

# HANDLING CHALLENGING TRAINING SITUATIONS

How we manage challenging training situations can influence the success of a training event through:

**Resolution of the situation** - so that you can resume progress toward your learning goals.

**Enhanced learning** - For example, if you're teaching a leadership development

program and a conflict arises among group members, the way in which you and the group reach resolution can involve application of concepts learned during the program, proving their value and increasing skill.

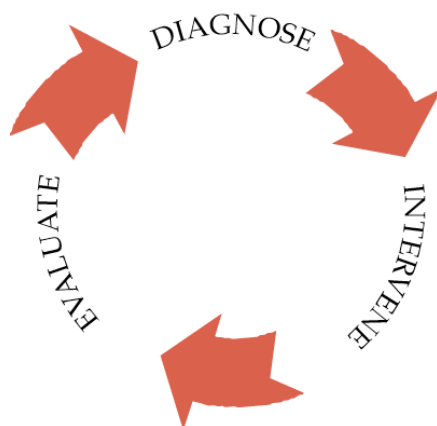
**Improved relationships** - Successful resolution of challenging situations can

bring a group closer together, enhancing their ability to perform effectively during and after your training event.

**Continuous improvement** - in your program design and your skills as a facilitator of learning, as you become more adept at anticipating these situations.

## THREE STEPS: DIAGNOSE, INTERVENE & EVALUATE

Advance preparation can help you avoid many challenging situations, by helping you ensure your program goals and course design are appropriate to your learners. But, not all challenging situations can be avoided.



Use a three step process - *Diagnose, Intervene & Evaluate* – to work through challenging training situations.

STEPS	ASK YOURSELF
<p><b>1. Diagnose</b></p> <p>Identify the nature of the challenging training situation - What's happening and why, the effect on you and participants, and how it's affecting your training outcomes.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• What's happening?</li> <li>• Who is affected and how?</li> <li>• Why is this happening? - something the instructor did, program content, process, group dynamics, or external factors?</li> </ul>
<p><b>2. Intervene</b></p> <p>Take action to resolve the situation by doing or saying something to move individuals or the group in a specific direction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should I intervene?</li> <li>• What are the consequences if I don't?</li> <li>• How should I intervene? Full group? Individual? During or outside the session?</li> <li>• Should I manage the process, coach the group through it, or let them handle it on their own?</li> </ul>
<p><b>3. Evaluate</b></p> <p>Monitor the outcomes of your intervention to determine its success. This might involve observation on your part alone, or further interaction with an individual or group.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should I follow up with participants, or monitor unobtrusively?</li> <li>• What are the benefits of obtaining feedback?</li> </ul>

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## COMMON INTERVENTION STRATEGIES

Here are common intervention strategies you can use to facilitate resolution of challenging training situations.

### **Content Focus**

Share an experience, example, data, or opinion that's relevant to the subject matter of the training "event."

### **Process Focus**

Focus on *how* the group or individual is carrying out tasks and activities, rather than content.

### **Ask for Feelings**

Ask questions to uncover participants' feelings about a situation.

### **Provide Direction**

Assign specific tasks or roles to group members, such as completing name cards, or provide a detailed explanation of how a task is to be completed.

### **Provide Feedback**

Provide direct feedback to a participant or group.

### **Link to theory**

Provide relevant "theory" or information that explains an event or experience.



### **Perform a group task function**

Take on functions a group might perform to help it maintain itself and accomplish its goals.

### **Diagnose the issue**

Diagnose what you see taking place, and ask other group members for their input.

### **Protection**

Intervene if you feel that participant comments or feedback to others are ill-timed, or overly severe, or support a participant who is feeling insecure. Some do this by focusing on the group process and asking if the specific behaviour is relevant to the group's goals.

## TEN KEY PRINCIPLES

1. **Be prepared**
2. **Be clear about goals and expectations**
3. **Be flexible**
4. **Communicate the principle of shared responsibility for success of your training**
5. **Be honest and authentic with the group at all times**
6. **Remember that your participants are human**
7. **Other participants are important too**
8. **They may have a point**
9. **You may not be able to help them**
10. **Remember that your participants want you to succeed**