Young People as Researchers

Save the Children

Published by
Save the Children
17 Grove Lane
London SE5 8RD
UK

First published 2000

ISBN 1-84187-011-0

Contents

Acknowledgements

This training pack was prepared by Steve Worrall of The Transformation Agency for Save the Children with additional work by Phil Treseder. Extra material was also prepared by Bridget Pettitt, Clive Hedges, Belinda Duff and Perpetua Kirby. The advice and expertise of Paula Rodgers, Ciaran McKeown, Sophie Laws, Lucy Linden, Anthony Worth and Jo Ghelmini were also invaluable. The publication process was managed by Bridget Pettitt, Clive Hedges and Caroline Pook.

Many of these materials were adapted from existing Save the Children publications, or from the practice of other people in the Save the Children UK programme. We would like to thank the Save the Children workers and trainers who provided advice and materials for this publication but whose names are not recorded here.

Section One

Introduction

The aim of this training pack is to provide materials for workers training young people in participatory research. It is designed to complement the Joseph Rowntree Foundation manual *Involving Young Researchers: How to enable young people to design and conduct research*, written by Perpetua Kirby. This manual examines issues that should be considered before undertaking research with young people, including whether or not carrying out research is appropriate, and the kind of support and resources that are often required to make the process successful.

The exercises contained in this training pack have been drawn from a number of sources, including Save the Children workers' personal experiences. They are designed for those training young people, not for young people themselves. It is assumed that trainers have an understanding of social research and are not new to the area. The exercises, and the handouts and information sheets accompanying them, provide a range of resources which can be used to develop young people's competence in preparing, planning and conducting research.

The training pack is divided into five sections:

Section One offers an introduction to the materials and guidance on how to approach the exercises.

Section Two offers a list of identified competencies.

Section Three contains the exercises. These are divided into four sections:

- Research issues
- Research methods
- Involving young people in analysis and report writing
- Learner needs, support and evaluation.

Section Four contains the handouts and information sheets for use with the exercises.

Section Five provides theoretical background and identifies some of the key issues in training. This final section is not designed to be a theoretical guide to training, but is intended to describe some of the influences behind current training practice. If you are interested in approaches to training theory, the Reference Materials on page 74 list some publications that may be of interest.

How to use the materials

These materials are designed to accompany the manual *Involving Young Researchers*, rather than as a 'stand-alone' resource. It is expected that trainers using the pack will want to select exercises relevant to the learning needs of the group they are working with.

There are many debates around the practice of research, and how to link this with participatory work with young people. These should be considered before beginning any training. As a trainer, you need to be clear about how far you take a participatory approach in your youth work and research practice before you begin to use the exercises. Working with the manual can be a useful way to explore, and to consider how to resolve, questions raised by participatory methodology.

When selecting methods and choosing exercises which are relevant for a group of young people, some points to consider are:

- the learning objectives, or what young people are expected to be able to do as a result of learning
- how their achievement of learning will be measured
- facilitating an exercise, and the skills and knowledge required to run it
- your own attitudes and approach
- the needs of individuals and the group
- different ways of learning.

To help define learning objectives, the majority of exercises have been developed around a series of competencies. These are certain key indicators of good practice that Save the Children have identified as essential for any young person to meet if they are undertaking a social research project. Each competency has specific learning objectives to support it and exercises designed to enable young people to work towards achieving the objectives (and so develop their competence). Several of the exercises outlined in this training pack may meet different competencies, or a number of learning objectives and competencies. A table cross referencing competencies, exercises and chapters from *Involving Young Researchers* is provided on page 11.

Three additional exercises, 31–33, which are not related to a competency, have been included to offer suggestions for evaluating immediate reactions to learning events.

Handouts and information sheets supplement several exercises. The timing given for each exercise is only an approximate guide. You will need to use your own expertise and experience of the group you are working with to judge more accurately how long you need to spend on each exercise.

For more in-depth information concerning the content areas in some of the exercises please refer to the Reference Materials on page 74.

Section Two

The Competencies

Overall aim

To develop research skills so that a social research assignment, or part of a research assignment, may be undertaken.

Research issues

Ability to define what research is

Participants will be able to:

- discuss the role and uses of research
- identify their role as researchers
- identify the purpose of social research and the difference between social research and other forms of enquiry, e.g. journalism.

Ability to set aims and objectives

Participants will be able to:

- produce clear and specific aims and objectives with reference to a particular research outcome.

Understand the importance of equality of opportunity to ethical research practice

Participants will be able to:

- describe why equality of opportunity is important in ethical research practice
- relate key equal opportunities practice issues to their own research practice

Recognise the rights of research respondents

Participants will be able to:

- identify two rights of research respondents
- explain how these rights will be respected during their research.

Show sensitivity to the needs of research respondents

Participants will be able to:

- offer an appropriate level of support to research respondents.

Understand the importance of confidentiality in a research setting

Participants will be able to:

- list the key factors involved in maintaining confidentiality, including the difference between secrecy and confidentiality
- draw up a confidentiality statement for their project
- explain their confidentiality statement to research participants.

Understand the importance of reflecting different views in research

Participants will be able to:

- identify a range of possible community viewpoints and interests concerning a particular issue and explain why these might be important in research.

Recognise the links between personal feelings and their involvement in aspects of research

Participants will be able to:

- describe their personal feelings about one or more issues relating to a research project and how these may affect their own participation.

Ability to produce a basic research plan

Participants will be able to:

- produce a research timetable relating to their research project.

Research methods

Identify a range of research methods/tools and demonstrate an understanding of the advantages and limitations of each method

Participants will be able to:

- list three research methods
- describe one advantage and one limitation of a chosen research method for their own project.

Understand how to design research questions

Participants will be able to:

- distinguish between an open and closed question
- identify when an open or a closed question would be appropriate
- produce examples of one open and one closed question
- produce questions for self-completion
- produce clear and unambiguous questions
- identify a leading question
- understand how to use probing questions.

Ability to use basic listening skills to conduct research activities

Participants will be able to:

- demonstrate basic listening skills, including understanding of body language, good eye contact and empathetic listening.

Ability to record information

Participants will be able to:

- identify an appropriate method for recording information
- record accurate and relevant information applicable to their research project and appropriate to their skills.

Ability to identify how they will access respondents

Participants will be able to:

- describe the types and numbers of respondents they would like to include and outline how they will access them.

Ability to conduct a group discussion

Participants will be able to:

- identify ways to run a group discussion
- describe helpful and unhelpful behaviour in groups.

Involvement in analysis

Ability to participate in analysis

Participants will be able to:

- describe the process used to analyse their data
- explain how their data has been coded and categorised.

Report writing and dissemination

Ability to participate in report writing

Participants will be able to:

- develop or contribute to a section for a report
- summarise key points clearly and concisely
- describe the stages of preparation of reports
- identify an appropriate method for presenting research results.

Ability to disseminate information

Participants will be able to:

- identify who should receive information about the project
- describe how they will inform people or distribute information about the project.

Personal development and understanding

Reflect on their own learning process

Participants will be able to:

- identify ways of learning and appropriate activities.

Recognise their own support needs when they are undertaking social research

Participants will be able to:

- identify their personal and emotional support needs in relation to undertaking research.

Key minimum components for training young people in research

The kind of training that young people require depends on the kind of project you are undertaking and the particular needs of the young people you are working with. However, it is possible to identify key competencies, which all young people should be able to achieve before conducting research.

COMPETENCIES	EXERCISES	COMMENTS
Ability to define what research is	**1**	
Understand the importance of equality of opportunity to ethical research practice	**5**	
Recognise the rights of research respondents	**10**	These rights can differ according to the research method used
Understand the importance of confidentiality in a research setting	**8, 9**	
Understand the importance of reflecting different views in research	**11**	
Recognise the links between personal feelings and thier involvement in aspects of research	**5**	
Understand how to design research questions	**14, 15, 16**	
Ability to use basic listening skills in research activities	**17**	When they are doing face-to-face work
Ability to record information	**18**	Varies according to research method
Recognise their own support needs when they are undertaking social research	**30**	These issues should also be discussed in individual support sessions with young researchers

Assessing young researchers

At the start of training, you may find it useful to have an understanding of the skills or knowledge levels present in the group. Although there is no competency associated with this, Exercises 31 and 32 can be used to help support the competencies associated with personal development and understanding. Exercise 31 has been included to help you identify what learning styles may be present in the group. This exercise can also be used to help participants identify what would be useful in helping them learn in a training situation or to identify help and support needed at various stages during the research project.

The exercises

The exercises in Section three have been grouped according to the competency levels. At the end of each exercise are several points to consider when undertaking the exercise or adapting it to meet local needs.

Exercises 31, 32 and 33 are not related to a competency, but are included as suggestions to help trainers when thinking about evaluating a training session or course.

Each exercise has been cross-referenced to the relevant chapter(s) in *Involving Young Researchers: How to enable young people to design and conduct research*. Wherever possible the content of the exercises should incorporate the participant's own understanding or experience of the chosen research subject.

The table on page 11 cross-references the competencies, the exercises and the chapters in *Involving Young Researchers*.

Aims and objectives

Exercises 2, 3 and 4 give practice in setting aims and objectives. They can be used individually or can be combined, depending on the depth of knowledge you feel the participants need. The following definitions of 'aim' and 'objective' might be useful:

Aim is another word for goal, or what you want to achieve.

Objective describes the steps towards the aim. It outlines how you are going to achieve the aim.

COMPETENCIES	EXERCISES	CHAPTER IN *INVOLVING YOUNG RESEARCHERS*
Ability to define what research is	1	4
Ability to set aims and objectives	2, 3, 4	4
Ability to produce a basic research plan	4	4
Understand the importance of equality of opportunity to ethical research practice	5	3
Recognise the rights of research respondents	10	6
Understand the importance of confidentiality in a research setting	8, 9	6
Understand the importance of reflecting different views in research	11	3, 4
Recognise the links between personal feelings and thier involvement in aspects of research	5	3
Identify a range of research methods/tools and demonstrate an understanding of the advantages and limitations of each method	12, 24	4
Understand how to design research questions	14, 15, 16	4
Understand how to use basic listening skills in research activities	17	4
Ability to record information	18	4
Ability to identify how they will access respondents	6, 7	3, 4
Ability to conduct a group discussion	19, 20, 21, 22	4
Ability to participate in analysis	24, 25, 26	5
Ability to understand the process of dissemination	27	7
Ability to participate in report writing and production	28	7
Reflect on their own learning process	29	3
Ability to recognise their own support needs when they are undertaking social research	30	3

Section Three

The Exercises

Research issues, exercises 1–11

Research methods, exercises 12–22

Involving young people in analysis and report writing, exercises 23–28

Learner needs, support and evaluation, exercises 29–33

Exercise 1 What is research?

Competency
Ability to identify what research is.

Materials
Flipchart and pens

Time
60 minutes

Learning objectives
Participants will be able to:

- discuss the role and uses of research
- identify their role as researchers
- identify the purpose of research and the difference between research and other forms of enquiry, e.g. journalism and counselling.

Method

1 In small groups or pairs, ask participants to:

- brainstorm everything that they have heard about research and why research is important
- identify the ways they may have been involved in research themselves as participants, e.g. in schools, for commercial research
- identify who might use research and why research may be important to them
- develop a simple definition of research.

2 Ask groups or pairs to feed back their ideas to the whole group. Write these on the flipchart.

3 Ask participants to consider an imaginary line across the room. At one end of the line is *always*, in the middle of the room is *sometimes*, and at the other end is *never*.

Tell the group that you are going to read out a statement for them to consider and that they will be given two minutes to decide where on the line they would stand in response. Once they have considered the statement, a member of the group will be asked up to stand on the line to represent the group's feelings and state the reasons for their response. Discussion will follow. The process can be repeated for a series of statements.

The following are some suggestions, but you may wish to develop your own:

The purpose of research is to find the truth.

The purpose of journalism is to find the truth.

The purpose of counselling is to find the truth.

The purpose of research is to initiate change.

The purpose of journalism is to initiate change.

The purpose of counselling is to initiate change.

The purpose of research is to help people.

The purpose of journalism is to help people.

The purpose of counselling is to help people.

The role of a researcher is to prove their own point of view.

The role of a researcher is to act as a vehicle for other people's views.

4 You can refer back to the group's definition of research to resolve conflicts arising in the exercise, and the exercise can be used to modify the original definition.

Note: Variations on this exercise can be a line with **agree**, **no opinion**, **disagree**. If the group is large, participants can be divided into smaller groups.

Likely outcomes

- Participants will be able to explore what their personal feelings are on the subject of research.
- They will be able to draw directly on their own experiences of either undertaking research or being the subject of research.
- The exercise gives you the flexibility to introduce a number of issues during the discussion stage, e.g. research being used for a certain purpose or as part of background material, such as information gathering for a newspaper story.

Exercise 2

Match the aim/objective

Competency
Ability to match the aim/objective.

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Prepared index cards
Handout 1: *Aims and objectives*

Time
45 minutes

Learning objectives
Participants will be able to produce clear and specific aims and objectives with reference to a particular research outcome.

