Tips to Professionally Package Your Trainings: A Relational and Collaborative Learning Approach

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Someone once asked us what we thought a key to pushing their training to the next level was and we were fascinated that we both had the same thought. We replied “Learn to say thank you for sharing without actually saying thank you for sharing”. It was a skill that we talked about when developing our own training style that many have seen as very different or unique. We will often say “If you want to learn how to train technically well we are probably not the trainers to watch”. While it is extremely important to learn and digest the technical skills one learns in a “train-the-trainer” philosophy it can lead to a style that might become “plastic” or seem rehearsed. Instead we have developed a style that respects the train-the-trainer core but is delivered in a very informal and free flow style that may sometimes be exactly the opposite of standard techniques. Our approach to training is in rooted the belief that trainings should not be based on “experts teaching non-experts” but rather in way that accentuates collaborative learning from all in the room with heavy emphasis on the relationship that develops between the trainer(s) and the participants as a way to maximize the chance for a transfer of learning back to the workplace.

We are writing this article in the form of “tips” to model the critical thinking approach we try to bring to our trainings, while being fully aware that this style is not for everyone. We also are not citing formal proof that this is “the best way”, but merely opening up thinking for other trainers about how to balance the traditional train-the-trainer core with a more relaxed, conversational style.

<u>Foundation and core values:</u>

As our training philosophy and practice have developed it has revolved around a strong foundation and set of core values that ground developing and delivering our trainings.

- *Learning is collaborative:* We strongly believe that effective training should not be connected to “the experts teaching the non-experts”. While the trainer should have significant expertise in each topic area they are presenting, the spirit of the training should be that all in the room are contributing knowledge and expertise to the rest of the class as well as to us as the trainers. We have often taken ideas and strategies from class members and integrated them into future trainings. We attempt to accomplish the collaborative learning energy by having very little lecture and a very interactive flow that continually weaves core learning concepts into the discussions. We also validate class members if they raise the concepts in discussing their own ideas or practice. We tend to shy away from a lengthy description of our “credentials” when introducing ourselves. We generally prefer “Hi, we are Frank and Jill. We will tell you more about ourselves and our practice as we go through the training”. We attempt to establish credibility naturally as the training goes along. It is helpful to have a written biography available in the training advertisement, or simply refer people to our website if they want to see more detail about our backgrounds.

- *Training is primarily a relational process:* We believe the relationship and sense of connection that develops between the trainer(s) and the class are the keys to a strong learning environment as well as increasing the probability people will be motivated to use what was experienced in the training to enhance their practice. We attempt to establish the relational connections in a variety of ways including a relaxed presentation style, learning and using people’s names often, a more casual dress style for us, the use of “stories” to exemplify key practice points, and a consistent pattern of validating ideas presented by the class. As we will describe later we also send a follow-up e-mail to all participants after the training to keep the relationship “connected” after the training.

- *Follow the energy:* We base our delivery style on reading the room and following the energy in the room. This may mean less structure around timing of breaks, how much time is spent on a particular topic, etc. We see it as crucial to keeping a positive flow going to maximizing learning capacity.

- *Be aware of the "parallel processes" involved in training:* We make special efforts to try to role model the topic we are facilitating as we deliver the training. For instance if we are teaching a "Coaching Skills" class for supervisors we will try to use good coaching questions and dynamics as we facilitate the class.

- *People will leave with "more questions than answers":* Of course we try to impart the desired amount of knowledge and skills in a training, but our foundational belief is that in the most effective trainings critical thinking is elicited and participants will leave with more questions than "answers". The goal is to give people a number of new perspectives that will motivate them to self-reflect about their practice and raise questions about how to enhance it.

- *Don't settle for less than excellent and have a continuous focus on quality improvement:* All trainers will have days when they are sharper than other days. However, a trainer should never settle for being just "professionally sound", although it may happen on occasion. We place significant importance on evaluations and ways to get as much feedback as possible from participants. We try to revise courses on an on-going basis to avoid becoming "stale" with the same information. We try to consistently evaluate our own energy during a training and may shift "the lead trainer" role based on that assessment. However, we feel the biggest impact here comes down to professional pride. There is the famous story of baseball great Joe DiMaggio. Toward the end of his career, with a number of nagging injuries, DiMaggio made an exceptional effort to stretch a double into a triple in the late innings of a 6-0 game. When asked why he would risk injury to make that effort in a lopsided game he said “That is what I expect of myself. There might a father here at the game with his son seeing the kid’s first major league game. It might be the only time the kid sees me play. There might be an old-timer here seeing me play for the last time. They deserve to see my best”. We are not presumptuous enough to think we are at the level of the great Joe DiMaggio, but it is a story we use in our minds when it may be tempting to settle for less than excellence, or coast, in delivering a training.

