



# > LEARNER IN DIFFICULTY

## Part B *Supporting the Learner in Difficulty*

### > Learning Objectives

*By the end of the session, learners will:*

1. List typical strategies to prevent and address learner difficulties
2. Create a learning plan based on a clinical scenario

### > Time: 60 minutes (1 hour)

### > Overview:

This is the second workshop in the Learner in Difficulty module. After focusing on diagnosing causal factors in Part A, Part B looks at addressing learner difficulties with concrete interventions. Learners will leave this highly-interactive session with a number of tools and strategies to address a learner in difficulty, including a structured framework to guide the creation of a learning plan.

*Key ideas for this workshop include:*

1. Preventive measures, including a thorough orientation, can help minimize learner difficulties.
2. Working as a team with the learner to diagnose and address performance issues helps increase buy-in and effectiveness of interventions.
3. Documenting all discussions and agreements with the learner helps streamline communication and ensure common understanding of the situation.
4. Learning plans can be useful tools to involve learners in the identification and addressing of problem areas.

### > Materials:

- Facilitator Guide
- PowerPoint File
- Supporting the Learner in Difficulty Resource [1 per participant]
- Learning Plan Templates 1&2 [1 per participant]
- Learning Plan Samples 1&2 [1 per participant]
- Learner in Difficulty Role Play Cards [1 per participant]
- Skill Dimensions Summary Resource [1 per participant]
- Blank Learning Plan Forms [1 per participant]
- Session Evaluation Forms [1 per participant]

## > Agenda:

TIME	TOPIC	DELIVERY FORMAT
10 minutes	Introductions and Session Orientation	<i>Interactive Lecture</i>
10 minutes	So, What Works?	Q&A
10 minutes	Factors Affecting Learners in Difficulty	<i>Interactive Lecture</i>
25 minutes	Diagnosing a Learner in Difficulty (Case Study)	<i>Small Group Activity</i>
5 minutes	Wrap up and Session Evaluation	Q&A
<b>60 minutes total</b>		

## > Pre-Session Preparation:

### *When you receive this module:*

1. Read through this guide to familiarize yourself with the learning objectives, general structure, and key ideas for this learning session.
  - Make notes for yourself that will help the session go smoothly.
    - **Note:** this activity for this workshop is fairly complex and requires a number of handouts - it would be helpful to pre-consider how you might distribute these so that participants are not distracted by the process and maintain their focus on understanding the activity instructions
  - What are the key messages for learners to take away?
  - Where do you anticipate learners may challenge ideas or struggle with concepts presented in this module?
2. Preview the associated PowerPoint file on the computer you will be using to deliver the session to test system compatibility and to give yourself a chance to see how information will be delivered
  - In some cases, you may need to download free, web-based software to allow your system to play any embedded video files – just follow the prompts that arise when previewing or consult a tech-savvy colleague for assistance
3. Assemble the required materials for the session.
  - Print out all documents needed to run the session (see the Required Materials list above)

### *On the day of the session:*

1. Prepare the learning environment to best suit this module.
  - Consider the physical layout of the space as well as optimal seating arrangements in relation to the activities to be completed during the session.
    - Will this session run best with learners arranged as individuals, in pairs, or in groups?
    - Where will you mainly locate yourself to facilitate the group?
2. Write the following on an easily visible surface in the room:
  - The title and learning outcomes for the session
  - The agenda for the session
3. Open the PowerPoint file and have the first slide projecting as learners enter the room.





2. [Show Slide 5 – Role Play Activity Instructions]

- **Review** the instructions on the slide:
  - ▶ *This is a paired activity where one partner will play the learner in difficulty and the other partner will play the preceptor*
  - ▶ *The goal of the exercise is to create a learning plan that will address the learning issues described in the scenario and that will work for both parties*
  - ▶ *Both partners should try to stay in character throughout the role play and behave in a manner that follows the descriptions they receive in their role play cards*
- 3. **Hand out** blank learning plans and Skill Dimensions Support Resource which may help participants identify learning issues, develop learning objectives, and design interventions for the learning plan
- 4. **Ask** learners to pair up and hand out one role play card to each participant. Ask participants to only read their own card
- 5. **Facilitate** role-plays and assist where needed. Often, learners will want to talk about the scenario rather than actually role play so try to encourage as much role playing as possible.
- 6. If groups finish early, **ask** them to switch roles and try the role play again to get a sense of what it's like on the other side
- 7. When groups are finished role-playing, **ask** for some feedback on that experience. Some guiding questions might include:
  - ▶ *Was it easy or challenging to create a learning plan?*
  - ▶ *How did you overcome obstacles to creating a mutually-agreeable plan?*
  - ▶ *What would help you do this process with your own learners?*



5  
minutes

WRAP-UP [Q&A]

1. [Show Slide 6 – Session Objectives]
  - **Review** learning objectives and use questioning to review suggested strategies to address Objective #1
  - **Ask** learners, "What is one useful idea you are taking from this session that will help you better support a learner in difficulty that you may encounter?" **Facilitate** a few responses from the group
2. [Show Slide 7 – That's a Wrap!]
  - **Challenge** learners to use some of the strategies presented in this module to support learners in difficulty (and/or pre-emptively address issues so they don't arise)
3. **Inform** learners that you'd like to collect some feedback from everyone regarding the session they just attended. Some of this feedback will inform us of our effectiveness in delivering the session.



4. **Distribute** session evaluation forms and ask learners to complete them
5. **Thank** learners for attending and participating in the session

**OPTIONAL MODULE IDEAS:**

1. If time permits, facilitate a brief discussion on recommended strategies to support learners in difficulty using the following questions:
  - a. *“What are some common difficulties that a thorough learner orientation can help prevent?”*

**Draw out:**

    - ▶ Unclear or differing expectations between learners and preceptors
    - ▶ Lack of understanding of other party in terms of priorities, practices, or preferences
    - ▶ Creating a negative work environment
  - b. *“What are the benefits of involving the learner in developing any interventions?”*

**Draw out:**

    - ▶ Adds one more mind to the problem-solving process
    - ▶ Helps clarify learner (and preceptor) understanding of exactly what will be expected from the learner
    - ▶ Increases buy-in from the learner
  - c. *“Why is it important to document all concerning behaviours and intervention agreements?”*

**Draw out:**

    - ▶ Specific, behaviour-based feedback is easier for learners to receive than general impressions (reference basic feedback principles)
    - ▶ Written agreements improve understanding of all parties as to exactly what is problematic and how the learner can demonstrate improved performance
    - ▶ Creates a paper trail in case the situation is escalated to remediation or probation stages

## > **Assessment:**

### *Formal*

- Learner responses during Q&A and Wrap-up sections on strategies to support learners in difficulty
- Learning plans completed during paired activity

### *Informal*

- Responses during interactive lecture