

# FACILITATOR TIPS FOR RUNNING SESSIONS

**Try these tips when you teach your heart health sessions.** It can also be helpful to write tips like these on your session agenda so that you remember to do them.

## Before Starting

- Have all materials and equipment prepared 15–30 minutes prior to starting. Have a backup plan in case your equipment malfunctions.
- Encourage people to arrive at least 15 minutes before the session starts to get situated and greet each other.
- Expect some people to arrive early. See whether they want to help you set up.
- Make sure that you remember the names of all people in your program. Refer to everyone by name.

## Welcome and Introductions

- Make a point to start on time. Show excitement in your voice and on your face as you greet people.
- Go over housekeeping. This means telling people things such as where the restrooms are and when there will be a break.
- If needed, remind people about the ground rules. These are the rules and agreements that help people feel safe and respected in the training. They can include things like having only one person speak at a time and making sure that what is shared in the group stays in the group. It is best to have the people in the program come up with these rules during the first session.

## Review

- Ask people to share what they remember from the previous session. Do not put anyone on the spot, though.
- While it may be tempting to skip participation in order to get through the information quicker, this can be a mistake. Adults appreciate having opportunities to share what they know and have experienced.
- Watch the time. If each participant speaks for 2–3 minutes, you will exceed the amount of time that you have for your review. Instead, consider having just a couple of people speak and then letting others do so during the next review.

## Conducting the Session

- Make the sessions hands-on and interactive. Mix it up! Try different teaching styles to best engage your group.
- Provide as many opportunities as possible for people to work together. This can be as partners, in small groups, in large groups, or with the whole group.
- Add your own ideas to the manual. Think about what would help the people in your program learn about heart health. Maybe it is something like going on a field trip, doing a role play, or creating a video. You choose, because you know the people in your program! Also, ask for suggestions from the group.

## Break

- Give people a 3-minute warning before their break ends so that they start making their way back to their seats.
- Check whether you are behind, ahead, or right on time with your agenda. During the break, you should look at what you have left to go over and then make adjustments to the rest of the agenda if needed.

## Closing

- Thank participants for being there and show that you value their participation. Remind participants when you will meet again.
- Some groups benefit from a closing ritual. It could be something like sharing something surprising that they learned or doing some deep breathing exercises.
- Consider cleaning up slowly to give your participants a chance to ask you questions.
- Make a point of ending on time every time.
- Make sure participants fill out all evaluation forms completely and correctly.

## De-briefing

- Facilitators can discuss what went well and what should be changed for next session.
- Track evaluation metrics (number of participants that attended, amount of interaction, session components completed, participant surveys.)



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