EMPLOYING, SUPPORTING AND RETAINING YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANT

AN ORIENTATION WORKSHOP FOR PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES

Prepared by the
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For more information about PHI and this curriculum, please contact:

Paraprofessional Healthcare Institute
349 East 149th Street, 10th Floor
Bronx NY 10451
Telephone: 718-402-7766
Fax: 718-585-6852
info@paraprofessional.org

INTRODUCTION FOR TRAINERS

The Need for this Curriculum

The term "personal assistance services" refers to the range of assistance provided to persons of any age with disabilities or long-term illness that enables them to accomplish tasks of daily living that they would normally do for themselves if they did not have a disability. Examples of this assistance include activities of daily living (ADLs) such as bathing, dressing, transferring, toileting, eating, and/or instrumental activities of daily living (IADLs) such as housekeeping, meal preparation, shopping, laundry, money management, and medication management.

Many people with disabilities prefer to live independently and hire workers to assist them in their various daily activities. The two most common service delivery models from which they can currently choose are agency-coordinated services and consumer-directed (CD) services (or a combination of both service models). With the CD approach, the person with a disability is the employer, the supervisor, and the consumer. All three roles may present challenges. Since in the past people with disabilities have been treated as "patients" needing "care," rather than as independent "consumers" needing "support," most have had little or no experience with hiring and supervising direct-care workers.

Concepts such as "consumer" vs. "patient" and "care" vs. "support" carry a lot of meaning for individuals with disabilities, who often struggle throughout their lives to prove that they are competent and have the capacity to live their lives to the fullest. This shift to consumer direction, however, can feel threatening to the self-esteem of home care workers, who are trained in a medical model of care delivery in which "professional experts" know what is best for the "patient." When the consumer becomes the "expert," determining his or her own support needs, home care workers may feel that their already-limited knowledge and authority is being further eroded.

Although the role of "employer" is not necessarily intuitive, many consumers, with assistance, are fully capable of effectively finding and orienting a personal assistant (PA) and providing their PAs with the support they need to be successful. This curriculum has been designed to (a) help consumers become familiar with the consumer-directed model and the steps involved in recruiting, hiring, training, and supervising PAs, and (b) to develop and strengthen the skills they need to direct their own care and to better support and retain their PAs.

GOAL
As a result of completing this training, participants will be more effective in finding, supporting, and supervising personal assistance staff, resulting in more success in retaining such staff.

OBJECTIVES
By the time participants complete this workshop, they will be able to:

- Describe the consumer-directed choice/option and the rights and responsibilities that go with consumer-directed services.
- Identify their personal assistance needs and preferences.
- Place ads, screen, interview, and hire PAs who can best match and support their needs and preferences
- Communicate better, including active listening, asking open-ended questions, and paraphrasing.
- More effectively supervise and support PAs and manage challenging conversations and situations.

Target Audience and Settings

Due to the interactive approach to this workshop, the minimum number of participants should be 5 and the maximum 12.

Consumers who will benefit from this workshop include those who:

- Receive agency services and *are actively exploring* the consumer-directed option
- Have been approved for consumer-directed service and *are actively seeking employees*
- Have *begun to direct* their own services.

Since these three categories of consumers are at different stages in terms of their experience with consumer-directed services, their needs will be different. Accordingly, this curriculum has been developed in three phases, targeting the needs of these different audiences (see **Structure**, below).

Trainers should be aware that some consumers will be younger people (under 65) directing their care, while others may be older people or family or friends directing care on behalf of a relative or friend (as in a spouse, parent, or adult children managing the care of someone with dementia).

This curriculum can be used in a variety of settings, such as independent living centers, fiscal intermediaries providing program oversight, managed long-term care programs, and Alzheimer support centers.

Trainers

A team of at least two trainers should always present this workshop. These may include experienced educators/trainers, social workers with group experience, home care agency staff, or consumers with disabilities. Trainers need to be skilled in interactive, participatory training techniques; at least one trainer needs to be very comfortable with performing and conducting role-plays.

For the greatest effectiveness in presenting these activities, it is recommended that at least one of the trainers should be someone who has personal experience with a disability.

Structure

The curriculum is structured as a series of training modules. The modules can be organized sequentially, as a "course" for consumers planning or beginning to direct their own care, or as stand-alone sessions to assist consumers with problem solving once they are already involved in directing their care (see **Target Audience and Settings**, above).

- **Module One: Understanding the Consumer-Direction Option** helps participants explore the concepts of choice and preference and rights and responsibilities in obtaining personal assistance services for themselves.

- **Module Two: Getting Started: Exploring Needs and Preferences** increases consumers' self-awareness of their personal assistance needs and preferences, in order to help them screen, hire, and supervise their PAs more effectively.

- **Module Three: Finding and Hiring Personal Assistants** increases participants' knowledge and skill in recruiting, interviewing, and hiring personal assistance staff.

- **Module Four: Managing the Consumer/Personal Assistant Relationship** introduces participants' to a major challenge in employer-employee relations in the consumer-directed model—setting and maintaining boundaries.

- **Module Five: Hiring and Orienting a New Personal Assistant** walks participants through all the necessary steps of hiring a PA, from developing a staffing plan and work agreement based on needs and preferences to offering the job and setting up paper work according to requirements.

- **Module Six: Supervision** introduces the coaching approach to supervision and develops further the communication and problem-solving skills that were introduced in Modules Three and Four, applying them through role plays to actual situations that consumers have encountered as employers.

As noted above, participants generally fit into three different categories in terms of their experience with consumer-directed services and their needs for knowledge and skill-building. Accordingly, we envision this curriculum being presented in the following three phases:

> **First phase: Orientation**—Modules One to Four (2-3 days): This workshop would be useful for all three phases of consumers, but is primarily designed for those who are *actively exploring* the consumer-directed option and need more in-depth knowledge and skills in order to make their decision.
>
> **Second phase: The Hiring Process**—Module Five (1 day). This workshop is for those consumers who have already decided to use the consumer-directed option and are ready to advertise and hire a PA. In addition, participants could include consumers who have already had some experience with hiring, but would like to improve their knowledge and skills.
>
> **Third phase: Supervising**—Module Six (1 day). This module is for those consumers who have already hired personal assistants and would like to enhance their communication and problem-solving skills.

Each workshop is not limited only to those consumers who are described as the "target." Those who are considering the CD option may be interested in learning more about hiring and supervising before they reach a final decision. And those who are already supervising a PA could benefit from being oriented to personal needs assessment and communication skills, which are the focus of the first phase.

Timing

Regardless of the composition of participants at each workshop, we recommend that the three workshops not be taught consecutively (i.e., for four to five days straight). Field tests showed that even the first four modules, which are organized as one "workshop," sometimes had to be conducted in three days, each separated by at least one week. This was due to the physical and mental energy required of participants—and not wanting to overload them—as well as to the logistics of scheduling and transporting participants with limited mobility.

Course Approach and Training Methodologies

The overall approach to training in these workshops is highly interactive and learner-centered. Content is taught using a variety of participatory training methodologies, including large- and small-group work, interactive discussions, role-plays (scripted and unscripted), partnering activities, and scenario-based problem-solving (case studies). This approach was found to be highly successful in the field tests of this curriculum.

Overall Training Tips

- **Respect for privacy and individual differences*:*** The interactive approach to this workshop involves a lot of personal sharing. Allow people to have their own style in terms of the amount of detail they provide — some will share a great deal; others will share only a little. Be patient with individual differences in the pace of learning.

- **Room set-up, comfort, and time*:*** In order to allow for maximum interaction and participation, trainers need to be aware of mobility and comfort issues while selecting the space and planning the activities for this training. Rooms must be accommodating of wheelchairs to allow free moving for pairings and other active techniques. Assigning participants for small-group work, plus large-group exercises that involve movement, will require time to actually move people around.

- Do not be afraid to ask participants if they need assistance in moving around, or getting what they need.

- Temperature control is also very important, especially with consumers whose disabilities increase their sensitivity to temperature.

- Some participants may tire from sitting in a chair/wheelchair for an extended period, and/or may be mentally exhausted as a result of the intensity of the workshop. Long lunch breaks need to be planned, and the trainer may need to make a decision in the moment to end the workshop/activity and pick up the information in the next meeting. We recommend no more than five hours of training per day, including lunch and other breaks.

- **Physical, Cognitive and Learning Disabilities*:*** Trainers need to be aware that these particular disabilities may reveal themselves in the course of the training. This is especially true for reading- and writing-based activities. Trainers will need to make decisions in the moment about time spent on a given activity, amount/depth of content to be taught, and amount of verbal explaining/re-reading that is necessary to ensure learning a particular skill or knowledge. For example, small-group work that requires writing may need to be changed to large-group work with a trainer doing the writing.

- **Homework Activities:** Homework is sometimes assigned to reinforce knowledge and skills or to prepare participants for the next session. Written homework can generate a sense of anxiety for participants with learning disabilities. Always provide alternate methods for completing assignments (e.g., small-group work with trainers or discussion) that are not based exclusively on reading and writing.

- **Time Saver Tips*:*** When running up against a clock, you can forego activities like "Opinion Poll" and "Take-A-Stand" as an introductory conversational stimulus to a given topic. This can easily save 20 to 30 minutes of attitude exploration before delving into the topic.

The Training Package

This trainer's manual consists of this introduction, an overview of the content of each module, a detailed curriculum with activity guides, and handouts.

The detailed curriculum is organized in modules. Each module has a summary page consisting of:

- Goal of the module
- Time for each activity and training methodology
- Materials needed
- Advance preparation that will help to make the training run more smoothly

Guides for each of the training activities follow the summary page. Each Activity Guide has the following components:

- Learning Outcomes
- Key Content
- Training Steps
- Training Tips (as needed)
- Training Options (as needed)

The **Learning Outcomes** are concrete, measurable behaviors that the participants should have adopted or demonstrated by the end of the session. These give the trainer a sense of why each activity is important, as well as provide a basis for feedback regarding the effectiveness of the curriculum and the training.

Key Content contains the basic ideas and important points to be covered during the activity. These are not to be read to participants, but rather should be worked into discussions as the activity unfolds. If necessary, the trainer can use these points to help summarize the session at the end—but, again, they should not be simply read aloud.

A time is estimated for each activity. **Training Steps** are suggested as a guide to help the trainer move the activity along in a logical sequence. With activities that involve many steps or different training methodologies (e.g., small-group work, followed by large-group discussion), a time is suggested for each training step. However, trainers should also be mindful of the needs and interests of the participants and adapt both the steps and the time required in order to meet those needs.

Training Tips give suggestions for how to make particular training steps work best. These are based on experiences with field-testing this curriculum. **Training Options** provide an alternative to the suggested activity, often related to group size or time issues.

Training Materials, Supplies, and Equipment

This training requires a flipchart pad with easels, a selection of colored markers, masking tape, pens and/or pencils, paper for participants, and nametags.

In addition, during presentations and discussions it is often important to have a visual aid to help focus the attention of participants. Trainers have a choice of three ways to present information visually and record responses: flipchart, overhead projection with transparencies, or overhead projection with a computer. Each way has special features, advantages, and disadvantages for the trainers to consider. (See **Tips on Presentation Media** below, for a summary of those considerations, and guidelines for using computers and LCD projection.) In general, it is important to:

- **Write large*:*** Printing on flipchart paper should be large and clear. Likewise, with printed overheads, the Arial font at a minimum size of 14 points is recommended. In field tests, many participants had difficulty seeing smaller print when projected on a screen.

- **Provide handouts:** Suggested handouts are attached. Whenever new handouts are created, remember to keep each page simple (lots of white space) and use large fonts in order to make the easier for participants to read and retain the information.

- **Build a Resource Guide:** One desired outcome of the training is to build a resource guide for consumers to refer to after the series is completed. However, only those materials (handouts) used in a given session should be distributed during the session. This ensures that the information taught in each session will be fresh and gives the participant a sense of learning accomplishment when each module is completed. Every participant should have a three-ring binder to keep materials for future reference; they can add handouts from subsequent workshops to this same binder.

Tips on Presentation Media

To make your workshop/training the most effective and most productive through the use of visual aids, it is best to know who is in the room, what resources are available to you, and the skills you have as a team.

Though LCD projectors have become very popular, they have drawbacks with diverse audiences. This may not be the best choice. Below is a grid that maps out some factors to consider in choosing the type of visual media that will be most effective for your training.

Please note: Regardless of the media used to record group work and discussions, handouts should be given to all participants at some point during the workshop.

	Media Mix	Trainer Requirements	Level of functioning (LOF) of consumers
LCD Projector and Computer	Can be used in conjunction with flip charts and handouts but do not mix well with overheads.	Computer savvy; comfortable with media; at least two trainers present; trainers must coordinate materials and training beforehand.	Low LOF: limited use of hands, reading.
			Mixed group or LOF unknown; some can write, others cannot.
Overhead Projector and Overheads	Can be used with flip charts and handouts but do not mix with LCD projector.	At least one trainer can write neatly on overhead itself.	Low LOF: limited use of hands, reading.
			Mixed group or LOF unknown; some can write, others cannot.
Flip Chart and Handouts Only	Can be used in conjunction with LCD or overhead projector.	At least one trainer can write neatly and large enough to see.	High LOF: can read, write, manipulate hands.

This chart provides a way to assess your needs and resources as a trainer and the needs of the participants in the training to ensure that the workshops are as effective as possible. There may be other factors that you need to evaluate as well before making final decisions.

Special Notes when Using an LCD Projector

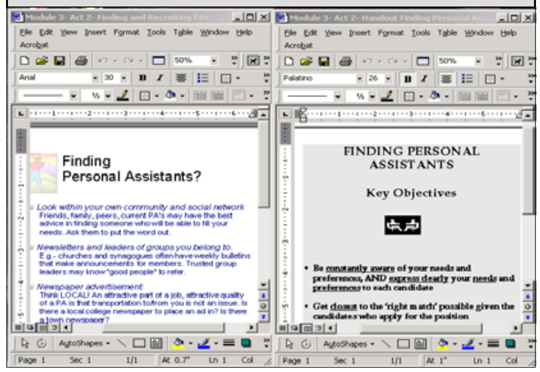
When using the LCD projector (connected to the computer), it is important to make sure that what is being projected is legible. We suggest using a sans serif font such as Arial, at no less than 14 pt.

What is projected does not need to be perfect at first; it can be changed in the moment. However, keep in mind that too many in-the-moment changes may be distracting to participants. When you first begin your training, check in with participants a few times to assess if what is projected is legible.

At times, you will want to compare or contrast documents on screen (putting documents side by side). This is relatively easy to do if you minimize or maximize the screens that are open. When minimized, ensure visibility by adjusting the zoom to 50% on each.

To make more space on the screen for the documents, close unnecessary tool bars on the view menu. At a minimum, keep: Standard, Formatting, and Drawing tool bars. It is also possible to add/remove buttons from your tool bar in order to fit the tool bars more tightly together.

Example of Splitting Screens



Using the projector is especially helpful in making changes and edits on screen. Specific activities enhanced by the use of an LCD projector include *Advantages/ Disadvantages of Consumer-Directed and Agency Models*, *Agency Takes on the Consumer-Directed Model*, *Personal Preference Assessment*, and *Personal Assistance Planning List*.

Co-facilitating with Computer Usage

It is important for the person facilitating the discussion to keep in tune with the person working at the computer as it is easy to get ahead. We suggest that the two trainers check in with each other frequently.

Evaluation and Follow-Up

During the workshop, it is important to get feedback from participants on a regular basis about key issues such as comfort and energy levels, comprehension of information being discussed or presented, and relevance to participants' needs. This can be done through ongoing verbal check-ins (e.g., *How is everyone feeling? Do we need a break now?*). Also, at the end of each day, trainers should conduct a quick activity to assess participants' reactions to the materials and approaches. Key questions to ask the group include:

- *What is one thing that stands out from your learning today?*
- *What is one thing you are still confused about?*
- *What would you do differently to improve the workshop for next time?*
- *What would you like more/less of?*

In terms of evaluating the impact and effectiveness of this workshop, the key mechanism is following up on participants, to see how well they are able to carry out the activities of employing and supervising their PAs. With the different phases of the workshop, it is important to follow up after each phase to find out who is ready for the next phase of the workshop, and/or what additional input or assistance they might need to carry out key tasks.

Follow-up need not be limited to continuing the workshop, nor does it end when the three phases are completed. Recommendations from the field tests included having support groups for participants to continue to share lessons learned from their own experiences and to address challenges.

OVERVIEW OF CURRICULUM CONTENT

Module One: Understanding the Consumer-Direction Option

- What would make an ideal day, and what would be needed for that to happen?
- What choices does the consumer have for personal assistance services?
- Agency vs. Consumer-Directed Care: Differences, advantages and disadvantages
- Rights and responsibilities under each model

CONTENT TIME: 2.5 HOURS

Module Two: Getting Started

- Qualities of an ideal personal assistant
- Assessing task needs and personal preferences
- Using these assessments to create work agreements and to provide the basis for hiring

CONTENT TIME: 2.5 HOURS

Module Three: Finding and Hiring Personal Assistants

- Staffing plan: Regular, back-up, and emergency
- Overview of the hiring process
- Recruitment options
- Creating ads
- Telephone screening
- Objectives and content of interviewing
- Interviewing skills: Active listening, asking open-ended questions, paraphrasing

CONTENT TIME: 3.5 HOURS

Module Four: Managing the Consumer/Personal Assistant Relationship

- Setting and maintaining boundaries

CONTENT TIME: 3.25 HOUR

Module Five: Hiring and Orienting a New Personal Assistant

- Program and administrative requirements for consumer-directed services
- Creating a staffing plan and work agreement
- Interview skills practice
- Checking references
- Offering jobs and contacting those not selected
- New hire orientation process
- Training personal Assistants: Personal and learning styles
- Other factors and challenges

CONTENT TIME: 5- 5/12 HOURS

Module Six: Supervision

- The importance of supervision
- Overview of coaching supervision
- Comparing coaching supervision with traditional supervision
- Communication skills for coaching supervision: Active listening, paraphrasing, asking open-ended questions, blocks to listening, pull back
- Skills practice in dealing with difficult situations with the personal assistant

CONTENT TIME: 5- 5/12 HOURS

MODULE ONE:
UNDERSTANDING THE CONSUMER-DIRECTION OPTION

Goal To help participants explore the concepts of choice and preference and rights and responsibilities in obtaining personal assistance services for themselves.

