

# III Developing Skills

## 3.1 Communication

*I know that you believe you understand what you think I said, but I am not sure you realize that what you heard is not what I meant...*  
(Peter Urs Bender, 1999)

**E**ffective communication is absolutely essential to working successfully with groups. It requires both the speaker and the listener to be engaged. It is also important that both are “speaking the same language”; i.e., there is a common understanding of terminology and phrases.

Both verbal and non-verbal communications are important. Non-verbal communication includes facial expressions, gestures, posture, body movements, pauses in verbal communication and the distance between the speaker and listener. Effective verbal communication requires effective listening, speaking and feedback.

### (a) Active Listening

**H**earing is passive: you hear things without making any effort to do so, and don’t necessarily pay any attention to what you hear. Listening, however, requires your conscious involvement. Listening effectively is hard work. Because we think approximately four times the speed at which we talk, it is easy to be distracted by our own thoughts when we are supposed to be listening to someone. To be an effective listener:

- Don’t assume that you already know what the person is going to say.
- Focus on trying to understand the other person’s point of view as fully as you can; do not suggest solutions or offer explanations.
- Use body language to convey interest; e.g. lean forward and use intermittent eye contact, avoid shifting around in your seat.
- Paraphrase the sender’s message and feed it back to ensure that you have understood correctly.
- Ask questions for clarification.

- When providing feedback take ownership for your own feelings by using “I” and “me” statements; e.g. “I am confused about...” “I am pleased that...” “What you have said makes me feel anxious because...”.

When sending messages:

- Avoid using collective terms such as “most people” or “our group”: speak for yourself.
- Keep messages brief and to the point.
- Think before you speak; avoid rambling or repeating yourself.
- Use humour only if appropriate.
- Avoid slang, euphemisms, jargon and profanities.
- Use eye contact for comfortable intervals.
- Repeat the main message subtly by using examples, pictures and other references.
- Ask for feedback from learners to ensure your message has been understood as intended.
- Provide feedback to give direction, reward effort and motivate. Feedback should be clear, concrete, constructive and immediate.



(b) Communication Techniques

Here are a few techniques that you might find helpful when facilitating a group process:

Technique	Why	How
<b>Paraphrasing</b>	Clarification - the speaker knows s/he has been heard and understood. It is especially useful if the speaker's statement is long or confusing.	Use your own words to summarize what you think the speaker meant. Preface your paraphrase with a comment such as "Let me see if I'm understanding you..." Then check the speaker's reaction to ensure that you did get it right.
<b>Drawing People Out</b>	Encourages the speaker to clarify or refine their ideas; sends the messages "Take your time" "What you're saying is important" and "I want to be sure I fully understand" .	Use with paraphrasing; e.g. "It sounds like you are saying..." (paraphrase). Follow with "Can you give us an example?" or "What do you mean by that?" (drawing out) .
<b>Mirroring</b>	Captures people's exact words. Some people need this degree of precision in order to feel that they are truly being heard. Also establishes the facilitator's neutrality and creates trust.	If the speaker has said a single sentence, repeat it back verbatim. If the speaker has said more than one sentence, repeat back key words or phrases. But keep your tone of voice warm and accepting, regardless of what the speaker's voice sounds like.
<b>Encouraging Participation</b>	Creates openings that allow quieter people to participate but without putting them on the spot individually.	Examples of creating openings: "Who else has an idea?", "Is there a student's perspective on this issue?" "A lot of women have been talking. Let's hear from the men."
<b>Balancing</b>	The direction of a discussion often follows the lead set by the first few people who speak on that topic. Help a group round out its discussions by asking for other views that may be present but unexpressed. Silence does not always signify agreement.	Here are some examples of balancing: "Okay, now we know where three people stand - does anyone have a different opinion?" "Does everyone agree with this?" "So, we've heard the 'x' point of view, and the 'y' point of view. Is there a third way of looking at this?"
<b>Intentional Silence</b>	Pausing for a few seconds will give the speaker that extra "quiet time" to discover what they want to say.	With eye contact and body language, stay focused on the speaker. Say nothing, just relax and pay attention. If necessary, hold up a hand to keep others from breaking the silence. Sometimes a group becomes agitated and it may be helpful to request a moment of silence to think about what is happening in the group.
<b>Listening for Common Ground</b>	Helps the group move forward when disagreement is threatening to polarize the group.	This is a 4-step process: 1. validate each side by paraphrasing their positions 2. summarize the differences 3. note areas of agreement - may be very broad, e.g., that they share a belief or goal 4. check with group for accuracy .

## 3.2 Learning Styles

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*I hear – I forget  
I see – I remember  
I do – I understand  
(Confucius)*

People learn at different rates and in different ways. Recognizing this fact, an effective facilitator develops a process that uses a variety of learning styles. The following explanation of learning styles is adapted from the Canadian Red Cross Society's First Aid Instructor Manual, The Vital Link (1994).

There are two main aspects to learning:

- receiving information
- processing information.

### *How We Receive Information*

There are four main ways that people receive information:

1. **Visual** - Use of graphics, colours, demonstrations, and written materials will assist visual learners.
2. **Auditory** - Lectures, music, and discussion are used to encourage auditory learners.
3. **Tactile** - Some people learn best by touch and by doing; if possible, opportunities for hands-on experience should be built into the session.
4. **Kinaesthetic** - These learners learn best when their learning involves physical activity, preferably whole body movements.

Most individuals learn to some degree using all these modes of perception, but may learn more effectively with one method than another. However, there are some individuals that have more marked restrictions on their modes of perception, which, if the facilitator is aware of it, should be taken into consideration.

### *How We Process Information*

After we have received the information, we need to process it; i.e., change it from meaningless symbols into information that makes sense to us and that we will be able to use.

Individuals process information in different ways, which can be generalized into four general categories:

1. Experience > Think > Understand
2. Experience > Practice > Understand
3. Theory > Experience > Practice > Understand
4. Theory > Think > Understand

It is often helpful to consider learning within three main domains:

- **Knowledge** or cognitive learning (i.e. involves thinking)
- **Skills** or psychomotor learning (i.e. involves physical activity)
- **Attitude** or affective learning (i.e., changes how we feel about certain things).

### *Adult Learning*

It is important to remember when you are facilitating a session for adults that they already have a wealth of knowledge, experience and skills. They also have different levels of confidence and self-esteem which may enhance or hinder their effective participation and learning. Adult learners often come with their own goals that they hope to meet, and are therefore highly motivated. They may also have physical limitations, ingrained habits and attitudes, a need for control and resistance to new ideas. The effective facilitator recognizes these factors and maximizes the opportunity for learning by:

- recognizing potential obstacles to learning and work with individuals to reduce them
- providing opportunities for learners to share their experience and knowledge with others
- identifying how the material is relevant to them or their situation
- allowing learners to design and manage their own learning experience, to the extent feasible.

### 3.3 Facilitation

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A facilitator is a neutral presence who directs the process for the group without shaping it. In other words, the facilitator does not push her/his agenda, but helps the group to develop and follow its own agenda. Overall, the primary purpose of the facilitator is to ease the process by making it run as smoothly and efficiently as possible.

#### (a) Who Facilitates?

The facilitator can be someone you know in your community who has facilitated before; someone whose job it is to facilitate; or someone who has good organizational, speaking and listening skills. The degree of expertise required in a facilitator depends on the nature of the group or work to be facilitated. For a large community meeting you will want to have someone that has sufficient experience to be able to deal with a wide range of unpredictable circumstances. For a strategic planning session within your group it is best to bring in someone from outside the group in order to ensure neutrality and also to allow all the group members to participate equally. For regular group meetings, you may designate someone within the group itself to facilitate. You might consider rotating the role of the facilitator. This avoids one person from feeling burnt out and it also gives all members the opportunity to develop facilitation skills. If you also rotate taking the minutes, the person who records the minutes at one meeting would be the ideal facilitator for the next meeting. You may want to consider co-facilitation, where two people facilitate the meeting together. This is particularly appropriate when it is someone's first time facilitating or when the group has a particularly contentious issue to deal with.