- *Professional ethics do matter:* We make a strong effort to look at ethical issues connected to each topic and to use the word “ethics” often in discussions. We have found as many people get mired in the realities of their practice they may have “ethics” less up front in their thinking. When we raise the word ethics or talk about having a standard of excellence you can almost visually see people tune in to the discussion more.

Setting a professional tone:

It is crucial for the trainer(s) to set and maintain a professional tone throughout the training. There are many ways to establish this and it should remain a consistent focus for each training that is constantly being monitored through the evaluations and trainers’ self-assessment. Some of our strategies are:

- *The trainer(s) should train to best practice standards and a standard of excellence*, but must be skilled enough not to have participants whose practice or programs are not measuring up to the highest standards feel they are being criticized or embarrassed. In the class discussions the trainer(s) can acknowledge that sometimes everyday realities, or lack of resources, can prevent us from always reaching the highest standards. However, we should always should be shooting for and measuring our practice by excellence and high standards.

- *Start on time…repeat…start on time!* Our introduction style described below will help with integrating late-comers into the group, but one should not lower a very concrete professional standard of promptness. If the trainer feels a large percentage of people are not there one option is to start with "table introductions" where small groups can introduce themselves and answer a question pertinent to the training among themselves. This allows the bulk of the group to arrive before the core of the training begins. For those who are significantly late the trainer must make a decision as to whether to not admit them if they have missed crucial parts of the training. It also may mean considering lessening the time the trainers(s) certify them as present in the training.

- *Give people their money's worth.* A training should not be ended early since participants, or agencies, may be paying for a certain amount of learning time. However, the trainer(s) also has to consider where the learning energy is in longer trainings. On the rare occasion that all the material has been covered and the learning energy seems clearly drained the trainer(s) might use the option of ending the class early. However, the trainer(s) should stay until the end of the planned time to honor their contracted time agreement. They can offer individual consultation with class members during that time.

- *Treat people as professionals until they give you reason not to.* A trainer should avoid too many "basic" ground rules in the beginning that may feel infantilizing to the professionally sound participants. One example would be that we now deal with the cell phone issue by saying something to the effect of "We are all adults here and we realize that sometimes realities back at your work site mean you may need to answer a message or call. If it is one or two sentences just feel free to do it here. If it is longer, or will take up more of your attention, we prefer you take it outside to do". This acknowledges professional realities but allows us to monitor how much time someone is away from the training which might impact the trainer certifying them for the whole course.

- *Be willing to say "I don't know" when needed*. This continues the collaborative learning theme and is far preferable professionally than fudging an answer. It is also role modeling for how participants can deal with clients when unsure. Our after-training contact practice described below allows the trainer to research the answer and send it along to the participants after the training. We are very comfortable sharing portions of our own practice that might be considered less than excellent as a way to reinforce the "we are not the experts" theme. It is a nice way to exemplify how we all can grow and learn from our mistakes.

- *Be willing to take a strong professional stand on unprofessional behavior in the class*. We will go into more detail later when discussing some of the "interesting characters" in trainings, but this would include things like side talk, rudeness to other participants, unveiling significant bad practice, etc.

- *Be careful of what you sign off on and certify*. The trainer(s) should only certify participants for the actual time they are in the class and for the level at which they completed the training. For example certifying for mere attendance or certifying a competency demonstrated are very different standards.

Room set-up:

The set-up of the room will have significant impact on the flow of the training. For example a classroom or auditorium set-up is conducive to a lecture, "trainer is the expert" delivery style. A circular set-up will give a "social work feel" to the training, but can be seen as a lack of needed boundaries for some. Our strong preference is a team set-up which is sometimes referred to as "crescent rounds". This set-up allows for most people in the room to see each other when they are talking and provides a convenient structure for small group activities. Some tips for making the room set-up most conducive are:

- Try to get an agreement before the training as to what the preferred room set-up is. If that is not possible try to arrive to the training site early enough to re-arrange the room yourself.
- The use of tent name tags is extremely helpful in learning names and being able to accentuate the relational nature of the training. While the tags may be formally printed with detailed information our preference is to use plain white card stock paper and having the participants write their own name with only what they prefer to called on the tag. This personalizes each participant and sometimes people will try to be artistic in designing their name tag.
- Try to arrange a set up where the clock is directly across from where you will be standing. This allows you to see and monitor the time without looking at your watch.

