

## Lesson Plan 15: Responding to Participants



1 hr 20 min total

### Lesson Description



In this lesson, participants act out common training scenarios and practice responding appropriately to different situations. This lesson is intended to prepare trainers for times when an appropriate response will be required to maintain their participants' confidence and to provide a safe learning environment.

### Learning Outcomes



At the end of this session participants will be able to:

1. Identify moments when trainers need to respond to participants.
2. Demonstrate responding effectively to different situations.

### Materials



- Flip chart paper
- Tape
- Markers
- Storyteller* Activity (See lesson plan)
- Responding to Participants – Scenarios* (See lesson plan)
- Responding to Participants – Challenging Situations* (See lesson plan)

### Preparation



- Read and prepare lesson plan
- Write the learning outcomes on the flip chart
- Print and cut *Storyteller* activity
- Print and cut *Responding to Participants – Scenarios*
- Print and cut *Responding to Participants – Challenging Situations*
- Write learning outcomes on the flip chart

### Introduction

10 minutes



1. Break the participants into two groups.
  - Explain that the participants in the first group will be “storytellers”. Each of them will receive a statement to say and will walk around the room trying to tell their story to as many people as possible.

- The participants in the second group will be “responders”. They will receive a description of how they should respond to the stories they are told.
  - The storytellers should tell their statement to as many responders as they can. Explain that responders will raise their hands to indicate that they are available for a storyteller to speak to them, and will lower their hand while they talk with the storyteller.
  - Ask participants to pay attention to how they feel throughout the activity.
2. Distribute approximately an equal number of “storyteller” and “responder” papers to the participants and ask them to begin the activity. Allow them to walk around and share their stories for a few minutes.
  3. As a large group, ask the storytellers: “How did you feel when you told your story?”
  4. As a large group, ask the responders: “How did you feel when you responded to people?”
  5. Ask the participants: “How is this experience like responding to participants in training?”
  6. Share responses as a large group.
  7. Present learning outcomes or lesson description.

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### Responding to Participants for Common Situations

**20 minutes**



1. As a large group, ask the participants: “Why it is important to respond appropriately to participants?”

*Responding appropriately to participants will help them to deepen learning and clarify confusion. If you respond in a way that makes them feel good, it will encourage them to learn more. You also need to know how to respond to ensure that you are maintaining a safe environment for participation.*

2. Explain that you have 3 common scenarios where a trainer needs to respond to a participant effectively. Explain that participants will be divided into 3 groups and each group will be given one of these scenarios to discuss.
3. Explain that for each scenario the group should come up with different ways of responding effectively and record their ideas on a piece of flip chart paper.
4. Explain that after a few minutes, each group will present their scenario and their ideas for responding to it. After each group has presented, the larger group can volunteer any additional ideas.



5. Divide participants into 3 groups, assign each group one of the 3 given scenarios (see *Responding to Participants – Scenarios*), and provide them with approximately 5-10 minutes to discuss and record their ideas.
6. After each group presents, as a large group discuss the trainer responses that the group created for their scenario. Record any additional responses from the large group on the flip chart to create 3 complete lists.

7. Explain that one of the key skills for trainers in responding appropriately to many training situations relies on the ability to actively listen to what participants are saying.

*Trainer Note: Possible Responses:*

- **Scenario 1 – Getting More Information**
  - *Ask them a follow up question such as “Why do you say that?”*
  - *Ask them to explain themselves more*
  - *Ask if there are other participants that can add more information to the response.*
- **Scenario 2 – Misunderstanding of Meaning**
  - *Thank the participant for their response and then apologize for not being clear about the intention of the question.*
    - *Ask your question again with clarified meaning and allow the same person to answer if they choose. Allowing the same person to answer helps with their confidence; they might feel embarrassed that they misunderstood the question.*
- **Scenario 3 – Long Answers**
  - *Interrupt the conversation and thank them for wanting to share so much information.*
    - *Explain that you want to make sure that you are able to capture everything that they say.*
    - *Pull out the important information from what the participant said and relate it back to the topic.*
    - *Re-state what the participant said, check with the participant to ensure that you captured the essence of what they were trying to say.*
  - *It is important not to allow participants to carry on for a long time because other participants might get bored and the conversation can go off topic.*
  - *If it is a participant that always gives long answers choose them at strategic times to speak in the large group.*
  - *If you have a participant that likes to talk a lot, try and have your back turned to them when you ask a question so that it doesn't appear that you are ignoring them when they raise their hand to answer.*