Facilitate means "to make easy". It is not teaching; rather, it is using a variety of methods to engage participants in learning. Information to fuel their learning will come from their own experience, from other participants, the facilitator and external sources that have been brought into the session.

The skills needed to facilitate or chair a meeting were covered in Chapter III - Getting Organized. If you are facilitating a workshop, a planning session or some other group activity other than a meeting, here are some other aspects of facilitation that you might find helpful to consider.

#### (b) The Role Of The Facilitator

The facilitator's job is to support everyone to do their best thinking while guiding the group to solutions and agreements that are satisfactory to all. To do this, the facilitator:

- establishes "ground rules"; i.e. rules of conduct that are agreed to by all members
- encourages full participation, promotes mutual understanding and cultivates shared responsibility
- contributes to the self-esteem, integrity and growth of participants
- establishes a climate of respect, acceptance, caring and genuineness
- helps participants explore their own ideas and resources for dealing with.... (whatever the focus of the session is).

#### *Encourage Full Participation*

Inherent in group decision-making is the basic problem that people don't always say what they are really thinking. It's hard to take risks, and it's particularly hard to do so when the group's response may be hostile or dismissive. Consider these comments:

- "Haven't we already covered that point?"
- "We tried that years ago and it didn't work."
- "Let's keep it simple – please."
- "Hurry up – we're running out of time."
- "Impossible. Won't work. No way."

Statements like these are discourage people from voicing their thoughts. Like an underground stream below the surface of a group's discussion, negative attitudes cause most people to constantly edit their thinking before they speak, or not to speak at all. An effective facilitator understands this difficulty and takes responsibility for helping people overcome it.

## ***Promoting Mutual Understanding***

Each person's life experiences are very different, and they may have remarkably different views of the world. What people expect, what they assume, how they use language and how they behave: all of these are possible sources of mutual misunderstanding. What's more, when people attempt to clear up a misunderstanding, they usually want their *own* ideas understood *first*. The facilitator accepts the *inevitability of misunderstanding* and supports people to express their ideas. It is essential that the facilitator is impartial and honours all points of view. S/he helps members to see that thinking from each other's viewpoint is invaluable, as sustainable agreements are built on a foundation of mutual understanding.

## ***Fostering Inclusive Solutions***

It's hard to imagine that stakeholders with apparently irreconcilable differences might actually reach an agreement that benefits all parties. It is especially difficult in problem-solving discussions when it degenerates into critiques, rationalizations and sales jobs, as participants remain attached to their fixed positions and work to defend their own positions. However it is possible when groups are facilitated with a win/win focus.

The facilitator must help a group search for innovative ideas that incorporate everyone's point of view. To accomplish this goal, a facilitator takes steps to encourage divergent thinking, build a shared framework of understanding and build agreement. Examples of facilitation techniques are provided later on in this chapter.

## **(c) Facilitation Techniques and Tips**

**T**here are many techniques that can be employed by a facilitator. In deciding which to employ as a facilitator, it is important to have an understanding/knowledge of the group you are working with. Not all are appropriate for everyone. Further information about facilitation is contained in Appendix 3: References and Resources. The following is a brief sampling of a few techniques you might find useful.

## ***Warm-Up Activities***

When people gather to learn or work together, it is a good idea to start the session with a warm-up activity. A warm-up (also known as an energizer or ice-breaker) is a brief structured activity with the main purpose being to help members focus in on the particular topic of the session. It will help them to disengage from their previous activity and focus on their new situation, the people they are with and the new task they are about to commence.

While warm-ups can be fun, they should also be purposeful and fit with the main body of the session. If this is a first meeting, a low risk activity is best, and one that gives people the opportunity to get to know each other. Warm-ups and energizers are also very effective in helping group members re-focus after a long break, such as a lunch break, or to 'get the blood flowing' after a lengthy time spent sitting. They can be something as simple as a group stretch: getting people up out of their seats and moving their bodies. However, the facilitator must take into consideration the space within the room and any physical challenges that members may have. Some examples of warm-up exercises are given in Appendix 2.

## ***Presentations***

Some information is best presented in a lecture-type format. Suggestions for preparing and delivering effective presentations are provided in the next section.



### *Question and Answer*

The purpose for asking questions may be to get the group's attention, to actively involve people, to raise confidence, to get them thinking, to find out their interests or attitudes or to test their knowledge. There are many different types of questions; e.g. factual (one that has one right answer), conceptual (requires several bits of information to be connected and/or evaluated), analysis, interpretation, prediction or probing.

Here are some tips about asking questions:

- Use a random pattern of types of questions to keep people alert.
- If no one answers immediately, patiently ask simpler, probing questions rather than giving the answer.
- Always find something positive to say about the answer that is given.
- Start with questions the learners already know, then move to less familiar territory.
- Avoid close-ended questions that require only “yes” or “no”, or have one right answer.
- Use open-ended questions instead; e.g. rather than “Do you agree with what I just said?” ask, “What do you think about that?” Close-ended questions shut down communication because they don't encourage the respondent to explain or elaborate on their thoughts or feelings. They can also make people feel inadequate, defensive or suspicious. Open-ended questions encourage people to think more about their answers and make them feel respected.

If you are asked a question:

- Don't bluff if you don't know the answer: say you don't know but will try to find out
- Make sure you understand the question.
- Repeat the question if necessary to ensure that everyone has heard it
- Answer only what is asked, keeping it short and concise.

- If the person might be able to answer his or her own question, ask short probing questions to elicit the answer.
- Questions that are not directed at the topic or are otherwise relevant, may be posted on a separate flipchart paper especially designated as the “parking lot”, “bike rack” or “holding tank” and can be reviewed at the end of the session to determine possible actions for these questions.
- End questioning firmly but politely.

### *Discussion*

- Have everyone (including you, the facilitator) sitting in positions of equality; e.g. in a circle.
- Encourage participants to respond to each other as well as to you.
- Keep everyone on topic; as soon as someone veers off the topic, politely remind him/her of the topic being discussed.
- Watch the time and close off discussion firmly but politely when the time is up.

### *Demonstration*

For a demonstration to be effective, ensure that everyone can see it properly. Describe what is taking place for the benefit of auditory learners. If it is a particular skill that is being demonstrated, there should be an immediate opportunity to practice the skill.

### *Problem solving*

This technique assumes that the participants already possess adequate knowledge which, if applied, will enable them to solve the problem. The goal must be clearly stated, and guiding questions may be helpful.

### *Case Study*

A case study is similar to problem-solving, but broader in scope and less specific; may involve identifying a number of problems to be solved, an evaluation of priorities and a range of actions to be taken.

## ***Role-Playing***

This is a structured exercise in which a situation is defined and participants each take on a role which they act out within the context of the situation. For example, you might role-play a community meeting to discuss a zoning change to allow a business to be established in a residential neighbourhood. Participants would divide themselves into two groups, one for and one against the proposed change. Further role definitions might include a mother of a small child, a local politician, a businessperson, a retired police officer, etc. By playing these various roles participants will come to understand the various perspectives that exist within a community.

- solutions to a problem
- new products
- new goals
- underlying causes of a problem
- points of view held by persons not in the room
- unexpressed concerns
- helpful people of resources
- ways to build teamwork
- new directions of inquiry
- lessons from the past
- obstacles to meeting a goal
- ways to improve how a meeting is run
- hidden beliefs or assumptions
- sources of inspiration.

