

Strategies for Engaging Difficult Trainees and Maintaining a Positive and Productive Training Environment

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1

Training Objective

Participants will be able to identify possible strategies for engaging challenging trainees and maintaining a positive and productive training environment.

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Outline

1. What Trainers and Participants bring to the table
2. Four different challenging participant characteristics
3. Strategies for improving outcome of motivation and positivity
 - Preparation strategies
 - Teaching strategies
 - Integrating learning objectives
4. Addressing learning styles to increase motivation
5. Effective forms of feedback
6. The value of evaluations

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EMDR training is unique from other forms of adult continuing education

- Participants are simultaneously:
 - Learning extensive new information
 - Thinking about the information and often imagining its application to their own life experiences
 - Stepping into the client role with their own small traumas while being monitored by faculty
 - Providing the newly learned information as the therapist while being monitored by faculty
 - All while sitting with peers & colleagues in the training
- VULNERABLE!

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Learners come to the table with many layers

Personal history (including any potential wounds or trauma)

Previous educational experiences- both good and bad

Varying levels of clinical experience

Varying personalities

Varying reasons for attendance

Varying cultural experiences and norms

Multiple demands- family, work, life stressors

Financial constraints

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Trainers come to the table with many layers

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Previous educational experiences- both good and bad

Varying levels of teaching experience

Varying personalities

Varying cultural experiences and norms

Multiple demands- family, work, life stressors

Varying needs for approval

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Some participants are:

- Required to be there by their agency or group practice
- Are strained financially to attend
- Have unexpected life stressors that have come up during the training
- And a host of other potential stressors that impact their enthusiasm or ability to be fully present.



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- “the need to avoid social pain and the need to experience social connection are the basic needs that can impair learning when unmet.”
 - MD Lieberman(2013) *Social: Why our brains are wired to connect.*

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Several Challenging Characters



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Antagonists

- May be hostile toward faculty or peers
- Unreasonably critical of faculty or peers
- Lack patience toward peers
- Overt emphasis to peers and faculty about experience and expertise (intimidation of peers)

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Doubters

- Question the efficacy of EMDR
- Skeptical
- Are uncertain of how this will apply to their practice
- Are uncertain if it will dovetail with their current clinical approaches

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Silent and disengaged

- Need reminding to keep screen on if in virtual training
- Looking at phone during lecture if in person training
- Preoccupied with other things happening in their life during the training
- Don't ask questions
- Go through the motions in dyad/triad practice

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Monopolizers

- Ask frequent questions, often appearing to have missed material that was just stated in lecture
- Monopolize the question and answer time
- Tend to be enthusiastic, nevertheless frustrating to others in the class

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Self reflection about challenging trainees- what does it stir in you (the trainer)?



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Strategies for improving outcome of motivation and positivity

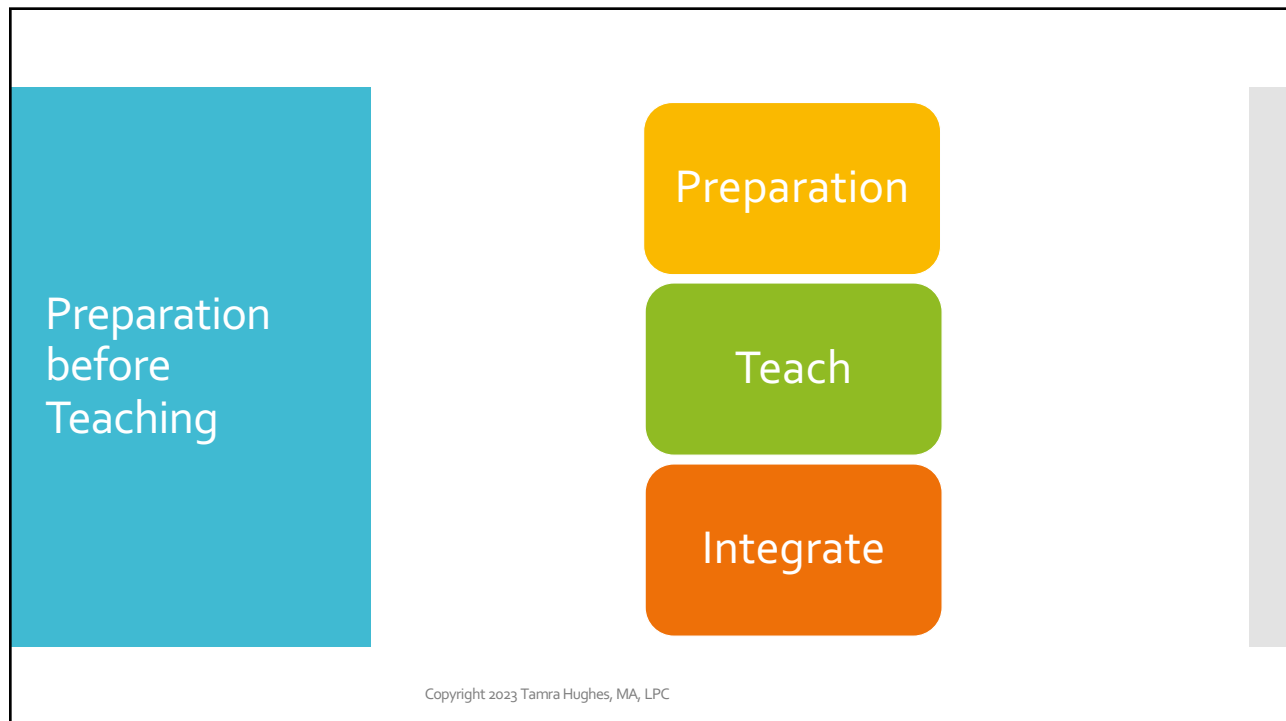
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- We are often so focused on content, that not enough time is devoted to preparing the learner
- It is difficult to address each participant one on one throughout the entire training. We teach to the group, while holding in mind that it is comprised of many individuals.