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### Challenging Situations for Responding to Participants

**45 minutes**



1. Explain to participants that there are other difficult situations where they need to respond to what participants have said or are doing.
2. Explain that we will focus on 3 additional challenging situations:
  - When participants give an incorrect answer to a question
  - When participants are learning a new skill but are doing it incorrectly

- When participants are doing something dangerous
3. Explain that the participants will be in groups and that each group will get one of these situations. They will create a 1-2 minute skit in which one person is a "trainer" who responds to the situation and the others are "participants."
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4. Divide the participants into 3 groups and assign each group a situation (see *Responding to Participants – Challenging Situations*). Give them 5 minutes to prepare their skit.
  5. Ask one group to present. After they present ask the trainer from the skit how they felt about their response. Then ask one of the participants from the skit how they felt about the trainer's response.
  6. In their small groups, ask participants to discuss if the trainer could have responded more effectively.
  7. If there could have been a more effective response, ask a volunteer to take the place of the trainer in the original skit, and to demonstrate the alternative response.
  8. As a large group discuss how effective the original and/or alternative response was. Record the techniques on the flip chart.
  9. Ask participants what other techniques they came up with. Record answers on the flip chart.
  10. Follow steps 5 – 9 until each group has had an opportunity to present their skit.

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**Review****5 minutes**

1. In pairs, ask the participants to discuss the situation that they feel will be the most difficult for them to respond to as a trainer. Based on what they've learned, how will they respond?

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**Reflections on Lesson**

## Storytellers

My wallet was stolen	I won the lottery!
My sister died yesterday	I am having a baby
I broke my leg	My son graduated from university
My spouse left me for another person	I bought a new house
My child is very sick in the hospital	I am going on a date tomorrow

## Responders

Respond by crying	Respond by saying "Great!"
Respond by saying "Ok."	Respond by asking "How do you feel?"
Respond by staring at them and then walking away	Respond by shrugging your shoulders
Respond by saying "That's too bad."	Respond by saying "I am happy for you."
Respond by laughing	Respond by clapping your hands

## **Responding to Participants – Challenging Situations**

**Challenge 1** – When participants give an incorrect response to a question

**Challenge 2** – When participants are learning a new skill and doing it incorrectly

**Challenge 3** – When participants are doing something dangerous

## Responding to Participants – Scenarios

### Scenario 1 – Getting more information

You are delivering an introductory lesson to a group of community people on the importance of water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH). You have explained that it is not enough to address only one aspect of WASH, but that a broader, integrated approach will yield better results. To assess participant understanding you ask the following question: “Why do you need to teach about water, sanitation and hygiene, not just one of these three topics?” In response, a participant volunteers the following answer: “Because they are all important.” Their answer is correct however it does not tell you if they have understood your lesson. How do you respond to the participant, and how can you get them to share more information?

### Scenario 2 - Misunderstanding of meaning

You are about to begin a session on the importance of lesson planning for well-structured training. To introduce the topic, you ask the group of participants the following question: “What is the purpose of an introduction?” Enthusiastically, one participant raises their hand and volunteers the following response: “It is to get to know people!” Realizing the participant has misunderstood what you meant to say, how should you respond? How can you correct the error without embarrassing a participant who is clearly motivated and interested in learning?

### Scenario 3 – Longwinded answers

You are presenting a training session on the importance of safe water and its connection to good health. You can see the participants are engaged and find the topic interesting. There are several people in the group who love to talk and volunteer their ideas. At one point in the lesson you ask the following question: “Why is safe water important for health?” One of the talkative participants begins to respond, but then starts telling a story about safe water and how it affected someone in their life. The story is long and begins to go off-topic. You can see other participants are becoming bored after a few minutes. What can you do to get the participant to finish their story without hurting their feelings? How can you bring the focus back on-topic and re-engage the other participants?