## ***Brainstorming***

This is a creative process of generating as many ideas or solutions as possible in a relatively short time frame. Brainstorming can be put to a great variety of uses. It can be used to build the following types of lists:

When brainstorming, *every contribution is worthwhile*. We suspend judgement and refrain from evaluating each other's ideas or censoring our own ideas until after the brainstorming session.

## ***Facilitator Tips for Brainstorming***

DO	DON'T
<b>Do</b> encourage people to take turns	<b>Don't</b> interrupt
<b>Do</b> treat "off the wall" ideas the same as "down-to-earth" ideas	<b>Don't</b> say "we've already got that one"
<b>Do</b> move around to create a lively feeling	<b>Don't</b> respond more positively to one idea over another
<b>Do</b> say "let's see if I got this right so far" if a person is difficult to follow	<b>Don't</b> use frowns, raised eyebrows or other non-verbal gestures that signal disapproval
<b>Do</b> repeat the purpose often	<b>Don't</b> give up the first time the group gets stuck - a moment or two of silence is ok
<b>Do</b> encourage everyone to contribute at least one idea	<b>Don't</b> start the process without clearly setting the time limit
<b>Do</b> give a warning that the end is approaching	<b>Don't</b> rush or pressure the group
<b>Do</b> expect a second wind of creative ideas after the obvious ones are exhausted	

***After the Brainstorm:***

- Debrief the activity by sharing reflections of the list as a whole.
- Create categories and sort the data into them.
- Evaluate the feasibility and potential effects of items, eventually culling the list to a few high priority items that have the strong support of many participants.
- Discuss “what do we want to do now?”

***Structured Go-Arounds***

In a Go-Around, each person in turn has the opportunity to express their thoughts or feelings, without interruption from others. Benefits of Go-Arounds are:

- warms up a newly formed group
- structures a complex discussion
- avoids simultaneous subconversations (facilitator must be firm about everyone listening to each speaker)
- makes room for quiet members
- gathers diverse perspectives when membership consists of varied interest groups
- avoids argument and debate before all viewpoints are fully heard
- shares risk and responsibility; e.g. in responding to a controversial issue everyone must state their position so a few are not “taking the heat” for others
- calms the group: after a disturbing episode, a break followed by a go-around is an ideal method for allowing everyone to voice reactions to what occurred before the break
- brings closure: at the end of a meeting, give each member a final chance to express thoughts and feelings that might otherwise not be spoken – at least, in front of everyone.

***Procedure for Go-Around:***

1. Have group members pull their chairs together to form a circle, or have members turn so that all can be seen. It is important in a go-around that every member sees every other member’s face.
2. Give a one-sentence overview of the topic to be addressed. For example: “In a moment we’ll each have a chance to give our reactions to the presentation we just heard.”

3. Explain the process. Example: “We’ll go clockwise from whoever speaks first. While someone is talking, no one may interrupt. When you’re through speaking, say ‘pass’ or ‘I’m done.’”
4. If there are particular variations in the ground rules, go over them now. For example, some facilitators give people explicit permission to pass without speaking when it is their turn.
5. After having gone over the ground rules, restate the topic. If a more detailed explanation is needed, give it now.
6. Give people an idea of how much time to take. Example 1: “This will work best if each of you spends about a minute sharing your reactions.” Example 2: “Take as much time as you like to give your impression of why this problem keeps reappearing.”

***Popular Education***

Population education was first started in Central America where popular groups such as labour unions, peasant organizations, and neighbourhood associations organized to challenge the power structures that oppressed them. Because many of the participants were illiterate, methods often involved tools such as role playing, drawing, and creating human “sculptures” representing the group’s understanding and knowledge of an issue. These methods have proven to be equally effective in North American cultures to help people organize more effectively for social change. Popular Education encourages a participatory process that develops people’s critical thought, creative expression, and collective action. It links analysis and action, theory and practice in order to transform the world. (Friere, 1990; Barndt, 1989; Arnolds, 1991) The Catalyst Centre in Toronto provides training and consultation services and a wide range of resources on popular education (see <http://www.catalystcentre.ca>).

***Debriefing***

It is important to help participants disengage from a structured exercise, such as a role-play, by debriefing the activity. Following a role-play it is important that group members separate their own views from those they may have expressed while playing a character role in the role-play. After all



structured exercises it is a good idea to take some time to separate the experience from the information that was gleaned within the activity. The following questions may assist in debriefing. They should be asked in the order shown, as they move from personal reflection to specific information or learning.

1. How did it feel to... ? (e.g., “play that character” or “be involved in that experience?”)
2. What did you observe about yourself?
3. What did you observe about others?
4. What concerns has this raised for you?
5. What did you learn?

6. How can you transfer this learning to other situations with this or other groups?

### ***Closure Activities***

Similarly to a warm-up activity, a closure activity is a brief, structured process that helps to pull together the work that has been completed within the session. Closure activities literally “close off” the session. It prepares members to move out of the meeting and helps solidify or summarize the collective work. It is also a way to check out peoples’ reactions to the meeting.

### ***Additional Tips For Effective Facilitation***

- Ensure the environment and other conditions are conducive to learning (i.e., comfortable chairs, few distractions, breaks, refreshments).
- State the anticipated outcomes of the session right at the start.
- Post an agenda and talk it through; you may choose not to post time allotments for each item but rather set specific times for breaks and ending. Once the agenda has been agreed on, stick to it!
- Use a variety of methods to stimulate and accommodate different learning styles.
- Use language that is appropriate for the level of the learners.
- Realize that every learner is an individual; recognize and accept differences.
- Provide positive feedback and reinforcement.
- Be patient, understanding and respectful.
- Post and discuss your goals for the session.

## 3.4 Presentations

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As you work towards your goals, opportunities to present your idea or project to groups of people may arise. Take advantage of these opportunities, even if you don't think you are a good at public speaking. The more people that understand your initiative and the rationale behind it, the better! Giving a good presentation is more a matter of preparation than of innate speaking ability. In the next section we will present some ideas to help you plan, prepare and deliver a successful presentation.

### (a) Initial Preparation

When you're asked to give a presentation there are some initial details you will need to know before you begin organizing it. Here are some of the preliminary steps you will need to take for your presentation to be successful.

#### *Audience*

The more you know about your audience the more you can tailor your presentation to suit their needs. Try to learn more about your audience by asking the following questions:

- Who is your audience?
- What community does the audience come from? Consider both geographic communities and communities of interest.
- What do you know about this community? Perhaps some research would be helpful.
- What concerns does the audience have for its community?

#### *Location and Set Up*

If at all possible try to see the meeting facilities prior to the date of your presentation. Check on the acoustics, lighting, temperature controls and ventilation. Also, determine whether you have any control over the arrangement of the seats. The audience may feel comfortable in a semi-circle arrangement where they

can see each other and may be more likely to participate. If it is a large room, ensure that a microphone is provided. For most presentations it is better not to use a lectern or podium, as it restricts your use of body language and ability to move around the room, but if you feel that you must use one, check that it will be available. If you're travelling some distance make sure you receive adequate directions. Give yourself enough time to get there so that you don't arrive late or out of breath. In fact, it is a good idea to give yourself some extra time to adapt to the room, practice using the microphone, check that the audio-visual equipment is working and pull yourself and your thoughts together.

#### *Timing*

Know how much time you have for your presentation so that you do not exceed the amount of time given to you. In fact, leave some time at the end of the presentation to let your audience ask questions and make comments.

### (b) Content

#### *Select Your Topic*

The content of your presentation will be shaped and influenced by the following factors:

- the purpose of your presentation (e.g., to inform; to discuss; to impart knowledge or skills)
- the issues that are relevant to the community
- what the participants know about the issues
- what the participants want or need to know
- what knowledge and/or skills the participants want to gain.

