Group Facilitation Strategies for Career Programs

Course Outline

Course Developer(s)
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Course Format
Two weeks, 10 hours per week

Course Prerequisites
Current and/or past experience as a career and employment practitioner and/or in a related field.

Course Description
This course will introduce strategies for effective face-to-face group facilitation. Topics include: stages of group development, differences between facilitating small and large groups, and strategies for effectively managing challenging situations.

Note: To simulate face-to-face facilitation, students will use either a live or asynchronous digital technology to facilitate a group. In addition, they will participate in two groups facilitated by their peers. Group facilitation and participation is a mandatory component of this course; your assignments will require a reflection on your experiences.

Course Objectives
General:
Participants will develop/enhance their knowledge about group process and improve their face-to-face facilitation skills. The course is aligned to the Pan-Canadian Competency Framework for Career Development Professionals.

Learning Objectives:
Upon successful completion of this course, students will be able to:
- Identify the stages of group development
- Create a "safe" group environment
- Discuss and demonstrate techniques for encouraging information sharing (e.g., brainstorming)
- Offer effective feedback
- Effectively divide groups into pairs and small breakout groups
- Demonstrate effective techniques for engaging "disruptive" or "challenging" participants
- Recognize external/internal influences and biases that may result in inappropriate behaviours

Required Texts / Supplies
Prendiville, P. (2008). *Developing facilitation skills: A handbook for group facilitators*. Combat Poverty Agency. Available at https://ualr.edu/publicaffairs/files/2017/08/DevelopingFacilitationSkills_2008.pdf

Additional Readings
Throughout the course, relevant readings will be posted on our website.

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Course Completion Requirements

Students must achieve an overall grade of at least 80% to successfully complete a course. If absent or offline for more than 48 consecutive hours, students are required to contact the instructor.

Participation	25%
Tip Sheet	20%
Focus Group Preparation	25%
Focus Group Reflection	30%

Learning Philosophy/Approach

LearnOnline is a student-centred, dynamic community where instructors and students co-create an engaging safe space to reflect, share, and grow together. Life Strategies is committed to infusing principles of equity, diversity, and inclusion within all our endeavors, including our e-learning offerings. We recognize that learning is a lifelong process impacted by our lived experiences and relationship to others and appreciate the unique learning preferences our students hold as they balance complex lives.

Life Strategies Ltd. continues to serve as an industry leader supporting local, national, and international strides forward in the professionalization of the career development sector. As a result, our courses are well positioned to respond to current and emerging trends, ethical and professional standards, and evidence-based practices from a variety of related sectors (e.g., HR/business, education, counselling). Life Strategies recognizes and values the diverse educational and employment backgrounds of individuals from within the career development sector and welcomes contributions that bridge across sectors, contexts, and clientele.

Life Strategies invites students to integrate their unique contexts within their e-learning journey and honour their personal learning goals. Together our learning community can support enhancing our professional community. We expect students, instructors, and administrative staff to treat others with respect and kindness, even when differences of opinions arise. We acknowledge, however, that sometimes our efforts to make people feel welcomed and included may fail, so we are always open to feedback to inform adjustments and improvements going forward.

Online Instruction Overview

This online course will be hosted on Life Strategies' *LearnOnline* e-learning platform which uses a Moodle-based learning management system. The system organizes a variety of learning activities (e.g., assigned readings, resources, videos, discussions, assignments) into several topical modules which students will progress through on a set schedule as described in the *Course Syllabus.* A course instructor will facilitate the discussions and review the assignments providing feedback and insights throughout the course. Although discussions are asynchronous (i.e., students are required to make a minimum of two posts, at their convenience, over at least 2 days that the topic is active), from time to time, the instructor may schedule live "sessions" or "office hours" using a web conferencing application (e.g., Zoom). Any "live" components will be communicated to students via the News forum; however, we recognize our students come from different time zones and are balancing many other work/life commitments that can impede attending in real time. As such, live elements will be recorded and/or optional.

Facilitated e-learning offers amazing opportunities for shared learning. Many experts in the field believe that the best learning occurs in the discussion forums and that the posted course content may take on a secondary importance. Although this course will provide comprehensive content, students' active

participation in the discussions enriches learning and is required for successful course completion. Students are encouraged not to delay jumping into the discussions. Although discussions are related to the assigned readings, resources, and/or videos, it is not necessary to wait until all of the readings/videos have been reviewed before jumping into the discussion forums – in fact, posting early and often contributes to richer discussions. Being inactive within the discussions for several days will impact a student's overall grade and may result in being unenrolled from the course.

Registered students will be enrolled and receive log-in instructions by email (noreply@learnonline.lifestrategies.ca) 1 week prior to the course start date. This provides a few days for students to orient themselves within the e-learning environment, review course expectations, and troubleshoot any technical concerns. If you require additional support or a course extension, please contact our team (studentadvisor@lifestrategies.ca) and we'll do our best to accommodate your needs.

Operational Requirements

As this course is offered entirely online, students must have reliable Internet access and be comfortable using Internet technology and participating in discussion forums.

Within each course, topics open and close on specific days facilitating learning as a cohort. Although there is flexibility in times of day to post, to achieve course mastery (i.e., 80%) students will be expected to adhere to the course schedule and spend a similar amount of time on this course as they would in a classroom-based environment of 20 hours.
Documents will be posted in Word, PowerPoint, and PDF — students must be able to download these documents as well as upload similar documents. Web conferencing software (e.g., Zoom) may also be utilized.

Students can count on our team for support if any technical challenge arises during the learning process. Contact us by sending an email to info@lifestrategies.ca so we can assist as soon as possible.

Accommodation

We recognize that students have different learning styles and needs. We want to make sure each student gets the most out of their learning experience with us. If there is any special need and/or disability which needs accommodation or special consideration throughout the course, please let us know prior to the course start so that we can work collaboratively to more effectively meet those needs.

Life Strategies Ltd. is a truly remote workplace with staff and associates working across a wide variety of traditional, ancestral, unceded and occupied Indigenous Lands. We want to take a moment to acknowledge the territory and thank the Nation(s) for allowing us visitation on their traditional lands and invite you to do the same. If you are connecting from Canada, please go to https://native-land.ca to learn more about and to reflect upon the lands you are joining us from.