<u>Introductions:</u>

We view introductions as far more than a formality. We view them as a crucial part of setting the foundation for the rest of the training. It is a golden opportunity to assess the room for a variety of dynamics as well as the first step in making a relational connection with individuals as well as the group. Our style is to begin the facilitation of the training through the introductions. We will sometimes spend as much as 45 minutes to an hour on them. Our basic format is as follows:

- Each person is asked to identify their name (gives the trainers a chance to get correct pronunciation of names which is a terrific way to begin the relationship forming in the class), agency and role.

- We generally add another question to the introduction that we believe is most crucial to introduce our style to the group. Each person is asked to share their own "words of wisdom" on the topic. On a very basic level this says very clearly that our style is not going to be “we are the experts and you are not”. It also sets a collaborative learning tone right from the beginning. It allows for us to assess the knowledge level of the group which will have a big impact on our delivery strategy and what topic areas to focus on. As people share their wisdom we will comment or ask for elaboration. This gives the trainer(s) opportunities to validate participants early on. If we can remember what some people say we can refer back to that during the training to further validate them give and positive feedback on their current practice.

- Before the introductions we establish our confidentiality contract with the group and ask them to commit to it also. We share that we are committed fully to not sharing anything specific an individual says in a training, although sometimes we may share themes from the group or a general description of how person participated. The only exceptions would be if someone shares such bad practice that all in the room would probably feel a need to bring it elsewhere (i.e., someone acknowledges abuse of clients in their program) or if it is so brilliant we just cannot contain ourselves. In either case the person would be made aware we are going to share it before we do so. On a number of occasions we have actually taken something said in class and used it with their name attached in a future training on the topic. This is another way to continue the relationship connection beyond the training and reinforce our commitment to respecting the knowledge of those we train.

This type of introduction allows the trainer(s) to get a basic sense of the education level of the group, organizational roles, and experience levels. It is crucial in that it allows everyone in the group to know who else is in the room. This is an asset for later networking as well as alerting them to any “VIP’s”, funding body people in the room, etc. Many times a large portion of the material will already be on the table by the time you get to the power points where there will be a chance to reinforce key points. Most importantly, it gets the training rolling in an interactive way that stresses a collaborative, cross learning approach.

Icebreakers:

We recommend using ice breakers very sparingly unless they have a direct connection to the training topic and fit smoothly into the flow of the delivery. They take up valuable learning time and many times are seen as frivolous or condescending. The standard rationale for ice breakers is that they can be engaging and loosen people up so they feel more comfortable participating. We believe that the trainers) should see engaging the group to make them more comfortable as a primary part of the skill sets they continually develop as they train more.

Delivery options:

There are many different delivery options and styles. Essentially there are three outcomes a trainer should be thinking about for each training. These three would be increasing knowledge, teaching skill, and shifting attitude by increasing motivation. Each of these is generally best accomplished by a different delivery method:

- Lecture will best accomplish increasing knowledge.
- Role plays and practice activities will best accomplish skill building.
- Interactive discussions around excellent and ethical practices would best facilitate increased motivation.

Our style is to try to minimize lecture and to try to accomplish all three outcomes, and do so in an extremely interactive training that continually facilitates collaborative learning and regularly validates the knowledge and strength in the group. We believe strongly, and have received significant anecdotal feedback, that this approach dramatically increases participants' motivation to go back to their work place and try to implement what was learned in the training. To accomplish this the trainer(s) should have an in depth knowledge of the topic being presented. They should continually weave key points of the topic throughout all discussions starting with the introductions. We will share many of our practice experiences through the medium of “stories”. This allows for our credentials to emerge as we go along. We try to make the stories about practice situations the class can relate to. We prefer to avoid a “follow the power point” type training or going from “section to section”. We want the learning to happen almost “by osmosis” in the discussions. When the power point slides are shown at the end of each section they will hopefully be review of points already made in the free flow discussions. If a key point was not discussed it allows us to simply say “Well, here is a point we missed…” and discuss it at that point. We do sometimes get negative evaluation comments from those who are used to more didactic learning. However, overwhelmingly people have commented on preferring that the power point was not a dominant teaching tool.