Keep these factors in mind to help you choose a topic that has some meaning or interest for your audience. If your audience chooses the topic for you then you should determine the level of their awareness on this topic.

## ***Gather Information***

Once you've determined what your topic is you need to research it, gathering all the relevant information that pertains to it. However, before you begin your research you should break down the topic into four or five main points. This will help you to identify specific elements that make up the topic. Gather supporting information for each of the main points. Collect information from as many different sources as possible including newspapers, journals, books, films, and your colleagues or peers. Try to find material that is accurate and up to date. If you are called upon quite often to present, you might consider starting a file to save newspaper clippings, magazine articles and quotations to keep your presentation fresh and up-to-date.

## ***Organize Your Material***

When you have gathered all of the necessary information for your presentation the next thing to do is make an outline. One way to do this is to put your main points in a logical sequence. List the details and supporting evidence for each main point in a logical order as well. Include any statistics, charts, or diagrams that you want to use.

Another way is to "map" your presentation (Bender, 1999). This may be a helpful approach if you are new to the topic and are having difficulty coming up with a logical outline.

- Start with the topic written in the centre of a blank page.
- What related issues come to mind? Write them down. Draw lines connecting each related word to the centre.
- For each new word, think of related key words and draw connecting lines. Be inclusive rather than exclusive.
- Write down as many correlated key words as you can to ensure that you haven't missed anything.

Once you have your outline, fill in the content by elaborating on each of the points or concepts you have listed. Try to develop a structure to your presentation (e.g., outline a series of events in chronological order, or identify the major problems).

Eliminate any information that seems redundant and that does not further your main point or presentation. Avoid technical terms and jargon, particularly if you are speaking to a diverse group of people. At the same time, however, don't insult your audience by making your presentation overly simplistic. Try to organize your presentation so that you have the following components:

- introduction
- body
- summary
- conclusion.

According to Granville Toogood (Lawrence, 2001), it takes only eight seconds for your audience to size you up and decide whether you are worth listening to or not. Personal stories and anecdotes are good starters, or asking a rhetorical question. Humour can work, but only if you know your audience, since humour is a very subjective thing. Other ways to spark interest in your topic are to look at projections for the future, or review the past to show how much things have changed. Whatever opener you use, make sure it is linked to your main message.

Try to provide something new to the audience in your presentation: something of value or that is memorable in some way. Possibilities include:

- taking a strong stance on an issue,
- analyzing data for its more subtle meanings,
- connecting facts or events in innovative and compelling ways, or
- teaching them something they could not have known already.

**(c) Delivery**

**E**ffective delivery requires rehearsal. Try to give yourself one or two days to practice and polish your presentation. If you are well-rehearsed you won't suffer as much from stage fright. Practice your presentation in front of a mirror, a friend, or even a video camera. As you practice, check that you:

- emphasize key words
- keep your sentences short
- speak slowly and clearly
- breathe from your diaphragm not from your throat
- regulate your voice (in terms of pitch, tone and volume)
- use plain language and avoid jargon
- avoid using clichés.

Time how long it takes to deliver your presentation. If you will be using visual aids then practice with them. Try to make your visuals fit as seamlessly as possible into your presentation. Finally, determine if each section and point is linked to the next by asking yourself whether the presentation flows and makes sense.

It is best not to read your speech unless it contains technical or sensitive material that you need to be completely accurate, or if it is not in your first language. It is difficult to use body language and verbal emphasis effectively when you are reading. Memorize your speech and use note cards with your main points listed on them in case you need a reminder.

On the day of the presentation try to arrive early. Before you begin you may want to try deep breathing for a minute or two to help you relax. Try not to speak for more than 20-30 minutes without a break or a change in direction or pace. During your presentation try to be conscious of your words, your body language, and the audience's interest. Review the following tips before you give your presentation.

***At the beginning:***

- thank your audience for coming
- start with a warm-up (e.g. introductions)
- clarify your purpose

***Throughout the presentation:***

- don't fidget
- look relaxed
- use personal language (i.e., how you relate to or feel about the topic)
- use humour if appropriate
- pause occasionally to let your words sink in
- try not to digress from your main points  
explain any unclear terms

***Your relationship with the audience:***

- make eye contact with audience
- encourage audience participation
- repeat people's questions so that everyone can hear them

**(d) Inform & Motivate**

**P**resentations relating to creating healthy communities usually have two objectives: to inform and motivate the audience. Here are some suggestions for making your presentation as effective as possible.

***Content***

- Speak only on topics that you are knowledgeable about.
- Clarify your message in your own mind before you attempt to communicate it to others.
- Speak from your sense of passion for the topic: only use facts and figures to support the points you want to make.
- Your presentation should have only one major theme: state the theme at the outset, remind the audience of the theme during the presentation and once again at in your conclusion.
- Speak in pictures or tell a story: using anecdotes, illustrations, and astonishing facts will keep the interest of your audience, but remember to link them to the main points of your presentation.

## ***Keep it Brief***

- You probably won't have time to present all the facts.
- Your audience won't have the energy to hear about them all.
- The more concise you are the less likely your audience will 'tune out'.
- Provide brochures or handouts that explore the issue in further detail.

## ***Relate to Your Audience***

- Invite them to introduce themselves (if group is not too big).
- Ask some/all to share their concerns or say why they've come to the presentation.
- Look up from your notes frequently and make eye contact with various people around the room.
- Maintain an awareness of the audience's reactions.
- If the audience seems bored or restless then try changing pace, taking a break, or letting them participate.
- Encourage the audience to ask questions.
- Encourage their feedback.
- Give them some time to discuss plans of action.

## ***Be Hopeful***

According to activist and writer Katrina Shields, "to be aware and active on social issues brings us face to face with a lot of bad news". (Shields 1969) Often it is difficult to deal with bad news. Many people, in fact, feel powerless when so much around them is going wrong. They feel frustrated by the crime, pollution, traffic, unemployment or whatever other problems pervade their communities.

If your presentation contains some "bad news" do not overwhelm your audience with an excessive barrage of facts and statistics. You don't want to numb your audience with too much information or make them feel helpless. Instead, you want to grab their attention and leave them feeling motivated and able to respond constructively to your presentation. Avoid turning it into a meaningless 'pep talk' by providing concrete information that will help them respond effectively to the challenges they face.

Here are some suggestions on organizing this type of talk.

- Leave the group with a message that will motivate them to work for change.
- Provide some illustrations of the achievements other communities have made. Explain to your audience how others have dealt with a similar issue, showing what a community can achieve when it pulls together.
- Encourage them to see themselves as important players in working towards change. Remind them that their opinions and actions can help shape policy decisions - and give some examples.
- Quote survey results or other sources of information that indicate that many people share similar concerns.
- Suggest ways that they can become more involved in their community and in creating healthier communities.
- Validate people's feelings and questions.
- Provide information on local resources, groups or other contacts that would be useful to the group.



### *Things to Avoid when Public Speaking*

- Talking too rapidly
- Speaking in a monotone
- Using too high a vocal pitch
- Not smiling enough while talking
- Talking and not saying much
- Presenting without enough emotion or passion
- Using too many 'big' words
- Using abstractions without giving concrete examples
- Not explaining the meaning of words and expressions
- Using unfamiliar technical jargon
- Not introducing the message and its relevance clearly
- Using poor grammar
- Talking so quietly that people cannot hear
- Using slang or profanity
- Talking without preparation or knowledge of the topic
- Disorganized and rambling performance
- Not making eye contact with listeners
- Fidgety behaviour that distracts the listeners
- Talking down to the audience
- Indirect communications (i.e. beating around the bush)
- Not summarizing and concluding the message clearly
- Failing to use visual aids to illustrate points
- Insulting the audience's intelligence
- Not asking for action

*(Bender, 1999)*

#### (e) Using Audio-visual Aids

**A**udio-visual aids can greatly enhance your presentation, if used well. They can help you present complex material in a way that is easily understood, and will help your audience retain the information you are giving them. They are also helpful if your audience has mixed language and/or literacy characteristics. However, audio-visual aids can also detract from the sense of connection between the speaker and audience, and have a depersonalizing effect. They can also confuse the audience if they are not clearly related to the points you are making. It is usually best to begin and end your presentation with just you talking, and to avoid using slides or overheads that distract the audience from listening to you at these times.