Time About 3.5 hours

Training Activities	Methodology	Time
1.1 Welcome	Large-group process	15 min
1.2 My Ideal Day	Discussion	45 min
1.3 Opinion Poll #1	Large-group exercise	20 min.
1.4 Advantages and Disadvantages (CD vs. Agency Model)	Small-group work or discussion	30 min.
1.5 Rights and Responsibilities (CD vs. Agency Model)	Large-group discussion or presentation	30 min.

Materials

- Handouts:
  - *Workshop Goal and Objectives*
  - *Advantages and Disadvantages: Consumer-Directed and Agency Models* (3 Handouts/Overheads)
  - *Agency Model Takes on the Consumer-Directed Model* (2 handouts: Sample and Blank)
- Nametags
- Flipchart easel, newsprint paper, markers, tape
- Paper and pens or pencils
- Three-ring binders to hold participants' handouts (Build a Resource Guide)
- Overhead projector and transparencies or LCD projector and computer
- Projector screens (in case there is no suitable wall for projection)

Advance Preparation

- Copy all handouts for participants.
- Prepare newsprint sheets for Activities 1.1, 1.3.
- Review *Agency Model Takes on the Consumer-Directed Model* for the state/program in which you are conducting this workshop to be clear about local responsibilities and regulations for consumer-directed services and make changes as needed.
- Set up the workshop space to allow for interactive sessions, keeping in mind the physical needs of participants.
- Set up projector and other equipment, as necessary, for optimum viewing by all participants.

ACTIVITY 1.1 WELCOME 15 MINUTES

1. Welcome participants. Introduce the trainers. Ensure everyone's comfort.

2. Distribute the participants' binders and the *Goal and Objectives* handout. Review the handout and encourage questions.

3. Post the agenda on newsprint. Review and agree on timing of breaks and lunch. Address any logistical/space issues. Ensure participants' comfort.

4. Ask participants to introduce themselves. If they are not known to each other already, they can say how long they have been a consumer with the organization and share something they'd like the group to know about them. Note that the approach (or "style") of this workshop is very participatory and interactive. Although no one will be forced to speak if they do not wish to, everyone will have opportunities to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences.

Key Content

- **Workshop Goal**

As a result of completing this training, participants will be more effective in finding, supporting, and supervising personal assistance staff, resulting in more success in retaining such staff.

- **Objectives:** By the time participants complete this workshop, they will be able to:
  - Describe the consumer-directed service model and the rights and responsibilities that go with consumer-directed services.
  - Identify their personal assistance needs and preferences.
  - Place ads, screen, interview, and hire personal assistants (PAs) who can best match and support their needs and preferences
  - Communicate better, including listening, asking open-ended questions, and paraphrasing.
  - More effectively manage difficult conversations and situations, applying communication skills.

- Note that this workshop (with four modules) is intended as an orientation for consumers who are considering the consumer-directed option and need more in-depth knowledge and skills in order to make their decision. Modules Five and Six address the information and skills needed by those consumers who have already decided and are ready to recruit and hire PAs or who are already supervising PAs.

ACTIVITY 1.2: MY IDEAL DAY 45 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe what they need on a day-to-day basis to live their lives as fully as possible.
- Describe the support they will need from personal assistants (PAs) to live independent and full lives.

Training Steps

Discussion

1. Display the newsprint (or transparency with overhead projector) that you prepared with the following bullets. Ask participants to think about the life each wants to live, now and in the future. Read the two bullets (or ask for a volunteer to read) aloud:
   - *Describe what your IDEAL day would look like.*
   - *What would need to happen for that ideal day to be a reality?*

2. Before they start answering, explain to participants:
   - *Each of you will have a few minutes to share your thoughts about these points and your thoughts and ideas will be noted on newsprint for you to use later in the workshop.*
   - *It is important for each of you to consider these issues for yourself in order to make decisions and choices about how you want to receive personal assistance services.*
   - *Throughout this workshop, we will keep coming back to these visions of your ideal day, in order to help you make choices that come the closest to making this vision a reality.*

3. Ask for a volunteer to begin. Allow 3 to 5 minutes for each participant to respond in a go-round. Write each participant's name on a separate newsprint sheet, and record their responses as they talk. Thank each one individually after they have finished, and thank all participants at the end.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
>
> - Strongly encourage *all* participants to respond, but do not force anyone who is very reluctant.
>
> - To increase the participants' input, ask open-ended questions like: *What would you do? Where would you go? What would need to be in place for that activity to occur?*
>
> - Some folks may "leave their disability at the door"—that's okay. Allow people to fantasize a little about life without disability, but also ask him/her further (and if appropriate):

Okay—so how could you do that tomorrow? Encourage imagination—*If you were rich and could have any and all the services you wish to make it happen, what would those services be?*

- If there are more than 10 participants, you may want to split the participants into two groups, in order to give enough time for each one to share their thoughts. Each group should have a facilitator to record each participant's ideas on newsprint.

ACTIVITY 1.3: OPINION POLL #1 20 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify and express their feelings and opinions about agency-coordinated services.

Training Steps

Large-group exercise

1. Give instructions:
   - *This exercise is intended to make people think about the ways personal assistance services are provided and how you as individuals feel about that.*
   - *I will read a statement. You will think about whether you strongly agree with that statement, strongly disagree, or agree/disagree somewhat. There is no right or wrong answer, and everyone is entitled to their own opinion. The purpose of the exercise is to consider how you feel and to hear how others are thinking.*
   - Designate three different places in the room for them to go to, based on their opinion. *You will go to the part of the room that matches your opinion, and then we will hear from people in each group about why you think that way.*

2. Read the Opinion Statement:

   Agencies have to coordinate the services people with disabilities need to help them live the life they prefer and make sure they are safe.

   > ⇨ **Training Tip**
   > The statement may be a little confusing for some to understand. Feel free to simplify the statement based on the participants in the room. It is okay to read it over two or three times, or you may choose to write it on newsprint.

3. Remind participants about the location for each group—*Strongly Agree, Strongly Disagree, Agree/Disagree Somewhat.* Ask participants to go the section that best represents how they feel about the statement.

   > ⇨ **Training Tip**
   > Participants who are unable to move, or choose to remain in their space, can stay where they are and speak with the group that represents their selection.

4. Facilitate dialogue by asking one or two people from each group to explain their opinion.

⇨ **Training Tip**

For many participants, the issue of agencies controlling their lives is emotionally charged. (Some may be in this workshop because of bad experiences with agency services.) This statement was chosen specifically to allow participants to express those feelings openly—get them “out on the table”—and early in the workshop. It is hoped that, having expressed and found acceptance for those feelings, participants can be more open-minded in exploring the conditions necessary to direct their own services successfully.

ACTIVITY 1.4: ADVANTAGES AND DISADVANTAGES (CD VS. AGENCY) 30 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe the differences between the agency-coordinated and consumer-directed service models and their advantages and disadvantages.
- Describe how directing their own personal assistance (PA) services may better serve their life needs.

Key Content

- *Choice* is about consumers selecting the model of personal assistance services that allows them to live their lives (immediate and future) in a way that best matches their assistance needs and personal preferences. The two most common models from which they can currently choose are agency-coordinated services and consumer-directed (CD) services. In addition, consumers can choose to use a combination of both service models.
- Each option has advantages and disadvantages. More fully understanding how each model functions and how it suits the life needs and preferences of the individual consumer is essential to selecting the most suitable model.

Training Steps (see Training Option, below, for alternatives)

Small-group brainstorming (15 min)

1. Break participants into two small groups. Assign “Consumer Direction” to one group and “Agency” to the other. Provide each group with one of the grids below, prepared in advance on newsprint. (These also appear in the handouts file, for participants to refer back to later.)

Consumer Direction	
Advantages	Disadvantages

Agency	
Advantages	Disadvantages

2. Ask each group to brainstorm both the advantages and disadvantages of their assigned service model. *Remind participants that, in brainstorming, every idea is accepted—*

there are no wrong answers or bad ideas. Ask them to identify one person to record and one to report out for the group members. Explain that they will have 10 minutes.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
>
> - The same person can do the writing and the reporting, if necessary. Encourage the groups to help each other record and report.
>
> - Individuals bring different backgrounds, skill sets, and experiences to the discussion. Exploring the disadvantages and advantages of both models from the multiple perspectives of all the participants in the workshop allows them to consider aspects of each model that they might not have before.
>
> - Participants tend to have very strong feelings (generally negative) about the agency model—probably because it is what they know best and it hasn't served their needs fully. This may speak to why they are considering or are already using the consumer-directed model. Like the previous activity, this exercise aims to draw out those feelings and place them into a context, so participants can explore both models more objectively. *Facilitators need to monitor the small-group discussions for balance, being sure that the pros and cons of both models are considered.*

Large-group discussion (15 min)

3. Ask the groups to post their newsprint and share their responses with the larger group. After the reporter for each group has presented, ask if anyone (in either group) wants to add any items to their lists. Thank both groups for their work.

4. Ask participants to summarize what they have learned from this activity. Ask if there are any surprises, or things they had not thought about before.

Training Option

Small-group work, with large-group discussion, is recommended for this activity, to encourage active input from more participants and to help them to think about aspects of each model that they may not have considered before. However, small groups take longer to set up and report back. If time is short, participants' overall level of physical or cognitive functioning is more limited, or it seems unlikely that you can complete this activity in 30 minutes with your participants in small groups, use large-group brainstorming, as follows:

1. Facilitate a brief discussion about participants' knowledge of and thoughts about the CD and Agency models. Draw out participants' feelings, experiences, and reactions to both. *(5 min)*

2. Project this grid onto the wall (see the **Training Tip** in Option One) or post on newsprint:

Consumer Directed		Agency Model	
Advantages	Disadvantages	Advantages	Disadvantages

3. Ask participants, in a round robin fashion, to fill in the grid starting with the left column first. Continue seeking input until the group has exhausted their own knowledge of each option/model. While facilitating the discussion, add your own knowledge if necessary.

4. Ask participants to summarize what they have learned from this activity. Ask if there are any surprises, or things they had not thought about before.

ACTIVITY 1.5: CD VS. AGENCY MODELS: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES 30 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain their rights and responsibilities when choosing the consumer-directed (CD) option.

Key Content

- Consumers have distinct rights and specific responsibilities that they must fulfill when choosing to employ their own personal assistant (PA). Knowing these rights and responsibilities and understanding how they can fulfill their employer responsibilities are important elements in making an informed choice about the CD option.

Advance Preparation

This activity needs to be adapted to fit your needs before the training occurs. The primary focus of the activity is on the assignment of responsibilities in the agency and consumer-directed models of personal assistance. It is meant to identify who (consumer or agency) is responsible for certain tasks in each model (for example: Who is responsible for supervising a personal assistant?). Who is responsible varies from state to state, and it is up to the trainer to know his/her state's regulations. Review the handout very carefully *beforehand* to be clear about who is responsible for the tasks listed in each model.

Training Steps (see Training Option, below, for alternatives)

Large-group discussion

1. Distribute the *blank* handout (A*gency Model Takes on the Consumer-Directed Model*) to the participants. Ask the participants to think about each routine function/concern area and where the responsibility of it falls in each of the two models, while the co-trainer projects the form onto the wall (with overhead or LCD projector).

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Before the training, check the transparency or computer file to be sure that the "Responsibility falls on" columns are blank for each category.

2. Go through the form, line by line, asking participants for their best guess on whose responsibility it is—consumer or agency. If using the computer, type in the correct response; if using an overhead, write it in clearly.

⇨ **Training Tip**
When possible, show the link between Activities 1.3 and 1.4 by pointing out that many of the disadvantages/advantages listed can be categorized as a responsibility of one of the actors in each model. For example, one advantage of an agency is that it is responsible for finding "back up" or replacement aides, whereas in a consumer-directed model that responsibility falls on the consumer.

3. After filling out the form with the group, ask: *Which model is best?*

⇨ **Training Tip**
The desired response is that model which is most suitable to meet physical, social, emotional, environmental, medical, etc., needs of the consumer. It could be either model or both. Ask leading questions to guide the group to that conclusion, if necessary.

4. Summarize by reviewing what has been covered in this first module. Note that we will refer back to their vision of an ideal day to guide the development of strategies and skills for employing PAs, so that vision can become a reality.

Training Option

If time is short during the workshop, this activity can be conducted as a mini-presentation, with brief discussion.

Presentation and discussion (15 min)

1. The handout, *Agency Model Takes on Consumer-Directed Model*, can be projected on the wall, summarized on newsprint, or distributed for participants to read along. The trainer briefly highlights key points from each category, noting the relationship between advantages/disadvantages (from Activity 1.3) and rights/responsibilities.

2. To summarize, the trainer asks the participants if there were any surprises, or anything new they learned from this handout.

MODULE TWO:
GETTING STARTED: EXPLORING NEEDS AND PREFERENCES

Goal To increase consumers' self-awareness of their personal assistance needs and preferences in order to help them screen, hire, and supervise their personal assistants (PAs) more effectively.

Time About 2.5 hours, with 20-minute break

Training Activities	Methodology	Time
2.1 Opinion Poll #2	Large-group exercise	20 min
2.2 The "Ideal" PA	Large-group exercise	30 min.
2.3 Assessment Tools for Personal Preferences and Personal Assistance Planning	Presentation and large-group exercise	30 min.
2.4 Opinion Poll #3	Large-group exercise	20 min.
2.5 Expressing Work Expectations: What Is a Work Agreement?	Large-group exercise	30 min.

Materials

- Handouts:
    - *My Ideal Personal Assistant*
    - *Personal Assistance Planning List*
    - *Personal Preference Assessment: Mapping Out My Comfort Zone*
    - *Snapshot of Me* (2 Handouts: Blank and Sample)
    - *Sample Work Agreement*
- Flipchart easel, newsprint paper, markers, tape
- Paper and pens or pencils
- Overhead projector and transparencies or LCD projector and computer
- Projector screen (in case there is no suitable wall for projection)

Advance Preparation

- Copy all handouts for participants.
- Prepare newsprint sheet for Activities 2.2 and 2.5.
- If a projector will be used, prepare transparencies or computer files of *Personal Assistance Planning List* and *Personal Preference Assessment: Mapping Out My Comfort Zone* for Activity 2.3 and *Snapshot of Me* for Activity 2.5.
- Set up the workshop space to allow for interactive sessions, keeping in mind the physical needs of participants.
- Set up projector and other equipment, as necessary, for optimum viewing by all participants.

- *Prior* to conducting Activity 2.3, carefully review the assessment areas to be sure that they are consistent with what PAs can be hired to do within the program that covers consumer-directed services.

ACTIVITY 2.1: OPINION POLL #2 20 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explore and express their feelings about the medical and social models of care for persons with disabilities.
- Begin to see the value that both the consumer-directed (CD) and the agency-coordinated service models can bring to ensuring safe and effective services to consumer.

Key Content

- Exploring these two models of service addresses a controversy about who is more knowledgeable of the type of skills and training the PA should have to meet the needs of consumers with disabilities. The current dominant model for personal care is based on medical practice. Paraprofessional skills training, education, and allowable caregiving tasks are largely under the purview of the state boards of nursing (under whose license the direct-care workers are legally employed). As such, these boards tend to limit which tasks they will comfortably delegate, often because of perceived safety and liability issues.
- A primary reason many consumers select the CD option is because, with agency-directed services, the PA is prohibited from doing a specific task or from doing it in the way a consumer may want (e.g., in the agency model, the PA may not be allowed to administer an insulin shot or dispense medication; they may only assist by bringing the supplies to the individual to administer on their own).

Training Steps

Large-group exercise

1. Give instructions:
   - *This second Opinion Poll is intended to prompt participants to think about who they feel best knows what background a PA should have.*
   - *I will read a statement. You will think about whether you strongly agree with that statement, strongly disagree, or agree/disagree somewhat. There is no right or wrong answer, and everyone is entitled to their own opinion. The purpose of the exercise is to consider how you feel and to hear how others are thinking.*
   - Designate three different places in the room for them to go to, based on their opinion and finish instructions: *You will go to the part of the room that matches your opinion, and then we will hear from people in each group about why you think that way.*

2. Read the Opinion Statement:

   Agencies that regulate personal assistance services know best what type of training, education, and experience a personal assistant needs to do a good job.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> The statement may be a little confusing for some to understand. Feel free to simplify the statement based on the participants in the room. It is okay to read it over two or three times, or you may choose to write it on newsprint.

3. Remind participants about the location for each group: *Strongly Agree, Strongly Disagree, Agree/Disagree Somewhat.* Ask participants to go the section that best represents how they feel about the statement.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Participants who are unable to move, or choose to remain in their space, can stay where they are and speak with the group that represents their selection.

4. Facilitate dialogue by asking one or two people from each group to explain their opinion.

ACTIVITY 2.2: THE "IDEAL" PERSONAL ASSISTANT

30 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe their ideal personal assistant (PA).
- Explain how having an ideal in mind can be helpful in (a) making conscious choices (or "trade offs") when hiring someone who is less than ideal and (b) helping a PA to come closer to the ideal through support and guidance after they have been hired.

Key Content

- Most people—*regardless of having a disability or not*—have had little or no training and/or experience in being an employer and supervisor.
- Being responsible for employing and supervising PAs requires new knowledge (e.g., administrative requirements) and skills (e.g., how to develop a supportive, supervisory relationship). Consumers need to know what is expected of them as employers to assess better their ability to carry out these functions and to identify what support they'll need.
- A key starting place for making a good PA match is to be clear about your needs and preferences as a consumer and be able to communicate your individual service needs and preferences as part of the hiring process (to be addressed in the next module).
- Employer/Employee matches are rarely perfect. A goal in recruiting and hiring is to make more conscious choices about the PAs you select—who they are (personality), what skills they have, and what type of supportive supervision the PA will need to be a successful hire in the long run. Ultimately, the consumer must decide how closely the candidate matches the ideal and consider what trade-offs will be made in hiring.

