

Module 12 Lesson 3

Transcript

I hear a lot from the community that you're all so innovative in getting your voices heard, and I love it. I hear about supermarket tours you're holding. I see on social that you're lecturing in gyms, and schools, and parks. Your communities must love these moments so much. I know they are essential for some of you as you're getting your feed wet, and getting out there, and looking for exposure yourselves as the expert coaches that you are.

In this lesson, I wanted to give you some framework to help you organize in creating successful group workshops. What we do isn't like going to a book club. Everyone just doesn't show up and contribute what they want. What we do requires planning, leadership, clarity, and sometimes a sense of humor too, so we can establish ourselves as experts, build our client base, and establish ourselves as professionals in our health and wellness fields.

Today, we're going to learn how to conduct a needs assessment, determine an educational approach, and craft a group lesson with established goals and objectives. I want to start with a little trip down memory lane. I do cringe when I think back to graduate school sometimes. I was in a counseling class with a classmate, Andrea, who looked like she was 15, first of all. The assignment was to find a community to do a group presentation for. We had to write a lesson plan, make handouts, have an icebreaker, of course. There were lots of parts and pieces to this assignment.

I literally spent hours on mine, which was a group of pregnant moms, and a community who knew me, and I was familiar with them. A friend of mine literally had an expecting moms group she met with weekly, and she asked them if they wanted to hear a nutrition presentation. They were all really excited about it, so I felt really good going in. Andrea wasn't so lucky. She was new to NYC and hadn't really integrated into the community or made friends yet. Our professor connected Andrea with a high school health class, and Andrea spoke to seniors about avoiding the Freshman 15.

To make a long story short, I remember Andrea had to present her total fail of a group lesson. I felt for her. The seniors she spoke to did not want to be there. They mocked her, and said she looked like she should be in high school. They were a captive audience, but weren't respectful because the teacher had left the room. They were combative and didn't want to hear why they should eat breakfast, carry a water bottle, or watch out for late night eating. She'd work for hours on an icebreaker nobody participated in. She made beautiful handouts that were not even taken.

Needless to say, Andrea's group lesson failed in spite of her being so knowledgeable, so hard-working, and so confident. Let's not have that happen to you.

First things first, let's learn from Andrea's story. If Andrea had done a proper needs assessment, there would have been so much more potential for a success. I can't remember what went wrong there, but I bet that was where her issue started. A needs assessment happens when you've decided on your audience. You may know you want to target people at your kid's school, for example. Now you need to understand your audience. Who is going to come and what do they want to learn about is the most important thing you can understand to set your workshop up for success.

Assess the workshop potential. It's tempting to get in touch with the PTA and ask them if you can do a workshop on afternoon snacks for your middle schooler when they come home from school because you know your own kids just want junk food after school. What if most kids stay for after-school activities and don't get a snack from home? Here are some common ways to collect intel on the community you're focusing on.

There are more details in your handout, but here is a few. Review data. Speak to a community leader. Look for community info. Check out the local paper. Interview, informal or formal, your choice. Ask people who reflect the community you want to reach. Write or email some questions to gather intel. Observe. Go check out the people you want to reach as they're shopping, eating, or headed out and walking to a club. At a minimum, your needs assessment should uncover where your population is available so you can set up the best time to hold your workshop. Reveal what topics people would like to learn about. Provide information about attitude, beliefs, and values related to nutrition. Offer some information about participant lifestyle.

You've done your needs assessment now. You know your topic is going to be Healthy Breakfast on the Go, and you're running your group at 8:00 AM for 30 minutes on Thursday before the PTA meeting. Now, you have to craft your lesson plan. You need to develop an educational approach. How are you going to teach your lesson? It doesn't matter if your workshop is for three-year-olds or 80-year-olds. Start with a goal. Your goal is a broadly stated outcome your learners are expected to meet. Your goal for the pre-PTA parent workshop may be, "Participants will learn how to plan and make healthy breakfasts that are portable." Your goal is broad stroke of what you want your participants to get out of their workshop with you.

Your next step is to craft objectives. If you write super tight objectives, your lesson is going to be clear and strong. Unlike your goal which is general, objectives are specific clearly stated outcomes about what your learner will be able to do after the experience. When you write a good objective use really strong verbs to support your statement. These verbs can be quantitative, identify,

recite, construct, classify, compare, for example, or they can qualitative verbs like understand, know, appreciate, value, or believe. For my example workshop, objectives may be, "Participants will be able to define what constitutes a healthful breakfast, prepare 3-5 healthy breakfasts that are grab-and-go, and plan a shopping list to set themselves up for success."

From here, once the objectives are written, the lesson plan writes itself. I'm not joking. Seriously, this is the easy part. Look at my first objective, "Define what constitutes a healthful breakfast." Defining a healthful breakfast is the first part of the workshop. I can literally think of dozens of ways to teach this, and I'd customize it to my audience. A group of parents might really like to see a lot of props, and food samples, and talk about pairing them. Some other people may learn better chatting about organizing carbs, proteins, and fats. Kids might do best with a hands-on learning experience. Customize to your population based on what you learn from the needs assessment.

From here, once all of your workshop is written with learning techniques to match your objectives, do yourself a huge favor, write down all of your teaching aids and materials. There's nothing worse than showing up to a workshop and forgetting your wooden spoon to mix your ingredients, for example. As you wind down, summarize what your participants have done and learned to reinforce the messaging you taught. It's not essential, but you may want to give your participants an assignment. Have them apply what they've learned in a tangible way. I'd probably have the pre-PTA group write down 3-5 grab-and-go breakfasts that would work for them and their family, and write a little shopping list to go along with it.

Finally, consider an evaluation, and have the participants anonymously or not share feedback on what they liked and what could be improved upon. Use this feedback as constructive criticism, and consider it an opportunity to improve on your work for next time. You are the teacher, but you're also a student. Forever a student. We're all forever students, so learning goes both ways. Andrea failed in her lesson from the start because she really didn't have a proper presentation for the audience who was receiving it. She was so smart, and knowledgeable, and worked so hard, but she just missed a few steps here, and that's why she was doomed from the beginning because her great lesson didn't hit the target.

You can really have weak moments at any point in your group lesson. To avoid having an Andrea story yourself, make sure you really have a solid workshop practice and know your audience. By the way, this goes for everything. When your writing, if you're going on TV, if you're doing a lecture anywhere, knowing your audience is always important. Okay, that was little side note.

There you have it. In this lesson, I went over the importance of a need for a needs assessment before writing a group lesson, determining your educational approach that will fit the community you're looking to speak to, and it's extremely important in having your message land and make an impact. Goals, remember, are broad stroke statements about what your population will learn. Objectives are more specific clearly defined statements about what your learners will be able to do. Lesson plans also should include teaching aids and materials so you don't forget anything. Also, a summary is really useful. Possibly an assignment and evaluation is a good thing to add into your group lesson as well. I will see you in the next lesson.