

USING ADULT EDUCATION PRINCIPLES IN MY PROGRAM

Use this tool to learn about **eight different adult education principles** and think about which ones you are already using in your program and brainstorm ways you can incorporate others. Start by reading the heart health example for each adult education principle. Then check off the ways you are already using this principle and circle the ones you will try.

Principle 1: Talk

Heart health example:

Before sharing information about a topic, give the people in your class some time to share what they already know. For example, when starting Session 5 on cholesterol, go beyond a simple “question and answer” time and, instead, have people get into small groups where they can share their own stories and experiences about preventing or controlling their cholesterol.

Check which ways you are using this principle:

- I include time in each session for people to talk with one another.
- I use strategies to get people to share things about their lives.
- I am comfortable taking what people share and relating it to heart health.

Principle 2: Create a Comfortable Space

Hang pictures around the room that relate to the sessions you will cover. These could be hearts of all shapes and sizes, people being active, or a person getting her blood pressure checked. Make sure the pictures are culturally appropriate and relate to the people in your program.

- I create an inviting space for participants.
- If people make a mistake or are embarrassed, I know what to say to make them feel comfortable.
- The classroom where I teach has enough light.
- There is enough room in the classroom for the number of people in my program.
- I know how to adjust the temperature in the classroom.
- There will not be distractions near the classroom (such as child care or construction).

Principle 3: Respect & Encourage

You can do more than say “thank you” after people in your program share something. Let them know why you value what they said. Here’s an example: “Thank you so much for sharing your story about how your uncle turned his life around after having a heart attack. That inspires all of us to take care of our health.”

- I have different ways to show people that I appreciate what they share and do (more than saying “thank you”).
- I know how to show people that they have a lot to contribute even if what they are learning is new.
- I have ideas about how to let people know they are doing a good job (more than saying “good job”).
- I know how to make people feel excited when they correctly remember or use what they learned about heart health.

Principle 4: Be Clear

Heart health example:

Be clear about what you are doing in each session and what you want people to leave the class knowing. For example, say: "Welcome back everyone. Last week we talked about high blood pressure and today we're going to talk about diabetes. By the end of class today, I want you to walk out the door knowing how diabetes can affect your heart. Let's get started."

Check which ways you are using this principle:

- I adjust my teaching style if people look confused.
- In each session, I teach the easier-to-understand information first, and the harder-to-understand information last.
- I have my program set up so that people know what to expect in each session.
- I have ideas about how to keep bringing up key information so that people remember what they learn.

Principle 5: Engage

Make the end-of-class review different. Have people work in pairs to tell each other as much as they can remember from the session. Then have pairs come up with a personal story to help remember key points of the session. Pairs can then take turns presenting what they remember and sharing their stories.

- I have ways to help people learn other than listening to me talk.
- I have ways to get people involved and have fun.
- I know how to make people feel connected to what they are learning.
- I know what I can do to get people to move around.

Principle 6: See & Do

Have each person come up with a picture or drawing that describes what he or she just learned or how they see themselves more active.

- I have plenty of visuals, such as posters, videos, and models that reinforce what I will teach.
- I have included opportunities in each session for people to practice what they learn.

Principle 7: Put Into Practice

Ask people to share how they will use what they have learned. You could say something like: "In our last class, Mary shared some great ways to remember to lower the salt in her diet. She put a note on her fridge that said 'Less Salt' and she tried different seasonings. What ideas do you have?"

- I have ideas of ways people can leave each session and immediately use what they learn at home, in their jobs, and/or in their activities.
- I know how to show people that what they are learning will be useful in the future.

Principle 8: Teamwork

When you can, have people work in pairs and small groups. When working in pairs, have each person take turns being the trainer for a certain heart health topic.

- I have ideas of ways to get people to learn from each other.
- I have included opportunities in each session where people can solve problems together.

