Project Firstline

Facilitator Guide

Project Firstline **Infection Control Training Toolkit**

U.S. Department of
Health and Human Services
Centers for Disease
Control and Prevention

PROJECT
FIRSTLINE

Contents

About Project Firstline

Project Firstline, CDC's national training collaborative for infection control, is a comprehensive infection control program designed to help prevent the spread of infectious diseases in U.S. healthcare settings.

Project Firstline aims to provide foundational and practical knowledge directly to frontline healthcare personnel and the public health workforce engaged in the prevention of healthcare-associated infections.

Project Firstline emphasizes the "why" behind infection control actions so that no matter participants' varied experiences, backgrounds, and work environments, they have the skills and knowledge to make informed decisions to keep themselves, their coworkers, and their patients safe.

Introduction to This Guide

This facilitator guide is designed to support you in using the Project Firstline Session Plans for live, web-based training events on wide-ranging infection control topics.

The guide offers resources and strategies to support your role as a facilitator of Project Firstline training sessions. You will find background on Project Firstline training materials, resources to help you prepare as a facilitator, and supporting items for your training sessions. Keep this guide handy for future reference. Thank you for joining the Project Firstline team in this important role.

The Role of the Facilitator

Your role as a facilitator is very important. Successful training using Project Firstline materials can help the healthcare workers you reach build a culture of providing safer, higher-quality care, and prevent infection not only among patients, but also among staff. The sessions you present should be interactive and provide several opportunities for you to engage with the audience. The Session Plans provide specific suggestions to support this important aim. The sections below provide additional tips and tricks to help you be successful in leading meaningful Project Firstline sessions and adapting them for your audience.

Using Project Firstline Session Plans

Before you start to develop a training, we invite you to familiarize yourself with the broad range of topics offered in the Session Plans.

Each Session Plan includes the following:

- Learning Objectives: what participants will learn or experience during the session
- Key Takeaways: the main points that participants should remember
- Facilitator Notes and Sample Script: a guided plan to help you design the details of each session

- Links to additional resources
- An outline of the content covered in each session: this outline can help you guide discussion and expand on certain topics that your participants may raise
- A Participant Booklet for your audience to use as a companion resource
- A PowerPoint slide deck that corresponds to the Facilitator Notes and Sample Script

As you begin to build a training plan for your audience, take a moment to consider additional elements that make for effective sessions. The following considerations will help you tailor your sessions to your audience's needs:

- The invitation to join the session should include the session date and time, detailed information on how to access it, and agenda items (e.g., Introductions, Discussion, Breakout Discussion, Wrap-Up).
- Keep a record or minutes of the session.
  - ▶ Depending on your organization's policies and the platform used, virtual sessions can be recorded (e.g., Zoom's recording function or other means).
  - ▶ Questions and conversation using the chat function should be saved for future use.
  - ▶ Take detailed notes or minutes.
    - It is best if notes are taken by someone other than the facilitator to allow the facilitator to focus on the content of the session and subsequent discussions.
    - The note-taker and the facilitator can meet after the session to review the notes and any other information captured during the session.
  - ▶ It is important to capture your audience's comments, questions, discussion, and suggestions.
    - This information can be used by your organization and Project Firstline for program improvement and to shape future infection control training events.
    - This information can also help you improve as a facilitator.
- Conduct follow-up and evaluation.
  - ▶ Reach out to your audience after the session for participant feedback.
  - ▶ This toolkit provides a sample feedback form ["After a Session"](#) section of this guide, which you may wish to use for this purpose.

Time Factors

Project Firstline provides training materials of varying lengths.

These time lengths are not intended to be prescriptive and are instead provided simply as a tool that you may tailor to best match your specific audience and their needs. When you schedule your session, use your knowledge about your audience's availability and learning needs to adapt these materials as necessary.

Preparing for a Session

Prepare yourself ahead of time to lead a Project Firstline session.

- Review the Session Plans and supporting materials for each topic so that you know the material thoroughly. In particular, be sure to review the activities and discussion questions and be prepared to modify them to suit your audience, as needed.

- Anticipate potential questions and prepare yourself to answer them.

- Be familiar with your organization's policies and procedures (if applicable) so that you can provide specific instruction.

- Practice!

  ▶ Practice using the features of the virtual platform you will use for training (e.g., Zoom, Microsoft Teams). Make sure you are familiar with specific features that will be used during the training (e.g., how to use the chat feature, mute buttons).

  ▶ Rehearse presenting the material to a test audience.