Co-training:

Co-training can be a uniquely valuable delivery method. It can bring together multiple perspectives and skill sets for the topics being trained. Perhaps the most important criteria for choosing a co-trainer is to be sure there is good chemistry between you and that you fully respect their professional standards and practice approaches. Traditionally when co-training the model has been that one trainer is responsible for a topic area and will present that section. They will then turn to their co-trainer and ask if they would like to add anything. We have chosen a very different style in that we simply train together at the same time without either of us being seen as “the leader” of the training or topic. The lead for each section just emerges naturally as the training moves along. Of course there are risks that we could disagree on a point, step on each other’s toes, etc. but those are also the strengths of this model. It allows a free discussion flow and role models real life in that sometimes two critical thinking professionals do disagree on issues and can do so respectfully. It also gives the class two different points of view on some topic areas which reinforces critical thinking and collaborative learning. This style is dependent on reading each other’s energy and tuning in to be able to feed off each other’s comments and ideas. It has proven to be a very successful approach based on evaluation feedback and follow up contacts. Many participants comment that it seems very “real” and allows them to feel connected to us in a different way than the more structured style would.

Dealing with the "interesting characters" in a training:

An effective training is heavily dependent on the trainer's ability to "read the room", facilitate productive discussions, maintain a professional tone and maximize learning potential for all in the room. The ability to do this can often depend on the trainer's ability to positively deal with some of the "interesting characters" that show up at a training. It is crucial to deal with these people in a manner that best brings them into the positive flow of training in a way that is respectful to them and seen that way by others in the room. Some of these "characters" might be:

- *"Shy Sarah":* Many participants are quiet or uneasy talking in front of the group. With shy participants it is important to have an introduction they can do comfortably. It is not wise to call on them directly during the training as it may exacerbate their discomfort. A good way to engage Shy Sarah would be to have dyad activities where she can share her views with one person. When a Shy Sarah does make a good point when participating acknowledge it as helpful then and try to find a way to refer back to it later in the training to build her confidence.

- *"Danny the Dozer", "Sam the Sleeper", and "Sal the Snorer":* These three are essentially the same person at different pitch levels. We feel strongly that while it may be uncomfortable it is imperative for the trainer to intervene at the "dozing" level. Someone dozing in a training is distracting to others but also reflects badly on themselves and their agency. One must always respect the idea that something medical may be going on so no attempt to "startle them" should be made. We suggest that when the dozing becomes evident a trainer should invoke a short break in the training and ask the person to talk privately. In that discussion the trainer(s) should say "I am not sure if you are not feeling well today but if you would like to leave and come back when you are feeling better that is ok. If you choose to remain in the training it is important that you are able to focus in on the class". This gives a face saving option to the person, helps them to avoid publicly presenting unprofessionally, and makes a statement to the class that you have set that high standard. It also prevents the trainer(s) from signing off on attendance to a course where the person was not “fully there”.

- *“Sally the Side Talker”:* It is extremely important that the trainer(s) deal with side talkers quickly and firmly while remaining respectful. In the beginning it may take the form of simply saying things like “hold on a second so we all can hear”, “is there something you wanted to add to the discussion?, etc. If these gentle reminders don’t work you may want to go a small group activity where the count-off allows the offending parties to be separated. If it persists beyond that the trainer may need to be very straightforward and assertively ask the side-talkers directly to stop. It would be best to take that route when someone else in the class is talking rather than you to depersonalize it. If it still persists you might want to take a break and ask if they are willing to make a case it is ok to talk when others are talking. This sounds harsh but every time we have made a case that we should not intercede forcefully (i.e., they are talking about the material, they are just excited to learn, etc.) we (deservedly) pay a big price on the evaluations from others in the class who remind us it was our responsibility to have stopped it.

- “Iris It Won’t Work”: Some participants can get locked into continuously suggesting the material will not work for them. Rather than getting into a power struggle around this it is wisest to acknowledge that nothing works in every situation and then ask Iris to share what she thinks would work better for her.

- “Long Winded Lucy”: There are two types of “Lucy”. One is someone who talks a lot but ultimately makes a good point and the other is someone who talks a lot but never seems to make a strong point. This is a delicate intervention because they are people who want to participate. It is important not to discourage that, but you have to keep it from grating on the other participants. One technique we have tried successfully is to put it back onto yourself and try to gently get into their long winded flow. “I am not sure if I am getting your point, is your point…?” is one approach to do that. The hope is that they will then be able to articulate a point and at least you have respectfully cut into the flow.

