**Prepare your flip charts, overheads, or other visual aids.**

**Gather supplies** for the session, such as name tags, markers, masking tape, and whatever else you'll need.

**Photocopy handouts.**

## **The Day of the Session**

**Set up the room.** Make sure that the number of chairs is about the same as the number of people you expect. If there are too many, people will huddle at the back of the room. Arrange the chairs so that they face away from the door, which will allow people to come and go without distracting others.

**Position your equipment and make sure everything works.** For example, make sure the bulb in your overhead projector hasn't burned out. (Do you have a spare bulb available?) Gather the materials you need to create overlays during the session, if that's part of your plan. Do you have enough flip chart paper? Make sure none of your markers are dry.

**Take a deep breath!**

## **Minutes Before the Session**

**Check the room temperature and adjust as needed.**

**Locate the restroom facilities** to ensure everything is in good working order.

**As participants arrive, greet them and recruit any helpers you'll need.** For instance, you might want someone to manage the lights for the video portion. You may ask someone to distribute handouts for you.

## **Need more ideas?**

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