



## Giving Clear Instructions

Giving clear instructions for activities helps participants be successful, creates a safe environment for learning, keeps participants engaged and involved, and increases the likelihood they will be able to use the skills in their own communities. The following steps help ensure that participants are able to accomplish the task given them with minimal confusion and requests for clarification.

1. **Explain the purpose of an activity before giving instructions.** When participants know why they are doing what they are doing, and how they will use the information or skills they are learning, they are more engaged and involved.
2. **Provide for various learning styles when giving instructions.** Provide visual instructions on PowerPoint slides and on an easel page. Using both visual formats and using different colors for alternating steps in a series of instructions also enhances understanding. Providing oral instructions and having volunteers read instructions aloud addresses auditory learning styles. Demonstrating, modeling or showcasing an activity helps participants who favor kinesthetic learning understand what they are to do.
3. **Provide step-by-step instructions.** Animate instructions on a PowerPoint slide so that one step appears at a time when introducing an activity. Divide complex activities into several parts and display instructions for each part on a different easel page. Give instructions for one part at a time and have participants complete that part before giving instructions for the next part. Also tell participants how much time they have for each part, then monitor their progress and periodically let them know how much time they have left and what they should be doing.
4. **Be specific.** Use specific language, showcase handouts you want participants to use and show them what to record where. Tell participants the number of minutes they have to complete each part of an activity and monitor time and tasks to keep everyone moving.
5. **Check for understanding.** Check to see if participants understand your instructions and what they are to do. Effective ways of checking for understanding include polling (having participants who are clear about what they are to do raise their hands); asking a participant to re-define what they are to do; and choral response (participants call out their response to clarifying questions by the trainer). Trainers can ask, "Who thinks they can explain what you are to do in the next 10 minutes?" or "Who can explain what you are to do in the next 10 minutes?" Less effective methods include asking participants, "Do you understand?" and "Are there any questions?"

