

Volume

1

ONTARIO NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Aboriginal Women's Leadership Program



Facilitators Guide

ONTARIO NATIVE WOMEN'S ASSOCIATION

Facilitators Guide to Effective Workshops

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Background Information

Ontario Native Women's Association – Our Mandate

The Ontario Native Women's Association (ONWA) is a not for profit organization that empowers and supports Aboriginal women and their families in the province of Ontario.

Affiliated with the Native Women's Association of Canada (NWAC), ONWA encourages the participation of Aboriginal women in the development of federal, provincial, municipal/local government policies that impact their lives and ensures issues affecting Aboriginal women and their families are heard at key government tables.

ONWA is committed to providing services that strengthen communities and guarantees the preservation of Aboriginal culture, identity, art, language and heritage. Ending violence against Aboriginal women and their families and ensuring equal access to justice, education, health services, environmental stewardship and economic development, sits at the cornerstone of the organization. ONWA insists on social and cultural well – being for all Aboriginal women and their families, so that all women, regardless of tribal heritage may live their best life.

Ontario Native Women's Association – Our Objectives

- To build relationships with all levels of government and other organizations to collaborate on all socio-economic issues affecting the well-being of all Aboriginal women and their families.
- To increase Aboriginal women's skills and capacity in planning, developing and managing an array of programs and services that directly impacts their lives and those of their families.
- To continue to work towards unity amongst Aboriginal women and their families to affect positive change in society in recognizing the importance of diversity and inclusion for all people.
 - Through a communication strategy with our membership we will encourage a unified voice to fully participate politically to ensure Aboriginal women and their families are appropriately represented
- To promote and advance equality and social justice issues as they affect the realities of Aboriginal women's lives.
 - Through the design, development and delivery of resource materials and capacity development opportunities.
- To preserve and promote the sacred roles of Aboriginal women and their families as valued and respected members in the community.
- To administer services in a culturally respectful manner.
- To provide opportunities for Aboriginal women to learn and teach traditional ways of living a good life for future generations that are unique to Aboriginal culture.

Introduction

The Ontario Native Women's Association's Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership Program has developed a Facilitators Guide to delivering effective workshops.

By providing you with all tools necessary to present effective workshops, we trust that it will enable you to effect positive change for Aboriginal women and their families in the province of Ontario.

Before the Workshop

Preplanning before the workshop is crucial for a successful event. As the facilitator you must ensure:

- Participants have been invited and are aware of the workshop content, start and end times and location.
- A venue is booked that can accommodate the participants and workshop i.e. It has video capabilities, PowerPoint, flip charts, enough room/seating etc.
- Meals have been carefully planned taking into account food sensitivities/allergies and diabetics.
- An elder is asked to lead the opening and closing (if appropriate for the community).
- Travel claims/expense claims are prepared or ready for participants when they arrive.

Workshops should be presented in such a way that best suits the needs of the community. Some recommendations that may be considered to support the presentation are as follows:

- An elder from the community should be present to support workshop participants and to provide guidance through out the entire session.
- Tobacco pouches can be offered to the elder and participants of the workshop.
- Work within your budget to plan healthy snacks and meals-consider the needs of diabetics when planning your food menu.

Ice Breakers

Ice Breakers are a presentation tool to bring the audience together, to prepare the participants for the work ahead, to encourage the participants to relax and feel more comfortable with each other and to add humour to the day ahead. Typically ice breakers are introduced at the beginning of a presentation, but can be used through out the session. Some ice breakers also work as energizers.

Some ice breakers require additional materials while others require nothing at all. Some ice breakers work better when the participants already know each other, while some are designed for groups where they do not know each other. You decide which is best depending on the group you have.