Training Steps

Large-group exercise

1. Post the newsprint that you prepared with trigger questions.
   - *Think of the best PA experience you've ever had.*
   - *Who was the person?*
   - *How did this person come into your life?*
   - *What makes that relationship stand out in your mind as "the best"?*

2. On a separate sheet of newsprint, draw a large stick figure. Explain that, as they talk about their best PA experiences, you will be filling in body parts and labeling the figure to represent qualities, skills, attributes of an ideal PA, based on their experiences.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Instead of using newsprint, participants' responses can be entered into a computer file and projected.

3. Ask for a volunteer to start the discussion by answering the questions on the newsprint.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> If a participant has not had a good experience to recount, ask him/her what has been lacking in the PAs they've worked with, and add to the stick-figure as a desirable trait.

4. Thank everyone for his/her contribution. Post the newsprint where everyone can see it.

ACTIVITY 2.3: ASSESSMENT TOOLS FOR PERSONAL ASSISTANCE PLANNING AND PERSONAL PREFERENCES

30 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe what is needed in a personal assistant (PA), including personality style, lifestyle, schedule, and interests, as well as abilities.
- Identify task needs and preferences for a "sample" consumer.
- Begin to see how their needs and preferences contribute to finding the ideal PA.

Key Content

- One essential responsibility of an employer is screening and hiring. To be most effective in screening and hiring, the employer needs to know not just what has to be done (tasks). He/she also needs to be aware of how they like a task done. For example, if you hired a typist, you want to know: Can he/she type? How fast? Is she accurate? And you also need to know if he/she works well under pressure, is flexible in scheduling if a project needs completion, etc.

- Issues of identifying the tasks to be performed and how you want them performed are challenges for all employers, not just those with disabilities. However, in this activity, we will focus on those tasks that are typical in personal assistance services for people with disabilities.

- It is unlikely that anyone will find his/her ideal PA. However, this assessment process will allow them (a) to make more *conscious* choices/trade-offs when screening PA candidates and (b) to know better in which areas to provide support and development for assistants whom they may eventually hire who may be "less than ideal."

- ***Background for the Trainer:*** Consumer-directed programs vary and regulations on what a PA can be hired to do may vary. A PA is meant "to help an individual function in the community." However, oversight agencies that approve personal assistance services vary in how they interpret the language "to help an individual function." When there are questions (for example, with pet care or child care), some agencies fall back on a narrower interpretation of this care/support goal. From the perspective of a person with disabilities, "helping her function within the community" means doing the things she cannot, including helping her take care of her children, cleaning the cat box, etc. For many people with disabilities, this is a common complaint of agency-coordinated services, especially since they don't understand why agencies appear inflexible (usually due to legal issues).

Training Steps

Large-group exercise

1. Note that each person has his or her own ideal PA. However, we don't often think in these terms, because:
   - Many consumers have the experience of interviewing/hiring a PA in terms of that PA's availability and/or training; often times consumers overlook (or neglect to factor in) their own personal and intimate preferences in finding a PA that fits their own lifestyle; or
   - Participants who have experience with the agency model have not had the opportunity to choose a PA.

2. The purpose of this activity is to provide assessment tools, or checklists, that help consumers to identify their own personal assistance *needs* and their *preferences* for how those needs are met, in order to select a PA who is as close to the ideal as possible.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> - This may be the first time some participants have had an opportunity to engage in an assessment of this type. Thus, they may need orientation to the concept itself and support for expressing their preferences in such a concrete way.
>
> - Stress that completing the assessments is not the intended purpose of this activity. The activity is designed to help participants grasp the concept that expressing "preferences" is as important as expressing "needs" when seeking PAs to help them live their lives fully and independently.

3. Distribute the handout *Personal Assistance Planning List* and project a version on an overhead transparency or computer. Explain that this list helps the consumer to determine the type and time of service needs and assists in estimating how many PAs are needed over the course of a week, including back-up. The list is not meant to cover everyone's needs, so it is possible to add new items.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> For those familiar with the concept, it may be helpful to note that when an agency directs a person's care, home health aides, nurses, certified nurse assistants (CNAs), PAs, and others involved follow a "care plan." Generally, nurses and/or others involved in delivering the services complete these plans. In some situations they determine what kind of care and how many hours of service the consumer receives. In the consumer-directed model the "Personal Assistance Plan" is an opportunity for *the consumer to determine what works best*.

4. Explain that, in order to orient them to completing the planning list, you will read a short "biography" on someone and they will fill out the list based on her story. (This fictitious person, "Sherry," will be used from this point forward as an example for filling out this and other forms.)

5. Read aloud:

   Sherry has been a member in a NYC-based independent living program for 18 months. She is a 38-year-old divorced African-American woman who lives alone in a predominantly low-income, African-American neighborhood. She has a diagnosis of CP and uses crutches and occasionally a non-motorized wheelchair. She periodically struggles with bouts of depression. She had difficulty holding on to her PAs because she hasn't been able to find a "good one" —someone who can braid her hair and put up with her occasional mood swings.

6. With the *Personal Assistance Planning List* projected on a screen or wall, ask participants to guess what Sherry may need in terms of each item listed. Go through the list and fill in (with computer or overhead marker) what participants think Sherry might need. Take participants' first responses and try to hear from everyone.

7. When a list has been completed, distribute and project the *Personal Preference Assessment: Mapping Out My Comfort Zone*. Explain that this assessment will give participants the opportunity to explore (some for the first time) what their likes/dislikes, preferences, styles, and needs are in terms of their lifestyle, habits, values, and schedule. (This will also help participants in shaping the interview later on.)

8. As you did for the personal assistance planning list, ask participants to make up Sherry's preferences, filling them in as you go down the list. Ask participants if they would like to add something that is not included.

⇨ **Training Tips**

- Some participants may have very limited or no writing and reading ability. It is beneficial to check in with each participant privately after the activity to ensure they have the means of completing the assessment.

- Participants could ask the staff members/trainers/trainers to assist in completing the assessment before the next day of training — setting up a phone conversation or meeting.

Homework Assignment: Instruct participants to take the two assessments home with them, think about their own needs and preferences, and complete them as homework. Explain that they will use the assessment in the next module so they need to bring it back.

ACTIVITY 2.4: OPINION POLL #3 — 20 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Express their feelings about the concept of "care."
- Describe how strongly negative feelings on this issue can become a barrier to effectively hiring and supervising personal assistants (PAs).

Key Content

- This opinion statement is one that generally triggers a strongly opinionated response. The words "cared for" are often equated with treating people with disabilities like invalids, as people who are child-like or sick and incapable of taking care of themselves (i.e., being a diagnosis, not a person).
- Having strong and unexpressed beliefs about these issues can derail a good assessment process because we may identify needs or preferences based on anger and resentment, even though these feelings may be unexpressed or even not well understood within ourselves. One purpose of this activity is to make participants' more aware of their emotionally charged opinions, in order to help them get beyond them in hiring and supervising their own PAs.
- A secondary reason for this activity is related to the persona of many disempowered people, who are typically not assertive in stating their beliefs and desires because their experiences in life have led them to feel that they often will not get what they ask for.

Training Steps

Large-group exercise

1. Give instructions (you may be able to skip this, except for the first "introductory" bullet):
   - *This third Opinion Poll is intended to help us look at the concept of "care" and what it means to us.*
   - *I will read a statement. You will think about whether you strongly agree with that statement, strongly disagree, or agree/disagree somewhat. There is no right or wrong answer, and everyone is entitled to their own opinion. We just want to hear how people are thinking.*
   - Designate three different places in the room for them to go to, based on their opinion and finish the instructions: *You will go to the part of the room that matches your opinion, and then we will hear from people in each group about why you think that way.*

2. Read the Opinion Statement:

   People with disabilities need to be cared for.

3. Remind participants about the location for each group: *Strongly Agree, Strongly Disagree, Agree/Disagree Somewhat.* Ask participants to go the section that best represents how they feel about the statement.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Participants who are unable to move, or choose to remain in their space, can stay where they are and speak with the group that represents their selection.

4. Facilitate dialogue by encouraging each person from each group to explain his/her opinion.

5. Lead a discussion by asking:
   - *What did it feel like to express your preferences?*
   - *How do you think your feelings about this issue might influence what type of PA you're likely to interview or hire?*

ACTIVITY 2.5: EXPRESSING WORK EXPECTATIONS: WHAT IS A WORK AGREEMENT? 30 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain how the *Snapshot of Me* and the *Work Agreement* can help them in their hiring and supervisory processes.
- Explain how the personal assistance planning list and the personal preference assessment contribute to their ability to develop a work agreement.

Key Content

- One purpose of this exercise is to increase participants' awareness and understanding of themselves as employers and directors of their own services.
- Being clear about your own service needs and preferences is the starting place to create work agreements (including schedules) to meet the lifestyle needs of both consumers and personal assistants (PAs).
- Many consumers find that developing a work agreement (or job description) is helpful in both hiring and working with PAs. Studies have also shown that workers often prefer to have a written description of their work duties. A work agreement can be shared in a hiring interview, to give prospective employees a better idea of what working with the consumer will be like. It can also help to minimize disagreements later on.

Advance Preparation

Prepare a newsprint version of *Snapshot of Me*, with the name "Sherry" at the top.

Training Steps

Large-group discussion

1. Post the newsprint *Sherry's Snapshot of Me*. (You can also distribute the blank *A Snapshot of Me* handouts, if it will be easier for participants to follow.)

2. Project the *Personal Assistance Planning List for Sherry* (from the previous session). Ask participants to look over what was filled in, then ask: *What do you think she may need every day?* Write in "Daily" on the newsprint and begin to fill in their responses.

3. Ask participants to do the same for "Couple times a week" and "Weekly."

Presentation

4. Distribute the (sample) *Work Agreement*. Very briefly, review the different parts of the agreement. Ask participants how the information in *A Snapshot of Me*, *Personal Assistance Planning List*, and *Mapping Out My Comfort Zone* could help them fill out the work agreement. Note that the work agreement can help guide them in interviewing candidates and in supporting and problem solving with their PAs.

5. Distribute the blank *Snapshot of Me* handouts (if you did not earlier) and ask participants to complete their *Snapshots* for homework, after completing the two previous assessments (*Personal Assistance Planning List* and *Mapping Out My Comfort Zone*).

Day's End Evaluation Go-Round

6. Name one key learning you're taking home with you today.

MODULE THREE:
FINDING AND HIRING PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

Goal: To increase participants' knowledge and skill in recruiting, interviewing, and hiring personal assistance staff.

Time About 3.5 hours; Add time for breaks

Training Activities	Methodology	Time
3.1 Opinion Poll #4	Large-group exercise	20 min
3.2 Overview of the Hiring Process	Presentation	20 min
3.3 Common Ways to Find a Personal Assistant:	Discussion	20 min.
3.4 Creating An Advertisement	Discussion and Paired Activity	20 min.
3.5 Telephone Screening	Large-group discussion	20 min.
3.6 The Interview Process	Presentation	20 min.
3.7 Interviewing Skills: Active Listening, Asking Questions, and Paraphrasing	Presentation and discussion, paired discussion; large-group discussion	45 min
3.8 Conducting an Interview	Demonstration role play and discussion	45 min

Materials

- Handouts:
    - *Finding Personal Assistants: Key Objectives*
    - *Finding Personal Assistants (Common Recruitment*
    - *Sources)*
    - *Creating an Ad*
    - *Sample Ads*
    - *Phone Screening Exercise*
    - *Structuring Your Interview Process/Checking References*
    - *In-Person Interviews: Key Objectives*
    - *Sample Interview Questions*
    - *Active Listening*
    - *Real Listening*
    - *Lead-Ins for Paraphrasing*
    - *Closed vs. Open Ended Questions*
    - *Make It Open*
    - *Ending the Interview/ Making an Offer Tips*
    - *Actions to Take That Avoid Unnecessary Coverage Emergencies*
- Newsprint/computer file: *Sherry's Snapshot of Me*, *Sample Ads*
- Participants' completed homework: *A Snapshot of Me*
- Flipchart easel, newsprint paper, markers, tape

- Paper and pens or pencils
- Overhead projector and transparencies or LCD projector and computer
- Projector screens (in case there is no suitable wall for projection)

Advance Preparation

- For Activity 3.4, trainers should be aware of basic legal and personal safety issues regarding advertising a position and interviewing candidates. If they are not already familiar with these areas, they should work closely with someone from the consumer organization who has expertise in this area while preparing to conduct this workshop.
- Copy all handouts for participants.
- If a projector will be used, prepare transparencies or computer files as necessary.
- Prepare newsprint sheets for Activity 3.2.
- Set up the workshop space to allow for interactive sessions, keeping in mind the physical needs of participants.
- Set up projector and other equipment, as necessary, for optimum viewing by all participants.

ACTIVITY 3.1: OPINION POLL #4 20 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Express their opinions about various ways of finding a personal assistant (PA) and describe others' experiences in doing so.

Training Steps

Large-group exercise

1. Give instructions (you may be able to skip this, except for the first bullet):
   - *This Opinion Poll is intended to get us started in thinking about how we find a PA.*
   - *I will read a statement. You will think about whether you strongly agree with that statement, strongly disagree, or agree/disagree somewhat. There is no right or wrong answer, and everyone is entitled to their own opinion. We just want to hear how people are thinking.*
   - Designate three different places in the room for them to go to, based on their opinion and continue the instructions: *You will go to the part of the room that matches your opinion, and then we will hear from people in each group about why you think that way.*

2. Read the Opinion Statement:

   The best way to find a good personal assistant is through a good friend or family member.

3. Remind participants about the location for each group: *Strongly Agree, Strongly Disagree, Agree/Disagree Somewhat.* Ask participants to go the section that best represents how they feel about the statement.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Participants who are unable to move, or choose to remain in their space, can stay where they are and speak with the group that represents their selection.

4. Facilitate dialogue by asking one or two people from each group to explain their opinion.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> This discussion is really key to starting this module, as well as being an icebreaker for the day.

ACTIVITY 3.2: OVERVIEW OF THE HIRING PROCESS

20 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain the importance of developing a staffing plan for personal assistance, based on their task needs and preferences
- Describe ways to prepare better to avoid and manage emergencies.
- Describe a process for identifying, screening, and hiring personal assistants (PAs).

Key Content

- Getting closest to the "right match" is the ultimate objective in the overall hiring process. *Knowing well* your assistance/support needs *and* preferences and *being able to explain* your needs and preferences clearly are the first and most important steps in the recruitment process

- Developing a staffing plan involves identifying what kind of assistance you need and when. This helps you know how many people you will need in your PA "pool." During the hiring process, you will find some people who are good for some categories and not for others.

- The basic categories for staffing are:
  - Regularly scheduled PAs (e.g., Monday to Friday, from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m.)
  - Back-up PAs: that is, those people who routinely come in on weekends or evenings, or whenever your regular PA needs time off (e.g., for doctor's appointments or sickness).
  - Emergency assistance PAs (i.e., people you can call on when both your regularly scheduled PAs and their back-ups are not available).

- Preparing for potential disasters and unavoidable emergencies must be taken into account and planned for in developing a PA staffing plan. However, many emergency situations are unnecessary and can be avoided if you review monthly calendars in advance to identify if there are special coverage issues (e.g., dental appointment); ask assistants to plan vacations in advance and notify you as soon as soon as details are known; ask assistants to contact you as soon as possible if they have a problem getting to work.

- Having a multi-step process before making a final offer of hire provides different opportunities to screen the candidate. The trade-off is spending extra time at the beginning to carefully select the right candidates, in order to avoid possibly having to spend time afterwards to deal with a bad fit. The essential elements of a complete hiring process include:

- Screening
- One-to-one interview and assessment
- Reference checking
- Making the offer
- Contacting candidates not offered position

Training Steps

Presentation and discussion

1. Discuss the basic components of a staffing plan and the importance of thinking of all three categories of staffing, prior to starting the hiring process.

2. Post newsprint with the essential elements of a complete hiring process and briefly review. Basic steps and interviewing skills will be covered in this module. Note that they will get handouts covering all these steps and that Module Five goes into more detail for actually carrying out each step.

3. Handout *Actions to Take that Help to Avoid Unnecessary Coverage Emergencies* and review. Reinforce the importance of having a plan to avoid unnecessary emergencies.

ACTIVITY 3.3: COMMON WAYS TO FIND A PERSONAL ASSISTANT — 20 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify an array of recruitment options and describe advantages and disadvantages of the different strategies.

Key Content

- In finding a personal assistant (PA), the key objectives are to:
  - Be constantly aware of your needs and preferences, and to express clearly your needs and preferences to each candidate.
  - Get closest to the right match, given the candidates who apply for the position.
  - Be conscious of what trade-offs and compromises are necessary to make in order to fulfill staff needs.

- Using an array of options for finding PAs strengthens the consumer's ability to have a larger pool of applicants to select among. In addition to finding one regular PA, having a larger pool will enable the consumer to identify possible sources for back-up and emergency coverage.

- Common areas to look for or advertise for a PA include:
  - Your own community and social network
  - Newsletters and leaders of groups you belong to.
  - Newspaper advertisement:
  - Independent Living Centers and Area Agencies on Aging
  - Community/local college or universities
  - Hospitals/ medical centers / nursing homes
  - Registries and hotlines

Training Steps

Large-group discussion

1. Introduce this activity by telling participants that there is no one best way to find a PA — there is no magic formula. However, there are certain ways to increase your likelihood of finding a close-to-ideal PA.

