

Executive Summary

Course Title: *The Top*[®] *Facilitation Methods Training*

Developed by the Institute of Cultural Affairs (ICA), ToP[®] courses have been successfully implemented in hundreds of organizations around the world since 1973. These courses benefit anyone involved in leading, facilitating or participating in teams, such as executive directors, supervisors, team leaders, training professionals and human resources practitioners.

Many important topics that need to be discussed and explored by teams, with clients or one-on-one with staff are challenging to facilitate. It can be hard to set the right tone. Sometimes the focus is not totally clear and the discussion veers off topic. At times there are so many aspects that need to be looked at that the conversation becomes confusing. Sometimes, people hold back and do not participate—for a variety of reasons. All of these situations can make advancing work collaboratively very challenging.

The Focused Conversation Method provides a powerful structure for clear communication and group reflection. It captures a groups' best thinking and leads to purposeful, productive insights in meetings. This discussion tools lessens frustration of not “being heard”, increases participant satisfaction and supports greater productivity from meetings.

It can also be used for one on one conversation as well as personal learning and reflection. The structure of the conversation is also a design tool for thinking about and planning longer events and meetings.

Target Audience: This class is being planned for supervisory staff.

Outcome Objectives for Participants:

1. Discern the underlying assumptions and reasons to utilize a facilitative leadership approach;
2. Identify and articulate rational and experiential aims for planned discussions or conversations;
3. Design a discussion or conversation using the Focused Conversation levels of discourse;
4. Lead a Focused Conversation.

Ways Supervisors Can Support the Transfer of Learning from the Classroom to the Job:

Before the training:

1. Have the worker identify places where they need to have productive conversations and discussions with staff or clients.

After the training:

1. Attendees will leave the training with a plan for conducting at least one focused conversation within the following two weeks.
2. A follow up refresher and review of their practice in using the Focused Conversation will occur in March. There will be two options for attending this 3.5 hour session.
3. Attendees will be encouraged to partner with others who attended the course to facilitate designing focused conversation methods.

Brief outline of the Training:

9:00 Welcome, Introductory Conversation, Course Introduction and Overview

10:00 Break

10:10 The Focused Conversation Method

1. Demonstration /simulation of the method
2. Walk through of the method illustrating basic elements:
3. Scramble Exercise: Practice in ordering questions

11:15 Small Group Practice of the Focused Conversation

12:00 Lunch

1:00 CONTINUED: Small Group Practice of the Focused Conversation

2:15 BREAK

2:25 Applications: Designing focused conversations.

3:30 Closing Conversation

3:45 Bay Area Academy Evaluation

4:00 Adjourn

Two half day follow up applications labs will follow for reporting out use of the methods, addressing questions and issues and learning new tips on using the method.

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