There are many books and manuals available on the technical aspects of developing effective visual aids, some of which are listed at the end of this section. Here are a few general tips:

- Use graphs, schematics, tables, photographs and illustrations for visuals. Avoid word-only materials because people will be too busy reading the slide or overhead to listen to what you are saying.
- Always introduce the information on the slide or overhead before you put it up, so your audience is

listening and not looking. Use the slide or overhead to reinforce what you have said, and leave it up while you elaborate on your point.

- Do not turn toward the overhead, slide or flipchart when you are speaking and always face the audience (have a copy of the visual in your notes if you need to see it).
- Put only one idea or point on each slide.
- If there is text, use a font size of at least 26 points.
- Use only a few words (if any).
- Use short bullet points; avoid long lines of text.
- Use colour to capture attention.
- Be familiar with the equipment, or ensure there is technical support available. If you are using your laptop with an unfamiliar projector, check for compatibility, correct cables, etc. ahead of time.
- Paper handouts that summarize your talk and can be kept for future reference are usually appreciated by audiences; let them know at the start of your talk that you will make them available. Some speakers prefer not to hand them out ahead of time because they will be reading them instead of listening. In some cases, however, it may be appropriate to hand out a copy of your slides with space for them to jot down their notes, ideas or reactions as the presentation proceeds.

*(adapted from Toogood in Lawrence, 2001 and Urs Bender, 1999)*

### (f) Evaluation

Once you've finished your presentation and you've answered questions it is important that you take the time to evaluate the presentation. Given enough time you may also want to hand out an evaluation sheet to your audience to give you some feedback. Some questions you could ask might include the following:

- What are the three most important things you learned from this presentation?
- Did the presenter speak loudly and clearly?
- Did the presentation sustain your interest and attention?
- Did you find the presentation too long/short?
- Was the presentation too technical/simple?
- What are three ways that this presentation could have been improved?

In addition to the feedback that others give, you need to take the time to evaluate how successful you think your presentation was.

Ask yourself the following questions:

- Did your audience seem attentive or listless?
- Did your audience look puzzled?
- Did you make eye contact?
- Did you let the audience participate and ask questions?
- Did you get to cover your main points?
- Did you feel rushed?
- Did you speak loudly and clearly?
- What three things did you learn from/during your presentation?
- What improvements do you think you could you make to your presentation?

Don't take criticisms about the presentation personally. First, decide for yourself if the criticism is valid. Don't be too hard on yourself: everyone is entitled to make mistakes or have an 'off' day. Don't aim for perfection, just improvement with practice. Learn what you can from the criticism, but also celebrate your accomplishment.



## 3.5 Media Relations

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If your group is going to be effective in creating positive community change, as many people as possible need to understand your concerns and activities. Publicity is essential to creating and maintaining support for your group and its cause. Through good media relations you can promote both your issues and/or programs as well as create a credible public image. Being known by community members and potential funders will go a long way towards helping you to achieve your goals.

This section is intended to provide useful information to Healthy Community organizers who may not be familiar with the news media and who wish to learn some basic terminology and techniques before planning and executing programs involving media outlets.

### (a) What Is “The Media”?

Generally, the “news media,” refers to:

- daily newspapers
- weekly (community) newspapers
- radio and television stations, including cable
- local, provincial and national magazines
- special interest publications (business/trade/association).

The term may also be extended to include special-interest newsletters, bulletin boards and, increasingly, Internet-based services.

There are two situations that are likely to bring us in contact with the news media:

- *we* initiate the contact by choosing to issue a news release, public service announcement (PSA) or statement, hold a news conference or stage a special public event; or
- *they* decide they want information from us (for example, if you make a presentation at a municipal council meeting and a reporter covering the meeting approaches you afterwards for more information).

Collectively, media personnel are a powerful force for shaping opinion in your community, both directly through their editorial pages and indirectly through the stories they choose to run or suppress. For this reason you cannot afford to ignore or offend them.

### (b) What Does The News Media Do?

This seems like a fairly simple question, but in fact many of the problems related to news media relations stem from a misunderstanding of its role. Some of this confusion arises because we often refer generically to “the news media” when we really mean something else: advertising media, entertainment media, sports media, etc.

As businesses, newspapers or radio and television stations have several roles, beyond the obvious one of remaining in business. These roles include entertaining, informing, educating and persuading. They do this by collecting, selecting and reproducing material from many sources.

When we become involved with the news media, we find there are two ways of gaining access to the printed pages or broadcast airwaves. You can either purchase time or space, and fill it with your message (i.e., advertising); or you can persuade an editor or reporter that your information will be of interest to his or her readers, listeners or watchers and is worthy of a story.

Advertising and news media relations are *not* interchangeable. Advertising provides control but is more expensive than the news media. There is usually no cost involved with the news media; however, there are no guarantees that your message will be published as submitted.

In order to develop effective relationships with the news media, it is important to recognize the constraints under which reporters and editors work: a corporate power structure, frequent deadlines, limited space or time, many competing demands, and decision-making that may be shared among several individuals. Unless a newspaper is very small, it’s highly unlikely that the reporter who interviews you will have any say in how or where the resulting article is placed, what the headline will be, or even if it appears at all.



### (c) What Is News?

As the old saying goes: “When a dog bites a man, that’s not news; when a man bites a dog, that’s news!”

There’s an important kernel of truth in this cliché. One of the principal characteristics of news is that it is unusual. This, however, is only the starting point of defining “news,” and it is essential to understand that definition if you are to plan and execute effective media relations initiatives.

What is news? It’s almost a trick question, because the definition of news will change from media outlet to media outlet, from medium to medium, and even from day to day. The best way to understand news in your community is simply by reading, watching and listening to your local news media. If you start compiling a news media contact file you’ll soon develop a sense for the kinds of stories preferred by the various outlets, and that will help you design your own approach.

That said, however, there are some common criteria that most news media observe. News is:

- timely
- unusual
- controversial
- relevant to the majority of the audience
- entertaining.

Not every news story will be all of these things, but most will fall into more than one category. Community news media are also especially open to stories that contain strong human interest elements, especially about local residents or organizations. But keep in mind that a journalist’s priorities and interests may be quite different from yours. In news media relations, you will find that it is the reporter’s priorities that take precedence, and your surest road to success is to match your organization’s interests with those priorities.

### (d) Developing Your Media Relations Program

Representatives of organizations often cannot choose when to become involved with the news media. Reporters on the trail of a story will contact any and all people who they think may have useful information. Therefore, organizations operating in the public arena should have an identified media spokesperson and a media relations plan in place, whether or not they intend to actively pursue media coverage of their activities. The goal of an active media relations program is to establish working relationships and to build up credits with your news media audience before you think you need it.

Building relationships with the news media is no different from building relationships with any other group of individuals. You must find out who they are, what interests them and how they prefer to receive information. In your review of local news media to determine their definitions of news, you probably also noted that specific reporters cover specific areas of interest. Clearly, your first contacts should be with those reporters who are interested in health, community, environmental and social issues.