2. Ask participants: *What are some common ways you've tried to find a PA?* Write their responses on newsprint.

3. After you have finished listing their ideas, discuss the pros and cons of each strategy, seeking input from participants based on their experiences.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
> - Generally, in listing some of the ways to find a PA when participants note newspapers, they are often able to list only the larger newspapers (e.g., *Daily News*), which cost a great deal of money. It is helpful to dig deeper and find out the specific names of the local "penny saver" newspaper where advertising is very inexpensive.
>
> - Regarding friends and families, it is important to point out that hiring them (or *their* friends/family) is not necessarily the only way to use them in the search. Ask participants to think outside the box and ask the question*, Do they have access to a pool of workers in their jobs, social networks, clubs, etc., to extend where they post a job ad for a PA*?

4. Distribute the handout, *Finding a Personal Assistant*, and compare this list with the one they have generated already. Distribute the handout: *Finding Personal Assistants: Key Objectives* and review.

> ***Homework Assignment:*** Ask participants to do the following, and be prepared to report on what they learn at the next workshop day. This will result in a "pool" of new ideas for recruiting PAs.
> - Identify two sources for recruiting PAs that you had not considered using before.
> - Find out how you would go about recruiting PAs through that source (e.g., newsletter, posting an ad on a bulletin board, contacting an outreach committee).

ACTIVITY 3.4: CREATING AN ADVERTISEMENT 20 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe what to include and what not to include in creating their own ad for personal assistant (PA) services.
- Explore their creativity in wording advertisements to find that "ideal PA" for a "sample" consumer.

Key Content

- Important information to put in an advertisement includes:
  - Hours of work
  - Pay
  - General location (Don't give out home address.)
  - Phone number to call
- Note things that may make the job appealing, such as:
  - Attractive/ flexible hours
  - Interesting person to work with
  - Easy to get to
  - Rewarding work
  - Benefits

Advance Preparation

Questions may arise around legal issues in employing and advertising. For example, "Can I say I want to hire a female?" or "Can I say I want someone who is young or black?" We suggest that trainers be aware of basic legal issues related to advertising for and interviewing potential employees (e.g., you can state "I am looking for a young guy…" but not "I am looking for someone under the age of 40.") The trainer should be careful to give legal **information**, but not legal **advice**.

Training Steps

Large-group discussion

1. Explain that in this activity, we will explore issues of creating our own ads, in hope of finding that "ideal PA." Ask participants to brainstorm what information they think should appear in such an ad.
   - Characteristics that make job appealing (e.g., flexible schedule)
   - Important information (e.g., number of hours, pay, *general* location of consumer, how to reach consumer)

⇨ **Training Tip**
Encourage participants to be creative (the "personals approach with important details").

2. Emphasize maintaining safety by what's NOT listed (e.g., *never* give out home address).

3. Distribute handout, *Create an Ad***,** and review the important steps listed.

4. Post the newsprint (or project on the screen) *Sherry's Snapshot of Me*. Using *Sherry's Snapshot of Me*, ask participants to come up with a few lines for an ad that they think would emphasize the positive, attract the ideal PA, and make the job appealing. (For example, "energetic student looking for someone to help with daily care needs.")

5. Write responses on flipchart.

6. Project *Sample Ads* and review each for content. Ask participants to imagine themselves looking for a job as a PA and to consider if they would respond and why.

ACTIVITY 3.5: TELEPHONE SCREENING — 20 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:
- Explain the importance of screening candidates.
- Identify their own biases/reactions to specific types of responses.
- Explain how individualized differences can select out potentially good candidates.

Key Content

- There are both advantages and disadvantages to using the telephone (including answering machines or voicemail) as an initial screening tool:

  ***Disadvantages**:*
  - Differences in phone vs. in-person personalities
  - Possibility of screening out someone who, in time, may become a good worker, based on one or two questions and/or first phone impression
  - Able to assess likelihood of person filling the hours needed—but also could screen out someone who may not be able to fill these hours now, but may be good for the future.

  ***Advantages**:*
  - Screening out potentially dangerous candidates
  - Able to ask key questions from your most important areas identified in your preference and task list
  - Able to determine where to do an in-person interview and who to have at the interview

- Different strategies will have different advantages/disadvantages. No one strategy is ever perfect.

- Keep in mind the staffing plan and the need to have a pool of people to call for back-up as well as emergency services.

Training Steps

Large-group discussion

1. Set the stage for the discussion by asking the participants to imagine that they have placed their ads and people have responded; now they have the opportunity to talk to them before meeting them. Ask participants to "take a stand" on this statement:

   Telephone screening is a good idea.

Training Option

This discussion (step 1) could be skipped to save time, but if it is, the trainer should briefly review some or all of the above themes.

Large-group exercise

2. Distribute the handout (or project for viewing) *Phone Screening Exercise*. Depending on how much time remains, select several for discussion. Ask participants: *Would you call back — yes/no/maybe? Why?*

⇨ **Training Tip**

- This handout works extremely well in eliciting how and when people make assumptions about others. It helps participants begin to build self-awareness about the nature of their assumptions.
- As a trainer, be prepared to play devil's advocate to some of the assumptions that may arise around particular candidates. Emphasize that phone screening is a relatively safe step in gathering information about candidates, to help you decide whether to conduct an in-person interview.

ACTIVITY 3.6: THE INTERVIEW PROCESS 20 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe the objectives of the in-person interview.
- Begin to consider their own answers to the key questions about the interview process: who, where, and what.

Key Content

- There are four objectives when conducting in-person interviews:
  - Convey to candidate that this is a place he/she would like to work
  - Give the candidate a good (general) sense of what job will be
  - Start the relationship building process
  - To get a sense of the candidate as a worker/person
- In structuring the interview process, the consumer needs to decide: *Who* will conduct the interview? *Where* it will be conducted? and *What* will be discussed?

Training Steps

Large-group discussion

⇨ **Training Tip**
Acknowledge that this information about the objectives and steps of interviewing will be shared only briefly. However, the information to be covered is included in their handouts, so they can easily refer back to it.

1. Ask participants: *What should be the objectives of the in-person interview?* After they share a few ideas, post the newsprint (or use the projector) with the information from the handout, *In-Person Interview Objectives.* Briefly review each point.

2. Post a separate newsprint sheet with the following questions. Ask participants to brainstorm ideas for each question; briefly write their responses on the newsprint. Give a mini-presentation on the last question, based on the handout *Structuring Your Interview Process*.
   - *Who should be part of the interview process (and why)?*
   - *Where should interviews take place (and why)?*
   - *What type of information do you want to communicate and gather?*

3. Summarize by emphasizing that interviewing is a key step in finding that ideal PA and that it is a skill that many people may have little comfort with. More in-depth review and discussion of this content is most useful in a follow-up session for new consumers actively seeking PAs or as a support session for consumers seeking to improve their recruitment skills. This is the purpose of Module Five.

ACTIVITY 3.7: INTERVIEWING SKILLS: ACTIVE LISTENING, ASKING QUESTIONS, AND PARAPHRASING

45 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe active listening, including the importance of being aware of body language—both of the person speaking and the one listening.
- Explain the difference between closed and open-ended questions and the importance of using open-ended questions in candidate interviews.
- Create open-ended questions for interviews.
- Describe paraphrasing as a two-way communication skill and explain its importance in interviewing candidates as well as supervising an employee.

Key Content

- Good listening is essential to clear, effective communication and is of primary importance in supervision.
- "Body language" refers to the way people communicate nonverbally, through postures, facial expressions, gestures, and movement. Body language often communicates more clearly than words. Since people often respond to our body language rather than to our words, we must become more aware of our body language and learn to control it.
- *Active* listening—i.e., listening with full attention to the other person, including attentive body language, is the underlying skill in supervision for the following reasons:
  - Being listened to attentively feels caring and helpful to the speaker. Not being listened to, or being listened to in an inattentive manner, feels hurtful and unhelpful.
  - When we listen with our full attention, we remember and understand more of what is being communicated. On the other hand, when we listen inattentively, we miss a great deal of what is being communicated.
- Using communication skills of paraphrasing and asking open-ended questions is a good way to learn much more about candidates.
- Closed questions usually generate facts or yes/no answers. Open-ended questions encourage responses that go into feelings, opinions, or explanations. Open-ended questions usually begin with *what, how,* or *why*?
- Paraphrasing is stating in your own words what you think someone just said. It is helpful in clarifying and gathering information, applying active listening,

and reflecting back what you have understood. Three main benefits of paraphrasing are that people appreciate feeling heard and understood, it can prevent miscommunication, and it can help you remember what was said. Also, asking an applicant to restate (paraphrase) their understanding of key issues discussed is a good way to test out his or her listening skills.

Training Steps

Presentation and discussion (10 minutes)

1. Explain that communication includes verbal and nonverbal techniques (and works two ways—i.e., others communicate to you verbally and nonverbally, and you communicate to others in both ways). Good communication techniques can help consumers to screen for appropriate candidates more effectively. Learning more about the candidate strengthens your ability to make the right choice. These techniques include ways of asking questions and repeating in your own words to check for understanding (*paraphrasing*). These communication skills are also vital to building a good working relationship between the consumer and assistant.

2. Explain the concept of closed vs. open-ended questions. Distribute (or project on the wall/screen) the handout, *Closed vs. Open-Ended Questions*. After reading each one, ask how the questions differ in terms of the answers one is likely to get, or their impact on the interviewee.

3. Handout and/or project *Make It Open*. Ask participants to practice making open-ended questions from the closed questions on the handout. Write their sample questions on newsprint so that you can use them in the role-play interview (next activity). Continue until you feel that participants understand the concept of open-ended questions.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Example: One preference might be to have an assistant who can read. Examples of open-ended questions that would explore that: What kind of books do you enjoy? What have you read lately?

Paired discussion (15 minutes)

4. Ask the participants to form pairs. Ask them to refer to their own *Snapshot of Me* (which was homework from the previous module) and help each other to form open-ended questions for an interview, based on their own preferences. They should create at least two sample questions per person and write them on a sheet of regular paper.

⇨ **Training Tips**

- If participants have not completed their own *Snapshot of Me*, they can continue with *Sherry's Snapshot of Me*, making open-ended questions for preferences from that list that match their own.

- Based on participants' level of functioning, this activity may need to be modified. Either several small groups led by facilitators or a large-group process will be effective.

5. Ask each pair to share one of their open-ended questions, going in round-robin fashion until each group has shared at least two questions. Add their sample questions to the newsprint started in Step 3, so that you can use them in the role-play interview (Activity 3.7).

⇨ **Training Tips**

- Remind participants that we are using these sample questions to reinforce the concept of closed vs. open-ended questions. Ask group members to decide if a question is phrased open or closed. If it is a closed question, ask a volunteer to restate the question as an open-ended one. Be gentle with this rephrasing process, as most people find it difficult to grasp this at first, and you don't want people to feel that their closed questions are wrong.

- Some of the questions participants may need to create are very personal (e.g., How do you feel about changing catheters?), and they may not be comfortable stating them in a large group. If this seems to be happening, the trainer may want to demonstrate how to ask some of the more personal questions.

Large-group discussion (20 minutes)

6. Introduce the topic of "checking for understanding," by asking the group: *What is the purpose of listening? How is listening different from hearing?*

7. Introduce paraphrasing as an important communication technique that allows the listener to check his/her understanding of what the speaker has said. Distribute (or post on newsprint/project on wall) *Lead-Ins for Paraphrasing* and fill in with sample questions to demonstrate the technique.

8. Summarize by noting that paraphrasing can be used both by the candidate and the consumer as a means for ensuring important details are being accurately communicated. The consumer can also ask the candidate to repeat back key instructions, in his/her own words, to be sure that you have been clear in your explanation.

ACTIVITY 3.8: DEMONSTRATION ROLE PLAY OF INTERVIEW

45 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe the impact of active listening, open-ended questions, and paraphrasing on a simulated interview.
- List the important steps for closing an interview.

Key Content

- Having a sample work agreement to discuss with the candidate is an extremely valuable interview tool.
- When ending the interview, it is important to: be clear about next steps, and what follow-up message you want to leave with the candidate—e.g., think about responsibilities and call at a particular time the next day if still interested or have additional questions.
- Second- and third-best candidates can be considered for back-up and emergency coverage.

Training Steps

Demonstration role-play (25 minutes)

1. Using a sample work agreement and referring to interview questions created by the group in Activity 3.7, the trainers conduct a simulated interview.

⇨ **Training Tips**

- For the profile of your candidate, you can use one of the people who responded in the *Phone Screening Exercise* (Activity 3.4).
- Model steps for ending the interview, as outlined in the handout *Ending the Interview: Tips*. This will be discussed at the end of the session.

Discussion (20 minutes)

2. After the role play, facilitate a discussion by asking participants:
   - *What did you notice about the consumer?*
   - *What did you notice about the job applicant?*
   - *How effective were the consumer's questions in gathering information about the applicant?*

- *How was paraphrasing used in this interview?*
- *Overall, how did the interview compare to the types of interviews you've conducted?*

3. Ask what they noticed about how the interview was ended. Review the handout (and/or post on newsprint or project) *Ending the Interview: Tips*.

4. Facilitate a small discussion about emergency back-up, and why it is important to end interviews positively and develop forward thinking. Ask participants for ideas on using the second and third best candidate. Encourage participants to talk briefly about emergency and back-up coverage.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> As part of the daily closing (see **Introduction for Trainers: Evaluation/Follow-up**), remind participants about the homework assignment for Activity 3.3.

MODULE FOUR:
MANAGING THE CONSUMER/PERSONAL ASSISTANT RELATIONSHIP—SETTING APPROPRIATE BOUNDARIES

Goal To increase participants' awareness of unique employer-employee boundary-setting issues within the consumer-directed model.

Time About 3 hours, 15 minutes; Add time for break

Training Activities	Methodology	Time
4.1 "Homework" Debriefing	Large-group discussion	1 hour
4.2 "Real Plays": Boundary Testing	Role-play	2 hrs
4.3 Closing	Discussion	15 min.

Materials

- Handouts: Real Play scripts (*Consumer at Center* and *Worker at Center*)

Advance Preparation

- Make enough copies of the Real Play script for the volunteer players and trainers (at least 5).

ACTIVITY 4.1: HOMEWORK DEBRIEFING 1 hour

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Name at least two new sources for recruiting personal assistants (PAs) that they had not considered using before.
- Describe the strategy they would use for recruiting PAs through those sources.

Training Steps

Large-group discussion

1. Remind participants about the homework assignment that they were given in Module Three:
   - Identify two sources for recruiting PAs that you had not considered using before.
   - Find out how you would go about recruiting PAs through that source (e.g., newsletter, posting an ad on a bulletin board, contacting an outreach committee).

2. Explain that this activity will allow time for every participant to share with the others what they have learned about new recruiting sources. Key information will be recorded on flipchart paper, for everyone to refer to. Ask for a volunteer to start.

3. As the volunteer describes his/her new source, write down key information on flipchart sheets: *name of source/site/organization, how to recruit there, who to contact, how much it costs, etc.*

4. Make sure everyone has enough time to share his or her new sources. With the remaining time, work on fleshing out the strategies for recruiting through these sources. For example, the group can help to redesign ads, can role-play the discussion one would have when first contacting the organization— whatever the participants feel is needed.

ACTIVITY 4.2: REAL PLAYS: BOUNDARY TESTING 2 hours

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Discuss how to avoid one common relationship pitfall: failing to set boundaries
- Identify ways to use communication skills effectively when faced with difficult conversations.

Key Content

- ◈ The goal for this exercise is to help consumers better understand the complexity of the employer/friend relationship they share with their PAs, and how "in-the-moment" negotiated decisions (even with the best intent) can place undue stress on the boundaries of the employer/worker relationship.
- ◈ All relationships build through a process of boundary testing. A unique challenge of the PA and consumer relationship is the ability to be both friend and employer in a highly charged environment of vulnerability and control.
- ◈ While boundary testing in the relationship between a consumer and the PA is a natural aspect of their developing trust, the consumer/employer must remember that the primary relationship is one of employment to best ensure that safety and support needs are consistently met.
- ◈ For the consumers as employers to have the best possible outcomes, they must be aware and constantly vigilant of the potential trade-offs involved in conscious deal making and negotiating that will likely occur in longstanding relationships with a PAs.
- ◈ Avoidance of conflict will only make situations worse. The consumer needs to address situations appropriately and early to maintain health, safety, and a sense of security.
- ◈ Becoming effective in managing difficult conversations requires taking risks and constant practice, but it does get less difficult each time.
- ◈ Applying the communication skills of active listening, asking open-ended questions, and paraphrasing are particularly helpful in managing such situations.

Training Steps

Introduction (10 min)

1. Explain that a Real Play is a scripted role-play that simulates "a day in the life." Note that there will be two parts to this Real Play, with the first being a day in the life of a consumer, the second part being the same day but from the PA's perspective.

2. Explain that one trainer (or a participant who has been selected and has agreed to do this in advance) will play the role of Anna, the central character in the play. Ask for volunteers to play the three other roles. Give the Real Play scripts to volunteers and allow a few minutes to review them.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
>
> - Getting people to volunteer to play a role often takes some work. If possible, select people for key roles before asking volunteers to play minor roles. Remind people that they will have a script to read from.
>
> - Psych the volunteers up. Tell the volunteers that this is an opportunity to shine. Tell them that a Hollywood talent scout is in the audience and they have the freedom to play the role as best as they can with all the attitude and emotion they see fit. If possible, form your cast prior to starting the module, or just before taking a break, allowing the volunteers time to read their parts and plan their performance.

Real Play and discussion: The consumer's perspective (30 min)

3. Play out each scene with the "actors" reading from the script.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Make sure to stage the play somewhere in the room where all participants can see and remind "actors" to speak loudly.

4. At the end of the first part (*Consumer at the Center*), thank the actors and ask for a round of applause for them. Then use the debriefing questions at end of the Real Play script to guide a discussion.

Real Play and discussion: The personal assistant's perspective (30 min)

5. Explain that we will now see the scenario continue, with Crystal, the PA, as the focus. Crystal and Anna re-appear in this scenario and are played by the same participants.