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Setting up an environment where all learners succeed

Trainer reflection

- Take into account cultural differences in learning
- Have we created an environment that feels inclusive?
- Do participants feel safe discussing
- Does every participant feel seen?

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The slide features a background image of a diverse group of people. On the left, a teal rectangle contains the text 'Setting up an environment where all learners succeed'. On the right, the text 'Trainer reflection' is followed by a bulleted list of four questions. A thin grey vertical bar is on the far right.

18

Preparation

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Preparation

- Best practice for managing challenge is being pre-emptive and setting aside time for solid preparation

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Preparation

Pre-training discussion board asking questions such as:

What brings you to the training?

What do you hope to gain?

How will it impact your practice?

What specific information would be helpful to you in this course?

Tell us a little about your expertise.

Trainer needs to read and respond or acknowledge the postings prior to start of training.

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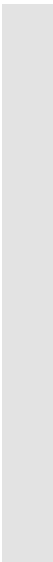

Preparation

Discussion boards have the potential to do the following:

- Provide respect to uniqueness of each participant
- Acknowledge expertise
- Prepare participants for an overview of who is in the class and start to cultivate connections and a sense of community.

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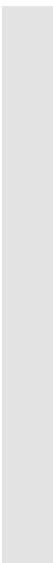

Preparation

Opening on the 1st Day of Training:

- Make training structure clear
- Make expectations clear
- “We will be coming at the material from many angles: Lecture, reading, consultation/discussion, practice, videos and watching role plays.”
- “Consider, what is your learning style?”

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Preparation

Encourage connection within the class:

- Support systems within the training
- Practice buddies
- Smaller groups within the larger group to work together

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Teaching

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Teaching

Teaching:

- Lecture
- Questions/Answers
- Videos/role plays
- Practicum
- Discussion (Consultation)
- Feedback
- Assessments
- Reading



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Trainer responsibility

Know	Trainer needs to thoroughly know the material
Prepare	Think on their feet
Teach	Teach the material
Manage	Manage the participant dynamics and foster connection in the training
Meet	Meet needs of different learning styles (readers, listeners, watchers, doers)
Aware	Be aware of their own triggers

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- "Adults rarely come alone to any learning situation; they bring with them an invisible crowd of many voices and messages, past and present."

• (K. Taylor, C. Marienau (2016), p. 92)

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Questions and Answers



Role play whereby consultant asks questions of the trainer that are frequently asked in trainings



Extended wait time: wait 6 seconds after asking a question for it to be answered.



Leave a solid block of time for questions. Let everyone know how long is left for questions/discussion



Respond to questioner by name



Treat irrelevant questions graciously—suggest time to meet

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Working with antagonists in the teaching phase

- Antagonists may be participants who are highly experienced in the field, but feel vulnerable being “beginners” in the field of EMDR
 - Ask how they have addressed similar situations in their practice.
 - Ask for their perspective on something
 - Validate and recognize their years of experience

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Working with antagonists in the teaching phase

Diffuse hostile questioners

- Rephrase the question for clarity
- Don't get defensive- respond with humor or an anecdote
- Respond with what you know—and look into things you don't know. **Admit what you don't know**
- Don't take it personally
- Welcome the questions: Positive feedback “That is a good question...”
- Use your answers to circle back and emphasize key points

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Keep training relevant to participants

- Adults learn best when they can compare new learning to prior experience— great opportunity to bring in their expertise!