Issues to consider

- This exercise may throw up some confusion as to what research is. Participants may have experience of research issues but not recognise them as research.
- Certain communities have been over-researched, e.g. single mothers, the unemployed, and children from families with difficulties. Members of those identified groups may feel particularly hostile to the concept of research. Participants in your training group may be associated with an over-researched group, and it may be helpful to explore this issue.
- When discussing what research can be used for, it is important to give concrete, practical examples that participants can relate to. There is a danger that any resulting discussion may become too abstract.

References

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 3 Define the aim

Competency
Ability to set aims and objectives.

Materials
Flipchart or OHP transparencies, and pens

Time
30 minutes

Learning objectives
Participants will be able to produce clear and specific aims and objectives that relate to a particular research outcome.

Method

1 As a group, get participants to brainstorm what they understand, or have been told about, aims and objectives. Alternatively, divide participants into small groups and ask them to define what they think an aim is and what an objective is.

2 Write up definitions on the flipchart and as a whole group agree on which are the best.

3 In small groups, ask participants to match up aim and objective cards. *Handout 1* contains statements which can be used.

4 Check that participants have matched up the cards correctly. As a whole group discuss the process involved in designing aims and objectives to see if there is a group consensus on it. The group can then go on to design a set of aims and objectives for their own research.

Likely outcome

- The group will be able to define the aim and at least one objective for their own research.

Issues to consider

- Participants may have some difficulty with the first part of the exercise, especially if they have never had any experience of training.
- Participants may attempt to develop too many objectives. It is important to keep them as simple as possible.

References

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Method

1 If you have a draft aim for a project, write it on a flipchart or OHP transparency.

2 Explain to the group the basic outline of the project, and tell them that the group will be reviewing the initial aim and objectives in order to see whether they are appropriate for generating lots of views and ideas.

3 Explain the discussion carousel, where the group arranges their chairs in two concentric circles facing each other in pairs. Each pair exchanges views for two minutes, discussing the following question:
What are we trying to achieve?

4 After two minutes, ask the inner circle to rotate one chair clockwise and the outer circle to rotate one chair anti-clockwise to form new pairs. Repeat the process, but tell them they must give the views of their previous partner.

5 Depending on the size of the group, you may now rotate one more time or return to the group for feedback. When feeding back ask the participants to give the views of partners.

6 Record the different views on the flipchart or OHP. Lead a whole-group discussion for common consensus among the views.

7 Repeat the whole process for the following questions:

How will the research help us?

What do we need to find out?

Likely outcomes

- The group will come up with a simple aim for the project.
- They will start to bond through having an agreed aim and objective that they can all own.

Issues to consider

- The group will need a clear briefing on any project in order to understand the aim.
- You may need to provide a definition/ example of an aim and objective at the start of the session.
- You may wish to combine this exercise with Exercise 2.

References

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 4

Aims, objectives and planning

Competencies

- Ability to set aims and objectives.
- Ability to produce a basic research plan.

Materials

Flipchart and pens, or printroll
Sticky tape

Time

60 minutes

Learning objectives

Participants will be able to:

- produce clear and specific aims and objectives that relate to a particular research outcome
- produce a research timetable relating to their research project.

Method

1 Introduce the group to the principles of planning by asking them to think about the following questions:

What will you do?
In what order will you need to do it?
How will you do it?
Who will do it?
What resources will they do it with?
When will it be done, i.e. what is the time-frame?

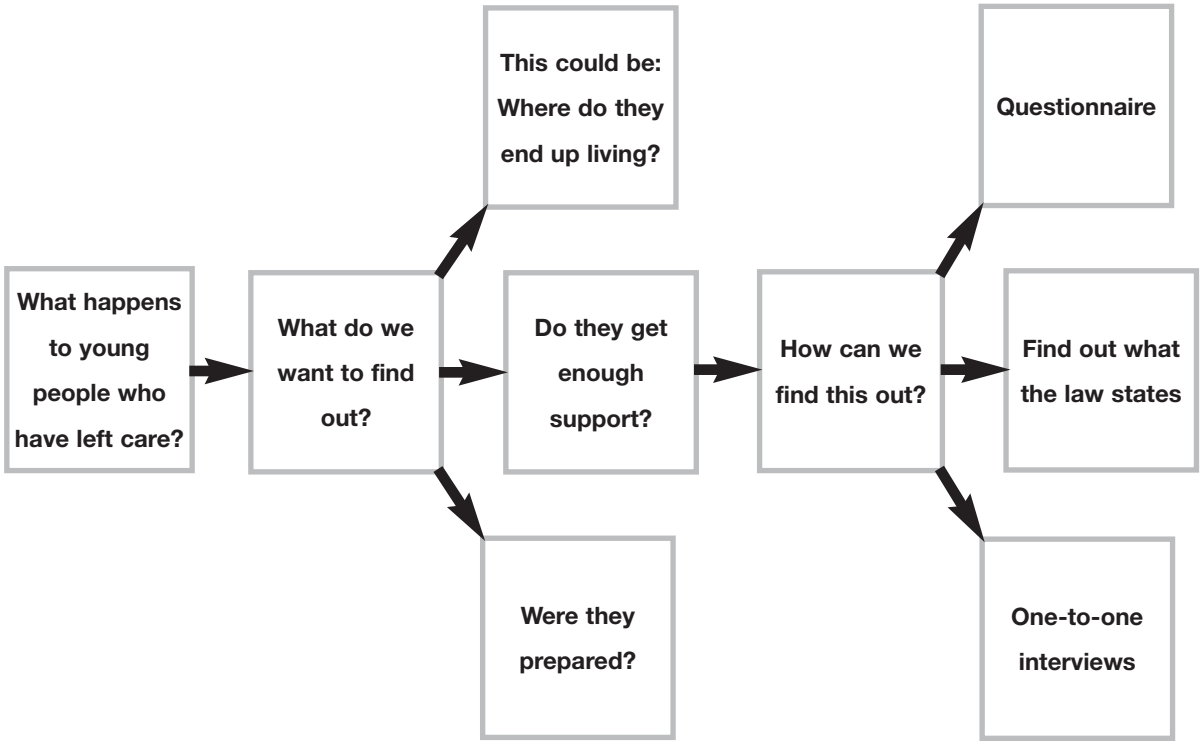
2 Introduce the SMART formula below. This list can be used as part of the planning process in order to ensure that the planning is on course.

Each section of the project should be:

S **pecific** (to the point)
M **anageable** (can it be done?)
A **chievable** (is it realistic?)
R **elevant** (to the objectives)
T **ime related** (does it fit within the time-frame?)

3 Ask participants to apply the SMART formula to develop a set of aims and objectives and a project plan for their chosen research area or project. If an aim has not been chosen you may need to identify one for the purposes of this exercise. It may be useful to have the formula on a handout for participants to refer back to.

4 On the printroll or flipchart write the aim of the research. Then ask participants to create a flow chart following the principles outlined above. For example, for a project researching what happens to young people after they leave care, the flow chart may start like this:



You may adapt the questions to: Who?, Why?, What resources would we need for a particular idea? etc.

5 Once the chart is completed, the group can take a step back and consider the order of priorities and timing for the overall project.

Note: An alternative, more visual, version of this exercise would be to draw in outline the trunk and main branches of a tree. Write the aim of the research below as the roots of the tree and use the objectives as the trunk. Different methods/ideas can then branch off the main trunk with smaller branches to consider resources and other issues.

Likely outcome

- Participants will be able to plan a simple research timetable from the objectives of the research project.

Issues to consider

- Participants may try to make the process too complicated.
- They may need support when applying the SMART formula.
- They may need help and support in deciding which areas to prioritise and include when undertaking a research project.

References

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 5 What is my attitude?

Competencies

- Understand the importance of equality of opportunity to ethical research practice.
- Recognise the links between personal feelings and their involvement in aspects of research.

Materials

Flipchart and pens

Pictures of a range of people to show to the training group, e.g. pop stars, football teams, politicians or just a range of different kinds of people in terms of age, sex, appearance, ethnicity, etc.

Time

75 minutes

Learning objectives

Participants will be able to:

- describe why equality of opportunity is important in ethical research practice
- describe their personal feelings about one or more issues involved in a research project and how this may affect their personal participation.

Method

1 Ask each participant to choose a selection of pictures. Ask them to arrange the pictures in an order that you have decided upon, e.g. in order of who they think they have most in common with, who they think is most likely to have views that are worth listening to, who they respect the most, who would be most useful as a research subject, etc.

2 In small groups ask participants to discuss why they chose those pictures and why they placed them in that order. They should discuss how other orders of priority may differ from their own. How do they feel about the others' order of priority? How would they feel if others ignored or put down their viewpoint?

3 Participants feed back their ideas to the whole group.

4 As a whole group discuss the following questions:

- Do you have any strong views on any particular issues?
- Where do your viewpoints come from?
- What has influenced you in these views?
- How might personal beliefs influence the behaviour of someone involved in the research?
- How could this affect the results of the research?

If a piece of research has already been identified, these questions can be focused towards it.

Likely outcome

- Participants will be able to see how their own social attitudes could have an effect on how they carry out research.

Issues to consider

- When discussing personal viewpoints, sensitivity is needed as this exercise may bring up issues of prejudice and some participants may find this challenging.
- The second stage of the exercise could be used to raise the issues of disability, sexual orientation, gender, cultural differences, etc. Once again, this needs to be sensitively handled.

References

Adapted from *A Trainer's Guide to Participatory Learning and Action*, J.N. Pretty et al., 1995
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 3: Setting up the Project

Exercise 6 Who is here?

Competency
Ability to identify how they will access respondents.

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Handout 2: *What is a community?*
Handout 3: *Improving participation in research*

Time
60 minutes

Learning objective
Participants will be able to describe the kinds and numbers of respondents they would like to include and outline how they will access them.

Method

1 Ask participants to sit quietly. Take them through the following guided visualisation:

You have just left home and are walking down your street towards the bus stop. At the bus stop you wait and watch the people walking past. After five minutes, the bus comes and you get on. You stay on until you get to your local shopping centre. You are going to meet some friends there, but have arrived ten minutes early. You decide to wander round the shopping centre until it is time to meet the others. You wander round the centre looking at the shop windows and the people around you. Ten minutes have passed and your friends arrive to meet you.

2 Divide participants into small groups and get them to discuss the kinds of people they saw. Ask them to consider the following questions:

- What communities did the people you saw come from?
- How did you recognise that they came from those communities? (What signs did you use to recognise them?)
- Was any particular group of people missing from your visualisation, and if so why do you think that they might have been missing?

3 As a whole group, ask participants to feed back the results of their discussions. Discuss how communities may be identified either by external researchers or by how people might see themselves, for example people living in a certain area or members of a school gang.

4 Thinking about the research they are going to undertake, ask participants to discuss the following questions:

- Who do you need to include in the research and why?
- Where can you access these groups of people?
- What problems might you face?
- What ideas can you come up with to resolve these problems?

Handout 2 should help participants to identify different ways in which a community may be identified. *Handout 3* should help them to think about ways to resolve some of the problems they may come up against.

Likely outcomes

- Most participants will identify someone from their own social or ethnic background.
- Participants will draw up a broad list, but may have difficulty in identifying why they have included some groups of people.

Issues to consider

- This can double as an equal opportunities exercise.
- You may need to check if participants have experience of visualisation exercises, as those who have never experienced these may find it difficult to participate or concentrate.
- Participants may need prompting in coming up with ideas for dealing with barriers in accessing people, especially those considered hard to reach.

References

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 3: Setting up the Project and Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 7 Mapping your area

Competency
Ability to identify how they will access respondents.

Materials
Flipchart and pens

Time
60 minutes

Learning objective
Participants will be able to describe the kinds and numbers of respondents they would like to include and outline how they will access them.

Method

1 Divide participants into small groups, and give each group a large piece of flipchart paper.

2 Ask each group to draw a map of the local area where they live or the area in which they are doing research. The group will need to agree how to represent different features, e.g. symbols, shapes.

They should include the following on their map:

- where they live
- where their friends live
- where their relatives live
- any other areas such as schools, shops, youth centres, religious centres, key architectural features, e.g. clock tower
- places where young people (or the target group) gather.

3 Pin the maps on the wall for the whole group to see. Alternatively, you could ask each group to present their map and discuss how they came up with it.

4 As a whole group, discuss the following questions:

- How might respondents in each place be contacted?
- What might be the issues that need to be considered for conducting research in each place?
- How could the mapping method be used when planning research?
- What did you learn and how could this be applied?
- What might you do differently if you used this technique again?

Note: An adaptation of this exercise could be to split the group according to gender or age and examine the results from those perspectives.

Likely outcome

- Participants will develop an understanding of the use of mapping.

Issues to consider

- The mapping could be changed to the school environment, as the parameters would be easier to identify.
- Some participants will have concerns about their ability to draw and get the dimensions right.
- You may need to set boundaries on the area that the maps could cover.
- When looking at the issues for conducting research, you may need to make suggestions, e.g. personal safety, convenience, confidentiality.

References

Adapted from *A Trainer's Guide to Participatory Learning and Action*, J.N. Pretty et al., 1995
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 3: Setting up the Project and Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 8

What is confidentiality?

Competency
Understand the importance of confidentiality in a research setting.

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Paper and pens for participants
Handout 4: *Research and confidentiality*

Time
30 minutes

Learning objective
Participants will be able to describe the key factors involved in maintaining confidentiality, including the difference between secrecy and confidentiality.