6. Play out each scene as was done before.

7. At end of real play, thank the players and ask for a round of applause. Use the debriefing questions at end of the Real Play script to guide a discussion.

Summary (5 min)

8. Ask participants: *What stands out for you the most from the discussion of the Real Play?*

Large-group discussion (45 min)

9. Ask participants:
   - *What other boundary issues have you encountered in your experience with PAs?*
   - *How could you apply what you have learned through this workshop to that situation?*

ACTIVITY 4.3: CLOSING 15 minutes

<u>Training Steps</u>

1. Explain that we have now come to the closing of the workshop, which is a time to reflect on what was learned and how this learning can be applied. Ask participants:
   - *What is the most important thing that you have learned today?*
   - *How do you think you can apply what you have learned today?*
   - *What kind of follow-up activities would you like to see to reinforce what was covered over the time we've been together?*
   - *How do you think this workshop should be used in the future?*

2. Thank everyone for his or her feedback and participation.

3. Celebrate, as appropriate.

MODULE FIVE:
HIRING AND ORIENTING A NEW PERSONAL ASSISTANT

Goal To familiarize consumers with administrative requirements of consumer direction and provide information and tools involved in hiring and orienting new personal assistants (PAs).

Time About 5.5 hours (depending on how well participants understood content covered in previous modules)

Training Activities	Methodology	Time
Part I: Hiring Your Personal Assistants *(approximately 2.5 hours, plus break)*		
5.1 Overview of Consumer-Directed Program Requirements	Presentation & discussion	30 min
5.2 Communicating Your Needs: Developing a Staffing Plan and Work Agreement	Discussion & individual work	60 min
Break		15 min
5.3 Interviewing and Hiring PAs	Small-group work & discussion	75 min
Part II: Orienting and Supporting Your PAs *(approximately 3 hours)*		
5.4 Introduction to Training PAs • Best/Worst Learning Experiences • Personal Styles	Large-group discussion, presentation, large-group exercise	60 min
Break		15 min
5.5 Learner Styles	Quiz and discussion	30 min
5.6 Other Issues and Challenges in Orienting/Supporting Your PA staff	Review of handout and mini presentation, large-group discussion	60 min
5.7 Closing	Large-group discussion	15 min

Materials

- Flipchart, easel, markers, tape, pens, pencils
- Handouts:
  - *Personal Assistance Planning List* (From Module Two)

- *Personal Preference Assessment: Mapping Out My Comfort Zone* (from Module Two)
    - *Personal Assistance Planning List—Beginning to Staff*
    - *Work Agreement* (blank)
    - *Telephone Screening Exercise* (from Module Three)
    - *My Best and Worst Learning Experiences*
    - *Personal Style Continuum*
    - *Learning Style Quiz*
    - *Auditory, Visual, and Kinesthetic Learners* (Three Handouts)
- If participants completed the *Personal Assistance Planning List* and *Personal Preference Assessment: Mapping Out My Comfort Zone* as homework for Module Two, they should bring those forms to this workshop.
- It is expected that participants will have completed Modules One to Four prior to attending this workshop. If so, they should bring their Resource Binders with them, including all the handouts from those modules.

Advance Preparation

- Make enough copies of handouts for all participants.

PART I. HIRING YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

ACTIVITY 5.1: OVERVIEW OF CONSUMER-DIRECTED PROGRAM REQUIREMENTS 30 minutes

Key Content

- Consumers need to be clear that they are responsible for knowing information about program and administrative requirements, for communicating it to their prospective and current workers, as necessary, and for meeting reporting requirements.
- This is not an in-depth session where all the consumer's questions are answered. It is designed to provide a summary review of what is required as an employer. As consumers move closer to hiring, they will receive more detailed orientation.

Advance Preparation

Program requirements differ by state and even by city or town. Appropriate information therefore will need to be gathered locally and, for this session, should be distributed to consumers in writing. The trainer for this session should be very familiar with the consumer-directed program's policies and procedures and be prepared to talk briefly about it with the group.

Training Steps

Handout and briefly provide an overview of these program requirements and administrative forms:

- Program application forms
- Overview of Medicaid information
- Any specific mandates regarding what personal assistants (PAs) are allowed or not allowed to do with regard to providing care
- Wages and any benefits to be paid to PAs (including health insurance and sick, vacation and holiday pay, if any).
- Requirements or restrictions on the number of hours PAs are allowed to work (i.e., not more than 40 hours per week, etc.)
- Application requirements for hiring (i.e., specific forms, Social Security numbers, citizenship verification, etc.)
- Payroll administration (how timesheets are to be filled out, when they must be submitted, who gets checks, when, etc.)

- Information about whether there are any oversight requirements (For example, New York City requires that an RN visit twice per year to assess whether the consumer's needs are being met satisfactorily.)
- Who to contact regarding payroll problems, problems signing up new PAs, etc.
- Any requirements or monetary allowances (or resources) for training of PAs (again, New York City allows consumers up to 40 hours a year to be used in paying PAs while they are being trained.)
- The process for terminating employment of PAs
- Any other relevant information required for implementation of the program

ACTIVITY 5.2: COMMUNICATING YOUR NEEDS: DEVELOPING A STAFFING PLAN AND WORK AGREEMENT

60 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain that personal assistance needs include not only tasks to be performed but also their unique needs and preferences regarding how these tasks are to be carried out.
- Communicate about personal preferences to others.
- Develop a staffing plan.
- Draft a work agreement for the primary personal assistant (PA) position in their staffing plan.

Key Content

- Remind participants (from discussions in Module Two) that one of the most critical elements to developing an effective working relationship between a consumer and a PA is that the consumer needs to have a comprehensive and clear understanding of his/her assistance needs. And because it is, literally, *personal* assistance that is being provided, these assistance needs inevitably encompass preference and lifestyle issues as well as tasks that need to be performed.

- Developing a staffing plan involves identifying what kind of assistance you need and when. This helps you know how many people you will need in your PA pool. During the hiring process, you will find some people who are good for some categories and not for others.

- The basic categories for staffing are:
  - Regularly scheduled PAs (e.g., Monday to Friday, from 9 to 3 p.m.)
  - Back-up PAs: that is, those people who routinely come in on weekends or evenings, or whenever your regular PA needs time off (e.g., for doctor's appointments or sickness).
  - Emergency assistance PAs (i.e., people you can call on when both your regularly scheduled PAs and their back-ups are not available).

- Many consumers find that developing a work agreement (or job description) is helpful in both hiring and working with PAs. Studies have also shown that workers often prefer to have a written description of their work duties. A work agreement can be shared in a hiring interview, to give prospective employees a better idea of what working with the consumer will be like. It can also help to minimize disagreements later on.

- Specifically, a work agreement can be used:
  - To help the consumer get a realistic picture of his/her assistance needs, limitations, and lifestyle.
  - As a guideline for more in-depth questions in the interview process.
  - To give a prospective employee some idea of what the position requires.
  - As a checklist of duties and responsibilities of the position.
  - As an evaluation tool of the PA's performance on the job.
  - (By the consumer) To remind the employer about the original agreement, so the employer doesn't take advantage of the PA.
  - (By both) To clarify disputes between the consumer and the worker as to what the worker's duties are.
  - To help keep communication open in the consumer/PA relationship.
  - To establish the position as a "real" job, with standards and recognition, and not just someone "helping out."

(Adapted from a list developed by the Community Living Alliance in Madison, Wisconsin)

Training Steps

Large-group discussion (5 min)

1. Review the discussions from Module Two, asking participants why it is important to know your personal assistance needs and personal preferences *before* hiring a PA.

Individual work (20 min)

2. Explain that a staffing plan identifies what kind of assistance you need and when. Explain the importance of having a staffing plan and the three categories of staff to include (see **Key Content** above).

3. Ask participants to turn to the *Personal Assistance Planning List* and *Personal Preference Assessment: Mapping Out My Comfort Zone* that they filled out after Module Two.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> If these forms were not filled out after Module Two, or you have some participants who did not attend that workshop, you will need to have participants fill them out now. If only a few need to do this, you could make a small group and have one trainer/facilitator work with them. (Hopefully, they can catch up with the others.)

4. Based on their two assessment forms, ask participants to develop a staffing plan that includes all three categories of staff. Distribute as an example: *Personal Assistance Planning List: Beginning to Staff (15 min)*

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Each participant needs to complete his/her own staffing plan. However, if it seems that most will need a lot of help from facilitators to do this, you may be able to form small working groups and assign one facilitator to help each group.

5. Ask participants: *Has anyone ever seen a job description for any job they've ever held?* If someone says "yes," then ask: *What do you think was the purpose of having a job description for the employer? For you, as the employee?*

Large-group discussion (10 min)

6. Distribute the *Sample Work Agreement*. Quickly go over the main categories of the work agreement.

7. Ask participants, *Why do you think this would be important to have as an employer?* (see **Key Content** for some of the answers you are looking for).

Individual work (20 min)

8. Ask participants to develop a work agreement for their PA position(s). These will be based on their *Personal Assistance Planning List* and *Personal Preference Assessment*. Remind them to refer to their staffing plans and see if they think different work agreements are necessary for different positions.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> As with the staffing plans, each participant needs to complete a very basic work agreement. However, if it seems that most will need a lot of help from facilitators to do this, you may be able to form small working groups and assign one facilitator to help each group.

Summary discussion (15 min)

9. Ask participants:
   - *How do you feel now about being an employer in a consumer-directed program?*
   - *Have your ideas or feelings about this changed at all after doing this activity? How?*

ACTIVITY 5.3: INTERVIEWING AND HIRING PERSONAL ASSISTANTS — 75 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate how to use the work agreement as a guide for interviewing personal assistant (PA) candidates.
- Demonstrate using open-ended questions and paraphrasing as communication tools during an interview.
- Explain why it is important to check references.
- Describe the steps of hiring a PA.
- Explain why it is important to contact candidates that you have decided not to hire.

Key Content

- NOTE**:** This is designed as an introductory skills practice session that builds on Module Three.

- The *Essential Elements of the Complete Hiring Process* are (from Module Three):
  - Advertising and screening
  - In-person interview and assessment
  - Checking references
  - Making the offer
  - Contacting candidates not chosen for the position

- The key objectives of interviewing candidates are to:
  - Show candidates that this is a situation that she/he would like to work in
  - Give the candidate a sense of what the job would be
  - Start the relationship-building process
  - Get a sense about the candidate as a worker and a person

- Decisions to make about the interview process include *who* will be there, *where* it will be conducted, and *what* will be discussed. Considerations include:
  - Having the current PA or a friend or family member attend the first interview, or doing it alone.
  - Holding the first interview in a neutral place and a second interview in the consumer's home with the finalists.

- Remind participants that active listening, asking open-ended questions, and paraphrasing are key communication skills for interviewing.

- When ending the interview, thank the candidate, be clear about next steps, and give clear messages for the candidate's further consideration.

- When checking references, ask about:
  - Job verification: Did the applicant provide an accurate job history and is there any experience relevant to the consumer's needs?
  - Responsibility: Did the applicant responsibly carry out his or her duties?
  - Punctuality: Was the applicant ever late for work? If so, often?
  - Overall quality: Would you hire this person again?

- When offering a job, both the timing and the process are important.
  - Return calls to *all* candidates who applied.
  - Make calls to offer the position(s) in the order of preference to be hired (i.e., call your favorite candidate first, then your next favorite, then your next, etc.).
  - If there are more good candidates than you have positions, ask candidates who will not be hired if they would be available for back-up, emergency, or future positions.

- Reminder: When consumers are developing their staffing plan, they must keep in mind they are responsible for finding replacements for vacation for their regular PA and emergency coverage. One way to do this is to stay in contact with applicants who were not hired but may be available to do replacement or emergency coverage. Working with several PAs at a time maximizes flexibility with regard to emergencies—you have more people to turn to if the unexpected occurs.

Training Steps

Large-group discussion (10 min)

1. Review with participants *Essential Elements of the Complete Hiring Process*. This was covered in Module Three; ask what they remember about advertising and screening and key objectives of the in-person interview. Participants should have their Resource Binders with them and can follow along by reviewing the handouts.

> **Training Option**
>
> If participants have not attended Module Three, this information can be covered in a presentation. Or, you can substitute this session with several of the activities from Module Three, according to the needs of your participants.

2. Ask participants what they remember about active listening, asking open-ended questions, and paraphrasing.

> ⇨ ***Training Tips***
> If you still have the flipcharts of questions from those activities in Module Three, post them on the wall and remind participants about what they discussed and why it was important.

3. Explain that the purpose of this activity is to build upon what was covered in Module Three, to give them some practice with the interviewing process and skills, and to cover the next and final steps in the hiring process—checking references and the hiring step itself.

Role-play (30 min)

4. Explain that, in order to practice interviewing skills, one participant will have a chance to role-play conducting an interview. Ask for two volunteers to role-play the consumer (i.e., him/herself) and the candidate. Refer to the *Telephone Screening Exercise* from Module Three. The trainer picks one of the candidates from the telephone screening for the consumer to interview.

5. After positioning the "consumer" and the "candidate" for the role-play, ask the consumer:
   - *Who would you like to have with you at this interview, if anyone? (If they want someone with them, ask another participant to join in.)*
   - *Where will this interview be conducted?*
   - *What points do you want to be sure to cover—e.g., from your work agreement or from your personal preferences assessment?*

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Set up the role-play in a place in the room where everyone can hear and see. Remind the players to speak loud enough for everyone to hear them.

6. Have the participants conduct the role-play for about five minutes and then stop them. Acknowledge that they are just getting started, but note that this may be a good time to reflect on where the interview is going and if there are ways to improve the communication.

7. Ask the "consumer":
   - *How do you feel about the quality of the information you are getting from the candidate—i.e., can you determine yet, if they are close to your ideal PA?*
   - If yes, continue. If no, ask: *What key questions do you feel you need to ask differently or more of?*

⇨ **Training Tips**

- Give the consumer additional time to come up with more questions.
- As the other participants observe the role-play, ask them to think of questions they would ask the candidate.

8. Continue the role-play for another five to ten minutes, instructing the "consumer" to try some of the suggestions and his/her own ideas about improving the communication.

⇨ **Training Tips**

- It is important to give the participant playing the consumer role a second chance to try out the communication skills and to get to the key questions. Without that second try, he/she might feel frustrated and embarrassed after this experience.

- If the "consumer" gets stuck, the trainer can gently put her hand on the consumer's shoulder and ask participants to help out by offering suggestions on questions to ask that may help in getting him/her unstuck. (If the group has never seen this technique before, explain that putting your hand on the role-player's shoulder is a symbolic sign that conveys, "You're not alone, I'm here to help you out." Participants may become nervous or frustrated in the role-play and this move often has a calming effect.)

9. Debrief:
   - Ask the other participants: *What did you observe about the communication skills being used? What was done well? What could be done better?*
   - Ask the "consumer": *How do you feel about using this process to conduct the interview?*

10. The trainer wraps up by reinforcing what the consumer did well, in terms of interviewing steps and skills. The trainer thanks the volunteers.

Large-group discussion/presentation (20 min)

11. Spend five minutes reviewing ways to conclude the interview by making these points:
    - Remind participants that it is always important to thank the candidate for their time and interest—no matter how well the interview went.
    - Next steps must be clearly explained, including when you will get back to them whether they are chosen or not.
    - Candidates should be left with a clear message for consideration (e.g., asking the applicant to think carefully about the responsibilities and commitment of the job).

12. Review the importance of checking references. Ask participants to quickly find a partner (or two if there is an odd number), and ask them to discuss for three to five minutes whether they would prefer their applicants to bring their references to the interview (letting them know in advance), or would they prefer to request them after the interview, having decided that this is an applicant they would consider hiring. Have the pairs report out in a large group some key points and then ask participants about the pros and cons of each option

13. Review the key content about offering a job:
    - Return calls to *all* candidates who applied.
    - Make calls to offer the position(s) in the order of preference to be hired (i.e., call your favorite candidate first, then your next favorite, then your next, etc.).
    - If there are more good candidates than you have positions, ask candidates who will not be hired if they would be available for back-up, emergency, or future positions.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
> - Remind participants that all the information we are reviewing (interview tips, concluding the interview, checking references, offering a job) has been covered in Module Three and they have already received handouts on the information.
>
> - For participants who have not attended the first phase of this training, it may be useful to distribute the handouts from Module Three.

14. In the large group, ask participants why it is important to return calls to all applicants who have been interviewed.

Pairs skills practice (15 minutes)

15. To provide consumers an opportunity to practice *turning down a candidate* for a position, a particularly difficult skill, ask the participants to quickly form pairs (with someone sitting next to him/her) and have each one take a turn giving the other person "the news." Give the pairs about five minutes. In a large group ask the "candidates" what they thought and felt about the consumer's handling of the situation, and to the "consumers," how did it feel in the moment?

PART II. ORIENTING AND SUPPORTING YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANTS

ACTIVITY 5.4: INTRODUCTION TO TRAINING PERSONAL ASSISTANTS 60 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe four basic dimensions of personal style.
- Describe their own personal style in regard to these dimensions.
- Explain that there is no right or wrong communication style.
- Explain how assumptions and judgments they make about others' behavior may be a result of stylistic differences.
- Explain how an awareness of stylistic differences and avoidance of judgments based on these differences can have a positive impact on orienting and supporting a personal assistant (PA).

Key Content

- The purpose of this activity is to further participants' awareness of their own personal styles or approach to life and how individual style can have an impact on communication and relationship building with PAs.

- There are four dimensions presented in this model of personal styles, with a continuum of individual characteristics for each dimension:
  - Introvert/ Extrovert
  - Big-Picture/ Detail-Oriented
  - Feeler/ Thinker
  - Present-Oriented/ Future-Oriented

- Each of these represents the extreme in each dimension of personality. Most people will find themselves responding to some characteristics on one side and some on the other.