One of the best ways of approaching a reporter for the first time is with an information package about your organization. This can be as simple as a single sheet of paper or as elaborate as custom-designed folder with facts, figures, biographies, photos and project descriptions. Regardless of its format, however, it must answer the “Five Ws” of journalism: Who, What, Where, When and Why?

Make an appointment with the reporter: you don’t want to show up when (s)he is trying to meet a deadline. Explain the purpose of your approach immediately, and confirm that the person you’ve contacted is the appropriate person at that news outlet. Spend just a few minutes outlining your organization and its activities, and make sure the reporter understands that you are the designated spokesperson for your organization. Above all, don’t expect the first meeting to last more than a few minutes, and don’t waste the reporter’s time.

It helps to track your media contacts. You can add this to the news media file that you started during your survey of the local news media.

The process of creating and implementing an effective news media relations program is similar to the planning for any successful venture. There are five basic steps:

- Set objectives
- Design a program
- Carry out activities
- Measure the results of those activities
- Revise the program and start the cycle again

A useful tool to organize the planning process is known as the RACE formula. RACE stands for Research, Analyze, Communicate (and) Evaluate. Each step is important -- especially the research and analysis -- and you should resist the temptation to leap directly into action. You may want to adopt the reporter's convention of answering the Five Ws as you work your way through research and analysis.

**Research** the media outlets in your area: How often do they publish? What kind of material do they print? Who is their audience? What are the stories or events we want to see covered in the media?

**Analyze** the data collected by your research activities. Choose one or two events or stories that are most likely to achieve the coverage you are seeking. Why are they newsworthy? Who would be interested in them? Are you likely to reach them through the news media? Which media outlet is the best match? What would be the best location for an announcement or promotional event? For the walk-a-thon example, you could invite the media to attend a regular meeting of your group, a news conference, or ensure they will be covering the municipal council meeting.

**Communicate** your information. If you are providing information in the hope of encouraging coverage, recognize that the more information you can provide to a journalist in a clear, concise, timely fashion, the more likely you are to be able to achieve an accurate portrayal of your position. If you are responding to a request for information, understand

that the more time you can spend with a journalist and the more you know about the story he or she is working on, the more likely you are to be able to achieve an accurate portrayal of your position.

**Evaluate** whether your media relations program met its objectives. "We achieved good coverage" is not an adequate evaluation. Try to quantify your results; i.e. "We reached 150,000 people...(with a certain message on a certain day)". Since few projects are 100% successful, it's important also to ask "What could we have done better?" Perhaps the timing was off; perhaps the information kit didn't convey the true essence of the story; perhaps the wrong reporters were selected. All of this information should be assessed, not to allocate blame but to feed back into the process to improve your next activity.

### (e) Media Skills

There are many different communications vehicles that may be employed in a news media relations program, but the three most basic skills are writing a news release, conducting a formal or informal interview and organizing a news conference or a special event.

#### *The News Release*

All communications to the media should be clear, concise, forceful, planned and thoughtful. Elsewhere we referred to the five Ws of journalism: "Who, What, Where, When, and Why?" "How" is often added to this list, and by answering all those questions, you can be sure of presenting all the information a journalist will want and need. A sample news release is included in Appendix 2

Your news release should contain these elements:

- **a headline** summing up the most important aspect of the release in a few words designed to catch the reader's attention; this is not, however, the headline likely to appear in the newspaper
- **a release time** telling the reporters when they can release a story; a news release with a future date is said to be "embargoed", but there is no legal sanction for reporters who break an embargo; only experience will tell you which reporters can be trusted to observe an embargo

- a **placeline** giving the geographic origin of the release
- a **dateline** giving the date the release was issued
- a **"lead"** sentence that is short (about 30 words), snappy, interesting and informative. It should at least begin to answer the "Five Ws"
- **body copy** expanding on the lead, providing necessary information to answer more fully all of the "Five Ws"
- a **closing** - usually either a summary of the release or a standard descriptive paragraph, used on every release, describing your organization
- **"- 30 -"** centred at the bottom of the page is the traditional symbol for closing a news release. Anything written below this would not be included in the published news release
- **For further information** - indicates the name, title, address and telephone number of the individual designated as spokesperson for whatever issue or event is highlighted by the news release

### Interviews

Reporters gather much of their information by interviewing, and you can expect to be interviewed either because you issued a news release or because someone from the news media thinks you can help with a story he or she is pursuing. Many news outlets will not use the information provided in a news release unless it is confirmed and expanded upon by the issuer. This is especially true of television and radio news.

Print interviews for newspaper and magazine stories are generally longer than for TV or radio. This means having in-depth knowledge of the topic and some detailed examples ready. TV and radio interviews allow for a more personal approach to the audience.

The key to a successful interview is *preparation*. You must decide on the points that are most important to you, marshal your arguments, assemble your data and be prepared to explain your position in detail. Sometimes, the reporter will know more about the subject under discussion than you do; often, the reporter will have done little or no homework and you will have to provide very basic information before going on to the story you wish to promote. Send appropriate material to the producer as soon as the arrangements have been made, for example:

- a fact sheet about the organization,
- a brief biographical sketches of the interviewees,
- a summary of the issues or topic at hand.

**Television, Video and Radio:** There are two main formats for TV and radio interviews. A news story will be very short – prepare several 15 second “sound bites” (i.e. concise, catchy statements) and use them in your interview. Being a guest on a talk show involve a longer interview, usually allowing for a relaxed conversation with the host. Most interviews are taped, but this does not mean that you will have an opportunity to re-do any part of it: it needs to be right the first time. No crib notes should be used; the turning of pages creates undesirable noise. During longer interviews, the production crew may cue the host with hand signals. You will have to learn and follow these signals: make sure you review them prior to airtime. With taped shows, discuss the possibility of saying “cut” if a blunder has been made. For interviews you initiate, it’s a good idea to jot down the three or four most important pieces of information, then make sure you get them across to the reporter early in the interview. Some trainers call this “playing your aces” and suggest you work them into your conversation at every opportunity. For a Healthy Communities coalition, four aces could be as follows:

- ♠ multisectoral, creating links, getting people to work together to improve our community’s economic, social and environmental well-being
- ♠ gets projects off the ground
- ♠ creates links with local government
- ♠ leads to improvements in jobs, schools, community safety.

When preparing for an interview, keep the following points in mind:

- rehearsal will improve your performance
- practice speaking in a pleasant, well-modulated voice
- ensure you have a good grasp of the organization’s history, objectives and accomplishments
- for televised or video-taped interviews, do not wear white or very light-coloured clothing; mid-toned is best. Be aware that light-sensitive glasses will darken under camera lights and make it appear that you are wearing sunglasses. Avoid large, dangling jewelry, as it may be distracting.

***Responding to the Media***

Preparing for an interview you initiate is fairly straightforward; what about interviews initiated by the news media? How do you prepare for those?

It's important that every organization have one or two designated spokespersons who are authorized to speak to the news media. These individuals must keep themselves up-to-date on current issues concerning their organizations, including those affecting community and government relations, events, policies, potential crises: the list is almost endless. Other members should be requested to refer news media enquiries to the news media spokespersons.

It's often useful to maintain an "issues book" that contains material that might be requested by the news media. Basic facts such as membership and policies, positions taken by the group or its board, background to contentious issues and lists of upcoming events are all potentially useful. The book should be updated regularly and copies made available to anyone authorized to speak on behalf of the organization.

When contacted by a journalist, it is never advisable to refuse to comment. You should either answer the question as directly as possible, ask her/him to call back at a time when you are able to give them your full attention, or refer the reporter to a more authoritative source. If you are unable to answer a question: for example, because it would require you to break a confidence, involves matters relating to personnel, or is before the courts, explain this to the reporter. If you promise to obtain information for a reporter and undertake to call back, make sure you know what the reporter's deadlines are, and respond in a timely fashion.