Method

1 Ask participants to sit in a circle. Give everyone a blank piece of paper.

2 Ask them to write down a bit of information they would not like anyone else in the room to know about. They then fold their piece of paper into four and hold on to it.

3 Reassure participants that the information will not be used to hurt them.

4 Ask participants to pass the paper to the person on their left. Stress that the person receiving the information is not to look at the paper under any circumstances.

5 Get feedback about how participants are feeling and why they feel that way.

6 Choose a member of the group and ask them if you can have the piece of paper that they are holding for a minute.

The participant will either hand over the paper or refuse to do so. If the paper is handed over, ask the owner of the information how they are feeling about the paper being handed to you. Explore the issue with the group.

7 End this part of the exercise and ask for the papers to be returned directly to their owners without being opened. Ask how participants are feeling now. Get participants to tear up the bits of paper and dispose of them.

8 As a whole group, discuss how research participants might feel about giving you sensitive information and the researcher's role in keeping it confidential.

9 Continue the exercise by dividing into small groups and asking participants to discuss the difference between confidentiality and secrecy. They then feed back to the whole group, drawing out the principles of confidentiality.

Handout 4 should help participants to find ways of maintaining confidentiality when carrying out research.

Likely outcomes

- Participants either refuse to take part or quickly get into the process.
- This exercise moves participants very quickly into a practical understanding of confidentiality.

Issues to consider

- You will need the confidence to run this exercise, and will need to ensure that participants feel safe and are comfortable with you dealing with the group's anxieties.
- Participants will need to be assured that confidential information will not be disclosed and trust will not be broken.
- Some people may write something non-serious or may decide not to write down anything at all. If this happens you can use this to explore why respondents may decide to withhold information during an interview.
- If during the exercise a participant refuses to give the paper to you, the exercise can still be completed and this can be the starting point for the discussion.
- Some participants may have difficulty in understanding the difference between secrecy and confidentiality and you may need to have an example of each prepared.
- You will need to be clear about your organisation's policy and practice on confidentiality.
- If participants have had any contact with statutory services, there may be confusion between individual confidentiality and team or organisation confidentiality. This may need to be clarified.

References

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 6: Ethics

Exercise 9 Who do I tell?

Competency

Understand the importance of confidentiality in a research setting.

Materials

Flipchart and pens

Handout 4: *Research and confidentiality*

Time

30 minutes

Learning objectives

Participants will be able to:

- list the key factors involved in maintaining confidentiality, including the difference between secrecy and confidentiality
- draw up a confidentiality statement for their project
- explain their confidentiality statement to research participants.

Method

1 As a whole group, discuss the following question:

Are there any times you think you might need to break a person's confidence? If so, who do you think you should tell?

Handout 4 should help participants to think about ways of maintaining trust and confidence during an interview.

Likely outcomes

- The discussion should draw out the issues surrounding confidentiality. You should be clear what your organisation's policy and procedure is regarding confidentiality.
- This exercise should enable you to identify clear lines of responsibility and support for the young researcher.

Issues to consider

- This exercise can also include questions on how to inform research respondents about confidentiality, e.g. in written or verbal form, and also what information actually needs to be conveyed to a research respondent.
- Participants could practise informing respondents of the confidentiality of the project in a role-play situation.
- You should be clear about your organisation's standpoint on the legal implications of confidentiality.

References

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 6: Ethics

Exercise 10 I have the right to

Competency
Ability to recognise the rights of research respondents.

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Handout 5: *Interview role-play*
Handout 6: *Interviewing code of conduct*
Handout 7: *The rights of someone being interviewed*

Time
40 minutes

Learning objectives
Participants will be able to:

- name two rights of research respondents
- explain how these rights will be respected during an interview.

Method 1

1 Using *Handout 5*, either ask participants to act out the dialogue or read through the dialogue, or act it out yourself with a colleague. If participants are acting it out, ask the 'interviewee' how they felt when being interviewed. Discuss what went wrong with the interview.

2 As a whole group discuss the following question:

What rights does a person have when being interviewed?

3 You can use the results of this discussion to formulate a handout for the group on ethical interviewing. Alternatively *Handout 6* and *Handout 7*, or a checklist based on both of these, can be used. You could ask the group to rewrite the dialogue to illustrate better practice.

Method 2

1 Introduce the exercise by asking participants to put themselves in the position of a research respondent. For the purpose of this exercise use an example of a research project that would draw on personal information, e.g. 'The sexual activities of young people aged between 14 and 19 years old'. Ask the group to brainstorm some of the questions/ information the researchers might require, for example:

- How many sexual partners have you had?
- Have you ever caught a sexually transmitted disease?

2 Now split the participants into smaller groups and ask them to spend 15 minutes considering what questions they would ask the researchers before they would agree to take part.

3 As a whole group, participants give feedback from their discussions. Raise any issues that may not have arisen, such as:

- confidentiality
- child protection
- payment to participants
- interview method, e.g. group discussion, one-to-one interviews
- if the interview is taped, who listens and what happens to it?

4 If the group has decided on a topic for research, ask them to consider in small groups which of the issues they have raised are likely to relate to their research and how they will deal with these matters. *Handouts 6* and *7* can be used to help facilitate discussion.

Likely outcomes

- Participants will draw up a list of rights.
- Participants may also think of other issues that are not on the list given here.

Issue to consider

- If the dialogue is acted out, you can discuss practical ways of ensuring interviews are conducted taking into account the interviewee's rights.

References

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 6: Ethics

Exercise 11 Differing views

Competency
Understand the importance of reflecting different views in research.

Materials
Flipchart and pens

Time
60 minutes

Learning objective
Participants will be able to identify a range of possible community viewpoints and interests concerning a particular issue and explain why this might be important in research.

Method

1 Organise participants into a group, or smaller groups if necessary, and give each participant a different role from the following:

Roles: These should be written on an index card or piece of paper and the group allowed to choose which role they would like to act out.

You are an enthusiastic football supporter. Your team is very successful and you attend matches whenever you can, and regularly watch matches on television.

You are a 70-year-old man living next door to the football stadium. Every Saturday in the football season, supporters park in your street and are very noisy.

You are the parent of a 15-year-old football supporter. You are worried that your child spends so much time watching football on the television that they will fail their exams. Your child wants you to get cable television so that they can watch more football.

You are 14 years old, love playing football and hate school work. You play every week with your friends and train twice a week.

You run a sports shop near the football ground and make lots of money selling football kits and memorabilia.

You are in your twenties and always hated football at school – you were never very good at it and got bullied because of it.

You are a hockey/rugby/tennis/netball player. Your team is really good but can't afford to travel to the matches outside the region. You feel that too much money is spent on football instead of your favourite sport.

You can also have other roles including a recorder, a group discussion facilitator, and an observer.

2 With each participant assuming their individual role, run a group discussion, to explore the following research question: Should the government give more money to encourage children to play football?

Participants should think about the following:

- What do you think of football?
- Do you think football is a good way of encouraging young people to take exercise?
- Do you think the government should spend more money on football?
- How should the government improve young people's take-up of sport?

3 Discuss the outcomes of the group discussion:

- Was anyone right or wrong in that discussion?
- How did participants feel if their point was being argued against or ignored?
- How easy was it to stay in role? Did their own views come through?

4 Discuss what different perspectives there may be for participants' own research project.

If there is time, you can rerun the exercise with participants exploring their own research topic.

Likely outcomes

- Participants should gain an understanding that different people have different perspectives on an issue.
- They should realise that one of the uses of research is to find out what influences people in their opinions.
- The exercise gives experience of a group interview situation. One of the participants could run the group if they have reached the appropriate stage of skills development.
- The exercise could be used for participants to gain experience of recording a group discussion.

Issues to consider

- If the groups are too small or aren't going to be using group discussions, the exercise may be done as a one-to-one interview. Give everyone a role and ask two other people to interview them and write up the interview. As a whole group ask them to say what conclusions they made from the interviews and bring the different views together.
- The exercise can be followed up by focusing on the participants' own research project and using a brainstorm session to get different perspectives on the issue.
- This exercise could be used to complement Exercises 21, 22 and 23 on group discussions.

References

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 3: Setting up the Project and Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 12 Name that method

Competency
Identify a range of research methods/tools and demonstrate an understanding of the advantages and limitations of each.

Materials
Pictures or drawings to show different research methods, e.g. picture of group sitting around discussing an issue (group discussion), one-to-one interview, someone sitting at a desk reading (secondary research), someone talking on a telephone, a sheet of paper with tick boxes on it (questionnaire)
Flipchart and pens

Time
45 minutes

Learning objectives
Participants will be able to:

- list three research methods
- describe one advantage and one limitation of a chosen research method for their own project.

Method

1 Put each picture on a piece of flipchart paper and pin up around the room. Ask the group to give a name for each method shown. Give a brief description of each method.

2 Split the participants into three groups and give each a sheet of flipchart paper with the following grid:

	Advantages	**Disadvantages**
Young people taking part		
Young people doing the research		

3 Allocate one of the methods to each group. The group should consider the advantages and disadvantages of each method for both the researchers and the young people who will be the subject of the research.

4 Ask the group to consider the following questions:

- If you used a certain method, what sort of information might you get? e.g. lots of facts, people's opinions, etc.
- Does any member of the group have any experience of any of the methods, either from undertaking research or being the subject of research?
- When might this method be useful?

- What could be the problems with using this method?
- Which methods do you find interesting and why?

5 The grids can then be passed on to the next group for consideration and for them to add further points. Repeat this and then return to the original group for feedback.

6 Allow the group time to discuss and agree the most appropriate method or methods for their project.

Likely outcomes

- Participants get an overview of the different research methods.
- They can identify which methods they may be attracted to or resistant to using.
- Participants will be able to see the strengths and weaknesses of each research method.

Issues to consider

- You may wish to concentrate on certain methods, depending on the range of interests and abilities of the group, or on methods that have already been used in the training.
- You may need to consider using this exercise in tandem with other exercises in the pack that involve practising the methods identified, for example exercise 19. This will give the participants practical experience of the pros and cons of different methods. Alternatively the results of this exercise could be returned to when carrying out later exercises on methods, in case the group wish to revise their views about suitable methods they are attracted to after further training.

References

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 13
Introduction to interviews

Competency

This exercise is a simple introduction to role-play and interviews. It is not specifically aimed at meeting any of the learning objectives but it could be used to help participants meet the competency of recognising the rights of research respondents, although this would require detailed discussion in steps 3 and 4.

Materials

Handout 6: *Interviewing code of conduct*
Handout 12: *Interview structure*
Handout 20: *Introduction to interviews*

Time

60 minutes

Method

1 Show participants the dialogue on *Handout 20*, or act it out.

2 Split the group into threes or fours and ask them to write down all the mistakes the interviewer makes. Discuss why each is a mistake and how it could be improved.

3 Return to the whole group for feedback. Discuss the responses.

4 Introduce and discuss *Handout 6* and *Handout 12*.

Likely outcomes

- Participants get an overview of different kinds of interview questions.
- *Handout 6* could be used to generate discussion on what makes a good interview or a good question.

Issue to consider

- Participants may need to be prompted to identify some of the mistakes being made.

References

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 6: Ethics

Exercise 14 Who am I?

Competency
Understand how to design research questions.

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Pre-prepared cards, each with details of one famous person with whom the group can identify

Time
30 minutes

Learning objectives
Participants will be able to:

- distinguish between an open and closed question
- identify when an open or closed question would be appropriate
- produce examples of one open and one closed question

Method

1 Divide the group into two teams.

2 Give each team a card showing a famous person. Each team is allowed to ask closed questions only until they guess the identity of the person. It is important that each member of the team gets the chance to ask a question. (See *Handout 9* for examples of open and closed questions.)

3 Repeat the exercise, allowing open questions only.

4 During this exercise encourage each team to write down the information they gain.

5 Get feedback from the whole group about their experiences and compare the kinds of information gained through the questioning process. Discuss when open and closed questions could be of use.

6 If a research project has been identified, you could set aside extra time to break the group into smaller groups to start developing questions that could be used in their own research. The group members could then role-play as interviewers and interviewees discussing their own research topic.

Likely outcome

- Participants will be able to identify open and closed questions and when to use them.

References

Adapted from *Learning About AIDS*,
P. Aggletyon et al., 1989
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 15

To question or not to question

Competency

Understand how to design research questions.

Materials

Flipchart and pens

Handout 8: *Questions to avoid*

Handout 9: *Interview skills*

Time

45 minutes

Learning objectives

Participants will be able to:

- distinguish between an open and a closed question
- identify when an open or a closed question would be appropriate
- produce examples of one open and one closed question
- produce clear and unambiguous questions
- understand the concept of leading questions

Method

1 Take three sheets of flipchart paper. On the first write 'open questions', on the second 'closed questions', and on the third 'leading or biased questions'. Pin up the sheets for the group to see.

2 The group shouts out what they think each term means. Write up a group definition of each term. *Handouts 8* and *9* may be useful in aiding this discussion. Make sure that the group realise that the categories are not mutually exclusive – a question may be both leading and open, for example.

3 Divide the group into pairs. Pick a topical subject. One person in each pair is to interview the other to find out how they feel about this issue. The interviewer should write down a list of questions before asking them. The 'interview' will last about 8–10 minutes.