- Remember that each person is unique, and this activity is designed to give you insight into your own and others' ways of being in the world. No place on the continuum is right or wrong, or better or worse. The goal is to better understand oneself and others and appreciate how we might have an emotional response or make judgments about others whose way of being is different from ours.

- Once we are aware of our styles, it becomes possible to change our approach and communicate more effectively with people who are different from us.

Training Steps

Large-group discussion (10 min)

1. Explain that this activity is intended to start participants thinking about how to train their new PAs, now that they have been hired. The consumer now takes on a "trainer" or "teacher" role in the relationship with the PA. It is important to consider your own experiences of learning—both good and bad—as a framework for what kind of learning experience you want to create for your PA.

2. Distribute the handout *My Best and Worst Learning Experiences* and ask participants to take five minutes to jot down or think about, *What has been your best learning experience, including childhood and adulthood? What made it your best? What has been your worst learning experience, including childhood and adulthood? What made it your worst?*

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Trainers may need to assist participants who have cognitive or physical disabilities in this exercise.

3. In a large group, ask participants to report out what they wrote down or what came to mind. Write the answers to both the worst/ best learning experiences on a flipchart.

4. Ask participants: *Based on these experiences, what can you do, as the trainer, to make the learning experience for your PA successful and effective?* Write these responses on flipchart paper. Note that this activity and the next will focus on the potential impact of personal style and learning style on the learning experience for participants and their PAs.

Presentation (5 min)

5. Before introducing the *Personal Style Inventory*, give a brief presentation on the need to understand someone else and the need to understand oneself in order to enhance communication and learning experiences.
   - This activity is designed to help each of us become more aware of aspects of our personal style. There are many aspects of personal style, but we will be looking at four basic dimensions that play a big role in communication with others.
   - Each dimension has two extremes. Give the example of Extrovert/Introvert. Ask participants if they are familiar with these terms. If not, explain by briefly summarizing the descriptions on the handout.
   - Explain that most people are not entirely extroverted or entirely introverted and have some aspects of both. But usually, people *tend toward* one or the other to some extent. You can think of this dimension as a line (draw a line on the blank flipchart page), going from totally introverted on one end to totally extroverted on the other.
   - Label each end of the line, making sure it is labeled the same as on the first page of the handout. Explain that this kind of line, showing a continuous progression from one extreme to another, is called a "continuum."

- Briefly talk about the introvert/extrovert elements in yourself and place yourself along the continuum on the flipchart page by marking an X.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> You are modeling for participants the thought process they will need to engage in when they are asked to self-identify along each continuum. Make sure everyone understands why you put the X where you did.

Large-group exercise (45 min)

6. Distribute the *Personal Styles* handout. Explain that participants will now get a chance to place themselves along this continuum and three other continuums that reflect differences in personal style.

7. Read aloud the handout introduction. Emphasize that our ultimate goal in identifying our own styles is to be able to communicate more effectively with people who are different from us. *(Steps 6-7, 5 min)*

8. Read the introvert/extrovert descriptions on the handout and ask participants to think about where they would place themselves on the line. Remind them that they will probably respond to some items on each side, but to pay attention to those that elicit the strongest response in order to determine which end of the continuum they are closest to.

9. Explain that we're now going to share how we identify ourselves by drawing a continuum line from one end of the flipchart to the other for the Introvert/Extrovert dimension, and marking each person's position with his/her initial (or initials if more than one person's names start with the same letter). Ask participants to help you to place them on the continuum by instructing you on where to place the X.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
> - An easy way for the trainer to do this is to start in the middle of the continuum for each participant, and then have them guide you by saying, "more to the left *[or right]*, more, more… there."
>
> - Explain that there may be spots along the line where two or more people feel they belong. That's okay; just double-up the X's (or initials if using them), and ask: *Are the two of you really exactly the same degree of extroverted or introverted?*
>
> - Allow time for informal discussion. You may need more time for this if participants already know each other, as they are likely to share their opinions about who belongs where. This can be a valuable part of the exercise. Ultimately, however,

each participant must be allowed to decide for themselves where they belong.

10. Once everyone has been placed along the line, ask them to look at the line and see where the other participants have placed themselves. Ask: *What about your experience or sense of yourself led you to place yourself where you did? (Steps 8-10, 10 min)*

⇨ **Training Tip**
Some people may decide to shift position once they hear others speak. This is okay.

11. Repeat Steps 8-10 for each of the remaining three dimensions. *(25 min)*

12. Ask participants: *How do you think knowing this information about yourself will help you to more effective in training your PAs? How will it be for you to work with a PA who is quite different in "style" from you? (10 min)*

ACTIVITY 5.5: LEARNING STYLES — 30 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe three different styles of learning information and skills: auditory, visual, and kinesthetic.
- Describe their own learning style
- Explain how their style may be different from that of their personal assistants (PAs) and how these differences may affect the learning experience.

Key Content

- Research on learning has shown that there are at least three different "styles" of learning: *auditory, kinesthetic,* and *visual.*
- Someone with an auditory learning style learns best by hearing; someone with a kinesthetic learning style learns best by doing; and someone with a visual learning style learns best by seeing.
- Some people fall in between several categories. That means they are more or less comfortable learning in various ways, often dependent on the situation. Also, just because you are primarily one kind of learner does not mean you don't learn in other ways. It just indicates that it may be easier for you to learn in your dominant learning style rather than one of the other two.
- Knowing which learning style you prefer, and being able to assess which style is likely to be preferred by your PA, can help you to see where you might have different approaches to learning. If you know this, you can make an effort to provide information in a way your PA can more easily understand.

Training Steps

Large-group exercise/individual activity

1. Explain that, in this activity, participants are going to have the opportunity to identify their own learning style. People are generally aware if they like to learn from listening or watching, doing or reading. Most everyone has a preference of putting a new gadget together—do they read the instructions thoroughly before beginning, just look at the pictures, or just go at it with their own intuition? This exercise will help people identify how they learn best.

2. Distribute the *Learning Style Quiz*. Ask the participants to take 10 minutes to go through and answer the 13 questions, circling A, V, or K next to the statement that best represents their style.

⇨ **Training Tips**

- Do not explain what A, V, and K stand for. Completing the quiz without knowing the categories allows participants to identify the behaviors themselves that describe their learning style and to build up their own personal learning "profile" — which is likely to be a combination of different styles.

- Facilitators may need to assist participants who have physical or cognitive disabilities to complete the quiz.

3. When everyone has completed the quiz, ask people to count the number of A's and place that number in the space provided at the end of the quiz. Do the same for V and K. Ask them to note which letter has the most. (Steps 1-3, 15 minutes)

4. Distribute the handouts: *Auditory, Visual,* and *Kinesthetic Learners*. Review each handout, making some of the statements real by adding concrete examples. Ask participants to refer to their "quiz" to see which category they fit into. (5 min)

⇨ **Training Tip**

Explain that some people fall in between several categories, and that's okay. It just means that they are more or less comfortable learning in various ways—often dependent on the situation. Also, just because you are one kind of learner does not mean you don't learn in other ways. It just indicates that it may be easier for you to learn in your dominant learning style.

5. Ask all the auditory learners to indicate who they are. Do the same for the visual and kinesthetic learners. (If possible, group participants with similar styles together). Ask the groups the following questions and compare and contrast their responses. (10 min)
   - *What is learning like when someone is lecturing at you?*
   - *What is learning like when it involves role-plays and moving around?*
   - *What was learning like when you were handed a binder of orientation materials and told you had to learn it within two weeks? (if appropriate)*
   - *What are written tests like for you?*
   - *How have the small-group discussions been for you so far over the past few days?*
   - *What do you do when you get a new gadget that comes with instructions to put it together?*
   - *How would you give someone instructions to get to your house?*
   - *How would you teach someone to give a bed bath?*

⇨ **Training Tips**
Responses to these questions need to be short. However, it's important to hear from each group on each question, and to use at least one question that will be strongly positive for each of the three learning styles.

6. Summary: It is important to keep in mind that the best way you learn may not be the best way your PA is going to learn. Differences in learning styles may be a point of frustration, aggravation, or just miscommunication.

ACTIVITY 5.6: OTHER ISSUES AND CHALLENGES IN ORIENTING AND SUPPORTING YOUR PERSONAL ASSISTANCE (PA) STAFF 60 minutes

⇨ **Training Tips**

- Orienting and supporting PAs is a big topic, including issues of responsibility, supervision, communication, economics, psychology, etc. Depending on the experience of participants, some issues will be more crucial to address now than others.
- In this last session of the workshop, the trainer needs to determine what areas need to be addressed to best meet the needs of participants in the time remaining. A range of topics is suggested here, with some ideas about how to approach them. However, the trainers may decide to use the remaining time to clarify or go into more depth on issues covered in previous activities—for example, discussing record-keeping and meeting administrative requirements or doing more role-plays on conducting interviews.
- Follow-up meetings, or the formation of a support group, may provide opportunities to address other issues and to continue to support the on-going development of the consumer as an employer.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify other factors to address in orienting and supporting PAs.
- Describe at least one strategy that they can use to enhance their ability to orient and support their PAs.

Key Content

◈ *Management issues:* One of the important tasks for the consumer, in collaboration with his/her PAs, is to organize the work to help things run as smoothly as possible for both the consumer and the PA and to minimize any potential problems. Other issues to consider are confidentiality, privacy, and the relationship of friends and family with the PA.

◈ The best way to keep an employee is to ensure that she or he finds the job satisfying and feels valued for the work that she/he does. As employers, it is valuable for consumers to know what PAs find fulfilling about their work and, therefore, what will make them more likely to stay in a particular job. It has been noted that attendants like being able to help others and to feel that they are doing something worthwhile. It has also been reported that the job aspects that PAs like least are the lack of flexibility of working hours, no clear definition of duties or written contract, lack of family cooperation, and failure of their employers to act as independently as possible.

- Research has found that PAs looked for the following characteristics/attitudes in employers with disabilities (listed in order of importance):
  - Treating employees with kindness, fairness, and respect
  - Knowing their own assistance needs
  - Being able to offer both praise and criticism, when appropriate
  - Acting as independently as possible

- It is important to praise employees. Good communication includes letting people know when things are going well and when they have done good work.

Training Steps

A. Key Management and Personal/Social Issues

Large-group presentation and discussion (30 min)

1. Post a flipchart with the ten key issues (Management [7] and Personal/Social issues [3]) listed below.

2. Using the bullets underneath each issue, give participants a brief description of the content within the seven management topic areas.

3. Ask participants to choose one or two of the management issues that they would like to know more about, discuss further, or that they find confusing. Lead a discussion on those topics.

4. Move on to the Personal/Social Issues. Repeat Steps 2 and 3.

Management Issues

1. Divide the work fairly**:**
   - It is important to try to avoid overburdening any one person
   - Different personal and household tasks are usually completed at different times of the day.

- It is probably not possible to divide things exactly evenly, but it is important for the consumer to be aware of the relative degrees of work and responsibility that one assistant may have in relationship to another.
- Encourage participants to talk over the distribution of the work with his/her PAs.

2. Diversify your staff**:**
   - Having several workers, rather than one or two, provides more flexibility, including if you need to replace someone temporarily or permanently.
   - Ask consumers to consider their PA's needs, schedules, and the availability.
   - Identify how many PAs they would consider optimal.
   - Additionally, consider the talents and skills of your workers. Do they compliment each other?

3. Maintain a home that supports the consumer and the PA:
   - Remind the group that their home is also the worker's place of employment.
   - This means that a degree of orderliness and cleanliness is called for, even if the consumer doesn't mind having a messy home. It is possible that a worker might leave a job because the work environment does not feel comfortable.
   - It is also the responsibility of the employer to make sure that appropriate and sufficient cleaning and laundry supplies are always available.
   - On the other hand, a consumer's very high cleanliness standards may place a burden on PAs.
   - Suggest that consumers work with their staff to find the right balance.

4. Look for recurring tasks, predictable and unpredictable needs:
   - It is important to identify tasks that are regular and predictable—for example, taking out the garbage and recycling.
   - Similarly, identify tasks that need attention but are less predictable—for example, replacing batteries, flat tires, or responding to a power failure.
   - Planning for these less predictable events is important.

5. Keep a master calendar:
   - Discuss how and where to keep a master calendar for yourself and your PAs, so that all PAs are aware of who is working when.
   - A master calendar is also important in scheduling for any special events that may require additional support.

6. Record Keeping:
   - The Master Calendar helps for planning ahead; record keeping is for keeping track of what actually occurred.

- Advise consumers about the need to keep detailed records. In addition to timesheets that may be required by Medicaid or other agencies, consumers should keep their own records of who worked when.
- This can be a very simple daily record that includes the name of the PA and how many hours were worked.
- In addition, once paychecks have been received, a notation should be made matching this record with the hours and time period indicated on the paycheck.

7. Role clarification for RN supervisors:
    - Some programs require an RN to visit the consumer several times a year. It may be to verify continuing program eligibility or to determine if the consumer's needs are being adequately addressed.
    - For programs where this is the case, it is helpful to review the role of the RN (Who do they report to? What exactly is the purpose of the visit? What is their relationship to the consumer, to the PA? How often are they likely to visit?)

Personal/Social Issues

8. Confidentiality**:**
    - The relationship between a consumer and his/her PA involves the exchange of a great deal of private information about each other.
    - It is important that both parties not share what they know about one another with others—including other aides or family members or friends—without a specific, work-related reason.
    - In addition, confidentiality is important for some conversations between the consumer and the PA. For example, if a disagreement occurs, the consumer and the assistant should attempt to have this is a conversation privately.

9. Privacy**:**
    - How much privacy a consumer needs can vary from individual to individual; the important thing to be aware of is that everyone needs some degree of privacy.
    - As the employer, the consumer needs to take responsibility for working with the PA to make sure that his/her privacy needs are met within the structure of the work situation.
    - PAs who "live in" often have a particularly difficult time finding any opportunities for privacy.

10. Family/friends:
    - Being attentive to how family, friends and PAs interact is important to maintaining a good working relationship.
    - All parties should be clear that the work relationship is between the consumer and the PA. This means that family and friends need to respect

and abide by these terms and not fall into the habit of instructing or making other demands of the PA.
- At the same time, the PA needs to appreciate and respect that friends and family are important relationships to the consumer.
- Advise consumers that this is an area, like confidentiality and privacy (above) that is useful to talk about during a weekly "check-in."

B. Characteristics in an Employer that are Important to PAs

Large-group discussion; or small-group discussions, with plenary reporting (20 min)

1. Ask participants what characteristics they think PAs would look for in an employer.

2. Post a flipchart with the following points. Explain that research has found that PAs looked for the following characteristics/attitudes in employers with disabilities (listed in order of importance):

   1st. Treating employees with kindness, fairness, and respect
   2nd. Knowing their own assistance needs
   3rd. Being able to offer both praise and criticism, when appropriate
   4th. Acting as independently as possible

3. Discuss these findings with the group, or assign each characteristic to a small group. Ask: *Is there anything surprising in what these PAs have reported? Anything the consumer disagrees with? Why? Would any of the things on this list be on the consumer's list of what they would want from an employee (i.e., kindness, fairness, respect)?*

4. The fourth item on the list, "Acting as independently as possible," may be a little puzzling to consumers. You may help them to grasp this issue better by noting:
   - The ultimate decision regarding when it is okay to ask for help must come from the consumer.
   - However, because help is available, consumers may sometimes request it, even when it isn't really needed—it is something the consumer could do for themselves, but it has become a habit to request assistance.
   - There are some tasks that consumers definitely can't do for themselves, and there are others that they could do, but if they do them, they might be too tired to do anything else (like go to work).

5. Ask the group for examples of tasks that they can't do for themselves, those they could do, but might choose not to for a legitimate reason, and those that they might choose not to do, just because help is available. Discuss these with the group, and consider why it is important to the worker that the consumer be as independent as possible.

C. Why It Is Important to Praise Employees

Large-group discussion (10 min)

1. Discuss what it means to be thanked when you do a job well. It doesn't matter that it is part of your regular responsibilities—the thank you is still appreciated.

2. Note that Smith's research showed that PAs "found it most difficult to work for employers who…rarely, if ever, showed appreciation for a job well done." Emphasize that good communication includes letting people know when things are going well and when they have done good work. Compliments should always be sincere, and thanks or praise should be given frequently. Praise can be a simple "thanks" or "I appreciate it"; in some cases, the consumer may want to take more time to express appreciation for a particular effort or kindness that was meaningful to him/her.

3. Ask the group members if they can think of anyone they know of whom they believe to be particularly sincere and effective in saying "thank you." Why?

ACTIVITY 5.7: CLOSING 15 minutes

Training Steps

1. Explain that we have now come to the closing of the workshop, which is a time to reflect on what was learned and how this learning can be applied. Ask participants:
   - *What is the most important thing that you have learned today?*
   - *How do you think you can apply what you have learned today?*
   - *What kind of follow-up activities would you like to see to reinforce what was covered over the time we've been together?*
   - *How do you think this workshop should be used in the future?*

2. Thank everyone for their feedback and participation.

3. Celebrate, as appropriate.

MODULE SIX:
SUPERVISION

Goals To orient consumers to the coaching approach to supervision, to enhance key communication skills, and to apply these skills to problem situations.