- “Sam Stuck in My Own Agency”: Sometimes in a training where many agencies are represented one participant may get stuck in only applying the material to their own setting. They will continuously say “Well, in my agency…” and then go into great detail about their individual issues. This is not a problem unless you notice others tuning out. If so, one strong technique would be to hear “Sam” out and then ask the class “Does anyone else have an opinion on how this would work for them?” That may be effective in bringing the conversation back to a more general discussion.

- “Bernie Bad Practice”: One of the biggest compliments we have ever received was from someone who said “You seem to have this amazing ability when someone says something a little crazy to make it sound less crazy, yet not seem to validate it in any way”. On occasion a participant will be responding to a discussion and unveil what you, and others in the room, might consider bad practice. This is a very delicate intervention as you don’t want to put the person or their agency in a bad light. Some early responses may be “Well, that is one way to handle that, does anyone else in the room have ways they handle it?” or “That is an interesting way to do it, can you think of any possible down sides to that?” If the practice being discussed is not on the far end of bad practice you can then make some alternative practice suggestions which give a more positive choice to people while the group sees you have respectfully not validated the apparent negative practice. If the practice described is far end bad practice, or the person is overly pushy about not hearing the other side, you may have to take a stand as respectfully as possible and say something like “Well, I am not sure if you do it exactly as you describe but what you are describing would not be considered good practice”. This is an “art form” for a trainer to develop as it brings together the crucial balance of respecting all participants while also keeping the standard of promoting excellent practices.

- "Donna the Dream": Many times a trainer will come across a "dream participant". They will sit in the "learners' seats", participate positively and often, volunteer for activities, etc. The approach here is simple: "Use them shamelessly" and take an opportunity to acknowledge their positive energy as much as you can. We have also "discovered" many future co-trainers this way which continues the relational, collaborative learning approach long after the training.

Evaluations:

Evaluations are a crucial factor in helping trainers to reflect on their practice and are key in allowing for an ongoing quality improvement process. We value evaluations at a very high pitch and make a strong effort to communicate how much we value them to participants. When developing an evaluation it is important to include areas you see as important to a strong quality improvement process. We have developed a form that focuses in on the following areas:

- Evaluating in the presentation asking to what degree it was (a) well organized, (b) informative, and (c) relevant to participants.
- Evaluating the trainer(s) on (a) knowledge of content, (b) respected the knowledge and experience of participants, (c) methods and (d) style.
- An overall grade for the entire training experience.

There are a variety of ways to grade those areas. Our feeling is it is best to go for a five scale grading of excellent, very good, good, fair and poor. Some feel that is too judgmental and prefer "I agree, somewhat agree, etc". Whatever method you choose be sure to match that to what will help you transfer the evaluation to improving your practice. We strive for excellence in each training and believe it is essential to have that standard highlighted for evaluation.

We add a series prose questions to enhance our ability to review how our training was received. These questions include:

- List two things you think you will be able to use in your practice after this training. This is a way to reinforce the importance we place on supporting the transfer of learning. If time permits we will sometimes go around the room and have each participant announce at least one “action plan” based on the training they will commit to implement when they get back to work.

- What I liked most about the workshop and what I liked least about the workshop.

- “The trainer(s) would be even better if…” is an extremely important question to support quality improvement and is very carefully worded here. Since the trainer has hopefully made relational connections with the group, and this question is personalized, the participants may tend to not want to say what they liked least or how the trainer could “improve”. The wording of “even better if…” gives permission to criticize constructively in a way that says it is welcomed. We have gotten some of the most valuable feedback to improve and refine our work from this question.

- A catch-all question of any other comments they may have.

A well devised evaluation can be helpful but careful attention must be paid to how the evaluation is administered. The delivery of the evaluation should emphasize how much the trainer(s) value the participants’ opinions. Some tips on how to administer and use the evaluations:

- Many trainers and agencies complain that participants don’t spend enough time on the evaluations. The best way to counter that possibility is to continually reinforce how much you value them. One technique we use is to not give them out at the very end of the training, but rather hand them out and then do one short activity after the evaluation is completed. This allows the trainer(s) to structure how much time is given to do the evaluations. This eliminates them doing a rush job to finish and leave the training. The closing activity we choose is to go around the room and ask each participant to complete one of the following statements: “I learned…., I re-learned…, I discovered…, I realized…”. This activity will add a verbal “evaluation” in addition to the written one of what the participants saw as meaningful to them in the training. It also allows the class to all leave together at the same time and not just file out as they drop off the written evaluation which can support camaraderie and networking.