4 The pairs feed back to each other and look at the questions asked to decide which category they fall into. They also discuss the range of information received and how the questions asked helped or hindered the responses.

5 The pairs give feedback on their interviews to the whole group.

Likely outcomes

- The participants are able to identify and use different kinds of questions.
- Participants practise interview skills.

Issues to consider

- The more topical or controversial the subject, the more animated the discussion may be.
- Depending on the subject matter, you may be able to broaden out the discussions to cover participants' personal feelings and how these may affect their personal participation in a research project.

References

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996
See *Involving Young People*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 16 Question time

Competency
Understand how to design research questions.

Materials
Paper and pens for participants
Flipchart and pens
Handout 8: *Questions to avoid*
Handout 9: *Interview skills*

Time
45 minutes

Learning objectives
Participants will be able to:

- use probing questions
- distinguish between an open and closed question

Method

1 Introduce the group to the concept of open and closed questions. Give participants *Handout 8* and *Handout 9*.

2 Divide the group into groups of three. Get them to decide who is going to be the interviewer, who will be the interviewee, and who will be the recorder.

3 Either:

Give each group a statement that they need to find out more information about. Examples could be: Why do you think you are doing this training? Why is your football/netball team (or other sport they may be involved in) doing well/ badly this season? Why are you wearing Nike/Adidas, etc.? Try to choose open questions that will allow for some discussion and probing.

Or:

If there is an identified research project, participants can design questions around the research subject.

4 Give the interviewers time to think of a few open questions. Tell them it is OK to think up other questions as they go along to probe the answers more. The role of the recorder is to record the questions asked and to jot down key information gained.

5 After ten minutes of role-play, each group reports back to the whole group on the process, including the kinds of questions used, the information gained and what they have learnt from the process. Ask the groups if any of the questions were leading. Also how the interviewee felt about the questions that were used.

6 To make the exercise more exciting, you could change it into a competition by seeing who can get the most information from their interviewee in a limited time, e.g. ten minutes.

Likely outcomes

- Participants will get the chance to review questions from three different perspectives:
  - **a** how to use the questions and the need to have clear questions
  - **b** the range of information that can be gained
  - **c** how information is recorded.
- The participants gain experience of interviews through role-play.
- If there is a research subject already identified, participants will be able to build up a bank of questions that could be used in the field.
- You may be able to introduce the issue of the rights of interviewees.

Issues to consider

- Some participants may feel put on the spot in trying to develop questions and may need some support.
- The recorder may need help in recording key information only, rather than everything that is said.

References

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 17
Conducting the interview

Competency
Ability to use basic listening skills required to conduct research activities.

Time
45 minutes

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Handout 10: *Communication skills*

Learning objective
Participants will be able to demonstrate basic listening skills, including understanding of body language, good eye contact and empathetic listening.

Method

1 Discuss with the group how they know when someone is listening to them and is interested in what they say. Make a list and discuss what techniques can be used by an interviewer. You will need to be aware of the basics of body language and of differences in culturally appropriate body language, for example the use of eye contact. Participants may not be aware of some verbal techniques, such as reflecting back what people say by repetition or rephrasing, and you may need to prompt. *Handout 10* can be used to aid the discussion.

2 Split the group into threes. One participant is the interviewer, one the interviewee and one the observer. Give them a series of simple questions to ask, e.g. What parts of the training are you enjoying? What parts of the training so far are you not enjoying, and why?

3 The observer watches the interview and makes notes on how they could tell the interviewer was or wasn't paying attention, or on what distractions there were. They give feedback on the process to the person interviewing and discuss the results.

4 Ask participants to feed back to the whole group what it was like to do the role-play. Check back with the group if there is anything that they would like to add to the list of basic listening skills previously discussed. Also use the discussion to talk about what distractions there were that may have hindered the interview. You may like to create a few, by offering refreshments, etc., so as to ensure such issues are brought up.

5 Finish the exercise by asking each participant to say one thing they have learnt from the exercise, and a general discussion on the points raised on *Handout 10*.

Likely outcomes

- Participants will develop a set of guidelines that they feel they can own.
- Participants should develop an understanding and awareness of the advantages and disadvantages of specific contexts for interviewing.

References

Adapted from *A Trainer's Guide to Participatory Learning and Action*, J.N. Pretty et al., 1995
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 18 Recording data

Competency
Ability to record information.

Time
20 minutes

Materials
Flipchart and pen
Tape recorder and cassette
Video recorder and playback equipment
Handout 11: *Hints to help you in recording data*

Learning objective
Participants will be able to identify an appropriate method for recording information.

Method

1 Ask the group to identify different ways to record the information in research. They should be able to identify the following methods:

1 Video taping

2 Tape recording

3 Writing down information by observation or questionnaire

4 Interviewees writing down the information for the researcher

5 Information recorded in a visual format, e.g. art or posters.

2 Split the group into threes. One person will be the interviewer and another the interviewee. The third will record what the interviewee has said, using one of the methods identified. If no equipment is available then participants could role-play using methods 3, 4 and 5 above.

3 Give each interviewer and interviewee a role. Roles could be based on the project that they are working on, or on something that the participants will be interested in.

4 Give the group a certain amount of time to prepare before they do the interview. Ask them to come up with, or give them some prepared, open questions. At the end of the exercise those recording the interview present the information to the other two.

5 Discuss in a group:

- how complete and accurate the record of the interview is
- how the process felt to both the interviewer and the interviewee
- what problems each method may present
- which method they think is best suited to their project and why
- what support or skills development they might need to carry out their chosen method.

6 If carrying out a tape or video recording, you may wish to ask the group to transcribe the tapes afterwards and then use these texts in the group discussion. This will give them an idea of the time involved in this process and give them something more comparable to a written record for the group discussion. You will need to bring to their attention the potential practical problems with using equipment, and the precautions to take, such as carrying spare batteries and tapes, etc. (see *Handout 11*).

Likely outcomes

- Participants will practise interviewing and recording.
- Participants will practise listening skills.
- The group can decide on a method of recording suitable for their project.

Issue to consider

- Participants focus more on one method than another, depending upon their personal experience

References

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 19 Being in a group

Competency
Ability to conduct a group discussion.

Time
75 minutes

Materials
Flipchart and coloured pens
Handout 14: *Useful hints for running a group discussion*
Handout 15: *Types of difficult behaviour*

Learning objectives
Participants will be able to:

- identify ways to run a group discussion
- describe helpful and unhelpful behaviour in a group.

Method

1 Ask participants to think individually about a time when they were part of a group or meeting. Ask them to write or draw what was said or done in the group that was helpful to their involvement or that they found irritating.

2 Participants then give feedback to the whole group. Write all the helpful issues on the flipchart in one colour, and all the irritating ones in another colour.

3 Divide the group into small groups/pairs. Ask them to discuss and think of ways of dealing with unhelpful behaviour.

4 Participants feed back their ideas to the whole group. *Handout 15* will help the discussion.

5 Ask participants to practise role-plays in pairs for ten minutes. One person conducts the research, the other is the research subject. (They should choose a subject before the role-play starts, or it could be their own research topic.) It is the role of the researcher to ask the questions and to deal with any difficult behaviour. The research subject may take on any of the following roles:

- You were out late last night and find it difficult to be attentive.
- You are bored and want to go home.
- You have lots of opinions on the subject and want to tell the researcher about them.
- You are shy and find it difficult to talk to people you don't know.

6 As a whole group, discuss the following:

- What was it like doing the role-play?
- What did participants do well?
- What could they do differently?
- What support will they need when doing research with a small group?
- What things do they still need to practise?

Handout 14 gives useful hints for running a group discussion.

Likely outcomes

- Participants will find it easier to discuss behaviour in groups when they have identified their own behaviour.
- They will be able to come up with ideas to deal with difficult behaviour.
- Participants will develop a checklist to help them in difficult situations.

Issues to consider

- Once participants have done this exercise, it could be useful to refer back to it when difficult behaviour arises. Also participants will start to check each other's behaviour in the group.
- You may have to offer guidance in some circumstances as participants may want to 'close down' a difficult participant as soon as they can.

References

Adapted from *A Framework for Peer Learning*, M. Harvey, 1995

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 20 Group settings

Competency
Ability to conduct a group discussion.

Time
20 minutes

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Paints
Handout 14: *Useful hints for running a group discussion*

Learning objective
Participants will be able to describe the issues involved in running a group discussion.

Method

1 Explain how a group discussion can be used for gathering information for research.

2 Divide the participants into two or more groups.

3 Ask one group to draw or describe the worst possible setting for a group discussion. They should label the picture with, or draw up a list of, all the things that are wrong with this setting.

4 Ask the other groups to draw or describe the best possible setting for a group discussion. They should label the picture with, or draw up a list of, all the things that are good about this setting.

5 Pin the two pictures or lists up on the wall and discuss the results as a whole group. Discuss what things you or the group discussion leader has control over or responsibility for, and which things they may not have control over.

6 From the discussion draw up a checklist for running a group discussion. *Handout 14* will be helpful.

Likely outcomes

- Participants will draw up a checklist for running a group discussion.
- Participants may be able to explore any fears and concerns they have over undertaking a group discussion.

Issues to consider

- Stress that the quality of the drawing of the setting is not important.
- Running a group discussion can bring up a number of concerns. The final part of the exercise could be used to help dispel fears and concerns and also to help participants recognise the skills they already have and how they may be able to deal with difficult situations.

References

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 21

What happens in a group discussion?

Competency
Ability to conduct a group discussion.

Time
30 minutes

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Tape or video recorder
Handout 14: *Useful hints for running a group discussion*

Learning objective
Participants will be able to identify ways to run a group discussion.

Method

1 Run a group discussion around a research topic. Either video or tape-record the discussion.

2 At the end of the discussion, ask participants to reflect on their experience and to try to identify the following:

- the various stages of the group discussion and how it ran
- the kinds of questions that were used and if they helped the group discussion.

3 Play back the tape of the session, stopping it at points to illustrate and discuss the various stages and elicit the participants' views about how they felt at those stages. Encourage participants to be aware of how what they said was structured by the questions asked, your behaviour, and the behaviour of the others in the group.

Let participants look at *Handout 14*.

Likely outcomes

- Participants will reflect on their experience of taking part in a group discussion.
- They will gain insight into how a group discussion develops and can be structured.
- They will develop ideas about how to lead a group discussion, e.g. the kind of questions which help to link contributions and move the discussion forward.

Issues to consider

- Participants should be encouraged to discuss their concerns about running a group discussion and what sort of support they may need and where could they get it.
- You may need to offer advice on how group discussions are constructed and run, as many participants may not have been asked to think about group processes before.

- The group discussion questions need to be well formulated and expressed in order for participants to recognise how they contribute to the process.

References

See *Involving Young People*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 22
Difficulties in groups

Competency
Ability to conduct a group discussion.

Time
20 minutes

Materials
Flipchart or OHP transparencies and pens
Handout 15: *Types of difficult behaviour*

Learning objectives
Participants will be able to:

- identify ways to run a group discussion
- describe helpful and unhelpful behaviour in a group.

Method

1 As a whole group get everyone to close their eyes. Ask them to think about an experience they have had of being in a group, such as at school, in a lecture, etc.

2 Ask them to open their eyes and to shout out what sort of disruptive behaviour they have experienced. See *Handout 15* for examples.

3 Divide participants into small groups. Ask them to think about what reasons people may have for disrupting groups and how could they deal with disruptive behaviour. Write their suggestions on the flipchart or OHP transparencies, and get them to compare with examples on the handout. Their suggestions can then be typed up as guidance notes for the group to use.

Likely outcome

- Participants will be able to discuss what problems may arise while running group sessions and be able to come up with possible strategies for dealing with them.

Issues to consider

- The production of a handout will encourage participants to feel that they have come up with something concrete that they can use.
- There needs to be a balance between acknowledging difficulties and unnecessarily raising fears and concerns.

References

See *Involving Young People*, Chapter 4: Doing the Research

Exercise 23 How do I analyse?

Competency	**Time**
This exercise is not linked to a competency.	30 minutes
Materials	**Learning objective**
Post-it notes Flipchart and pens	The aim of the exercise is to introduce participants to the concept of analysis in order to try and deal with any fears and concerns they may have.

Method

1 Explain to the group that analysis can be simple. Note that:

We all do it every day.

We all do it fairly well.

The principles are the same for both everyday and research issues.

Then explain the principles of analysis:

Identify the problem/question.

Break it down into smaller elements/ questions.

Find out more information where you need to.

Try out some connections between the elements.

In small groups, ask participants to go through a logical way of working out a simple problem, for example:

Q: Why is Ravi not here today?

A: Perhaps he missed the bus.

Q: Does he always come by bus?

A: Yes, he hasn't got a car. It is too far to walk.

Q: Why would he have missed the bus?

A: He might have slept late, he might be ill, he might have to look after his little sister.

Q: Which is most likely?

A: It's the holidays and his mom is at work today, so he's probably looking after his sister.

2 Point out that all analysis is dependent upon the amount of information available. As a whole group, brainstorm ways of finding out the information.

3 Repeat this exercise using other examples until you are satisfied that participants understand the process of analysis.

4 If there is time, have a whole-group discussion about participants feelings of being involved in the process of analysis.

