



Logistics Planning for In-Person Abuse in Later Life Training Events: Best Practices

A Comprehensive Guide for Advocates and Trainers
Working with Multidisciplinary Groups

Executive Summary

Training multidisciplinary groups about abuse in later life requires thoughtful approaches that account for diverse professional backgrounds, varying levels of prior knowledge, different learning styles, and the sensitive nature of the subject matter. This resource provides best practices for all things logistics: planning, executing, and evaluating in-person training events that inspire action and create lasting impact.

This guide addresses every aspect of the training lifecycle, from initial planning through post-event evaluation, ensuring that advocates and trainers can deliver high-quality educational experiences that drive meaningful change in their communities.

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Pre-Event Planning and Communications

Initial Outreach and Registration

Since much of your subsequent planning work will be tailored to the needs of your audience, it is important to clearly identify your target audience and craft your invitation list with intention. How will you reach your intended audience? Will you rely on listservs, professional associations, your own contacts, or some other means? How many people can you effectively train, given the focus of the event? And will the event space accommodate that size group?

Effective communication begins at first contact. When reaching out to potential participants from diverse disciplines (advocacy, healthcare, social services, law enforcement, legal professionals, faith communities), ensure that your messaging clearly communicates the purpose and format of the event, an overview of the agenda, and expected outcomes so participants know what to expect.

Registration Communications Should Include:

- Clear [learning objectives](#) written in [accessible language](#)
- Detailed agenda with time allocations and room location information
- Prerequisites or recommended background knowledge
- Accessibility accommodation request process (including materials in alternative formats)
- Parking and transportation information
- Contact information for questions
- Cancellation policies (if applicable)
- A registration deadline at least two weeks prior to the training event, allowing time to meet accommodations requests



Faculty and Presenter Coordination

Establish clear expectations with all presenters well before the event. Create a comprehensive presenter packet that includes venue information, the agenda, technical specifications, audience demographics, and content guidelines. Schedule check-ins with presenters 2 weeks prior to the training event to review the materials and address concerns.

Key Communication Timeline*

Your communication timeline will vary according to the size of the event, your intended audience, and your organization's capacity. In general, you will want to provide the following communication to attendees in this order:

- First communication once your audience has been determined: Initial save-the-date and basic information
- Once participants have registered: Detailed agenda and logistics
- Closer to the day of the event: Final confirmations and materials
- 1 week prior: Last-minute updates and reminders
- Day of event: Final logistics and emergency contacts

*Please note that this timeline may vary by audience and type of event. For example, prosecutors and judges whose calendars fill up many months out will need more lead time.

Communicating Expectations of Participants

Different professional backgrounds bring varying comfort levels with the subject matter and different learning preferences. Consider surveying participants during registration to understand their current knowledge level, professional role, and specific learning goals. This information helps tailor content delivery and manage expectations appropriately.

Let participants know if you will be providing refreshments at the event. If not, provide information about nearby dining options, and invite them to bring their own snacks into the training space (if allowed).

As many event spaces do not allow for easy heating/cooling control, inform attendees to dress in layers in order to accommodate temperature preferences.

Resources

- **End Abuse of People with Disabilities:** [Accessible Registration Tip Sheet](#)

Accessibility and Inclusive Design

Selecting an Accessibility Training Venue

Beyond ADA compliance, consider the full spectrum of accessibility needs. Ensure the venue provides multiple accessible entrances, clearly marked accessible restrooms, and flexible seating arrangements. Reserve front-of-room seating for participants who may need visual or auditory accommodations.



Accessibility Checklist:

- Accessible parking spaces with clear signage
- Wheelchair accessible entrances, pathways, and seating areas
- Adequate space at and between tables
- Unobstructed sight lines
- Clear signage in and around the event space
- Adjustable lighting controls
- Multiple microphone options
- Large-print materials available on request
- Quiet spaces for sensory breaks
- Gender-neutral restroom access
- Lactation room availability

Cognitive and Learning Accessibility

Abuse in later life trainings can be cognitively and emotionally demanding. Design content delivery to accommodate various learning styles and processing needs. Provide materials in multiple formats (e.g., hard copies, digital files, etc. as noted in the next section), include regular breaks, and create opportunities for different types of engagement (e.g., small group discussions, large group discussions, interactive exercises, etc.).

Language and Culture Access

To ensure the training is accessible to people from various populations in your community, plan to provide language interpretation services and bilingual materials as necessary. Be mindful of cultural differences in communication styles and comfort levels with discussing sensitive topics. Create an environment where all participants feel respected and included.