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Working with doubters in the teaching phase

- Allow space for doubt
- Ask if they have explored any research on it
- Ask for example that prompts their concern

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Working with silent and disengaged participants in the teaching phase

- May be a cultural norm for them to listen in learning environments instead of asking questions.
- May be someone who is intimidated by others in the training- they are potentially less experienced clinicians
- May be distracted by stressors happening for them outside of the training
- May be fragile- dealing with their own small trauma in the training could be overwhelming

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Caution:

- **Be aware of cultural differences:**
- In some cultures it is common to talk less and listen more.
- Learning format in some cultures is more instructional.
- In these cases it is not that the learners are not paying attention.
- Too much prompting them to talk can potentially demotivate them.

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Working with silent and disengaged participants in the teaching phase

- Invite people to ask a question who have not asked one yet.
- Make space for Q and A in smaller groups
- Use role plays and scripts
- Make time for trainer contact with every participant—rolling through all triads/dyads
- Ask questions that require silent decision making
- Make yourself accessible outside of the training for questions and answers or to participant to address their concerns

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Working with Monopolizers in the teaching phase

- For irrelevant, or redundant questions: suggest time to meet outside of lecture
- Ask to hear from participants that have not yet shared a question
- First respond to questions from people who have not yet shared a question.

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What questions stir in trainers

Dislike of being questioned?

Fear of showing that they don't know something/being "shown up" by a participant?

Fear of being embarrassed?

Fear of discussing difficult subject matter?

Feeling tired—talking a long time—waste of time?

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Learning style

- Frustration or decreasing motivation in participants can occur if they are not taking in the material that is taught.
- It is important that the trainer consider delivery formats so that all learning styles are addressed.

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7 Adult Learning Styles

7 adult learning styles

Kinesthetic (doing)

Intrapersonal (self analysis, contemplation)

Interpersonal (brainstorming, group discussion)

Linguistic (discussing)

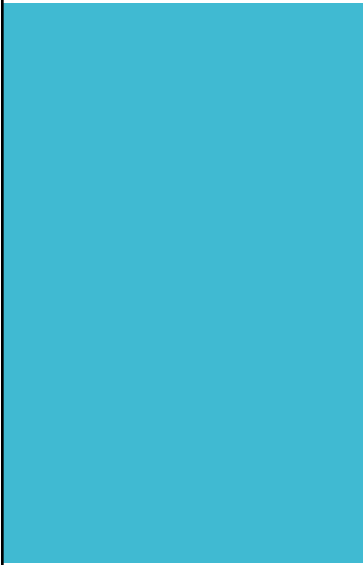
Auditory (hearing)

Visual (watching, reading)

Logical (steps and applying new information to what is already known)

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Holding
zone for
questions

Share
control

Recognize
expertise



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Meet with consultation faculty

- Involve consultants– make sure team also is reading the discussion board.
- They should be familiar with participants
- There should be good communication between trainer and consultants throughout the training so that they are aware of participants that may need more help or management during practicum.

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Providing feedback

Adult learners need and expect feedback

- After consultation
- After practicum
- Compilations of research have shown that the impact on learning from feedback is .79 --two times greater than other instructional methods (Clark, 2020, p. 254)
- Feedback can have a positive impact on participant attitudes.

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Feedback guidelines

- Provide task process comments but don't mix praise with them
- Provide explanation of the correct answer/method
- Provide feedback that connects performance progress in relation to goals
- Include suggestions for improvement
- Provide feedback soon after the experience being assessed


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Concluding the training

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- Circle back with participants on how this integrates into their practice. Welcome questions about implementation of the material. Point them in the direction of trainings and consultation to continue growth.
 - Keep their best interest in mind.

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Evaluations

- Similar to the Re-evaluation phase of EMDR Therapy, evaluations give you feedback on the macro and micro level
- Consider course evaluations after each Module of the training
- Micro level:
 - Gives you feedback to make adjustments, if necessary, to areas where there may be lack of clarity or common issues reported by participants in the cohort, improving motivation and participation in the training.
- Macro level:
 - Gives you feedback to make necessary adjustments overall to your training format to improve future participation and motivation in trainings.

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- **Challenging participants can be the impetus for growth.
Welcome the challenge!**

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48

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