Likely outcomes

- Participants will be able to explore any fears they may have about their ability to be involved in the process of analysis, because of literacy and numerical skill levels for example.
- Participants will have an introduction to methods of analysing information.

Issues to consider

- If participants can see that they use the methods every day, they may be more willing to participate in the analysis process of the actual project.
- Participants may find the issue of analysis of information boring.
- You will need to have back-up examples, like the one given here, available.

References

Adapted from *Children in Focus – A Manual for Participatory Research with Children*, J. Boyden et al., 1997.
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 5: Analysis and Write Up

Exercise 24
Working with information

Competency
Ability to participate in analysis.

Time
75 minutes

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Paper and pens for participants
Handout 21: *Task sheets*

Learning objective
Participants will be able to describe the process used to analyse their data.

Exercises with information

The aim of these exercises is to build participants' confidence in their own ability to work with data and write up their research. Their success depends to a large extent on developing peer group review skills. Thus, in the first instance, most of the exercises should be carried out by participants working individually, perhaps overnight, then sharing their ideas in pairs. Pairs can then join up into groups, and finally ideas can be shared in whole group sessions. You may find local resources, for example from published or unpublished reports, that can be used in the exercises. Be prepared to repeat particular exercises with new materials at intervals, in order to reinforce learning.

A: What do numbers tell us?

These are simple exercises to get the group to think about how they present any quantitative information they have got once they have counted it all up. This can be the starting point for discussing how data can be presented in such a way that it best illustrates what they want it to show. The last part of this exercise should be used to get participants to think about the limitations of data, what it can prove and what it can't, and what depends on making inferences.

Divide participants into small groups with *Handout 21*. Ask the groups to do the task and come to a conclusion based on the results. After a determined amount of time ask the group to go to the next task. Once finished, get each group to feed back their results. Discuss the interpretations.

The exercises are laid out in *Handout 21*.

Suggested answers for Exercise 1 are:

- No title
- No age given for children
- No sample size
- Percentages do not add up to 100.

Suggested answers for Exercise 2 are:

- Insufficient information in title: this should give details of when the research was carried out and what/who was sampled
- Insufficient information in column headings: Who was interviewed? Percentage of what?

B: Working with ideas and opinions

1 Some words we use: the game of eight squares

This game was created in response to a common problem, affecting a number of words that are used in a loose way in everyday speech, but have precise use in social research. The game can be played twice during the learning experience: once using the examples given here during the training phase, then again during writing up using exercises from participants' data or writing. The point of the exercise, however, is not to begin teaching social theory, but to bring about discussion around the validity of statements and how to differentiate between prejudice, assumptions, coherent arguments and statements backed by verifiable evidence.

To play the game you should prepare three or four game boards, depending on the number of groups. Use stiff card, about the same size as a flipchart sheet, and mark up each one clearly as follows:

Description	**Fact**
Theory	**Myth**
Analysis	

Then prepare two sets of cards, 'Definitions' and 'Examples', for each group, placing each set in a marked envelope. Prepare a master sheet like the one below, making sure that participants do not see.

Master sheet

Word on game board	Definition	Example
Description	A description of places, events, people or situations:	*There were three young people standing on the corner smoking. Two were male and one was female. They were all laughing and appeared to be enjoying themselves.*
Fact	A proven belief (based on information that has been properly collected and analysed):	*Smoking increases your chances of getting cancer and/or heart disease.*
Theory	A belief that has not yet been proved:	*Children can take an active part in governing their country.*
Myth	A mistaken belief based on unproved ideas or often on prejudice:	*Men are paid more because they work harder and are more competitive than women.*
Analysis	A process of examining information to see what it means:	*In a study of 450 15-year-old Indian boys, 25 per cent were found to work full time. Of those who worked, 85 per cent were found to have suffered an illness in the past 14 days, compared to 32 per cent of those who did not work. This suggests that full-time work in childhood may be harmful to health.*

Each group should first open the envelope marked 'Definitions' and fit the cards on to the correct square on the board. The facilitator asks each group in turn to provide one of the definitions, checking with other groups, until all groups have correctly matched definitions to words. Then the process should be repeated with the cards in the 'Examples' envelope.

The game provides a means of learning in a group that is not threatening and does not cause individuals to lose face. Because it is fun, it is easy to remember what is learnt.

During the writing up period, this game should be repeated, using examples of statements the group wants to make about their own data. This should enable the group to explore the limitations of their own work.

2 How do we know what we know?

This exercise is intended to sharpen participants' understanding of how information achieves the status of fact – a true belief. Write a series of factual, preferably everyday, statements on a flipchart and then ask participants to brainstorm about how they know these statements are true.

Examples

Statement	Participants' comments
The sky is blue.	From whose point of view? What do we mean by sky? The sun is in the sky – beyond the clouds. What is blue? What day and time of the day is it blue? Based on observations. Social consensus and scientific consensus.
It will rain this afternoon.	Probably is true. Based on past experience. It's the rainy season (experience). It has rained for the past three afternoons (experience). There are clouds in the sky (observation). Weather report (science – but can you believe it?). Donkeys have their ears pricked up (observation, tradition). Humidity (sensation, scientific measurement).
Children need parents.	It's obviously the case. But nothing is obvious. It's natural for human beings. Who says so? Which children (age and gender)? Which parents? Biological? Foster? Abusive? Caring? Nothing is obvious: This statement needs: theories of biology; experience (but not individual, social consensus); psychology; evidence from studies of abuse; definition of terms.
All children in England go to school.	Which children don't go to school (include school age, define child). Change 'all' to most...? What is most? Bare majority? Great majority?

Likely outcomes

- Participants will get an experience of justifying statements made and relating them to a process of analysis.
- You will get a clearer idea of the degree of resistance participants might have to doing analysis within the group.

Issues to consider

- Participants may find it difficult to identify ways of making analysis more interesting.
- You should stress that this is not a comparison to see who had the best results. Also stress that there are different ways of interpreting data and work can be done on the issue of objectivity.
- Watch the timing of the exercises. It may be useful to take a break in between each exercise for a feedback session.

References

Adapted from *Children in Focus – A Manual for Participatory Research with Children*, J. Boyden et al., 1997
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 5: Analysis and Write Up

Exercise 25 Coding data

Competency Ability to participate in analysis.	**Time** 30 minutes
Materials needed Flipchart and pens Handout 16: *Example of coding sheet*	**Learning objective** Participants will be able to explain how their data has been coded and categorised.

Method

1 Participants draw up a coding sheet, using the example given in *Handout 16*. It is helpful to code by key variables, such as age or gender. Some of the categories may need discussion with the group, for participants to come up with codes for any open questions, as for example with questions on the handout asking about religion or ethnicity.

2 It may be useful to use questions that are directly applicable to participants, e.g. what their feelings are for the local football team, a pop group, their school, etc. If there is a chosen research project then the sheet can be developed for that.

3 Participants ask each other the questions and record the information. They count up the responses and calculate the percentages for each response.

4 Flip up the final responses for discussion.

5 If you wish, you can go on to develop the exercise to give the group a chance to code qualitative data. This can be done by giving the group one or two open questions to use on each other, such as 'How can your youth centre be improved?' or 'What do you think about the training so far?'. These interviews may be recorded so that the group can read through the responses. They can then group the different issues and like opinions given in the answers and give them a code. They can go on to code all of the interviews and select quotes that they think are typical of one or other of these coded groups.

Likely outcomes

- Participants will gain practice in interviewing.
- They will be able to practise coding.

Issues to consider

- You should consider whether participants are undertaking the research as one group or in pairs as this will influence the processing.
- Some participants may have problems with numeracy and may need support.
- Some participants may have difficulty with calculating percentages, and you may have to provide help for this.

References

Adapted from unpublished training materials developed by P. Kirby
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 5: Analysis and Write Up

Exercise 26 Quality information

Competency
Ability to participate in analysis.

Time
45 minutes

Materials
Paper and pens for participants
Tapes, transcripts or written interview results
Tape recorder(s) (optional)
Flipchart and pens

Learning objective
Participants will be able to describe the process used to analyse their data.

Method

1 You will need to give the group a number of tapes, transcripts or written interview records. These could be taken from the group's own research project or alternatively could be the result of previous role-plays done by the group, for example when carrying out Exercise 16 or 18. If the latter option is chosen the group will need to be reminded of the 'research topic' that was used as the basis of the earlier interviewing role-play.

2 Split the participants into small groups and ask them to come to an agreement on a list of two or three things that they expect to be important issues in the interviews they are about to read or listen to, given the research topic they are related to. They should justify their choices.

3 Ask each group to read through or listen to the available interview records. If there are only a small number of these, they can be circulated between the small groups as they finish with them. Ask the groups to write down the following while they are studying the interviews:

- Three or four quotes that they think fit in with and help justify their initial list of important issues.
- Three or four quotes that contradict one of the items on their list or offer a different view of what are important issues.
- Some quotes that don't have any relation to the items on their list but do tell them something else that they think is interesting.
- Areas where they think the person being interviewed is not telling the whole truth, or is uncomfortable with the question, or gets some factual information wrong.

4 When the groups have finished ask them to feed back to the whole group, going through the whole process and presenting their results. Have a discussion with the whole group about their initial lists and about whether they have changed them or added to them as a result of looking at the interviews. Ask them if they have learnt anything about when they may need to be careful about interpretating information, for example whether certain kinds of questions result in more doubtful information.

5 If participants are working on data from their actual research project, you could use this discussion to get them to agree on the start of an initial coding scheme. Ask them what they thought about the process and how they found it, e.g. difficult, easy, boring?

Likely outcomes

- It will become evident how interested the group is likely to be in actually carrying out some analysis.
- Participants will be able to see and understand the process of forming arguments from their data.

Issues to consider

- You may like to refer back to the final part of Exercise 24 to remind the group of how to justify the arguments they make from their data.
- Some participants may find this exercise boring and/or difficult, depending on their level of confidence in putting forward arguments. Make sure the initial lists made are not too bland or obvious so that the group give themselves something to work with.

References

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 5: Analysis and Write Up

Exercise 27
Presenting the information

Competency
Ability to disseminate information.

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Index cards or post-it stickers
Handout 17: *Ways of presenting information other than in a written report*

Time
45 minutes (or longer depending on size of group)

Learning objectives
Participants will be able to:
- identify an appropriate method for presenting research results
- describe how they will inform people or distribute information about the project.

Method

1 Explain to participants the importance of disseminating research information.

2 As a whole group brainstorm the different ways that information can be presented (see *Handout 17*).

3 Split into small groups and ask participants to consider the strengths and weaknesses of each method of presentation, who the presentation may appeal to and how easy it may be to distribute information using that kind of presentation. It is important to consider the audience for the research and feedback to the participants in the research.

4 To help the groups consider these issues, ask them to write down appropriate methods for each audience on index cards or post-it stickers. Inform them that some methods might be useful for more than one audience.

5 Ask the groups to undertake a prioritising exercise called 'Diamond Ranking'. The ideal number of cards for this exercise is nine, but this is not essential. Ask the groups to prioritise the methods for appropriateness for each audience. The top card of the diamond should be the most appropriate and the bottom card the least appropriate. The next two cards from the top would be the second most appropriate, and so on.

For example, methods for feeding back research to young people would be prioritised as follows:

Video

Newsletters **Poster**

Postcards **Website** **Drama**

Art display **Verbal report**

Puppet display

6 Once the group has established their diamond, bearing in mind practicalities and the target age range, ask them to meet with another group to compare, discuss and agree a consensus between the two groups. This process can continue until the whole group comes together to reach a consensus.

Likely outcome

- Participants will identify different methods for presenting research results.

Issues to consider

- It is important to keep the feedback upbeat as some participants can take feedback in a negative way and become defensive. A useful formula is: positive feedback, constructive criticism and positive feedback. Provide examples and possible alternatives.
- It may be useful to ask participants to identify how they could prepare for presentations.

References

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 7: Dissemination and Development

Exercise 28 Reporting back

Competency
Ability to participate in report writing.

Time
45 minutes

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Paper and pens for participants
Articles from newspapers/magazines
Taped interview
Video tape of documentary or interview
Handout 18: *Writing a report*
Handout 19: *Producing a report*

Learning objectives
Participants will be able to:

- develop or contribute to a section of a report
- summarise key points clearly and concisely
- describe the stages of preparation of reports
- identify an appropriate method for presenting research results.

Method

1 Give participants an article from a magazine or newspaper, or a series of interviews on something they may find interesting or stimulating. Alternatively, show a video of an interview or part of a documentary, or hand out one or two transcripts or interview tapes to play back.

2 In small groups get participants to pick out and summarise the key points.

3 Ask them to rewrite and present the information in a way that they think would appeal to different groups, for example an audience of young people or an audience of community workers or teachers.

4 Get the groups to present their work to each other.

5 Ask the groups to describe and discuss the processes they went through to agree on what information they would include and the style in which they would present it.

6 Invite participants to discuss how they found doing the exercise and what they found difficult or disliked. Discuss with them how report writing could be made easier or more stimulating. Talk participants through *Handouts 18* and *19* if necessary.

Likely outcomes

- Participants will be able to pick out key points.
- They should develop basic skills in summarising information.
- They will be able to identify how different styles of report presentation are appropriate for different audiences.

