

# Leading Effective Groups in the D2d Study

The D2d study session leaders' guidelines provide some ideas for leading successful groups for the D2d study. The preparation for the session and some helpful tips for conducting the groups are important factors.

## Preparation

It's obvious that an in-depth understanding of the session content is a basic requirement. Review the materials to identify the most important points to be covered in the session. What are the key take away messages that can be explained comfortably in your own words?

However, here are some small details that can make the sessions flow smoothly and even be FUN.

- Get key information about the classes re: number of participants; location; room set up e.g. classroom, theater, conference table.
- Nice items to consider: sign in sheet; name tags; refreshments; handouts; white board or flip chart; audio visual needs
- Do confirmations for attendance by phone, email, text, etc.

What is your teaching style? Lecture or interactive? Do you prefer questions be held until the end of the session or invite questions throughout the session? How much time will be allowed for questions?

Work out a general time line for the class and note anticipated times for specific milestones, e.g. wrap up by 2:15 pm with 15 minutes for Q & A. Tell the participants up front how their session time will be spent. For example, 10 minutes for introductions, 30 minutes for session and 20 minutes for discussion and Q & A.

Be aware of participants' reactions to the material throughout the session. Be prepared to adjust the presentation appropriately to meet the participants' needs.

## Guidelines for Conducting Sessions

Depending on your data source, first impressions occur quickly from 3 seconds to 2 minutes. You and your facility can insure a professional, supportive environment for the D2d study participants with some of these suggestions:

- Punctuality- Arrive 30 minutes before the session to greet participants. Start and end the session on time to respect everyone's time.
- Welcome and introduce yourself to each participant as they arrive. Wear a name tag to help them remember your name.
- Repeat the participant's name as often as possible. Remember, one's name is the most beautiful word of the vocabulary.
- Be sure there is adequate seating and materials. Can room size accommodate

guests? Space may dictate whether a family support person can also attend. Be sure those arrangements are communicated clearly in advance.

- Seating configuration – Is the room set up conducive to discussion or lecture?

### **Facilitating Participation and Group Interaction**

Some groups (and sessions) just “seem to click” while others never completely find their stride. All groups have a unique personality that is driven by the eclectic, individual members ranging from the talkers who want to own the class to the shy ones who have very little eye contact with anyone. It can be challenging to manage the “talkers”. If they seem to be taking too much “air time”; be diplomatic in suggesting that you will be available to explore their idea after class. The rest of the class will be most appreciative.

Interaction may be facilitated by assigning participants a joint task. For example, ask the participants to divide up into pairs to discuss things that are helpful for staying physically active and to write the top 2 strategies on the index card in 6 minutes. Then each group will report out their suggestions. This will allow everyone to think about the topic and participate in a “small group of 2”.

### **Maintaining a Professional Relationship**

The session leader demonstrates respect for all participants’ diversity and individuality while maintaining a professional relationship. Strive for a friendly, supportive relationship without establishing a traditional type of friendship. This means avoiding socializing outside of the group. Politely decline an invitation for lunch after class or invitation to a participant’s birthday party. Participants could easily think of the leader as a “friend” and create unintended confusion. Other participants may become jealous or suspicious of perceived extra attention.

### **Confidentiality**

Assure participants that things they say in the sessions will be held confidential among the D2d study staff members. No information about participants will be communicated to anyone or other health care professionals outside of the D2d study without the participants’ written consent.

Participants in turn are asked to respect each others’ confidentiality by not sharing an individual’s participation in the study and any information to others from discussions in the class. This is an important point if guests are allowed to sit in on the classes.

### **Conclusion**

Finally, as you begin, focus on the educational goals of the session. Create an environment of professionalism, respect and FUN to help keep participants engaged and committed to the D2d study. Afterall, retention is the overall goal of the sessions.

**Support and Education Program**  
**Ideas for making sessions interactive and engaging:**

- Encourage socializing
- Allow spouses or guests to join in
- Provide healthy snacks (can be tied in with topic of the day)
- Cooking demonstration
- Dancing or other fun physical activity
- Give appreciation tokens for attending
- Have a door prize (e.g. grocery or fitness/sports store gift card)
- Give participants something to think about ahead of time to stimulate discussion
- PI question and answer period (could include information/misinformation in the media, scientific updates geared toward lay audience, etc)
- Visual demonstration other than PowerPoint presentation
- Games (e.g. Jeopardy) designed around the topic
- Raffles (e.g. of centerpieces)
- Mail fun invitations and ask participants to RSVP, to make these events seem special and to set them apart from regular study visits

If you have more ideas, please share them with the Coordinating Center and we will add them to the list!