Please remember that these are only suggestions, and you may use these or any that you may have learned along the

Sample Ice Breakers

(1) **Name Game:**

Get each participant to introduce themselves choosing an adjective to describe their personality. This personality trait must begin with the same letter as their first name. For example – Sunny Susan, depressed Dorothy, Laughing Laura

Variations:

These still must begin with the same letter of their first name - Choose food that describes them, activity they like to do, colour they like/resemble, animal they admire etc.

Best Used:

In groups where people do not know each others names, but will work in a group where everyone knows each other

Additional Material:

None required

(2) **What I did Last Night:**

Get each participant to introduce themselves and give a description of what they did last night.

Variations:

Participants could describe their weekend, what they did over Easter, Thanksgiving, Christmas or March Break holidays.

Best Used:

In groups where people know each other or where people feel comfortable sharing personal information about themselves. Best used in multi-day training.

Additional Material:

None required

(3) If I Were Stranded:

Get participants to list 3 or 5 items they would take with if they were stranded on a tropical island. People can be included in their list.

Variations:

The list of items can range from 1 to 5 depending on time and size of group. The location can vary from desert, to arctic, to bush, to road trip, to island, to the moon.

Best Used:

In groups less than 30 (sometimes this exercise takes a while).

Additional Material:

None Required

(4) Sharing Feather:

Participants are sitting in a circle – each participant will answer 3 questions about themselves and their relationship to other things in the world. First they must introduce themselves and provide the possible meaning behind their name, who gave it to them, special significance, any nicknames etc and also where they are from (this is their relationship to themselves). Next they must describe their relationship to other people (they may be a mother, auntie, grandmother, sister, etc) and pick one of those relationships to tell the group why it is special. Lastly they must describe a place on earth of special significance to them.

This exercise is to reaffirm our connectedness to ourselves, other people including our families and the earth.

Variations:

The feather can be replaced with stones, tree branch, leaves etc. Questions can be changed to suit group as long as the main message of connectedness is not lost.

Best Used:

In groups less than 30 as the exercise can take some time. This ice breaker is better suited for presentation material that is a bit more emotionally triggering or a difficult topic to discuss.

Additional Material:

A feather, stone, tree branch, leaves etc or something to pass when it is the participant's time to share.

(5) **Complete this Sentence**

Have participants complete one of these sentences, after they introduced themselves:

Once upon a time, I

My ideal vacation is

The rickiest thing I ever did was

The wildest thing I ever did was

The most embarrassing thing I ever did was

My kid embarrassed me when

Variations:

This ice breaker works with everyone, anytime. You can make the question topic related or weather related...the sky is the limit!

Best Used:

In any size group, whether they know each other or not.

Additional Resources:

None required.

way.

Energizers

Energizers are presentation tools that 'wake' the participants up, provides a break from emotionally difficult topics or 'dry' material and generally gets the participants up and moving. Some presentations are difficult for people to sit and listen too for long periods of time, especially

if there are no activities planned that get participants up and moving. Energizers do just that; they provide a break from the planned outlined schedule and gets the participants up, laughing and refocused. Some energizers also work as ice breakers.

Some energizers require additional materials while others require nothing at all. Some energizers work better when participants already know each other, while some are designed for groups where they do not know each other. You decide which is best depending on the group you have.

Please remember that these are only suggestions, and you may use these or any that you may have learned along the way.

Sample Energizers

(1) **String Toss:**

Participants are standing in a circle with one person holding the ball of string. They say someone's name across the circle and throws the ball of string to them while holding onto the end of the string. The next person holds the string and throws the ball to someone else, after they have called their name. This carries on until everyone is holding onto a piece of the string. This exercise also shows the interconnectedness that we all play in each others life or how we are all in this together.

Variations:

Instead of string you can use a ball or bean bag etc.

Best Used:

In groups where people know each others name.

Additional Materials:

A ball of string or yarn, ball, bean bag etc.

(2) **Bingo:**

Prepare a bingo sheet ahead of time and have participants go around the room finding someone who fits that characteristic in the bingo box. Example for the boxes are:

Someone who has caught a fish

Someone who PowWow Dances

Someone who drums

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Someone who makes bannock

Someone who is on Band council

Someone who has been BCR – just kidding!