Issues to consider

- You may need to offer guidance on how to summarise information.
- When describing the stages of report preparation, it is important to keep this as simple as possible.
- You may want to use this time to get participants to identify which parts of their research report/dissemination they may be interested in working on, for example planning it, writing up a section or preparing an event, etc.

References

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 7: Dissemination and Development

Exercise 29
I like learning when...

Competency
Ability to reflect on their own learning process.

Materials
Flipchart and pens

Time
1 hour

Learning objective
Participants will be able to identify preferred ways of learning and related activities.

Method

1 Divide participants into pairs or threes. Ask them to consider something that they have learnt to do in the last three years. This should be an activity like driving a car, or programming a video machine rather than a passive experience like reading a book. Ask them to discuss how they believe they learnt to do it. They should record any key points on paper under the headings 'I like learning when...' and 'I don't like learning when...'

2 Take general feedback on the following questions:

- How did you learn to (drive a car, programme a video, etc)?
- What helped you to learn?
- What kinds of things do you like to be involved in when you're learning?

Likely outcome

- Participants will identify ways of learning and activities they prefer, e.g. doing physical activities, working in a group, working independently, working on puzzles.

Issues to consider

- Participants may need a prompt or example to start discussion.
- This exercise can lead into introducing the learning cycle

References

See Section Five, page 101, for notes on ways of learning, and Reference Materials, page 74, for publications on experiential learning and learning styles
See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 3: Setting up the Project

Exercise 30

Being a researcher/ apple tree

Competency
Ability to recognise their own support needs when they are undertaking social research.

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Coloured pens

Time
1 hour

Learning objective
Participants will be able to identify their personal and emotional support needs in relation to undertaking research.

Method

1 Ask participants to think of different roles or parts they play in their lives and to call out examples which you list on a flipchart, for example sister, friend, son or daughter, etc. Add 'researcher' to the list. Reflect on the contents of the list and the variety of parts we all play.

2 Give each person a large sheet of paper and coloured pens and ask them to draw a tree. Tell them:

The trunk is them – 'me doing research'.

The branches are the things they will be doing as researchers, for example interviewing people, asking questions, writing a plan, analysing information, presenting the results, etc. These activities should be written on the branches.

3 Once the trunk and branches have been drawn ask them to add apples. The apples are how they feel about doing these things and can be good or bad feelings, anything from happy, can do, excited to nervous, won't do, can't do, sad or frightened, etc.

Ask them to put as many apples/feelings on the branches as they can.

4 When they have done this ask them to talk to one other person about what they have drawn. Tell them that they don't have to share anything they don't want to and ask that the information is not shared outside of the group.

Then move to a whole group discussion. Ask them how it felt to record the information and share it with someone else. Draw the parallel with the research process and what happens when people are interviewed. Talk about the kind of feelings that may be triggered.

5 In the whole group, list on a flipchart what, based on their pictures, they think they may be good at and what they may need help with. You may want to list which parts of the research people might like to take a lead in, and/or ask them to each list which parts they feel they need extra support in doing and what this support may be. Make sure that the responses are shared and that everyone knows that the research and training will be done in a way that takes these needs into account.

Likely outcome

- You will get an overview of participants' expectations and feelings about doing research. This self-assessment can then be measured against your own observations about support needs and used in personal tutorials with each member of the group.

Issues to consider

- The exercises can be adapted to meet the needs of the groups in terms of age and/or literacy levels.
- You will need to make sure that any future training that follows this exercise is carried out in a way that recognises and supports the needs that the group has identified. This can mean a lot of extra work for the trainer.
- You may wish to include in the whole group discussion at the end the chance for participants to identify ways in which they can support each other through the research.

References

See *Involving Young Researchers*, Chapter 3: Setting up the Project

Exercise 31 I liked it when...

Materials
None

Time
20 minutes

Learning objective
Participants will be able to describe what they have learnt about themselves and what influenced their learning.

Method

1 Ask participants to sit in a circle so that they are looking at each other. Ask each participant to finish the sentence, 'I did not like it when...' No other participant passes any comment on what has been said.

2 Once everyone has had a chance to speak, the group repeats the process with the sentence, 'I liked it when...'

3 The process can be repeated, asking participants to identify one good thing they have personally contributed to the day. (This can be very useful when trying to build up confidence and self esteem.)

Likely outcome

- Participants will be able to identify what has helped them to learn and to participate.

Issues to consider

- It is important to introduce this exercise and what it is trying to achieve. You will need to explain that the exercise is about what participants liked and didn't like.
- Pace is important – keep people going quickly enough to keep the momentum.
- You may need to remind participants to keep to the rules of the exercise and not deviate into, for example, blaming others or other behaviour that is not constructive or deviates from the aim of the exercise.
- If there is a large group you may need to limit the number of issues identified.
- You could take notes of the comments and use these to discuss each person's experience of the training and their personal development in individual tutorials.

Exercise 32 Evaluation wheel

Materials
A4 paper
OHP, transparencies and pens
Paper and pens for participants

Time
20 minutes

Learning objective
Participants will be able to describe what they have learnt about themselves and what influenced their learning.

Method

1 Decide with the group the criteria for evaluation of the training. It may be of use to refer back to the original aims and objectives of the exercise or session you are wanting to evaluate so that they can see what the exercise or session was intended to achieve. The group may also wish to add some of their own criteria, reflecting their own support needs.

2 Ask each participant to draw a wheel, with the same number of spokes as the criteria to be evaluated. The centre of the spoke will be 0 and the edge of the wheel 10. Each person assesses what is to be evaluated, decided in part 1, and scores their response on the various spokes/criteria.

3 These are then transferred on to an OHP transparency. They can be overlaid on each other to see if there is a group consensus. Lead a discussion around the strengths and weaknesses and how to use evaluation.

Likely outcome

You should get an idea of how different members of the group are responding to the training and the different ways each assesses whether the training was good or bad.

Issues to consider

- The second part of the exercise can be used as a discussion trigger. If you want a quick evaluation then undertake the first two parts of the exercise only.
- If you are undertaking the second part of the exercise it is important that you are aware of issues of comparison and competition that could arise.
- You could ask people to do this exercise in pairs.

References

Adapted from *A Trainer's Guide to Participatory Learning and Action*, J.N. Pretty et al., 1995.

Exercise 33 Graffiti evaluation

Materials
Flipchart and pens
Post-it notes

Time needed
20 minutes

Learning objective
Participants will be able to describe what they have learnt about themselves and what influenced their learning.

Method

1 Place sheets of flipchart paper on the wall with key questions written on. Useful questions can include:

- What is the most useful thing that you have learnt from this course/exercise?
- What things did you like or find useful?
- What things didn't you like or find useful?
- What was the most important lesson that you learnt?
- What did you find the most difficult?
- What do you think the main barrier or problem in applying what you have learnt will be?

2 Ask participants to write down their responses on post-it notes – one response per post-it note. Then ask them to stick their responses on the sheets under the relevant questions.

Likely outcome

- Participants may be more likely to give honest responses than if you ask for such comments personally or in the whole group.

Issues to consider

- Some trainers may find it difficult not to respond to any negative criticism.
- This depends on everyone being able to write. If any participants have problems writing, they can scribe for each other or you can create questions that can be answered by drawing, for example 'how do you feel about...?'.
- Participants may find this more engaging than filling in an evaluation form.

Reference Materials

A Trainer's Guide to Participatory Learning and Action, J.N. Pretty, I. Guijt, J. Thompson, I. Scoones, International Institute for Environment and Development Participatory Methodology Series 1, Earthscan, London, 1995.

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Learning About AIDS, P. Aggletyon, H. Homans, J. Mojsa, S. Watson, S. Watney, Churchill Livingstone, London, 1989.

Manual on Research for Development Practitioners, S. Laws, Save the Children, London, 1999.

Skills in Community Research – A Practical Training Course that will give People the Opportunity to Research Aspects of their Own Community or Peer Group, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, Save the Children, Newcastle-upon-Tyne, 1996.

Standards in Training and Development, Employment NTO, London, 1997.

The Manual of Learning Styles, P. Honey and A. Mumford, Peter Honey, Maidenhead, 1992.

Time to Listen – Young People's Experiences of Mental Health Services, S. Laws, D. Armitt, W. Metzendorf, P. Percival, J. Reisel, Save the Children/The Mental Health Foundation/ College of Health, London, 1999.

Training Matters, S. Cranfield, Health Education Authority, London, 1994.

Training the Trainers, HIV Project, London, 1990.

Volunteer Basic Training, Terence Higgins Trust, London, 1997.

Section Four

The Handouts

Handout 1

Aims and objectives

- **For use with Exercise 2**

Cut out the following statements and stick each statement on a card.

To expand our number of supermarket branches

To involve everyone in our community in sport

To get more girls playing football

To have the lowest prices in Britain

To have a healthy lifestyle

To advertise our special offers on food

To walk rather than get the bus

To promote exercise among the elderly

To give up smoking

To eat lots of fresh vegetables

To build a new swimming pool

To be the biggest supermarket in the country

The following are the matched aims and objectives:

Aim

To be the biggest supermarket chain in the country

Objectives

To expand our number of supermarket branches
To have the lowest prices in Britain
To advertise our special offers on food

.....

Aim

To have a healthy lifestyle

Objectives

To give up smoking
To walk rather than get the bus
To eat lots of fresh vegetables

.....

Aim

To involve everyone in our community in sport

Objectives

To get more girls playing football
To promote exercise among the elderly
To build a new swimming pool

.....

Handout 2

What is a community?

- **For use with Exercise 6**

Some factors which are used to define a community:

- **The area where you live**
- **Your ethnic group, e.g. Asian, African, English**
- **The language(s) you speak**
- **Your age**
- **Your sex**
- **Your sexuality, e.g. gay, heterosexual**
- **The clubs, societies, groups you belong to**
- **Your nationality, e.g. British, Irish, Nigerian**
- **Your religion, e.g. Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, Muslim**
- **Your behaviour or lifestyle, e.g. punk or hippy**

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996.

Handout 3

Improving participation in research

- **For use with Exercise 6**

Listed below are some pointers to help improve the response rates you get when undertaking research, and how to encourage involvement in interviews and group discussions.

- Explain clearly what the aims of the study are and make sure that you give a contact name and number.
- Ensure that information about the research is presented clearly. Take into account potential language barriers, disabilities such as sight and hearing problems, or problems with reading.
- Think about whether you need to use interpreters to overcome language or communication barriers. Think about what information you need to keep confidential.
- Say clearly what the participant will have to do in the research.
- Get the support and backing of people or organisations that are known and respected by the community you want to work with. You could ask them to support the research by speaking to people or by writing letters of introduction to participants.
- Be creative about where you recruit participants for your research. This could include community organisations, places of worship, businesses that have a number of your target group working for them and youth centres.
- Find out whether there are groups already in existence undertaking similar work that you could link in with, e.g. self-help groups.
- Think about the timing of your research. Try to avoid national, local, religious and school holidays.
- If you send out any letters, try and send them to a named person. Avoid addressing them, 'Dear young person...', or 'Dear friend...'
- Say clearly how you will let the participants know the results of the study and what the person or community involved might stand to gain.
- Wherever possible, give assurances of confidentiality. Think about how it will be achieved.
- You may want to follow up people who have not responded. This can be done by phone calls, letters or e-mail, or by personal visits.
- If you want to use questionnaires, think about whether they can be used over the phone.
- Think about the possibility of giving participants something for taking part in the interview or questionnaire, e.g. food, vouchers or money.
- Think about providing childcare where necessary.
- Wherever possible, publicise research beforehand. This can be through posters, local press and radio, or television.

Handout 4

Research and confidentiality

- **For use with Exercises 8 and 9**

During the interview

When carrying out interviews of any kind, it is important to make sure that the person being asked questions trusts that the interviewer will not betray their confidence. This can be difficult if the people involved already know each other. The challenge is to create a procedure that establishes trust, without making the situation too formal. Possible methods to use, depending on what follow up action may be planned, are:

- If writing down answers, put major personal details (name and address) on a separate sheet and tear off this sheet, making it obvious that this sheet will be kept separately.
- If taping an interview, put any personal details on a sheet of paper rather than asking them to be spoken on to the tape.
- Have a written confidentiality policy, which can be read out and given to the interviewee, or a leaflet explaining the research and confidentiality policy.
- Give the interviewee a choice as to whether they disclose any of their personal details. To avoid it affecting the interview, ask for personal details at the end rather than at the beginning.
- Give the interviewee the chance to review and change the information given so that nothing is kept on record that they are unhappy about.

You can try out different methods at the planning stage and evaluate which ones you think work best.

In the office

- Keep names and personal details of interviewees separate from interview schedules. Code the interview schedules and personal details with numbers.
- Do not put names on cassettes, but code them with numbers.
- Do not discuss interviewees or their findings by using their names or any other information that could identify them.

Handout 5

Interview role-play

- **For use with Exercise 10**

[*Interviewer (A) sits down next to interviewee (B)*]

A: Hello there, I'm just doing some research on something that's going to be useful to the community. Do you mind if I ask you a few questions?

B: What's it about?

A: Don't worry it's nothing too personal. Anyway you know me don't you? Just answer these few questions and then we'll have a cup of tea.