  ▶ When possible, include your colleagues who will assist during the session (e.g., by taking notes, monitoring the chat) in your practice sessions so that you are all comfortable with the session format and flow.

  ▶ Get feedback from your practice audience. As outlined in the "After a Session" section of this guide, consider using Project Firstline's sample self-assessment form and participant feedback form for this purpose. These essential resources will help you strengthen your skills and sessions over time.

Understanding Your Audience

As part of the planning process, take time to think about how your audience and their learning needs, and about your opportunities to adapt the Project Firstline Session Plans accordingly. Consider questions such as the following:

- Who is your audience? What are their general job duties? What have their experiences been? How familiar are they likely to be with infection control? Do they have specific learning needs (e.g., literacy level, language considerations)?

- Is there an opportunity to share information before the session?

- How can you best set the proper expectations in advance and at the beginning of the session?

- Do participants understand what is expected after the session (e.g., evaluation and follow-up)?

- How will you manage large or smaller groups?

Drawing on the answers to these questions, you can then begin to tailor the Project Firstline Session Plans in a way that participants will value and internalize. Keep the following points in mind as you prepare for your training:

- Provide a motivation to learn.

- Emphasizing why participants need to learn something new, such as how it can be applied to their experiences, can help drive their motivation to learn.
- Protecting and providing better care for patients is a strong motivator for healthcare workers. Connecting the information in your training sessions to the impact of improved patient care and patient safety provides a strong incentive for participants to engage with the content.

- Build on participants' experience.
  - Drawing on participants' knowledge and experience allows them to make connections to educational content more easily.
- Connect with topics of immediate value.
  - Participants look for ways that new knowledge is relevant to their current role, and they want to apply new knowledge as soon as possible.
  - Participants will personalize new knowledge to their role or experience.

The Session Plans provide a jumping-off point for applying these principles to specific infection control topics. As you become increasingly familiar with Project Firstline resources, you will find many opportunities to integrate these principles into your trainings.

Conducting a Session

You Have the Floor

As you facilitate the session, the following strategies will help you communicate effectively with your audience:

- Speak slowly and clearly.
- Reduce environmental distractions and noise as much as possible.
  - Choose a simple background for yourself.
  - Avoid shuffling papers during the session.
  - Do your best to work from a quiet place, without phones ringing, HVAC noise, typing on a keyboard, etc.
  - Use and encourage "mute" options for yourself and your audience.
- Use active listening skills to engage your audience and encourage participation.
  - Learn your participants' names and use them with respect when engaging with your audience.
  - When someone is speaking, give them your undivided attention.
  - Make eye contact by looking directly into the webcam, and use appropriate non-verbal cues to show that you are listening, such as by nodding at appropriate moments.
  - Listen to a question or comment fully before replying. Ask follow-up questions to clarify your understanding, as needed.
- Thank participants for contributing to the discussion!

Tell Me More

Questions that can be answered with a simple "yes" or "no" are often great icebreakers to get a content-focused conversation started or to get feedback in a short period of time. Richer open-ended questions also play an important role in effective training. Open-ended questions encourage your audience to share more of their thoughts and apply what they are learning to their experiences.

The following are some potential phrases for open-ended questions:

- How so?
- Would you explain that a bit more?
- What do you mean when you say...?
- And what was the result?
- Can you expand on that, please?
- How did you react to that?
- I see a great comment in the chat. [Participant Name], would you like to unmute and say more about your thought?

After a Session

Project Firstline offers tools to help you follow up after training sessions:

- Facilitator self-assessment: a resource to help you reflect on your experience after a session
- Participant feedback form: a resource for you to gather participant feedback on a session

These resources may be adapted to suit your specific training needs. Over time, they can help you respond to participant feedback, support continued learning after a session, and strengthen your skills as a facilitator.

Additional Resources

The links below provide additional resources that may be helpful to you in this work. Thank you again for serving as a Project Firstline facilitator!

- Project Firstline
- Project Firstline Training Toolkits on Infection Control and COVID-19
- Project Firstline Videos on Infection Control and COVID-19
- Project Firstline Training Toolkits on Recognizing Infection Risks in Healthcare
- Project Firstline Resources on Recognizing Infection Risks in Healthcare
- CDC-TRAIN
- CDC: Infection Control

For more information, please contact

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
1600 Clifton Road NE, Atlanta, GA 33029-4027
Telephone: 1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)/TTY: 1-888-232-6348
E-mail: cdcinfo@cdc.gov
Web: www.cdc.gov/projectfirstline