Resources

- **End Abuse of People with Disabilities:** [Selecting an Accessible Venue Tip Sheet](#)
- **End Abuse of People with Disabilities:** [Creating an Accessible Meeting Environment Tip Sheet](#)
- **University of Chicago:** [Accessible Event Resource Guide](#)
- **Asian Pacific Institute on Gender Based Violence:** [Holding Inclusive Events: A Guide to Accessible Event Planning](#)

Logistics Coordination

Develop detailed run-of-show documents that include setup timelines, vendor contacts, emergency procedures, contingency plans, and staff assignments. Conduct a thorough venue walkthrough with the event team before the event begins.

Space Configuration

The physical environment significantly impacts learning outcomes, especially when dealing with sensitive topics. Choose venues that feel safe, professional, and conducive to both large group presentations and small group discussions. The main event space should be free of obstructions (such as columns) that might interrupt sightlines.

Optimal Room Setup:

- Flexible seating arrangements (avoid fixed auditorium-style when possible)
- Natural lighting supplemented by adjustable artificial lighting
- Temperature control with zones if possible
- Sound system appropriate for room size and acoustics
- Multiple projection screens for large venues
- Breakout spaces for small group activities
- Quiet areas for private conversations or decompression
- Participants assigned to multidisciplinary groups seated at round tables to facilitate small-group discussions and cross-disciplinary learning

Audiovisual Equipment (AV) and Technology

Reliable AV equipment is key to make sure your training runs smoothly. As you plan your AV equipment, consider your training plans – such as a group lecture with slides, small group discussions, or an interactive activity requiring people to move around.

Microphone use is an accessibility best practice. Even if nobody requests it, explain to participants and faculty that microphones are used to ensure that everyone has equal access to the content. Even people who do not identify as Deaf or hard of hearing can benefit from the use of microphones.

Core AV Requirements:

Before each session, check the operation of your audio-visual equipment. For example, make sure the presentation slides are ready to go and the projector is working, ensure the videos and sound work, and test microphones and presentation clickers. Make sure you have spare batteries in case you need to replace them during the event. What follows is a list of equipment you may need, depending on your event.

- Professional sound system with wireless and handheld microphones
- High-quality projectors with backup units
- Multiple presentation laptops/computers
- Extension cords and power strips
- Flipchart easels and markers (stand-alone or tabletop)
- Timer/clock (or timing cards) visible to presenters
- Recording equipment (if applicable and consented)

Virtual Audience Engagement Options

Consider incorporating interactive elements like audience engagement platforms such as Mentimeter, Slido, and Poll Everywhere—which enable participants to respond to questions, polls, and quizzes using their devices—or visual whiteboarding tools like Miro, Mural, and Padlet. Visual whiteboarding tools provide a digital space to collaborate, brainstorm, and organize ideas in real time. Ensure reliable



internet connectivity and have offline alternatives prepared. Test all technology thoroughly before participants arrive.

Backup Plans

Always have low-tech alternatives prepared. Equipment failures can derail even the best-planned events. Prepare printed versions of key slides, have non-digital interactive activities ready, and ensure presenters are comfortable adapting their delivery methods if necessary.

Managing Group Dynamics

Establishing Group Norms

Begin each training session by collectively establishing ground rules that support respectful dialogue across disciplines. Address confidentiality expectations clearly, especially given the sensitive nature of abuse cases and the diverse professional obligations participants may have.

Recommended Ground Rules:

- Respect for diverse perspectives and professional experiences
- Confidentiality regarding personal information shared
- Active listening and avoiding interruptions
- Microphone use for accessibility
- Professional language and behavior
- Time awareness and punctuality
- Technology use guidelines
- Process for addressing conflicts or concerns

Managing Challenging Participants

Multidisciplinary groups may include participants with strong opinions, trauma histories, or resistance to certain approaches. Develop strategies for redirecting disruptive behavior while maintaining respect for all participants.



De-escalation Techniques:

- Acknowledge concerns while redirecting focus to learning objectives
- Use structured discussion formats to prevent domination by vocal participants
- Provide alternative outlets for processing (private discussion, written reflection)
- Have clear de-escalation procedures for serious disruptions
- Maintain calm, professional demeanor at all times

Facilitating Cross-Disciplinary Learning

Leverage the diversity of perspectives as a learning opportunity. Create structured opportunities for participants to share discipline-specific insights while finding common ground in serving older adults experiencing abuse.

During the Event: Execution Best Practices

Day-of-Event Coordination

Successful event execution requires careful coordination and clear communication among all team members. Establish clear roles so everyone staffing the event knows what they are responsible for.