Time About 5 hours *(depending on whether participants have completed earlier modules and how well content was understood and skills applied)*

Activity	Methodology	Time
Part I: Introduction to Coaching Supervision *(approximately 1.5 hrs, plus break)*		
6.1 Group Introductions	Discussion	15 min
6.2 Importance of Supervision & Overview of Coaching Supervision	Presentation	15 min
6.3 Role-play of Traditional Supervision	Role-play and discussion	15 min
6.4 Role-play of Coaching Approach to Supervision	Role-play & discussion; presentation	45 min
Break		15 min
Part II: Effective Coaching Skills *(approximately 3.5 hrs)*		
6.5 Listening Exercise	Demonstration role-plays, pairs role-play, discussion	30 min
6.6 Paraphrase and Open-Ended Clarifying Questions	Large-group discussion, pairs work, demonstration role-play	40 min
6.7 Blocks to Listening	Presentation and small-group work	20 min
Break		15 min
6.8 Pull Back Strategies	Presentation, brainstorm, small-group work, discussion	40 min
6.9 Talking About Things That Are Hard to Talk About	Role plays, discussion	50 min
6.10 Closing	Large-group discussion	15 min

Materials

- Flipchart, easel, markers, tape, pens, pencils
- Handouts:
  - *Why Coaching?*
  - *Role-Play Scenario: Traditional Supervision* (2 pages)
  - *Elements of Traditional Supervision*
  - *Role-Play Scenario: Coaching Supervision* (6 pages)
  - *What a Coach Supervisor Does*
  - *Elements of Coaching Supervision*
  - *Active Listening* (same handout as in Module Three)
  - *Lead-ins for Clarifying Questions*
  - *Paraphrase and Clarifying Questions Worksheet*
  - *Blocks to Listening* (5 pages)
  - *Choosing Option* B (8 pages)

Advance Preparation

- Make enough copies of handouts for all participants.
- To avoid confusion, use different colored paper for the *Paraphrase…* worksheet and the *Lead-ins…* handout.
- Prepare flipcharts of: *Benefits of Coaching* and *Definition of Coaching Supervision* (Activity 6.2); *Elements of the Traditional Approach* (Act. 6.3)

PART I: INTRODUCTION TO COACHING SUPERVISION

ACTIVITY 6.1: GROUP INTRODUCTIONS 15 minutes

Key Content

- Since this module is highly participatory, it is important to start with an activity that makes everyone feel welcome and acknowledged in the group. Participants should feel comfortable jumping in with their own thoughts and responses.

- To help achieve that atmosphere, participants and trainers will learn one another's names and brief, pertinent information about their supervisory experience. If participants already know each other, they will hopefully gain more ease with each other by beginning the module in this way.

Training Steps

1. Trainers introduce themselves, including a brief description of their background.

2. Ask participants to introduce themselves by going around the circle. Ask them to mention their experience in employing their own personal assistants (PAs). If the participants all know each other already, ask them to share something about themselves that others in the group don't already know.

3. Continue until everyone has been introduced.

⇨ **Training Tips**

- It's important that trainers who don't yet know the participants make an effort to learn everyone's name as soon as possible. Write them down if necessary.

- Keep your own introduction brief and focused.

- Listen carefully to each participant. Remember, you are modeling good coaching practices.

- If participants don't know each other at all, you can adapt this as a partner activity.

ACTIVITY 6.2: IMPORTANCE OF SUPERVISION AND OVERVIEW OF COACHING SUPERVISION 15 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain that problems in retention of PAs can often be traced to lack of attention paid to the critical role of supervision. Consequently, there is inadequate training and support for consumers who hire and supervise their own PAs.
- Describe how their life and/or work experiences have taught them to use a traditional approach to supervision, which does not provide them with the tools needed to work effectively with PAs.
- Define coaching supervision.
- List the four major benefits of the coaching approach.

Key Content

The Importance of Supervision

- The job of supervising PAs is demanding, stressful, and largely unsupported.
- The role of supervisors in the satisfaction and retention of workers is critical. However, too little attention is paid to this critical role and to training and support for supervisors.
- The traditional approach to supervision does not provide the tools needed to effectively supervise PAs.

Coaching Supervision in Consumer-Direction Settings

- The primary goal of the seminar is to introduce participants to the coaching approach and help them understand how coaching works in the context of supervision.
- Coaching supervision is defined as “a relational approach to working with frontline employees that helps workers to develop problem-solving skills: the ability to think critically, prioritize, and communicate effectively.”
- The coaching approach to supervision was developed in the corporate business world during the 1990s. Coaching has proven results, including these four major benefits:
    1. Enhances retention
    2. Reduces conflict
    3. Improves problem solving
    4. Improves likelihood that consumer and worker needs will be met

Training Steps

Presentation & discussion: The Importance of Supervision (5 min)

1. Introduce this module by stating that supervision is one responsibility that consumers assume when they opt to direct their own services. Explain that supervisors' jobs are demanding and stressful generally and are particularly strained by the uniqueness of the relationship between the PA and the consumer as employer/friend. Explain that supervisors play a critical role in retaining direct-care staff and that this relationship is complicated further by the reality that people with disabilities depend on their PAs to live their lives fully.
2. Write this statement on a flipchart sheet: *Workers don't leave their jobs, they leave their supervisors.* Ask for a volunteer to read it aloud. Ask for reactions to this statement from participants' experience.
3. Define the problems as lack of attention paid to the critical role of supervisors, lack of adequate training and support for supervisors, and a traditional approach to supervision that does not provide supervisors with the necessary tools to work effectively.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
>
> - It is important to clarify that the participants are *not personally to blame* for the retention problem in direct care. The problem is insufficient training and support, as well as an ineffective approach used with traditional supervision.
>
> - When requesting reactions to the information, ask participants to be brief—explain that you want to know whether or not the information makes sense in their experience, but that this is not a time for sharing detailed stories.
>
> - To assess your learner's needs, it may be helpful to survey the participants, asking if anyone has had experience working as a supervisor or in a supervisory relationship.

Presentation & discussion: Coaching Supervision in Consumer-Direction Settings (10 min)

4. This activity is an interactive lecture/presentation. Engage participants by asking them what comes to mind when they hear the word "coaching." Let several participants share their thoughts before moving on.

5. Display a pre-written, flipchart definition of coaching (see **Key Content**). Read aloud the definition or ask a participant to do so. Explain what it means to think critically. Take questions and discuss until all participants understand this definition of coaching.

6. Mention the history of coaching, emphasizing that the corporate sector has invested a great deal of time and energy in implementing coaching supervision. Ask participants, *Why has so much time and energy been invested in learning the*

coaching approach to supervision? Allow participants to volunteer responses, some of which may relate to the four major benefits of coaching that you are about to introduce.

7. Distribute the *Why Coaching?* handout to the participants.

8. Explain that coaching supervision has been found to reap significant benefits. Display a pre-written flipchart list of the four major benefits of coaching supervision (see **Key Content**). Read the list of benefits, pausing between each item to make sure all participants understand. Ask participants if they have any questions about the meaning of items on the list.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
>
> - Although a lot of material is presented in this activity, try to keep participants engaged with questions and elicit their input. Make it as interactive as possible.
>
> - Take time to be sure all participants understand the definition of coaching and its four major benefits. This is the foundation for the rest of the seminar.

ACTIVITY 6.3: ROLE-PLAY OF TRADITIONAL SUPERVISION

15 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe the traditional approach to supervision and explain why its effectiveness is limited.
- List the five elements of the traditional approach.
- Describe connections between the traditional approach and their own experience.

Key Content

- The role-play demonstrates some of the limitations of traditional supervision.
- The steps involved in the traditional approach to supervision, as illustrated in the role-play, are:
  1. Identify issues to be addressed
  2. Explain the rules clearly
  3. Explain the consequences of breaking the rules
  4. Offer possible solutions to the problem
  5. Request or direct the worker to comply with work rules
- Participants' experiences with supervision in the past have most likely been with traditional supervision.

Training Steps

1. Pass out the role-play scenario on traditional supervision and ask for two volunteers to read it aloud, each taking a part. Ask participants to use expression in their voices.

2. Ask the group:
   - *What did you notice?*
   - *How did the worker react? What did the supervisor do?*
   - *What is the likely outcome of this interaction?*

3. Post the pre-written flipchart page and distribute *Elements of the Traditional Approach*. Explain that these were the steps followed by the supervisor in the role-play scenario. Ask for volunteers to read them aloud.

4. Invite participants to relate their experiences as supervisors or supervisees to the role-play scenario and to the flipchart list. Is this how they usually approach supervisory interactions? What are the most common outcomes, in their experience, of the kind of interactions illustrated in the role-play?

5. Ask the group, *What chance do you think this supervisory intervention has of succeeding?*

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
>
> - Explain that the role-play is not specific to consumer-directed work settings. The focus is on the approach to the supervisor uses with the worker.
>
> - The role-play scenario is the core of this activity, so it is important that it be performed effectively. Before asking for two volunteers to read it aloud, explain that you are looking for people willing to play the role and have some fun.
>
> - Keep the end discussion focused on how participants' experience relates to the flipchart list and to the role-play. Don't allow participants to dwell on the specific issue presented in the role-play scenario, rather focus them on *the relationship between the worker and the supervisor* in the role-play and the dynamic between them.
>
> - It is likely that most of the participants have limited experience in supervisory relationships. To include those participants, it may be helpful to ask for their input based on what they think happens or what they have seen portrayed on television or in the movies in terms of supervisory styles and models.

ACTIVITY 6.4: ROLE-PLAY OF COACHING APPROACH TO SUPERVISION 45 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe the coaching approach to supervision in practice.
- Explain how the coaching approach leads to more positive outcomes and more positive relationships between workers and supervisors.
- Compare or contrast their own experience with that in the role-play scenario.
- List the five basic elements of coaching supervision.

Key Content

- ◈ The coaching approach differs markedly from the traditional approach we saw modeled in the earlier role-play. The coach supervisor in this role-play behaves differently toward the worker, in a number of ways, from the traditional supervisor in the earlier role-play.
- ◈ The outcome of the scenario described in this role-play is likely to be more positive than the outcome of the first role-play. The worker is more likely to stay on the job and to have more positive feelings about herself and her supervisor as a result of the interaction.
- ◈ The seven basic elements of coaching supervision are listed in the handout: *What a Coach Supervisor Does.*

Training Steps

1. Distribute the role-play scenario on the coaching approach to supervision, and ask two volunteers to act out the parts of the supervisor and the worker.

2. Ask the group:
   - *What did you notice?*
   - *How did the worker react? What did the supervisor do?*
   - *What is the likely outcome of this interaction?*
   - *What chance do you think this intervention has of succeeding?*

3. Ask participants to relate this role-play scenario to their experiences as supervisors or as supervisees or their beliefs about supervision. *Are there familiar aspects to the coaching approach? Have they tried to take a similar approach with workers they supervise? Have they ever had a supervisor who took an approach like this?*

⇨ **Training Tip**

It is likely that most of the participants have limited experience in supervisory relationships. To include all participants, it may be helpful to ask for their input based on what they think happens or what they have seen portrayed on television or in the movies in terms of supervisory styles and models.

4. Point out that in this role-play the supervisor took a little more time with the worker than in the previous role-play. Acknowledge that the coaching approach does take more time in the early stages as it is being implemented. Explain that in the long run, however, this investment pays off; coach supervisors end up spending much less time dealing with problems.

5. Distribute handout *What a Coach Supervisor Does*. Ask for volunteers to read it aloud, relating each element to specific actions taken by the coach in the role-play. Emphasize the critical importance of *self-awareness* and *listening*.

6. Explain that the rest of the seminar will focus on developing these basic coaching skills.

⇨ **Training Tips**

- Choose volunteers who are strong readers and who can read with expression.
- You may need to explain the meaning of some of the elements on the list, such as "re-frames the issue." Refer to the role-play for specific examples of each element. Make sure all participants understand each element.

PART II. EFFECTIVE COACHING SKILLS

ACTIVITY 6.5: ACTIVE LISTENING — 30 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain the importance of listening as the communication skill that underlies all others in coaching supervision.
- Experience the difference between listening and non-listening and describe the impact of poor listening vs. active listening in any interaction.

Key Content

- This part of the workshop introduces the primary tool used in coaching supervision: listening. Good listening is essential to clear, effective communication and is of primary importance in coaching.
- "Body language" refers to the way people communicate nonverbally, through postures, facial expressions, gestures, and movement. Body language often communicates more clearly than words. Since people often respond to our body language rather than to our words, we must become more aware of our body language and learn to control it.
- *Active* listening—i.e., listening with full attention to the other person, including attentive body language—is the underlying skill in coaching supervision for the following reasons:
  - Being listened to attentively feels caring and helpful to the speaker. Not being listened to, or being listened to in an inattentive manner, feels hurtful and unhelpful.
  - When we listen with our full attention, we remember and understand more of what is being communicated. On the other hand, when we listen inattentively, we miss a great deal of what is being communicated.
- Listening with full attention to another person requires constant, conscious effort. Active listening is a skill that must be learned and practiced since it is not something we were taught or often experience.

Training Steps

Demonstration role-play (10 minutes)

1. Explain that this part of the seminar introduces the primary tool used in coaching supervision—listening. Good listening is crucial to any relationship and to effective communication. Although participants may feel that they are already good listeners,

coaching supervision requires a more conscious level of listening, called *active listening*. Define active listening (referring to the handout). Point out that most of us rarely use active listening, because we have not been taught how to do it and are not in the habit of doing so.

2. Briefly explain the importance of body language in active listening (see **Key Content**).

3. Explain that you and your co-trainer are going to engage in a set of role-plays that will demonstrate "non-listening" and "listening." Explain that one trainer will be telling a personal story to the other trainer, while that trainer will do everything within her capacity to show she is "not listening." To demonstrate nonverbal poor listening, Trainer 1 tells Trainer 2 about something that is going on in his/her life—something very important. It can be something positive or something he/she is struggling with. Trainer 2 should exaggerate nonverbal poor listening skills by becoming increasingly distracted. For example, she could keep looking at her watch, keep glancing away, get fidgety, etc. Before beginning, ask for a timekeeper and ask him or her to let you know when two minutes have passed.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
> - If two trainers are not available, choose a participant to help out and prepare him or her during the lunch break.
> - This activity works for participants only if they are sharing something that is current and important to them, so Trainer 1 has to model this in the demonstration. Also, it works only if the non-listening behaviors are really exaggerated, so Trainer 2 needs to be quite obviously *not* listening.

4. After the non-listening demonstration:
   - Ask participants*: How could you tell that Trainer 2 was not listening? What did she do*? Write participants' responses on flipchart labeled *Poor Listening*.
   - Ask Trainer 1: *How did it feel not be listened to?*
   - Ask Trainer 2: *Do you remember anything the speaker told you?* Emphasize here how little information Trainer 2 was taking in.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
> Remember that the focus is not simply on how good it feels to be listened to, but also on the importance of listening in order to clearly understand the information being shared.

5. Repeat the same role-play (with the same topic), only this time Trainer 2 should demonstrate good skills of nonverbal active listening. Again, ask for a participant to keep time for two minutes.

6. After the listening demonstration:
   - Ask participants: *How could you tell that Trainer 2 was listening?* Write participants' responses on flipchart, labeled *Active Listening*.
   - Ask Trainer 1: *How did it feel to be listened to?*
   - Ask Trainer 2: Can you retell the speaker's story?

Role-plays in pairs with large-group discussion (15 minutes)

7. Explain that participants will now have a chance to experience for themselves how poor vs. active listening feels for a speaker and to practice active listening skills. Quickly put participants in pairs. ***Instructions:*** One partner is the speaker, the other the listener (note that the roles will be switched later). Ask the speakers to think of something to share that is important to them. Ask the listeners to *really* exaggerate their nonverbal non-listening, referring to the *Poor Listening* flipchart.

8. Participants role-play for *two* minutes. The speaker should share for the full two minutes.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Some participants may become angry when they are blatantly not being listened to. Be prepared to acknowledge the anger or any other emotion elicited and ask participants what made them feel that way. Also emphasize that everyone is doing what she/he was told if this occurs.

9. Debrief with the whole class
   - Ask the speakers: *How did it make them feel to **not** be listened to?*
   - Ask the "non-listeners": *Do any remember what they were told?*

10. Repeat the exercise, this time asking the listener to use effective nonverbal active listening skills and to pay careful attention. Ask the same debriefing questions, and give people an opportunity to talk about how this felt and how it was different.

11. Ask the pairs to switch roles and repeat both the ineffective and effective non-verbal listening skills. Debrief after each one, allowing people to share their experiences.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> It is important to switch roles and repeat the exercise so that everyone can have the experience of not being listened to. Only through this experience can they fully understand how hard and frustrating it can be. You will probably find, however, that the debriefing periods can be much shorter.

Summary discussion (5 minutes)

12. Because you have been debriefing all along, wrap up the session by reviewing the primary points that participants have been making—i.e., feelings that came up when not being listened to and the importance of feeling listened to.

13. Ask participants: *What do you think is the role of active listening in coaching supervision?*

14. Emphasize that active listening is an essential skill that requires self-awareness and lots of practice. Encourage participants to strengthen their skills by trying to be effective listeners all the time.

ACTIVITY 6.6: PARAPHRASE AND OPEN-ENDED QUESTIONS
40 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate paraphrasing and asking open-ended questions.

Key Content

Definitions of paraphrasing and asking open-ended questions are covered in Module Three. If participants have not attended the Orientation Workshop (Modules One through Four), you may want to begin this activity by reviewing the handouts from Activity 3.7 and add some time to this activity.

- Remind participants about the definitions of paraphrasing and asking open-ended questions:
  - Paraphrasing means stating in your own words what you think someone just said.
  - Open-ended questions are those that do not result in a simple “yes” or “no,” or factual answers.

- When you paraphrase you will be rewarded four important ways:
  - People deeply appreciate feeling heard (refer to the Listening Exercise).
  - Paraphrasing can stop anger and cool down a crisis because the focus is on clarifying information, rather than on reacting to the situation.
  - Paraphrasing prevents miscommunication and helps you remember what was said. False assumptions, errors, and misinterpretations can be corrected on the spot.
  - When paraphrasing, it’s much harder to fall into the traps that block listening, such as the temptation to judge or interrupt (to be covered in Activity 6.7). Your focus is on really understanding what is going on with the other person.

- Used together, paraphrasing and asking open-ended clarifying questions greatly enhance communication and are keys to successful coaching supervision because:
  - They allow for more complete understanding.
  - They help to establish a positive relationship between the consumer and the PA.
  - They set the stage for more appropriate and effective problem solving.

Training Steps

Large-group exercise (15 min)

1. Review the definitions of *paraphrasing* and *asking open-ended questions* (from Activity 3.7). Ask participants why these skills are essential in coaching supervision (see **Key Content**).

