



Trainer Skills Course for Anti-Trafficking Trainers

Lesson 10

Practical Exercises and Role Plays

Participant Notes





Introduction

Many everyday incidents can be reconstructed in a training environment by the trainer through the use of imagination and some simple equipment. These reconstructions are known as **practical exercises**.

I. Practical Exercises

Practical exercises are an excellent training tool to test the participants' understanding of the subject material, and are extremely popular with participants eager to see if the theory of the classroom actually transfers to the real world. Practical exercises mainly test the participant in the cognitive and psychomotor areas of learning, although the participants' own affective zone is often revealed during these scenarios, and an examination of different levels of learning within these zones can also take place. Further learning follows the scenario during a plenary debrief when constructive feedback is given to the person selected to deal with the incident by both the trainer and those taking part in addition to those acting as observers. Strict guidelines are imposed on the way in which the scenario is constructed and directed in order to achieve the desired objective and effect of the practical exercise.

As with all training, the first requirement for a practical exercise is the identification of a learning objective, as there has to be some definite purpose and outcome to the exercise. For the purpose of this lesson, it will be assumed that the trainer wishes to test the participant's ability to deal with a simple offence of theft, where a shopkeeper has detained a person taking items from his/her store. The primary objective is to see if the participant has knowledge of the law, evidence and procedure, powers of arrest, and the ability to correctly affect an arrest. Secondary objectives would be to examine the way in which the selected participant communicated with the shopkeeper and the suspect in order to find out what had taken place.

The first requirement is to identify a location where this offence has taken place, and this is where the trainer needs to have a fertile imagination. Ideally the exercise should take place in a realistic location such as a purpose built room, or in the case of a traffic accident, on a road with vehicles. However, if the training establishment does not have a purpose built practical exercise area, then any place, including an area of the classroom, can be turned into a shop by simple use of desks, space and imagination. Care must be taken to select a location that will not be compromised by non-players passing by, such as friends or colleagues of the players, as this may lead to a disruption of the proceedings or even ruin the exercise.

Having identified the location, the trainer should consider how many characters or actors are required for the scenario. In this case, there is a need for a shopkeeper, a suspect and a police officer. Additional characters could be an independent witness or even a friend of the suspect whose role would be to tell a different story to that of the shopkeeper to create doubt in the mind of the police officer. However in this case it will be kept simple with just the three main characters involved.

The trainer then needs to identify which participant is to deal with the incident and also those participants who are to play the other parts. The participants portraying the shopkeeper and suspect are then given briefing sheets, which dictate to a large degree what they should say and do. The person selected to deal with the practical is generally the only one with no idea

as to how events will unfold. The trainer may have a prepared skills or knowledge list to check on whether or not the objectives are achieved during the exercise. Another variation is if the situation or location allows, brief other members of the group to be observers looking for general or particular points to emerge, although other members of the group just being casual onlookers should be avoided if possible.

The exercise ends when all of the objectives have been achieved, or when it is obvious to the trainer that no more useful learning can come from continuing with the scenario. A debrief follows immediately when the person selected to deal with the incident is asked how they think they performed. Feedback is then given firstly from the other characters that took part in the scenario followed by any nominated observers before the trainer gives their own feedback during which all aspects are examined. The following points mentioned in lesson 5 are repeated for information:

- The trainer must always remember his/her responsibility as a supervisor in addition to that as a trainer as he/she is the quality control for what goes on.
- The trainer should remember to integrate human rights, community and race relations' issues.
- Where possible, realism is essential in everything from the scenario itself, to props, to locations, to briefing sheets.
- For safety reasons, some things obviously cannot be constructed realistically so use another method to examine such incidents.
- Build from simple to complex, practical exercises should build confidence, not destroy it.
- Avoid large use of participant onlookers. Consider the use of video or carousel of mini structured practical exercises.
- Vary the actors, using participants in preference to trainers.
- Avoid the use of so-called humorous names and do not allow anyone to overact.
- Debrief immediately afterwards and allow enough time. A 5 minute practical may easily take 30 minutes to debrief.

II. Role-play

A role-play is similar to the practical exercise in that it allows participants to experience work or life situations in a safe environment, but has fundamental differences in how it is designed and run.

The main difference is that a role-play deals more with the affective zone of learning. It does not have a script other than to inform the actors who they are playing and the type of person they should portray. It also allows the actors to react realistically to how they feel about the way in which the participant selected to deal with the situation is treating them.

As the name suggests, a role-play is simply characters playing roles. Participants are given identities and personalities to assume and to react according to the character allotted as opposed to being directed as to what to say and do. The only person not to assume a character role is the one delegated to deal with the incident, which must play himself/herself and react as he/she would in reality.

The trainer selects a topic for the role-play, and for the purposes of this lesson it will be a domestic violence incident, and then decides the type of role the characters should adopt. As

ever, there is a need for training objectives to be identified, and for this role-play, they are to see how the participant deals with having to enter a domestic situation and how he/she reacts to the different types of people encountered. Knowledge of the law and procedures is also tested.

The actors playing the roles are given a written description of the character they will portray and the incident that has occurred. In this case, the person playing the victim is to be a timid wife of a domineering husband who regularly beats her. She is given a name, an age and any other details pertinent to the objectives, but other than that the freedom to react. She has called the police because her husband has beaten her again. She has injuries on her face (make up essential) and is afraid that when the police leave her husband will kill her. This gives the role-player all the information she needs to play the part effectively. The husband is given similar instructions as to his role, including that he does not think that this is a police matter as his wife is his property and he can do, as he likes behind closed doors. It is important that the respective role-players do not share the information they have each been given.

Once the role-play has concluded, it is immediately debriefed, but this is done in a slightly different way to that of a practical exercise. The role-players remain in role during the initial debriefing, and at this time are referred to by their role-play names until brought out of role by the trainer.

III. Role-Play Debrief

The importance of debriefing a role play correctly cannot be overemphasised. As players are sometimes placed in very emotive situations, it is also imperative that they are brought out of role at the end of the debriefing. As a role-play is more about the affective zone, the trainer must first review the players in role, beginning with the principle characters and then going onto the secondary characters. Before starting the debriefing proper, it is important for the trainer to ask the players how they are feeling, particularly following emotive subjects such as being the victim of trafficking or domestic violence, to ensure they are able to take an effective part in the debriefing process. All players should be referred to by their role names, as it is the feelings of the role person that should be sought. The players should be sat apart from the rest of the class at this time.

The victim should be the first person to be de-briefed and after making sure that this person is alright and able to answer the questions, the trainer should what happened and how they felt about the way in which they were treated. If not happy they should be asked to explain why. All role players are debriefed. The trainer can then keep these players in role whilst the person who handled the situation is also de-briefed or they can remain in role to challenge what happened. Once all players have been fully debriefed or at the discretion of the trainer depending on what is happening in the classroom, the role\players are brought out of role one by one by the trainer now using their real names and thanking them in their real names for taking part. They must be checked to see if they are alright and are completely out of role. Observers then give their feedback according to their tasks as they relate to the role-play. The trainer then completes the debriefing session by identifying all learning points, giving feedback where required and thanking all concerned for their efforts.

Role-plays need careful monitoring and effective debriefing of the actors after the incident in order to take maximum learning from the situation, and although difficult to design and run,

are an excellent method of assessing the participants' progress, learning and understanding of the subject material.