Key Roles:

- **Event lead:** Overall management and decision-making
- **Registration lead:** Check-in process and attendee support
- **Technical support:** AV troubleshooting and presenter assistance
- **Content facilitator/lead:** Responsible for supporting and communicating with faculty regarding content presentation and facilitation. Usually this person is also the event lead.
- **Resource coordinator:** Material distribution and logistics

Managing the Training Schedule

Build flexibility into the agenda while maintaining respect for participants' time commitments. Professional attendees often have limited availability and competing obligations.

Schedule Management Tips:

- Start and end on time consistently
- Provide clear break schedules and stick to them
- Have a staff person in the back of the room using timing cards to cue faculty and keep them on schedule.
- Build buffer time into complex segments
- Have abbreviated versions of activities and content prepared in case time runs short
- Communicate schedule adjustments clearly and promptly

Real-Time Adaptation

Keep an eye on how participants are engaging and be ready to switch things up if needed. For example, if a small group activity isn't sparking discussion, try turning it into a full-group brainstorm, or if energy is lagging, add a short movement break. If a large group covered all your teaching points you planned to cover in a lecture, consider abbreviating your lecture or skipping it. Always

keep your main learning goals in mind, but stay flexible so the session meets the group's needs.

Troubleshooting Common Challenges

Technical Difficulties

Equipment failures are among the most common training disruptions. Prepare comprehensive troubleshooting protocols and ensure multiple team members are familiar with all equipment.



Common Technical Issues and Solutions:

- **Projection problems:** Have backup projectors and adapters for various devices
- **Audio failures:** Multiple microphone options and backup technology, if available
- **Connectivity issues:** Offline versions of online content and mobile hotspot backups
- **Presentation file problems:** Multiple format versions and cloud storage backups

Tips for Challenging Scenarios:

- **Overly dominant participants:** Use structured activities and time limits. Remind participants to monitor their own participation and make space for others to share.
- **Resistant or skeptical attendees:** Acknowledge concerns and focus on clear information grounded in your professional expertise, that of others in the room, or other informed perspectives.
- **Emotional responses to content:** Be aware that many in the audience may have personal experiences with abuse and may have emotional

responses; in these cases, offer to discuss to provide support, and resources.

- **Professional conflicts:** In multidisciplinary groups, participants may respond to content differently based on their own professional roles, obligations, and experiences. Facilitate respectful dialogue and focus on shared goals.
- **Disengaged attendees: Consider** moving around the room to reconnect with participants, or break them into small groups for discussions or activities to spark more interaction.

Emergency Situations

Develop comprehensive emergency procedures that account for medical emergencies, severe weather, facility problems, or security concerns. Ensure all staff are familiar with evacuation procedures and emergency contacts.

Post-Event Follow-up and Evaluation

Immediate Follow-up

Send thank-you communications within 24-48 hours of the event conclusion. Include key resources, evaluation surveys, and next steps information. This prompt follow-up helps maintain engagement and demonstrates professionalism. Don't forget to also thank and seek feedback from presenters, event site staff, and anyone else who provided support for the event.

Comprehensive Evaluation

Implement evaluation strategies that capture both immediate reactions and longer-term impact. Use this feedback to improve future training design and demonstrate program effectiveness to stakeholders.

Event Debrief:

- Conduct faculty and staff debrief meetings immediately following the event – and at the end of each day, if the event is longer than a single day.
- A staff person (usually the event or content lead) should take careful notes of any necessary changes, and create a plan for implementing them before the next event.
- Debrief topics might include sharing observations about participant engagement, timing issues, suggested curriculum updates, room/facility issues, and anything else related to the overall effectiveness of the event.

Evaluation Components:

- **Participant surveys:** Use daily participant surveys to assess overall satisfaction, faculty effectiveness, content quality, and suggestions for improvement.
- **Long-term follow-up:** 3-6 month impact assessment – how have participants implemented the knowledge they acquired? Consider creating a tool that participants can use to apply what they have learned, (see next section) and send out an email survey after the event to collect feedback.

Resource Sharing and Ongoing Support

Provide continued access to training materials and create mechanisms for ongoing learning and networking if possible. Consider establishing online communities or regular follow-up sessions to maintain momentum.

Conclusion

Effective training on abuse in later life requires careful attention to the unique needs of multidisciplinary audiences and the sensitive nature of the subject matter. Success depends on thorough preparation, inclusive design, professional execution, and meaningful follow-up. By implementing these best practices, advocates and trainers can create powerful learning

experiences that drive real-world change in how communities respond to abuse in later life.

The investment in high-quality training design and delivery supports improved outcomes for older adults, increased professional competence across disciplines, and stronger community response systems that enhance victim safety and offender accountability. Regular evaluation and continuous improvement ensure that training programs remain effective and responsive to evolving needs.

Remember that training is just the beginning of the change process. The true measure of success lies in the actions participants take after leaving the training room and the improvements they create in their professional practice and community response systems.