Variations:

Instead of Bingo the clues can spell a message. For example, the message they need to spell is *the eagle builds a nest* and so they have to find someone who has done the activity (see above list) and for each one they get that corresponds with a letter that spells out the message.

Best Used:

Where the facilitator knows some of the kinds of people that will be attending and the traits they probably will have.

Additional Materials:

Bingo sheet made up ahead of time or message prepared.

(3) **All My Relations:**

Participants are sitting in a circle with one person standing (think musical chairs) the facilitator calls out a statement and whoever that statement applies to must get up and find another chair. The person who is left, must now call out a statement. The statement begins with...all my relations who have ever... Statements can be:

Danced at a PowWow

Made Bannock

Is a mother

Hiked in the bush

Caught a fish

Variations:

This can be done standing in a circle as long as there can be a place to mark spots.

Best Used:

In a group less than 30 and room to move. Participants should also be able to move.

Additional Materials:

Room to place chairs in a circle or markers on the floor.

(4) Dance, Dance Canada

Have participants stand up in a circle, go around the circle and each participant must come up with a new dance move or move their body in some way. High energy music should be playing.

Variations:

This can be done seated if there is no space or if there are mobility issues with participants. Participants can still move the body without standing up.

Best Used:

When the group is tired or the training is extending past a day. Great way to improve energy and get people up and moving.

Additional Materials:

High energy music is a must!

(5) Eagle, Eagle, Crow

Just like duck, duck, goose. Participants sit in circle with someone on the outside. They touch each person on the shoulder and say eagle, then they change it to crow...who ever is the crow has to get up and run around the circle in the opposite direction as the person who was touching shoulders. Whoever gets back to the place last must now go around the circle eagle, eagle, crow.

Variations:

The names of the animals can change and instead of sitting in a circle, participants can stand.

Best Used:

In places with lots of space and groups of about 30.

Additional Materials:

None required....just the space to run around.

During the Workshop

People come to workshops for a variety of reasons, all which are valid. As the facilitator, you need to be aware of the many challenges that some of the participants will need to overcome just to attend the workshop. There will be many different people that come to workshops held by the Ontario Native Women's Association and as the facilitator it is crucial that you provide a positive experience for everyone that attends.

When people first take part in participatory learning, they work with facilitators to learn different approaches to exploring issues that are important to themselves and their communities. Facilitators use various techniques to help people feel comfortable with a participatory approach:

- Encourage people to share information, ideas, concerns and knowledge.
- Support learning in a group.
- Help people to communicate effectively.
- Manage group dynamics.
- Keep the work practical and relevant.
- Invite the group to take control of the learning and sharing process.

Facilitators ensure that everyone gets an equal opportunity to participate. Through active listening and good questioning, they demonstrate that each person's contribution is valuable. Facilitators help group members to develop communication skills by promoting discussion. Activities such as role play and case studies are used to explore different points of view.

What makes a good Workshop Facilitator?

In a participatory workshop, the role of a facilitator is to support the learning process. The facilitator creates a supportive environment in which a "learning journey" can take place.

Participants explore their own experiences and those of others, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and share their knowledge, ideas and concerns. If appropriate, a facilitator may also offer their own expertise in addition to facilitating the exchange of ideas and experience.

A facilitator does not need to be an "expert" or to be superhuman! However, they do need to have some basic professional and personal characteristics. Examples of these can be divided into three main areas: knowledge, skills and attitudes.

Facilitators do not have to have all of these characteristics. However, they should aim to have at least some from each area and to be open to developing more as they gain experience.

Attitude

- Friendly, honest and authentic.
- Committed to helping people to learn for themselves.
- Gender sensitive.
- Respectful of culture and confidentiality.
- Equal to participants.
- Self-aware.