- In multi-day courses we build in as many as six structured ways to have the participants evaluate the product we are bringing to them.

  (1) Opening introductions can include asking what they hope to take away from the training. These answers can be written out on a chart. They can then be reviewed at the end of the training to see if people “got what they came for”.

  (2) At the end day one and two of a three day training participants fill out a brief evaluation of the day. This daily evaluation asks what they liked about the day, how the day could have been improved, and what they would want to change before the end of the training. We read those evaluations very carefully and then at the beginning of the next morning we read each one out loud to the class so everyone can hear what others thought about the day. It is a very practically valuable tool as some of the changes suggested may actually be able to be implemented. It is also a very concrete and visual statement of how much participants input is valued by us as trainers. Of course, one has to sterilize an evaluation where a class member may be identified and

put in a bad light (i.e. the person at the back table talked too much) but the positive impact of these make them well worth the risk. One crucial piece to success is that if something negative is said about the trainer(s) there should be careful attention to not sounding defensive, or over explaining, when you read them. This would be a great opportunity for trainer(s) to role model how to receive constructive feedback to improve practice.

(3) There is a full evaluation at the end of the training and then the "I learned…, etc." activity described above.

(4) Five to seven days after the training we send a follow up e-mail to all participants to ask for any more feedback they may have after having some time to digest the training.

Each trainer should develop a strategy for how to use the evaluation in a way that is most helpful to them in assessing and refining their trainings. For us there are three key areas we focus in on:

(1) We read the evaluations immediately after the training quickly. After an hour or two we re-read them together with focus on the overall grade. If we get 24 excellent grades and 1 very good out of 25 the first few minutes of our discussion is not about how well we seem to have done, but rather why it wasn't 25 out of 25! This sounds arrogant at first, but it is our way of keeping up the standard of excellence focus. Our thinking is if we start settling for 24, when will we settle for 23? then 22? etc. Of course even 20 out of 25 excellent grades sounds like a superb day, but we choose to start with perfection as an expectation and then come down to reality.

(2) We take careful notice of how realistic the written answers seem to the question of what things participants think will take back and use and he one on how we might improve the training. However, the most crucial area for us is the question about whether or not the trainer(s) respected the knowledge and experience of people in the room. Our strong belief and experience has been is that if that question has the highest number of excellent responses we can rest assured the training will have been effective and that people will be motivated to enhance their practice when they leave. If people believe they were not respected and valued by the trainers they will likely just take it as another few hours sitting there being told what they should do.

(3) For each training we use the evaluations as a barometer of how successful we have been, but we also have a separate self-assessment discussion of how we felt we did independent of the evaluations. This is important to keep the focus on excellence as many times we have gotten very high grades on the evaluations, but felt we were not that sharp or focused. Sometimes people tend to give you high grades just because they "liked you". In those cases we spend significant time critiquing ourselves and looking at how we could have been better.

After training contacts:

There are many strategies employed to achieve an increase in the transfer of learning back to the participants' practice setting. Two methods that we have observed as most effective are a high level of success the trainer has in matching the concepts being taught to real life situations that participants face and a commitment to having supervisors/managers attend trainings together with staff they supervise. We have added an additional tool that has proven very successful in helping increase the chances of the training being used in practice. During each training we gather the e-mail addresses of all participants. Between five and seven days after the training we send everyone in the group a follow up e-mail that essentially thanks them for coming and asks for any more feedback they may have for us about their experience in the training. We also open the door for them to request more resources on the material and we offer direct contact with us if they want to share how they have been applying the material or would like our advice as they put the training into their practice. Of course, we have to structure in confidentiality parameters and be sure agencies our ok with the process. In many cases we have worked directly with participants as they implement a new meeting structure, enact a constructive confrontation with a staff or just want to have someone who is purely objective to reflect with about their practice. It is a terrific way to help solidify the transfer of learning and also to reinforce the relational foundation of our training philosophy.

In this article we have attempted to explain the foundation concepts we use to develop and deliver trainings in a collaborative and relational way with a high focus on standards of excellence. There are many other nuances that can be applied to further that process for those interested in pursuing this style. We hope these "tips" will be helpful as that process evolves.

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Frank Delano will be facilitating a three hour training on "Interviewing and Engagement Skills" for staff of the Little Sisters of the Assumption Family Health Services staff on April 13th. The training will take place in Spanish Harlem in New York City.