Finally, never assume that what you say to a reporter is "off the record". You must have a specific understanding of the ground rules before the interview begins. Is it off the record, and nothing you say will be reported? Will you be quoted but your identity withheld? Are you speaking for publication with full attribution? *Be sure!*

***News Conferences/Special Events***

News conferences and other special events (which may or may not involve the news media) require the same planning and preparation as any other phase of a news media relations program.

The planning period for special events will vary with the complexity of the event itself. For news conferences, planning may range from a few hours for fast-breaking news stories to several months for the promotion of other events. An "ideal minimum" for planning is two weeks, and that assumes that an organization has a basic news media plan in place.

***Responding to Difficult Questions***

Developing a news media relations program can result in tremendous benefits for a community-based organization: increased public awareness of its cause, active political support, greater fund raising opportunities, and so on. However, it also increases the likelihood of reporters asking questions that might embarrass or discredit the organization. Such questions may be asked out of ignorance, or because an opponent of the program has planted the idea, or simply because the reporter feels it's his or her job to ask tough questions. Responding in an honest, open manner is the best technique for countering such questions. Offering a "no comment" or otherwise trying to evade an issue is simply an invitation for a reporter to dig deeper.

***Other Forms of Publicity through the Media******Paid Advertising***

Even if you don't have a substantial advertising budget, it is probably smart to pay for a small ad in the your local paper or on the radio from time to time. Editors and station managers may feel more kindly toward groups that pay for advertising on occasion.

***Public Service Announcement (PSA)***

A PSA is written in the form of a short commercial for an upcoming event. If you are having an Open

House, recruiting volunteers, holding a fund-raising event or anything else you feel would benefit from advertising, then send out PSAs to all media. Include information about who is sponsoring it, what it's about, where the proceeds are going and most importantly, why people should come to it. Most media outlets print or broadcast PSAs free of charge. Each media outlet may limit the number of words allowable. Be as brief and concise as possible. Some further suggestions and examples of PSAs are included in Appendix 2.

## Letters to the editor

Letters to the editor can be used to inform the public of issues, events, concerns and misinformation. They should have a specific point, but are also excellent for putting your organization's name in the public eye. Include your full name, your address and daytime telephone number. Check with the newspaper for the maximum length for letters, but keep in mind that shorter letters have a better chance of being published (London Community Resource Centre, 2002).

## News articles

Many newspapers, especially the smaller community newspapers will accept occasional articles from community members. Also some of the major newspapers have special features for which contributions are invited only if they are of interest to their subscribers.

## Newsletters

Consider publishing your own newsletter on a regular basis. It is an excellent vehicle for informing the public about your concerns and activities. If you do not have the resource to publish your own newsletter, become a regular contributor to a newsletter of an organization that has similar goals or interests to yours.

## Handling Inadequate Coverage

While you will want to correct any inaccurate or misleading information in a story carried by the media, it is vital that you do so politely and tactfully, so as not to jeopardize your media relations for the future. It may be helpful to approach the reporter or editor, explain the problem and ask for his or her assistance in rectifying it. Another option for print media is to write a letter to the editor. This letter should contain praises for the writer's "well thought out and well-written" article, the necessary corrections or additional information, and a carefully worded thank you. This will also put your organization in the public eye once more, and in a more positive manner.

Personal contact is necessary if poor coverage involves a total misrepresentation of your organization, and allowing the story to stand as written might threaten your credibility, future funding or the provision of services. Strongly but politely urge the paper to print a correction.

### *Getting Better News Coverage*

#### DO

- describe your story, event or project openly and clearly
- be satisfied with your share of coverage.
- provide an insider's perspective to editors and reporters
- know what information is needed
- follow up
- for print publications, research what's been published before

#### DON'T

- speculate on answers to a question
- pester
- be afraid to ask questions

*(The Health Communications Unit, Vol. 8: Interviewing)*

## 3.6 Leadership

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No matter what organizational style you adopt, some form of leadership within the group is needed. Even within a collective, where there is collective leadership, natural leaders tend to emerge.

Leadership issues can be a major problem for groups. Sometimes the group is overly dependent on a leader and allows decisions to be made on their behalf without due consideration. Other times a leader becomes dictatorial and creates animosity within the group. Some leaders stay on longer than they should and not enough effort is made to recruit and train new leaders.

Often leaders develop through participating in the activities of the group. Generally, good leaders were first good participants or followers. As they become familiar with its operations and experience some success in working with others, they may gain the confidence to take on a leadership role. Thus, in order for new leadership to develop, opportunities must be created for participants to gain experience and work constructively with others. Recognition for their work is important, but many leaders are motivated more from the intrinsic rewards found in the work itself and in moving closer to their vision of a healthy community.

Providing formal training in leadership development to members of your group could be a rewarding investment that increases the success of your group.

### (a) Leadership Styles

According to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), there are several styles of leader, including:

1. The Directing/Telling Leader
2. The Coaching/Selling Leader
3. The Participating/Supportive Leader
4. The Delegating/Trusting Leader

These four different styles of leadership depend upon the abilities and co-operation of the groups or communities involved in community development. Communities that have different levels of confidence, skills and knowledge require different leadership styles to help them organize and plan for their future efficiently and effectively. OMAFRA developed the chart opposite to match different kinds of groups with different styles of leadership.

In organizing a Healthy Communities initiative, successful leaders take on a variety of roles, depending on the people involved, the issues that are being addressed and the problems that are encountered.

#### *The Leader as Catalyst/Guide*

- takes the initiative in approaching problems
- encourages people to face their concerns of the community
- encourages group action
- stirs people's awareness
- helps the community explore its concerns and weigh its weaknesses and strengths
- offers a range of alternative solutions
- assist to clarify issues
- encourages reflection, discussion and co-operation
- helps develop decision-making procedures
- lets the group make its own decisions without passing judgement
- respects the community values and traditions.

#### *The Leader as Facilitator/Enabler*

- enables and supports the community organizing process
- encourages people to work together co-operatively
- supports group efforts to develop their own solutions and plans of action
- helps the group identify and overcome obstacles

If the members in your group:	Use This Leadership Style	By using these specific actions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· are new (inexperienced)</li> <li>· unfamiliar with the job</li> <li>· lack confidence</li> </ul>	<b>TELL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· give clear directions</li> <li>· follow-up</li> <li>· provide feedback</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· are somewhat experienced</li> <li>· need help 'buying into' the decisions that have to be made</li> <li>· need coaching on how to do job</li> </ul>	<b>SELL</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· explain decisions</li> <li>· allow frequent opportunities for clarification</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· know how to do the job, but lack self-confidence</li> <li>· need to share decision making with each other and the leader</li> </ul>	<b>PARTICIPATE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· share ideas</li> <li>· help members in decision making</li> <li>· encourage and compliment</li> </ul>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· are quite experienced</li> <li>· are capable of doing the job</li> <li>· want to do the job</li> <li>· direct own affairs</li> </ul>	<b>DELEGATE</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· allow members to make and carry out decisions</li> </ul>

***The Leader as Expert/Teacher***

- offers his/her research and analysis skills to the community.
- provides advice, data, technical assistance, or knowledge of procedures and evaluation. methods and information about other communities and their projects.
- assistance to secure needed resources.
- acknowledges that the community is not obliged to follow the leader’s advice..

***The Leader as Counsellor/Therapist***

- helps the community to identify and resolve underlying conflicts.
  - helps dissenting groups or voices within the community search for and establish some common ground.
- (Antone, Miller & Myers 1986)*

**(b) Effective Leadership**

**A**n effective leader is someone who is a team builder, a good facilitator and committed to a cause. The chart on the next page demonstrates the attitudes and behaviours involved in developing these three traits that make an effective leader. There are many other qualities and characteristics of an effective leader, such as honesty, flexibility, creativity and initiative. And don’t estimate the importance of being able to have some fun while working with others.

