

# Facilitator's Guide

## Gender, Diversity and HIV/AIDS Skills-Building Workshop

XVI International AIDS Conference, Toronto 2006

In this guide, you will find

- Objectives of the Workshop
- Rationale for the Workshop Format: Scenarios
- The Facilitator's Role in Group Work
- Principles of Effective Facilitation
- Techniques/Issues Specific to this Workshop

### Objectives of the Workshop

This workshop is coordinated by the staff of the Atlantic Centre of Excellence for Women's Health (ACEWH) and the Prairie Women's Health Centre of Excellence and supported by the Bureau of Women's Health and Gender Analysis at Health Canada. ACEWH is "dedicated to conducting policy-oriented research aimed at improving the health status of Canadian women by making the health system more aware of and responsive to women's health needs.

"The goal of the Atlantic Centre is to support research, influence policy and promote action on the social factors that affect women's health and well-being over their lifespan. We support a woman-centred approach that respects women's perspectives and experiences, and listens to the voices of women not typically heard in health research or health systems." ([www.acewh.dal.ca](http://www.acewh.dal.ca))

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To this end, the overall objectives of the the workshop include, helping participants to:

1. Understand the terms “sex” and “gender” and appreciate the overlapping and discrete impact of sex and gender on health;
2. Recognize gender differences that may affect HIV/AIDS awareness;
3. Examine the role of gender in the HIV/AIDS pandemic in terms of prevention, care, treatment, support and mitigation of impact;
4. Gain a basic understanding of gender-based analysis and practice it (GBA);
5. Move from GBA in theory to its application in their own practices and policies

### Rationale for the Workshop Format: Scenarios

The scenarios that comprise this workshop are research-based, and have factual components as well as imaginative narrative elements. We recommend that the facilitator avoid engaging in debate over the likelihood or construction of the scenarios presented as this would be a distraction from the objectives of the workshop. In our experience, it can sometimes be used as a means to avoid grappling with the real impact of sex and gender in the HIV/AIDS pandemic. If participants request further information about the research that informs the scenarios, they should be directed to the ACEWH website, which will contain references to the background documents upon which the scenarios are based.

Additionally, although it may seem that the scenarios are country-specific or context - dependent, they have been carefully constructed to incorporate issues and principles that might emerge in a broad range of contexts and countries. They are composite portraits of real experiences and situations facing women and men infected and affected by HIV and AIDS-related illnesses.

It may be helpful for the facilitator to read all of the scenarios before the session in order to identify key concerns surrounding gender, diversity and HIV/AIDS, though we would

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advise against the facilitators referring to scenarios other than the one their group is discussing.

### The Facilitator's Role in Group Work

Facilitating group work is an integral part of supporting participatory processes. The facilitator takes a central role in guaranteeing the smooth running of the session, maintaining a balance between letting the group work on their own and assisting actively in order to avoid unnecessary detours and friction.

### Principles of Effective Facilitation

These are some basic tenets of successful facilitation:

- State the objectives of the exercises so that all participants are clear on the task to be completed.
  - Establish and get consensus on “ground rules” for conversation.
  - Guide the discussion of others instead of participating in the discussion; think of the facilitator's role as an “air traffic controller”.
  - Encourage everyone to talk (explain at the beginning of the session that the facilitator will intercede and bring the session back to a group discussion if one person has dominated the dialogue); evoke participation by non-threatening observations such as “X, it looks as though you're considering Y's last comment...”
  - Be ready to deal with emotional reactions and/or disclosure; have a respectful yet firm response ready, such as “Thank you for sharing that with us, now we need to return to the task at hand.”
  - Avoid distractions or digressions; refocus the group using phrases like “And in what way do you see that point relating to gender, diversity and HIV/AIDS?”
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- Signal the approaching conclusion of the exercise; use finite reminders (“We have five minutes left with our group”) or summary actions (“What are our three most pressing concerns to feed back on in this scenario?”)

Remember that "...A good facilitator is not a stage performer but one who creates space for other people to interact and have their passion flow on a matter of common concern..."

### Techniques/Issues Specific to this Workshop

During group work, potential problems can arise; these can be issues of timing, equal airing of viewpoints, lack of focus and individual communication styles. You may wish to follow these steps to ensure a clear and productive session.

Before the Session:

1. Familiarize yourself with all of the scenarios – in case last minute changes are needed to the assignments.
2. Ensure that you are comfortable with the content of the scenarios – both with respect to HIV/AIDS and sex and gender. Do some background reading, if necessary. Come to the facilitators' meeting with questions.

At the Beginning of the Session:

1. Introduce yourself and explain your role (such as, to capture major items of interest).
  2. Encourage participants to introduce themselves. Be sure to record phonetic pronunciation of participants' names if you do not feel confident you can say these correctly.
  3. Hand out the scenario and give each participant time to read it. Offer to clarify anything people do not understand. It is unlikely that all participants will finish reading simultaneously; look to body language (shifting, raised head, eye contact) to determine when the majority of participants are finished. Speak quietly to begin the discussion so that others have a greater chance to complete the reading.
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4. Ensure participants understand that consensus is not required or needed during this type of session; each participant is here to build her or his own skill level
5. Guide the group through the steps at the end of the scenario. For each question
  - ◆ encourage general discussion and allow the participants to talk freely about the scenario in general
  - ◆ guide the discussion to focus more specifically on the questions and gender components

### During the conversation

1. Encourage quieter participants to contribute and good-humouredly try to restrict more assertive participants (observe the general demeanour of the group to determine if this becomes necessary). Keep/record an overview and guide the group to adhere to a gender-based analysis of the scenario (rather than other issues of social justice). You may find it helpful to acknowledge that teasing out the gender and diversity issues from other issues is often challenging. Watch the time closely.
  2. Remember to demonstrate respect towards diversity at all times. Be aware that cultural differences may exist between the participants. When uncertainty is expressed about cultural norms, encourage participants to ask questions or discuss these practices in relation to the scenario discussion guidelines.
  3. Try to remove yourself and your personal opinions from the content of the discussion. Observe and listen; this includes monitoring social interactions during the discussion and managing these where appropriate.
  4. At the end of the session, give a (visual) summary of achievements and pending issues remaining. Distinguish clearly between the discussion points and the recommendations for policies or programs.
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Write the names of participants here to help you during the session:

Have a good session!

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