2. To review paraphrase "lead-ins" (covered in a previous module), ask participants to brainstorm paraphrase "lead-ins" and write responses on a flipchart.

3. Distribute the handout *Lead-Ins to Clarifying Questions* and worksheet *Paraphrase and Clarifying Questions*. Go over the "lead-ins" handout with the group, explaining that these are suggestions that can help make it easier to ask open-ended questions.

4. Ask participants to turn to their worksheet. Explain that each of the four statements on the worksheet is something a worker is saying to her supervisor at the beginning of a supervisory interaction. Some may sound familiar.

5. Read the first statement aloud. Ask the group to make some suggestions about how to paraphrase this statement. Discuss which suggestions are effective paraphrasing and which may not be.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
>
> - Ineffective paraphrasing is simply repeating without restating in different words, or implying a negative judgment.
>
> - If participants are coming up with paraphrases that imply judgment, ask if they can recognize the judgment in the words. A trick that can help with this—tell them to imagine a supervisor saying this to them, as a paraphrase of their words. Does it feel respectful and accurate, or does it feel hurtful? Get two to three workable suggestions from the group.
>
> - We are so used to hearing and making judgmental statements that we may not notice immediately when participants suggest paraphrases or clarifying questions that imply judgment. Listen carefully to their suggestions for any trace of judgment or blame. It is very important that participants understand how to recognize when judgment could be implied in their choice of words, what it means to take the judgment out of their words, and how to do it. Trainers may need to model this repeatedly.

6. Ask for suggestions about what open-ended questions a supervisor might ask to clarify the PA's situation. Remind the group to avoid judgment in forming their

questions and to refer to the handout for lead-ins. Discuss the suggestions offered by the group.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
> - To help participants to create open-ended questions, the trainer can prompt by asking: *What do we need to know in order to further understand what might be behind this person's story or where this person is coming from in presenting the story in this way?*
> - You will probably get a number of questions that are not open-ended. Explain that these questions are okay, but a yes or no answer won't lead you far because it tends to bring the conversation to a stop; more questions will be required in order to fully understand what is going on. Encourage the group to come up with at least two open-ended questions.

Pairs work (15 min)

7. Explain that the group will work in new pairs (team up with someone you haven't paired with yet) on two more statements on the worksheet. The task is to paraphrase each statement and to come up with two open-ended clarifying questions.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
> - Make sure pairs are well spaced so they can hear each other easily and not be distracted by others' conversations.
> - Assign statements to the pairs so that each statement is addressed by at least one of the pairs.

8. After everyone has completed their assigned statements, go over each statement and ask the assigned pair to report to the group on how they paraphrased it. Then ask what open-ended clarifying questions they would ask. Write responses on a flipchart to be used in a later role-play.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Encourage participants' efforts while making sure their paraphrases and open-ended questions are effective. If not, help modify them.

9. Ask the group whether or not the worksheet task felt difficult or awkward. Ask what specific aspects of the task felt hard. Emphasize that these skills do not come

naturally to most of us, but that we can gain them through practice, both on the job and elsewhere.

Demonstration role-play and discussion (10 min)

10. Explain that you and the other trainer will now play out one of the scenarios on the worksheet, with one trainer taking the role of the worker and the other trainer taking the role of coach supervisor.

11. Play out the scenario for five minutes or less, with the ”supervisor” eliciting more and more pertinent information from the “worker.” In the role-play, use some of the same paraphrasing and clarifying questions suggested earlier by the reporting pairs. Do not move into problem solving.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> The role-play at the end of the activity should be quite brief and focused entirely on eliciting information. It will feel unfinished because you do not move into problem solving. That’s okay. If you move into problem solving here, participants will lose sight of the primary importance of paraphrasing and asking clarifying questions.

12. Ask the group for responses to this role-play. In particular, *What benefits of paraphrasing and asking open-ended clarifying questions did you see illustrated in the role-play?*

ACTIVITY 6.7: BLOCKS TO LISTENING 20 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Identify and describe the common blocks to listening.
- Be more aware of these blocks in themselves as they arise in listening situations.

Key Content

- *Pseudo listening* is when we act like we are listening, but we are not. Examples of pseudo listening (and why we do it) include:
  - Making people think you're interested so they'll like you.
  - Being alert to see if you may be rejected.
  - Listening for one piece of information and ignoring everything else.
  - Buying time while you prepare your next comment.
  - Half-listening so someone will listen to you.
  - Listening to find someone's weak points or to take advantage, or to make sure you are right.
  - Half-listening because you don't know how to get away without offending the person.

- Everyone does pseudo listening and pseudo listening in itself is nothing to be embarrassed about. It seems to be part of our human nature. In many situations it is not a problem, such as when listening to TV, or when making light conversation with someone at a party or other gathering. However, pseudo listening can cause problems when real communication is important, such as in supervisory interactions.

- Blocks to listening are kinds of distractions, usually unconscious, that keep us from listening with our full attention. Everyone experiences blocks to listening at least some of the time. Becoming aware of our particular blocks helps us to consciously put them aside and bring our full attention to listening.

Training Steps

Presentation (5 min)

1. Explain that we tend to think that listening well is easy. It is true that everyone has the *ability* to listen well, but various distractions get in our way. There are many ways that listening gets blocked and everyone experiences at least some of them. Usually we experience them without being conscious of them. In this session we're going to talk about the most common of these blocks, and each of us will identify which blocks we experience the most frequently. The point of identifying your particular blocks is to become aware of them—to bring them to consciousness. Becoming aware

of your blocks is the first step in changing your behavior. The goal is to set these distracting blocks aside as you make a conscious choice to listen.

2. Pass out the handout *Blocks to Listening*. Read aloud the first paragraph of the handout. Explain the meaning of "pseudo" if you think it is necessary. Explain that pseudo listening is very common, and often doesn't cause any problems. Ask how pseudo listening *could* be a problem when supervising a PA (see **Key Content**).

3. Read the first listening block, *Mind Reading*. Share a personal example of your experience with this listening block. Ask participants if they have any personal examples of this listening block to share. Hear from one or two people before moving on.

Small-group work and discussion (15 min)

4. Divide participants into three small groups. Assign three of the remaining nine listening blocks to each group. Ask them to think of an example of how each listening block can occur in the consumer/PA relationship.

5. After about five minutes of group work, ask each group to read each listening block and share their examples. Ask if other participants have other examples of a particular listening block.

6. After everyone has reported out, ask participants if they can identify with a particular block and what would be their strategy for getting past that block. Ask for further strategies as time allows.

ACTIVITY 6.8: PULL BACK STRATEGIES 40 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Explain how emotional responses often get in the way of our ability to listen attentively.
- Explain that they have a choice to "pull back" from their emotional responses and suspend their negative opinion of a person when they are feeling emotionally triggered by what is being said.
- Explain how pulling back often leads to more effective communication.
- Describe strategies for pulling back from their emotional responses.

Key Content

- Our emotional response to what people say to us often gets in the way of our ability to listen with full attention.

- While we rarely have control over other people's behavior, we can control our own internal responses. Shifting our internal responses makes it possible for us to listen more attentively. The result is more effective and more positive communication.

- The first step in shifting our internal responses is to become consciously aware of them as we listen to someone speak.

- We can then make a conscious choice to pull back from negative judgments, remain curious about the other person, and stay open to changing our opinion about her/him ("Option B" in this exercise). Choosing Option B generally leads to more effective communication and more positive supervisory outcomes.

- Choosing Option B does not mean being soft, or allowing dishonest workers to get one over on you. In fact, choosing Option B makes it much less likely that you will be misled or manipulated. If you are listening attentively, paraphrasing and asking clarifying questions whenever something seems confusing or odd, you will eventually get to the bottom of what is really going on.

- Choosing Option B requires slowing down and pulling back from your emotional response. Pulling back is the ability to gain emotional control in stressful settings. Practical strategies can help us pull back both in the moment and in the longer term.

Training Steps

Large-group discussion (20 min)

1. Explain that, as demonstrated in the Listening exercise and the Paraphrasing exercise, we all listen well when we bring our full attention to it. But, as with the listening blocks, often our emotional response to what the other person is saying gets in the way of listening with full attention. These emotional responses and how to deal with them are what this session addresses.

2. Explain that in a supervisory situation, when we listen to a worker talk about a problem, we often focus on the *worker* as the problem—on how *her* behavior got her into this mess. Explain that in this session, however, we will shift our focus from the worker to *our own internal reaction*, because that is something we can change. If we change our internal response in a difficult situation, we can affect what happens in the interaction.

3. Pass out the handout, *Choosing Option B*. Go through the handout with the group, reading aloud and giving brief examples or stories that relate to supervision.

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
>
> - The *Choosing Option B* handout is a core piece of this activity, so don't be tempted to race through it. Take time with each page; for each concept, give examples that participants will relate to as their personal assistant's supervisor. As you go through the handout, involve participants by asking if they can think of similar examples or simply by asking if the examples you give ring true for them. Tune in closely to participants, making sure everyone is engaged in the material and understanding all the concepts presented.
>
> - *Stop* if you notice any puzzled, frustrated or eager looks. Ask for questions, for examples from their experience, or for why they are frowning. The key is to keep everyone involved.
>
> - Emphasize that choosing Option B does not mean being soft. Continuing to ask clarifying questions cuts through attempts to manipulate or mislead and, generally, results in finding out the full truth of what is going on.

Large-group exercise (10 min)

4. Turn to the second-to-last page (Pull Back) of the handout with the group, explaining the meaning of "pull back," discussing its importance in health care, and asking for workplace examples of the need to pull back and gain emotional control.

5. Read through the last page, explaining that these are examples of either personal or workplace situations in which you might have a need to pull back. Use examples from your own life to help participants understand what you mean and to model self-reflection and self-disclosure.

6. Ask participants to take a few minutes to check off those on the list that apply to them and to add others that they have encountered in their experience.

7. Ask for volunteers to report out on what they came up with.

Brainstorm & discussion (10 min)

8. Explain that we all use one or more strategies to help us pull back in stressful situations. Our goal is become aware of those strategies and strengthen them if necessary. Talk about what pull back strategies work best for you (as a trainer and/or in other areas of your life) both in a stressful situation and when you are preparing for a potentially stressful situation, and have the other trainer do the same.

9. Ask the group to brainstorm different strategies for pulling back. You may want to make the first suggestion, such as "Take a deep breath," so that they understand what you're asking for. Write the strategies on a flipchart page. The list could include: *take deep breaths*, *silently say a prayer*, *silently count to ten*, and *silently say a personal affirmation such as "I am stronger than whatever is happening here."*

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Some strategies may not be appropriate responses to a stressful situation. The trainer should attempt to either redirect or reframe what was stated before writing it on the flipchart. Keep in mind the list will be divided into "in-the-moment strategies" and "preparing strategies" later.

10. Explain to the group that there are two categories of pull back strategies. The first is strategies to be used *in the moment* when someone is pushing your buttons. The second is strategies to be used when you know you are soon to encounter a potentially stressful situation such as a difficult meeting or phone conversation, but you have at least a little time to prepare yourself for it.

11. Ask the group to identify which strategies on the brainstorm list are for using in the moment and which are more useful when preparing for a stressful situation. Place a "P" next to those strategies they identify as "preparing" and "I" next to in-the-moment strategies. Then ask participants to add on to the "P" list because most strategies already listed will probably be "Is."

> ⇨ **Training Tip**
> Examples of "preparing" strategies include: vent/talk to a co-worker about it, listen to soothing music, and imagine yourself

staying calm and collected during the situation. Some strategies may belong on both lists.

12. Ask the participants to pair with someone sitting next to him/her. Ask the pairs to discuss for two minutes situations in which they could use pull back strategies, and how they can apply ideas discussed in this activity. In a large group briefly, ask for key thoughts from each pair before going on to the next activity.

ACTIVITY 6.9: TALKING ABOUT THINGS THAT ARE HARD TO TALK ABOUT 50 minutes

Learning Outcomes

By the end of this activity, participants will be able to:

- Describe how a coaching approach to supervision can be applied to real problem situations that participants are facing with their PAs.
- Demonstrate using the coaching approach to address problem situations, including using communication skills of active listening, paraphrasing, asking open-ended questions, and the strategy of pulling back.

Key Content

- For consumers who are employers, problems that arise concerning an assistant's job performance, personal habits, or other irritating behavior only become harder to talk about as more time passes.

- It is important for consumers to recognize that, especially when a working relationship is new, it is inevitable that there will be a need to make adjustments.

- Most importantly, consumers should learn to address problems as close to when they happen as possible, in order to avoid having anger and frustration build up. As in any relationship, when frustrations and negative feelings are allowed to build up, people say things in anger that are too often hurtful and even destructive. This is not an effective way to maintain healthy relationships with assistants.

- Strategies to help improve communication include:
  - Having regular weekly check-ins, when either the consumer or the personal attendant can raise a difficult issue, to give praise and feedback, or tend to other important work-related issues.
  - Being attentive to signs that the PA may have something on his/her mind. Although it is extremely important that the consumer encourage the aide to raise issues of concern, it is the consumer who needs to set the example by noticing such signs and asking about them,
  - Flexibility and compromise are important qualities for both the consumer and the PA. Both the consumer and the PA need to be open to making changes in the routine, in attitude, or in anything else that can correct a problem. This is easier to do when the problem first arises than if the issue is left unattended and negative feelings are allowed to build up.

- Personal issues sometimes affect job performance, so consumers should try to find out if a PA's performance problem is related to a personal concern—

for example a sick child or money problems. It is not the consumer's responsibility to try to solve such problems, but by acknowledging they exist, it may be possible to come up with plans, together, to address the problem in a way that is satisfactory to both the consumer and the aide.

Training Steps

Brainstorm (5 min)

1. Explain that practice is the best way to learn how to use communication skills in a coaching approach to supervision. Note that in this session the participants will do role-plays, based on real problem situations that they may face or are facing with their PAs.

2. Ask participants to brainstorm typical problems that consumers have with their PAs. List their ideas on flipchart paper.

Role-play (10 min)

3. Pick out one problem that you think would be effectively addressed through coaching supervision. Ask if anyone has an example of this problem actually occurring in his/her life now, and if he/she would be willing to share that issue with the group. If no one offers, choose another problem area, until you get someone who is willing to share a problem with the group.

4. Ask the participant to describe the situation. Select a point in the scenario where direct communication between the consumer and the PA would be likely. Ask the participant to play the role of the PA. Ask another participant to volunteer to play the role of the consumer.

⇨ **Training Tips**

- By asking the participant to play the role of the PA, he/she will know best how to portray the problematic aspects of the situation. But perhaps more importantly, he/she may develop some empathy for the PA's situation.

- By asking another participant to play the role of the consumer, the participant who is having this problem can see how another person might approach the situation. Also, it feels very awkward to role-play yourself in front of others.

- Other characters can be brought into the role-play if necessary, but it complicates matters, and takes more time. A short, focused role-play could allow for good discussion and enough time to do at least one more.

5. Have the two participants play out a conversation between the consumer and the PA. Ask the "consumer" to try to apply the coaching supervision approach and use active listening, paraphrasing, open-ended questions, and pulling back as much as possible. Ask participants to observe and mentally track the coaching skills used (paraphrase, pull back, clarifying open-ended questions). Let the role-play run for five minutes.

> ⇨ **Training Tips**
> - Set up the role-play in a place in the room where everyone can hear and see. Remind the players to speak loud enough for everyone to hear them.
>
> - A good way to involve all participants in playing either the consumer or PA is to use a "rapid switch" technique that allows another person to step into the role when another gets stuck. This can occur in one of two ways: 1) the trainer determines that the player is stuck and claps her hand to signal for another volunteer to step into the role; 2) the player indicates that she'd like to switch with another participant. When using this technique, it's important to allow the player to exhaust his/her efforts before moving too quickly to another.

Debriefing/ discussion (5-10 min)

6. Debrief the role-play:
   - Ask the participant playing the consumer: *How do you think you are doing in terms of using the new skills? How do you feel being in this role?*
   - Ask the "audience": *What have you observed about coaching supervision and communication skills in this role-play? What would you suggest the "consumer" do differently, if anything?*
   - Ask the participant playing the "PA," but now thinking as him/herself, the consumer: *Does the situation seems realistic? What have you learned from this that you might try*?

***Continuation of the Role-play/Debriefing* (15-20 min)**

7. Continue with the same role-play a few minute more. Encourage the consumer to try out some of the recommendations during the debriefing.

8. After all role plays are done, wrap the session up by asking participants: *What affect do you think this approach will have on helping you to more effectively talk about things that are hard to talk about?*

⇨ **Training Tips**

- You can do this activity with scripted “real plays” or with role-plays that the trainers create, based on their knowledge of the participants’ realities. However, it is much more useful and meaningful to have participants provide examples of problems they are feeling stuck about.

- Problem solving is a huge topic, with many different approaches and models. Instead of using these role-plays to try to solve the problem, the purpose is to practice the coaching supervision approach and using the specific communication skills addressed in this module.

- Participants may be feeling overwhelmed by the problems they are dealing with, so it is important to get them focused on the specific techniques they can use to address the situation. The goal here is to have people leave feeling more confident about managing their situation. If, however, it becomes clear that a consumer is feeling particularly overwhelmed, the trainer may want to step in, move the workshop along, and let the consumer know that she will meet with him or her individually after the workshop is over. At that time, the trainer should be prepared to either (1) talk further about the individual’s problem and provide support or (2) refer the consumer to someone else who can help.

ACTIVITY 6.10: CLOSING 15 minutes

Training Steps

1. Explain that we have now come to the closing of the workshop, which is a time to reflect on what was learned and how this learning can be applied. Ask participants:
   - *What is the most important thing that you have learned today?*
   - *How do you think you can apply what you have learned today?*
   - *What kind of follow-up activities would you like to see to reinforce what was covered over the time we've been together?*
   - *How do you think this workshop should be used in the future?*

2. Thank everyone for their feedback and participation.

3. Celebrate, as appropriate.