Knowledge

- About the culture
- About the community/participants and the challenges they face
- About the topic area
- About group dynamics
- About adult learning

Skills

- Active listening and good questioning.
- Open communication.
- Managing group work.
- Conflict resolution.
- Summarizing.
- Time keeping.

What key skills do workshop facilitators need?

Facilitators need to build a broad base of knowledge, skills and attitudes. In general, facilitators need to develop key skills in four main areas:

- Encouraging sharing and learning.
- Communicating well.

- Keeping material practical and relevant.
- Responding to group dynamics.

The following information aims to provide a checklist and some ideas of the techniques that facilitators use to make sure participants have the best possible learning experience:

Encouraging Sharing and Learning

Encourage two-way communication; by actively listening to people and by using open, rather than closed questions.

Active listening encourages the open communication of ideas and feelings by making a participant feel not only heard, but also understood. Some tips include:

- Look at the person who is speaking to show that you are both interested in what they are saying and that you understand.
- Pay attention to your body language to show physically that you are listening.
- Listen to both what is said and how it is said to pick up the emotion as well as the words.
- Summarize what you have heard to show that you have caught the main points.

Good questioning encourages people to go beyond simply providing information it prompts them to share their views. Some tips include:

- Ask open-ended rather than closed questions. For example: "What was the meeting like?" rather than: "Did you go to the meeting?"
- Ask probing questions. For example: "Could you explain what you meant about the Aboriginal woman's experience?"
- Ask clarifying questions. For example: "Is it that people lack empathy or that they lack cultural awareness?"
- Ask questions about personal views and feelings. For example: "What do you feel about local services for Aboriginal women?"
- Give, and ask, for feedback after group work or presentations.
- Paraphrase or summing up to confirm people's key points.

Summarizing is an important skill for drawing conclusions and results from workshop activities. Tips include:

- State the positive points first.

- Highlight where there was agreement or differences.
- Reflect on people's comments rather than your own opinions.
- Focus on just the main points that have been made.

Communicating Well

Be enthusiastic, calm and confident.

Talk slowly and clearly.

Use language that is simple and appropriate.

Provide clear guidance and instructions, especially for group work.

Facilitating Group Work

Facilitating the work of groups is about more than enabling people to exchange information and learn from each other. It is also a way to build agreement and practical skills. Some tips include:

- Be clear about the aim of the work, and agree it with the participants.
- Keep activities focused and on track.
- Encourage all group members to contribute.
- End by summarizing the discussion and agreeing action points.
- Be honest. Be clear about what you do and don't know.
- Use positive body language. Make eye contact with all participants and be relaxed.

Make effective materials. Produce handouts for participants, prepare flipcharts or overhead transparencies with key information, and make examples to help explain activities or participatory approaches.

Display results well. Put participant's flipcharts up on the walls, on tables, or on the ground where everyone can see them.

Keeping the Work Practical and Relevant

Focus on practice rather than theory. Include case studies of real situations in action.

Talk about "*we*" and "*us*" rather than "*they*" and "*them*".

Link the activities to participants own work. Ask "How could you use this in your day-to-day projects/clients?"

Responding to Group Dynamics

Cope with power imbalances. Encourage people with different social and professional backgrounds to work as equals.

Enable participants to give each other feedback. Help people to clarify the ideas and opinions of others. Show them how to question incorrect factual statements. Avoid crises. Deal with problems as they arise and work with the group to resolve them.

Deal positively with criticism. It is important to find a way for the participants to challenge each other constructively. Encourage discussion of the criticism, such as by asking, "*Can you explain why you feel that way?*" or "*What do others think?*"

Accept that you may not be able to please everyone all the time! Accept the fact that group members do not always have to agree on everything. It is more important that they have shared different experiences and learned from them.

Cope with judgmental attitudes. Work involving Aboriginal people often involves discussing issues that some participants might consider offensive or difficult to discuss. Wherever possible, these attitudes should be challenged constructively by fellow participants.

