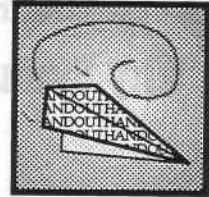


APPENDIX:

Handout

Learning log



**Developing Training Skills
Learning Log & Personal Action Plan**

Name:

Date:

Section Title:

What I enjoyed about this section was:

What I found difficult about this section was:

What I found challenging about this section was:

What I have learned is:

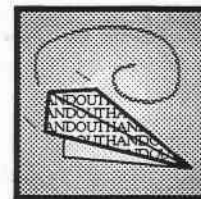
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What I have learned connects with:

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Handout

Engaging a trainer



It is very unlikely that a trainer will be able to meet all the training needs of her organisation. At such times, the organisation should look to other trainers for the skills or knowledge to run particular training events. The success of an event involving external trainers depends on the same criteria which we have described earlier in this manual.

By way of a summary, we include a checklist which can be used when engaging other trainers. The checklist is divided into three sections:

- *What to cover before commissioning the trainer*

You need to be as clear as possible in your own mind about what you require. If you want a trainer for a particularly important, expensive or sensitive training event, you should consider the selection of the correct trainer in the same way as you would if you were recruiting a new member of staff.

This will entail having the equivalent of an accurate 'job description' (in this case, a description of the training tasks to be undertaken). You should also have a 'person specification' for the trainer (a clear statement about the essential skills, experience and attitudes which you are looking for). Remember that just as you would not engage a new staff member who did not meet all your essential criteria, so you should also avoid engaging a trainer who does not meet the key criteria you have determined. It is far less damaging to delay a training event than have one run by someone who is incompetent or unsuitable.

- *What to discuss with the trainer*

If at all possible you should arrange a meeting with the trainer to discuss the proposed training event. This may not be necessary if you already know the trainer, but is essential if you have not engaged the person before. It is important to allow as much opportunity as possible for the trainer to talk about their ideas for the event. What they ask you and, more importantly, what they overlook, may be useful indicators of their thoroughness and suitability for the job. A good trainer will anticipate most of the questions in this appendix. If they do not, it is even more important that you are satisfied with their answers to *your* questions.

- *Debriefing the trainer after the event*

We include the third section because, as an

organiser of training and a trainer yourself, there may be a lot you can learn from discussing and evaluating the event you have planned with the trainer you engage. This can help you to improve your own training skills and help you to avoid pitfalls the next time you commission an external trainer. Remember that the trainer may well charge you for this time. Budget accordingly.

1. What to cover before engaging the trainer

- *What is the purpose of the training event?*

What area do you want the training event to cover? What are the reasons for looking outside the organisation for a trainer? Is this a response to a need identified by potential participants? Could there be any reluctant attenders? Are there any other ways in which you could help people achieve the learning outcomes (e.g. visits, directed reading, supervision)?

- *Who is the target group for the training event?*

Will this be a self selecting group which responds to your marketing of the event or will the participants be selected by others? How many people will be involved? What is their range of experience, interest and motivation?

- *What, precisely, do you want people to learn as a result of the training event?*

How clear are you about this? How much say in the outcomes will participants have before and during the event? Who else do you need to consult about outcomes (e.g. managers, users of services)?

- *What sort of training approach do you want the trainer to use?*

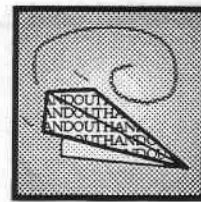
Are the participants familiar or more comfortable with a particular approach? What will their expectations be? What kind of methods would you like to see used?

- *What about dates and venues?*

When do you want the event to happen? Are there any particular time constraints? Remember about school holidays, religious and other holidays, etc. Where will the event be held? Make sure the venue is accessible.

APPENDIX:

Handout cont....



- *What is your budget?*

How much can you spend on trainer's fees, venue hire, travel expenses, resource material, meals, accommodation and all the other expenses involved? Do you have the authority to negotiate fees and expense payments with the trainer?

2. What to discuss with the trainer

- *Is the trainer able to work to your brief?*

What is their previous experience of work in this area? Look at any material they have used in previous training events of this sort. How does it compare with what you and the participants are after? Get some questions from participants about the subject area. See how the trainer responds to these. Are they prepared to be honest with you about what they don't know?

- *How would the trainer plan to organise the training event?*

What methods would they use? To what extent do these methods fit in with the goals of the event and the expectations of the participants? To what extent would they negotiate with the participants over outcomes and methods? What is their attitude to the participants?

- *What is the trainer's value base?*

Do they have experience of working with the personal social services? What are their views about equality of opportunity? How do they tackle this in their practice? How do they encourage participation in their training events?

- *What does the trainer charge?*

What are their fees? What does this include? Ask, specifically about preparation time, handouts and other resource materials, travel and other expenses, VAT, and administration costs. Do their rates change according to numbers attending? What do they charge for postponement or cancellation? Do these penalty clauses also apply to the trainers in cases of their own cancellation? In some large training organisations, you cannot assume that the negotiator will also be the trainer. Find out if the person you are negotiating with will be the person who undertakes the training.

- *Is the trainer available and interested?*

Check times and dates. Will the proposed venue be acceptable? How much time will they need for preparation? Ask them to send a proposal with a programme for the event, but only if you think you might be prepared to engage them. (Producing proposals can be extremely time-consuming. It is unfair to ask a trainer to spend what may well be unpaid time producing a proposal if you do not have any intention of engaging them.)

- *How will the training event be evaluated?*

What kind of evaluation do you want of the event? What ideas does the trainer have about evaluation? Who will undertake the evaluation? What role (if any) will the trainer have in undertaking the evaluation? Do you plan to evaluate the trainer's performance? If so, how will this be done?

3. Debriefing the trainer after the event

- *What areas do you want to cover in the debriefing?*

You should be clear about what you want to cover in the debriefing before you commission the trainer. From the commissioning organisation's point of view, debriefing is important to get the maximum value out of a training event.

Areas which might usefully be covered in the debriefing session include:

- the trainer's views about the extent to which planned outcomes were achieved;
- successful and unsuccessful aspects of the training event and the trainer's views on the reasons for these;
- critical incidents which the trainer felt were particularly significant during the training event;
- particular issues which were left unresolved at the end of the event;
- any unintended outcomes from the training event;
- potential areas for further training which were identified either by participants or the external trainer herself;
- suggestions from the trainer about how a similar event in the future might be improved;
- the trainer's views about the practical arrangements (venue, equipment, administration);
- the trainer's views about the commissioning process;