B: Well it would be...

A: [*interrupting*] What's your date of birth again?

B: Twenty-fifth of December, 1960.

A: Right, I'll just write that down here with your name and address. Don't worry, there's only a few of us that see this information. Now then, when you moved to [*name of town*] where did you first go to meet members of the same community?

B: Well I came here mostly, and a couple of other places.

A: What other places?

B: Well, just here really.

A: Yes but what other places exactly?

B: Well only really here. This was the only place really.

A: Yes but you did say 'a couple of other places'.

B: Well here and over the road once. But here was the only place really.

A: So that's here and over the road?

B: Well here was the only place that was important. I mean, what have you written down for that? [*Tries to look at what A is writing*]

A: [*brings pad of paper up to chest to hide it*] Well don't worry about that, you've given me an answer now. I'll be here all day if you keep wanting to change things. Let's just get on, I'm desperate to have a cup of tea when this is finished.

B: Well I just want to make sure you get the right answer. I wouldn't want you to be doing dodgy research now would I?

A: Don't you worry about that. This research has been worked out all properly and scientifically. The best brains in the city have worked on this research, so don't you worry your head about it. I mean you don't have a degree in research now do you?

B: I just meant...

A: [*interrupting*] Never mind. Now, what did you think of this place as a meeting place when you first came here?

B: Well, look, I think I might have to go now, I've got to meet [*name of person*]**.**

A: Come on. I've only just started. It won't take five minutes. What did you think of this place when you first came here?

B: Actually I'm still not sure about the first question. Can we go back to it?

A: Now come on, we've done that one. What did you think of this place?

B: Well I had a bit of an embarrassing experience actually.

A: I'm all ears.

B: [*leans towards A and whispers in their ear, then sits back. A furiously scribbles on to the pad*] **You're not writing all that down are you?**

A: Yeah, of course. This is an interview you know.

B: Well... is my name on it?

A: Yeah, but don't worry, like I said only a few of us read it, and we keep the embarrassing stuff to ourselves.

B: Well, I'd prefer it if it was secret.

A: Don't worry, it's absolutely confidential.

B: Well, look, I'm going to have to go now, I'm running late. Will you tell me what the results of all this are when it's finished?

A: Well if there are any results you'll probably find out. Especially if they are all as funny as yours!

B: Eh?

A: Just joking, don't worry. [*As B leaves the room A should turn to the group*] You will never believe what one told me! He was going to... [*B interrupts by coming back into the room*].

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996.

Handout 6

Interviewing code of conduct

- **For use with Exercises 10 and 13**

1. **Always introduce yourself and say if you are from an organisation.**
2. **Always fully explain the research and what it is for.**
3. **Explain how the information is to be recorded and used. Make sure that you explain any issues relating to confidentiality.**
4. **Ask one question at a time. Make sure that you are clear and do not rush the question.**
5. **Give the person time to think.**
6. **Don't use leading questions.**
7. **Make sure that you listen carefully to the answers.**
8. **Give people time to answer the question.**
9. **If you are writing anything down, allow the other person to see what you are writing down.**
10. **Do not use complicated language.**
11. **Only write down what the person says. Do not interpret on their behalf.**
12. **Thank people for taking part and explain what will happen next.**

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996.

Handout 7

The rights of someone being interviewed

- **For use with Exercise 10**

When someone is being interviewed, remember that they have the following rights or choices. Children and young people in particular who are being asked to take part in research must be given enough time to think it over and must have given their personal consent to it.

The person being interviewed has the right:

- to know why the research is being done
- to have enough information to decide if they wish to take part
- to be able to stop whenever they want and for whatever reason
- not to be pushed into carrying on with the interview
- to be anonymous (not to be named in the research)
- to see what information is being recorded
- to delete or change any information they have given – this includes being able to go back to earlier questions to add to or change any answer
- for information given to be confidential
- not to be named for participating
- to be able to express any opinions about the kinds of questions used or about the research, or participation in the research
- to refuse to answer any questions and to give only information they feel is important
- to be able to see all the research findings
- to discuss the interview with others
- to have other people around when answering questions
- to have details of claimable expenses and how they are to be supplied
- to have details of any rewards which may be forthcoming to the participants.

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996.

Handout 8

Questions to avoid

- **For use with Exercises 15 and 16**

Long questions: The person you are interviewing may only remember part of the question.

Double-barrelled questions: These are over-complex, e.g. *Do you own a washing machine or dishwasher?* Break down into several questions.

Proverbs/sayings: Try to make the respondent think afresh and in their own words.

Double negatives: These are confusing, e.g. *Smoking in public places should not be allowed: agree/disagree.*

Jargon and technical terms: Keep it simple.

Leading questions: You may be making assumptions about the respondent, e.g. *What do you think is good about pop music?* This assumes they think there is something good about it.

Ambiguity: Always be precise, e.g. *Do you have a car?* Who does the 'you' refer to? What does the 'have' mean?

Biased questions: It is not very difficult to *write* unbiased questions – it is harder to ask questions in an unbiased way. For example *Do you agree that young people have too much independence?* suggests that the interviewee shares a common view of what 'independence' means, and not including a 'no' option means people are more likely to agree than disagree.

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996.

Handout 9 Interview skills

- **For use with Exercises 15 and 16**

Different kinds of questions

Open questions

These are questions which allow a person to give their own opinion and talk as freely as they wish. They are used to get people to talk about their opinions, experiences and feelings, for example:

How do you feel about…?
What do you think about…?
Could you tell me about…?

Closed questions

These are used to find out specific pieces of information and usually lead to either a yes/no answer or a one- or two-word answer, for example:

Did you enjoy that?
Was that the only time it happened?

Probes

It is important you pay attention to the answers people give, not only to write them down but also to probe for further information. As people talk about their opinions and experiences you will need to get them to give more information so that it is possible to fully understand what they are saying and why. These questions may begin with:

Why…?
Could you tell me more about…?
What did you think about that?

Check

This is used to make sure that you have understood the answers that people give and that they are sure you have understood them. The most usual way of doing this is to repeat or paraphrase what a person has said and use it as a question by adding:

…is that right?
So you think…?
Am I right in saying that you think…?

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996.

Handout 10

Communication skills

- **For use with Exercise 17**

Communication and active listening skills involve listening to what someone says and also our use of non-verbal communication (also known as body language).

When we communicate with others, we are strongly influenced by the non-verbal messages that are given to us:

- Much of what we communicate is through our body language.
- Some of what we communicate is through our use of voice.
- A little of what we communicate is through the content, ideas or words we use.

It is important to consider our body language and use of voice in our communication with others. These are some things you should be looking for when working on improving your body language:

- **Square**: facing the other person squarely.
- **Open**: keeping an open, accepting posture – sitting preferably with legs uncrossed.
- **Leaning**: leaning towards the speaker without sitting too close or invading their personal space.
- **Eye contact**: keeping some eye contact with the speaker; not looking around/away; some slight nodding might be helpful (particpants may need to be made aware that this varies between cultures and is affected by gender).
- **Relaxed**: no fidgeting or checking the time; no frowning or looking tense.

Non-verbal communication can be through the use of voice, or other body gestures such as smiling, fiddling with a pen, and posture. When using your voice think about the following:

- **Volume**: how loud you are
- **Articulation**: how distinctly you speak
- **Pitch**: how loud or soft you are
- **Emphasis**: which words or phrases you stress
- **Pace**: how fast or slow your speech is

Adapted from *Volunteer Basic Training*, Terrence Higgins Trust, 1997.

Handout 11

Hints to help you in recording data

- **For use with Exercise 18**

- Write in the first person, recording what the person actually says as they say it. For example:

  Do write: *I wasn't bullied very much...*

  Do not write: *He said he wasn't bullied very much...*

- Record the main things said. Do not include irrelevant information, hesitations, or word-for-word quotes, unless they are particularly relevant or illustrate well the point being made.

- If you write exactly what the interviewee says (an exact quote), then indicate that you have done so by putting it in quote marks ("..."), particularly if it is interesting and can be used in the report. For example:

  Most staff not v. supportive, one was. "He was v. supportive because he asked me if I understood everything, and if I needed more help."

- Use shorthand rather than writing full sentences. This does take practice, and you will get better at it the more interviews you do. These are some commonly used examples: sch – school; sw – social worker; v – very; w – with; e/one – everyone. You can also develop your own.

- When using a tape or video recorder always make sure you have good enough equipment – batteries, microphone, tapes, etc. It is good practice to carry spares of batteries and tapes if possible.

- Make sure that the place you will be using for tape recording will not be too noisy. If recording a group of people, be careful to make sure people don't talk over the top of each other.

Handout 12 Interview structure

- **For use with Exercise 13**

Introduction: How to introduce the research, e.g. say who is doing the research, why they are doing it, what kind of questions they want to ask, how long it will take. Talk about confidentiality, and ask if it is OK to tape the interview. Give the interviewee the opportunity to ask any questions.

Opening: Start with easy-to-answer opening questions. Move on to the more sensitive questions later on.

Probing: In-depth questions for more relevant information. You should not prompt, and questions should be kept relevant to the topic being discussed.

Closing: Easy, non-sensitive closing questions make sure the interview has a good ending – particularly when sensitive issues have been discussed.

Ending: Thank the participant, and if they have spoken about personal or sensitive issues, reassure them that they have done the right thing by speaking.

Terminating: The participant should be told that if they do not want to answer a question, they can remain quiet, or leave the interview at any time. It can be hard for people to say 'no', so this should be made as easy as possible. It may be difficult for young people to leave if the research is conducted in a formal setting, such as the school classroom. If necessary, the young participants can be encouraged to practise what they would like to say if they do not want to answer a question beforehand.

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996.

Handout 13
Recording information

- **For use with Exercise 18**

There are several ways to record information during an interview or a group discussion. The following are an outline of some of the pros and cons of the methods that could be used.

Using an observer

Pros	Cons
Frees the researcher to: • lead the discussion • encourage discussion • follow up discussion points.	The observer will need the relevant skills to write down key points. An observer could encourage others to remain silent. Some could find an observer intimidating or distracting.

Using flipcharts

Pros	Cons
Enables the discussion leader to summarise as they progress through the interview and check that they have correctly understood the participant's views.	The discussion leader may miss information while taking notes. They can be disruptive to the flow of discussion.

Tape-recording

Pros	Cons
Allows information to flow without interruption. Ensures that all relevant information is available to the researcher. Can be unobtrusive.	It can be difficult to record a number of people clearly. Success is dependent upon the quality of the recorder. It is difficult to sift the information later. Transcribing can take a long time. Some people feel uncomfortable being recorded.

Closing questionnaire/impressions sheet

Pros	Cons
Allows discussion to flow without interruption. Ensures that the researcher gets some feedback from as many people as possible.	A questionnaire will allow only limited responses. It depends on the reading ability of the person being researched. It is impossible to record all the issues discussed.

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996.

Handout 14

Useful hints for running a group discussion

- **For use with Exercises 19, 20 and 21**

- Always explain what the purpose of the group discussion is.

- Explain what will happen to the information.

- Try to make the environment as comfortable as possible. This could include providing refreshments and something to snack on.

- Make sure everyone's voice is heard by encouraging all members to talk and contribute.

- Always check that people have had the chance to say what they want.

- Thank everyone at the end for their contribution.

Handout 15

Types of difficult behaviour

- **For use with Exercises 19 and 22**

Overt criticism

When a participant openly criticises the group facilitator or other members of the group:

- Try to use humour.
- Do not become defensive. Try to explain rather than becoming defensive.
- Accept constructive criticism.
- Be aware of your own personal feelings – try not to react to the person.
- Try and get the group to deal with the difficult person.

Covert criticism

When a participant disrupts a group through body language (for example constantly yawning or smiling to themselves), or by whispering to others, making 'fed-up' noises, etc.:

- Try not to put the person down.
- Do not enter into a competition with the person.
- Do not fight the person.
- Do not rise to the bait and ignore when possible.

Uncooperative

When a participant does not respond to the facilitator:

- Don't force someone to talk as they have a right to remain silent.
- Try and get them involved as early as possible by doing a 'round' where everyone gets the chance to speak.
- Don't pick on them in front of the rest of the group.

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996.

Handout 16

Example of coding sheet

• For use with Exercise 25. This sheet should be adapted for your own particular needs.

	Totals				
1 Gender *(Enter number of YP* in each box)*	Male ☐	Female ☐			
2 Age *(Enter number of YP in each box)*	14 ☐	15 ☐	16 ☐	17 ☐	18 ☐
3 School or college *(Enter number of YP in each box)*	School ☐	College ☐			
4 Year of school/college *(Enter number of YP in each box)*	9 ☐	10 ☐	11 ☐	6th1 ☐	6th2 ☐
5 Ethnic origin	*(Enter categories)* _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	*(Enter No.)* _____ _____ _____ _____ _____			
6 Religion	*(Enter categories)* _____ _____ _____ _____ _____	*(Enter No.)* _____ _____ _____ _____ _____			
7 Disability/learning difficulty *(Enter number of YP in each box)* If Yes: **Registered disabled** *(Enter number of YP in each box)*	Yes ☐ Yes ☐	No ☐ No ☐			

*YP = Young People

Adapted from unpublished training materials developed by P. Kirby.