Balance participation. Encourage quiet participants to speak and dominant ones to respect others.

Facilitating Quiet and Dominant Participants

Facilitators can build the confidence of quiet participants and encourage them to become involved by:

- Encouraging them to start by speaking during small group work.
- Asking them to share their experiences in a discussion about their area of specific expertise.
- Using activities whereby all participants are asked to make a small contribution.
- Providing them with positive but not patronizing feedback when they contribute. For example, try and build on, or reinforce, what they have said rather than say "well done" or "very good".

Facilitators can work positively with dominant participants and support them to let others make a contribution by:

- Giving them positive feedback and involving other participants in responding to them. For example, by saying "Thank you for that interesting viewpoint. What do other people think about it?"

- Speaking with them privately during a break to ask them to allow others more time to participate.
- Giving them a job to do within the workshop, for example providing the participants with a re-recap at the beginning of each day.
- Drawing their attention to established ground rules about allowing everyone to contribute or using games that encourage awareness of one's own behaviour.

Small Groups:

There are many reasons why you may want to split into smaller groups:

- Large groups can sometimes become dominated by a few people or ideas, stifling creativity and the contributions of others.
- Small groups alter the dynamic of a workshop, keeping the energy moving.
- Smaller groups allow time for everyone to speak and to feel involved. They are a lot less intimidating too.
- You can cover several different topics at once – with each group taking on one topic or task.

Think about the sort of group you need - a random split (e.g. numbering off or by eye/hair colour etc.) or groups of people with particular experience or skills (or mix of experience or skills)?

Explain clearly what you want groups to do. Write specific questions or topics on flipchart paper or a blackboard beforehand. If you are going to have feedback at the end, you need to say clearly what they need to feedback and ask them to ensure someone from each group is ready to give the feedback.

Tools for Evaluating Workshops

Have a round where everyone sums up their feelings or ask everyone to write down comments on a large piece of paper.

Ask “What are you taking away from this session?” This rapid review can help people notice what they have learned.

- Evaluation allows us to learn from our experiences. It should be a regular part of our workshops as it gives us the chance for honest feedback on the process and content of the event, allowing us to improve in the future.
- Everyone who participated in an event should be encouraged to take part in its evaluation. Bear in mind that there will be differences of opinion and that it is not necessary for the group to come to agreement on the matter.
- It is important to point out what was successful as well as what could have gone better. Begin with positive evaluations wherever possible.
- The structure of the evaluation should be planned carefully - how will you draw out what type of information? Keep evaluations of the process and of the content of the events separate.

Ask everyone to call out two or three high and low points of the workshop.

Draw up an evaluation questionnaire and distribute it amongst the participants for filling in.

Other things to consider:

- Be aware of the session's start and end times.
- Assume that you are visible and can be heard at all times.
- Do not monopolize the conversation.
- Do not interrupt when others are speaking.
- Use respectful language at all times.
- Focus the discussion and questions on the content of session.
- Remember that differences of opinion should be conceptual, not personal.
- Respect individual confidentiality.
- If the session is being recorded, the moderator will notify you at the beginning of the session

After the Workshop

After the closing of the workshop, ensure that all the participants are feeling alright, especially if the topic was a heavy or emotional one.

Collect all remaining materials and tidy the room – leaving it as you found it.

Ensure you have the evaluation forms.

Send follow-up reports (if promised) or any other materials requested from participants.

Conclusion

This facilitator's manual are geared towards Aboriginal women looking for additional resources to supplement their existing knowledge in workshop facilitation.

It is the hope of the Ontario Native Women's Association's Building Aboriginal Women's Leadership program that facilitators will find these resource materials useful and helpful as they begin to host workshops in their communities.

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The Ontario Native Women's Association is committed to inspiring and assisting Aboriginal women, where ever they live in any capacity, so that our communities will be healthy and continue to flourish.