While leadership may come easily for some, anyone can learn and practice the skills involved in being a leader. Look for opportunities to practice these skills. If there are few opportunities in your community or organization then work with others to create opportunities to develop leadership skills. Opportunities could involve job sharing, sharing responsibilities, rotating roles or organizing a workshop on leadership skills.

**Effective Leadership Traits**

<b>Team builder</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· works co-operatively with others</li> <li>· asks for help; shares responsibilities</li> <li>· motivates others to get involved</li> <li>· helps others be confident in their work; gives positive reinforcement</li> <li>· knows the skills, interests and responsibilities of others</li> <li>· communicates ideas well and listens to others</li> <li>· builds trust</li> <li>· assigns tasks according to the members' interests and skills</li> </ul>
<b>Good facilitator</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· guides but does not direct</li> <li>· helps groups create visions</li> <li>· helps group identify and achieve its goals</li> <li>· can chair a meeting effectively</li> <li>· is aware that solutions come from the group</li> <li>· can help community re-focus and re-invent itself</li> <li>· has problem solving and negotiation skills</li> <li>· can build a shared understanding of issues</li> <li>· encourages brainstorming</li> <li>· provides support but does not push own agenda</li> </ul>
<b>Committed</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>· dedicated to cause</li> <li>· has the time</li> <li>· is aware of own strengths and weaknesses</li> <li>· knows when to take risks</li> <li>· is knowledgeable; i.e., is aware of changes in the community and world</li> <li>· is confident and motivated</li> <li>· has a positive attitude</li> </ul>

**(c) Stress and Burnout**

**M**any people working to make their communities healthier complain of feeling tired and stressed, particularly those who take on a lot of responsibilities.

Symptoms of stress and burnout may include tiredness, stress, lethargy, depression and/or irritability. Possible causes of these symptoms might be:

- taking on too much responsibility or work
- unclear goals
- unrealistic deadlines
- lack of mutual support
- ineffective communication systems
- a personal crisis.

**Solutions**

Below is a list of ideas to help you cope with or prevent burnout. Are there other solutions that you can add to the list?

- Ask for help when you need it.
- Clarify goals and reassess priorities regularly.
- Share responsibilities, decision making and roles; for example, give committees responsibility for projects rather than one individual.
- Allot time to do job related tasks and personal tasks (be realistic!).
- Improve communication between members through meetings, social outings, memos, or telephone calls.
- Take a personal interest in those you work with so that you will be aware of each other's personal needs and if someone is experiencing a personal crisis, and help if you can.
- Find a colleague or friend to talk with about your frustrations around work or personal matters.
- Take some time out occasionally to assess the responsibilities you have taken on and whether you are able to manage them successfully. Remember to eat well, get enough sleep and maintain your physical fitness. While your community work is important, don't let it hurt your physical health or your family and personal relationships.



## 3.7 Negotiation

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**E**ffective negotiating skills are an important asset for resolving conflict, making decisions and building consensus. Negotiation is used to deal with issues in such a way that all parties are mutually satisfied with the outcome. The best solution is one that takes into account all positions and one that all parties can live with comfortably.

### (a) Stages Of Negotiation

**A**ccording to authors Nancy Huelsberg and William Lincoln there are four different stages of negotiation. They include:

1. Organizing
2. Informal exchange of information
3. Bargaining process
4. Review and monitoring of agreement

Basic rules should be established for the negotiation process as follows:

- both parties agree to work co-operatively toward a mutually agreeable outcome
- everyone's interests should be met
- outcomes are fair for all
- everyone involves participates in finding a solution.

#### *Organizing*

Before negotiation begins, the different parties involved in the matter need to be identified. Next, someone will need to determine whether these parties are willing to participate in negotiations. Finally, all willing parties should come together to decide and determine the following matters:

- what the conflict or issue and its boundaries are
- who would be an appropriate mediator
- where the negotiations should be held
- how long the process should take (e.g., how many meetings, how long should the meetings be)

#### *Informal Exchange of Information*

The first gathering should be an informal session that allows everyone to get to know each other and establish the rules for the negotiation process.

This meeting can also be used to:

- develop the issues
- request information from each other
- exchange information
- prepare preliminary positions
- present positions.

#### *Bargaining Process*

The bargaining process occurs when the actual negotiations take place. At this point a mediator is usually present to help facilitate the process. Each party has a draft of its formal position, which is shared with the entire group. Differences over each position are worked out, concerns are raised and any conflict that emerges is resolved. Once the entire group reaches a solution, someone will have to draft an agreement.

#### *Review and Monitoring*

Once an agreement is drafted the group will have to review and adopt it. Outlined within this agreement should be a method to monitor and evaluate the success of the agreement.

### (b) Negotiation Tips

**I**n some circumstances negotiations are entered into with a party that does not share the goals of your group, and with whom there does not seem to be much common ground. While every effort should be made to reach a "win-win" solution, here are some tips for strengthening your position during the negotiation process.

- Develop a clear understanding of both your group's and the other side's strengths and weaknesses.
- Be prepared: have all the facts and figures you will need at your fingertips.

- Identify a main negotiator to do most of the talking, as well as a backup person to step in if necessary.
- The negotiator should include key individuals, with whom he/she can consult privately during the negotiation process; different team members might have specific areas of expertise/knowledge.
- If possible, take charge in a subtle manner; for example, ask for the meeting to be on your turf, arrange the room, assume the role of chair, provide or negotiate the agenda and procedures; conversely, politely resist attempts by the other party to take control.
- State your request in clear and concrete terms.
- Stay focused on the main issues; don't allow yourself to be distracted by side issues.
- Only deal with one issue at a time; resolve it before addressing the next issue.
- Don't permit stalling tactics; don't allow your time to be wasted. Push for a deadline by which a decision will be made.
- Do not immediately accept assertions of authority or knowledge (e.g. "the city bylaws prohibit this"): check it out for yourselves.
- Don't make threats, especially if you can't carry them out, but do state what you see as potential consequences of either the action or inaction you are hoping to achieve or avoid.
- Be firm but polite.
- Do not try to persuade others to your belief or point of view: state your position clearly, but be respectful of others. Accept your differences and try to find other common ground (or perhaps common enemies or friends).
- Try to structure your argument in terms of their interests, not yours (i.e. what's in it for them?)
- It may not be wise to reveal all your information up front; for example, they don't need to know what your real bottom line is at the start of the negotiation.
- Keep calm and keep your facial expressions and body language neutral.
- Get them talking: it gives you time to think about your next move, and may also provide insight into their perspective, needs and wants.
- Consider other concurrent activities during the negotiation process: press releases, community events, demonstration, etc. that might focus positive public attention on your cause.

- Be flexible; be willing to compromise and modify your position in order to achieve the best possible result.
- Never say yes or no immediately unless it is exactly what you requested; check with other members of the group that the proposal is satisfactory.

### (c) Mediation

Not everyone will find it necessary to have a mediator during the process of negotiation. However, a mediator is usually skilled at running meetings effectively and will be able to move the process along efficiently.

Consider using a mediator in the following cases:

- the conflict or problem is particularly complex
- there are multiple parties
- there is a need for extensive co-ordination
- all parties realize that a decision is necessary and that reaching a resolution is urgent.

Normally, a mediator is someone who:

- is impartial
- helps parties reach agreement
- helps define conflict more clearly
- facilitates the negotiation process
- does not judge
- does not provide solutions
- helps groups come up with a broader range of options.