Handout 17

Ways of presenting information other than in a written report

• **For use with Exercise 27**

Art display

Dance

Drama

Exhibition

Mime

Musical

Electronically (Internet)

Newspaper articles or newsletter

Postcards

Posters

Puppet display

Puzzles

Verbal report

Story telling

Video/film

Handout 18 Writing a report

- **For use with Exercise 28**

Reports are usually broken into:

- Title
- Summary of what you found
- Acknowledgements/thank you
- Contents page
- Introduction
- Aims and objectives
- Why you undertook the research
- How you did it (the method)
- What you have found (the results)
- Process involved in doing the research
- What next (recommendations)
- Conclusion
- References to other research you may have quoted
- Appendices (other material that does not fit into the report).

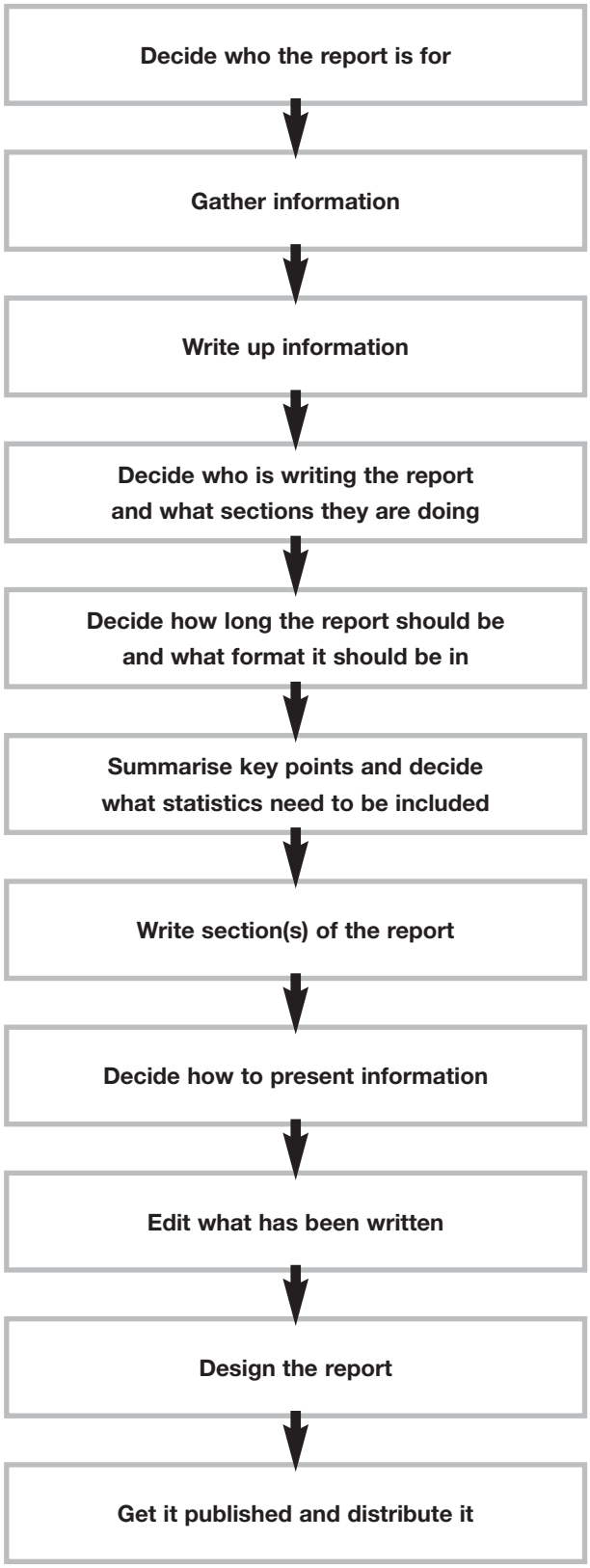
Checklist

- Who is the report aimed at and how will you reach them?
- Who is involved in writing the report?
- What format do you want the report to be?
- How much statistical data do you want to include and in what form?
- Keep it simple.
- Avoid using jargon, and give explanations for any unusual words.

Adapted from *How to do a Community Survey: 'What You Should Know'*, Family Health and Community Project/Save the Children, 1997.

Handout 19 Producing a report

- **For use with Exercise 28**



Handout 20

Introduction to interviews

- **For use with Exercise 13**

One person plays the interviewer (A), preferably with a pad of paper or clipboard that they can use to shield what they are writing. They go to sit with the other person playing the interviewee (B).

A: Can you tell me your name?

B: Umm… Ciaran.

A: Right Ken, can you tell me if you thought the programme content was good?

B: Good? Err… yes… I suppose it was.

A: Did you enjoy the session on evaluation or the lunch?

B: The lunch was tasty.

A: It was, yeah. Would you agree that it's not unlikely that the next course won't be a success?

B: Er, sorry?

A: Would you agree it's unlikely that the next course will not be a success?

B: I suppose not.

A: And what did you think of Martin Craig?

B: Oh Martin's OK.

A: So you enjoyed that session?

B: Well… I'm not entirely…

A: So you didn't enjoy that session?

B: Well… I wouldn't like to say that but well…

A: Well would you say that other people would enjoy that session?

B: Well, I don't know. I know my mother wouldn't that's for sure!

A: Hmm… Well, do you feel that this kind of subjective ethnographic exercise in covert participant observation could be of use to other people in their working environments?

B: [*looking completely lost*] **Oh, yeah, definitely. Of course it would.**

A: Right, see you then, must move on, bye.

Adapted from *Skills in Community Research*, C. McKeown and C. Hedges, 1996.

Handout 21 Task sheets

- **For use with Exercise 24**

Working with information

A: Numerical Analysis

1

Children	Percentage
Girls	43.7
Boys	53.3

What is wrong with the above table?

_____

_____

_____

2 **Sample sizes in research villages**

Village	Number of interviews	Percentage
A	52	33
B	27	50
C	88	10

What is wrong with the above table?

_____

_____

_____

3 Look carefully at the table and text below. Think about the following:

- What is wrong with the title and layout of the table?
- How easy is it to read the table?
- What are the most interesting results shown in this table?

Age of first kiss for children from each village school

Bishopston	**Under 10**	**10-12 years**	**12-14 years**	**Over 14**
Clase	40.8	40.9	12.4	5.9
Dunvant	37.3	40.1	21.4	2.3
Brynmill	31.4	43.0	20.0	5.7
Mayhill	43.7	32.1	18.0	6.4
Newton	50.7	31.5	13.7	4.0
Cadle	50.0	33.4	16.0	0.7
Penlan	39.2	38.4	18.5	4.8

Now try to re-write or redesign the table so that the most interesting results are clear:

- for a reader from the Education Department who is trying to decide what age to start discussing sex and relationships at school.
- for a group of school children aged 8–10 years.

Section Five

Theoretical Issues

Motivation and the learner

Research can often be seen as a long and dull process, concerned only with statistics. One of the many challenges facing anyone planning training is how to create conditions in which participants are encouraged and supported in learning. From your own experience of learning you may be aware that people come to training, as they come to any relationship, with their own:

- history, including their background, culture, education, family and work experience;
- assumptions and prejudices about other people;
- needs for security, safety, acceptance, belonging and encouragement;
- fears of rejection, failure, being patronised or being overwhelmed;
- expectations:
  - some positive and hoped for;
  - some negative and feared;
  - some realistic, some unrealistic – all of which are based on their history, assumptions, needs and fears;
- ways of behaving which may indicate a preference, e.g. quiet rather than outspoken, or spontaneous rather than deliberate.

What participants perceive to be important and how they feel they are being treated will strongly influence their reactions to training exercises.

It may be useful to consider helping young researchers to overcome any blocks and to open up opportunities for learning by:

- giving clear explanations of objectives and learning outcomes to help them to grasp the relevance to what they want to do and/or the goals of the workshop;
- describing any games or exercises in a way which conveys an informal and relaxed approach;
- managing time so that sufficient time is given for them to engage with the materials and there is a balance of doing and reflecting in the activities;
- using a variety of ways of actively engaging people in learning, e.g.
  - *pictorial images*, colours, shapes, patterns, guided visualisation,
  - *aural 'triggers'* such as acronyms, mnemonics, rhymes, intonation,
  - *tactile stimuli* – using things people can handle like pens, cards, modelling materials,
  - *physical activities* like running, shouting, relaxation techniques.

Ways of learning

There are different approaches to training. Save the Children's approach is based upon participatory learning and development. This approach values involvement and learning in groups because:

- learning with others allows you to use the skills, experience, views and knowledge of people in the group;
- ideas about research can be shared and tested in a group, which gives a creative context for exploring and developing new thoughts and insights;
- group learning is a source of mutual enjoyment.

All of these are closely linked to the theory of experiential learning developed by David Kolb (1984). Peter Honey and Alan Mumford (1992) further developed this in their work on the contribution which can be made to effective learning by understanding and using different individual styles of learning. For more information on the learning cycle and learning styles, please see the Reference Materials section on page 74.

A brief description of how the structure of the learning cycle can be used to design a group exercise is given below:

Stage 1. Having an experience
This will be an experience involving everyone in the group, which might be:

- an activity by itself;
- an activity which comes after explaining a theory, a concept or an idea;
- a mixture of both of these.

Stage 2. Reflecting on the experience
Thinking and discussing observations about what was said, done, demonstrated, observed or explored. Sharing reactions to the experience itself. (This stage allows us to move away from the actual experience and begin to think of it in a more objective way as a source for learning).

Within the group, discussion should focus on:

- What happened?
- What did participants think/feel about it?
- What problems came up?

Stage 3. Concluding (theorising, making sense) from the experience
Developing an understanding of what we have learnt by questioning and evaluating the learning. Linking what has been learnt to previous experiences and to similar events, which the learning could apply to. Relating the learning to a variety of situations. This can happen through group discussions, e.g. exchanges in plenaries, as well as through individual thought and analysis.

Becoming aware of how this could change or alter our behaviour. Drawing conclusions about what we have learned.

Stage 4. Planning the next steps

Thinking about how we could make use of the learning – how it could help us, how it could be used and in what situations. Planning how to apply it.

Translating the general learning into various kinds of action, which is seen to be better than previous action. Testing it out in practice. This is often used at the end of training courses when people prepare 'action plans' to take away with them.

Task versus process

The amount of time training takes can sometimes be an issue, especially when there is a considerable amount of material to cover. However, time should always be set aside for the group, or individuals within the group, to process their responses to certain issues or events. This is especially true when individuals may have had negative experiences around research or a teaching experience. The dilemma for many trainers is how much time to allow for dealing with the processing of an experience? For many young people, some of the issues raised by the training will be new or difficult to understand. By allowing them time to deal with the issues raised and the complexity of information presented, the actual information learned will be more firmly embedded.

Trainers' self-evaluation

When leading a training group trainers have an ethical responsibility to review what happened and consider what they did or did not do, and what the effects of behaviour were in the group. Anybody involved in a teaching, training, facilitating or tutoring role is strongly encouraged to think about what their learning needs might be in relation to leading a group of young researchers through the kind of exercises described in this pack, and where they might go to seek support and help in developing relevant knowledge, skills and awareness. This will have a practical interest as well as an ethical one – what worked, and how can exercises or the management of exercises be improved?

Training involves the whole person and can touch on areas of people's lives which are not known to trainers and may be difficult or painful, or as yet unresolved. As an area with a distinctive contribution to make in developing people, over time training has acquired the status of a professional occupation. National standards and qualifications for trainers have been developed in relation to NVQs, for example. Among these standards is the requirement for all those involved in learning and development occupations to evaluate and develop their own practice. You may not be or wish to become a professional trainer, but it is important to remember the nature of the task being undertaken when training others, and to know that resources and guidance are available if you are interested in exploring some of the theory and practice of training.

Ground rules and endings, and stages of 'group life'

When a group of people are brought together for the purpose of learning, the beginning and end of a learning event are important periods of time. Much has been written about the significance of these points in the overall emotional development of a group and about ways to help people to join, to build cohesion and collaboration, and to bring this experience to an end. There are many factors which influence the development of 'group life' and no one model or theory adequately explains what is going on in every group. However, many theories suggest that within the stages of 'group life' there is likely to be:

1. Early anxiety

- in this stage everyone is thinking about themselves and their feelings and about how they fit in;
- participants will probably depend on the trainer/group leader;
- there will be anxiety about what is going to happen and how people are going to behave.

2. Conflict period

- there is an awareness of issues such as control and power;
- there could be some hostility or withdrawal;
- individuals could try to set their own agendas;
- 'cliques' could form;
- all this can develop into a better atmosphere, participation, sharing and beginning to work on tasks together.

3. Cohesion

- beginning to feel you are part of the group;
- increasing commitment to group tasks and more mutual support and collaboration;
- open exchange of views and cooperation;
- this can develop into high group morale, intense group loyalty;
- the group performs tasks with lots of energy.

4. Ending

- beginning to realise the group is coming to an end;
- looking back over shared experiences;
- some desire to meet again.

These theories can offer a useful contribution to trainers' understanding and you are encouraged to think about where you could go to find out more about them. Practical suggestions for how to run ground rules and closing exercises are found in many training manuals and books on running groups, and again you are encouraged to seek out such resources and to try them out for yourself.