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| **TRAINING CONSIDERATIONS** |
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WHAT THIS HANDOUT IS ABOUT

This handout offers suggestions that you may wish to reflect upon when creating your own training to introduce the labyrinth to others, or to train labyrinth hosts.

The following are the key points that we discuss:

* + Objectives for training
  + Designing training
  + Creating opportunities for reflection, learning, and experience
  + Delivering training
  + Trialing training, responding to feedback
  + Certification and accreditation
  + Adapting *Labyrinth Launchpad* notes.

These notes make no assumption about what type of training you may be developing, other than this being labyrinth related. You may use any or all of the original materials that we have developed, customize these, or add to them to meet your own needs. In all probability, the course that you develop will be unique.

Remember you can **CONTACT US** if you have any questions, or would like to chat about your planned training with a “fresh pair of eyes”.

1. OBJECTIVES FOR TRAINING

It might seem obvious, but can be easily forgotten – before offering training, it’s important to consider what the **objectives** for the training are. This includes considering:

* How many people are likely to be in the audience for the training? Will the training be for a large or small group, or conducted on a one-to-one basis?
* Who will your main audience likely (or known) be? What will they be seeking/expecting from the training? Will all become labyrinth hosts?
* What may attendees know about the labyrinth ahead of the training? Will all be at the same starting point?
* What are attendees most likely to relate to, e.g. are particular labyrinth types more or less likely to have appeal given the associations of some (such as the Chartres design to the Christian tradition)? How can the training be set in context with what you specifically need? What might *not* be meaningful for attendees?
* Where might the training fit in with any broader objectives for your labyrinth project? For example, how will it help bring a community together, and what might need to be taught/presented to bring this about (either in short briefings or in longer training)?
* What are the expected outcomes of the training? e.g. To encourage, inform, equip hosts; spread awareness of the labyrinth and its benefits; enable participants to experience the labyrinth for themselves?

Clarifying the objectives will help you to develop training that is appropriate for your project or participants’ needs. If you know who some or all of the likely trainees may be before developing your training, you may be able to ask them for input about their hopes and intentions. However, be wary of aiming to promise everything, unless you’re confident that you can deliver this!

2. DESIGNING TRAINING

Having established objectives for training and considered your likely audience, you are ready to design your program. It’s possible that what we offer through the *Labyrinth Launchpad* may require little or no adaptation for your need. Whether or not this is so, you may still wish to consider the following points:

* What content is important to provide to satisfy the **knowledge** needs of participants?
* What may be needed to engage **understanding of the labyrinth experience** and **prompt self-learning**?
* How can the training support the **various ways that individuals learn**, bearing in mind that we are all different? e.g. Some prefer interactive approaches to learning, others like visual aids, hearing stories and anecdotes, or class discussion. This should help prompt possible exercises that you might include in the training, as well as help guide your thinking about the balance or mix of presentation, experience, class discussion, and exercises that might be appropriate
* What order makes sense to introduce the material, e.g. if some content assumes knowledge of material that might need to be introduced earlier?
* How might the training best be split into parts, not necessarily all delivered at the same time or place?
* How to split out an **outline** for the training, giving headings for each main topic or module, and listing the main points covered by each, and exercises that might support learning (see the INTRODUCTION for the *Labyrinth Launchpad* materials as an example, which may or may not be appropriate for your needs)?
* Estimating how much time may be needed for each module, allowing time for individuals to share their thoughts and ask questions.

The next task is to **develop the materials** to support the modules – notes, exercise guidance, and any presentation materials to give or show to attendees; and notes for yourself as trainer to keep track on timings, note any points that you may want to make that aren’t included in what’s given to attendees.

Try not to be over-ambitious in what you deliver at one time – delivering training usually takes longer than might be imagined, and can be exhausting!

3. CREATING OPPORTUNITIES FOR REFLECTION, LEARNING, AND EXPERIENCE

Look for opportunities to allow attendees to experience the labyrinth for themselves during their training, if you’re able. Depending on what may be available to you, the following may be among possibilities that you could consider:

* Guiding individuals through the process of drawing one or more labyrinths to create their own paper finger labyrinths that they might then “walk”
* Offering a temporary labyrinth to walk, if you have one, or visiting a permanent one as part of the training (again, if you are fortunate to have access to one)
* Co-creating a temporary (or more permanent!) labyrinth with participants, e.g. by cutting a path in mud or sand, or using chalk or rope on a hard surface.

Additionally, and especially if you are training individuals to become hosts, allow opportunities for attendees to privately reflect upon what they are learning, as well as time to share their thoughts, feelings, and experiences in the group. The reflective exercises included with this training might be used for this purpose, or serve as examples for exercises that you might wish to create. Ask many “open” questions–ones that can’t easily be answered with a simple “yes”/”no” answer–as these will help people with their reflections. Encourage class sharing, questioning, and reflecting, and be sure to allow time for this in planning timings for the training.

Group-based exercises may require a minimum number of participants to be helpful, which may determine what you choose to include in the training. One-to-one training may be valuable too, although restrict the opportunity to experience walking the labyrinth with others (however, this shouldn’t be a reason for not holding training – opportunities for group walking will come when they are meant to).

4. DELIVERING TRAINING

Acting as a trainer may be a role that you’re unfamiliar with. If this is the case, don’t worry – most individuals who attend training are very forgiving of anything you feel doesn’t run as you’d planned, and especially if they know that you are delivering training for the first time.

Being well prepared should help too, and arriving early on the day of the training should help set any nerves at ease.

The following may be among points to bear in mind:

* Planning the venue, logistics, and any resource and equipment needs (which may involve having space to lay out or temporarily create a labyrinth, electric power points for computers and video projectors, seating for participants arranged as you prefer, e.g. at tables in a ring or “cabaret style”, print-offs of training notes and other handouts, writing paper and any materials that might be needed for exercises, badges or name labels for participants, confirming your booking for a room or rooms for the training, confirming the timing/venue/joining instructions for attendees – or, much simpler, just having an in or outdoor place where you can gather and enjoy informally learning about the labyrinth together!)
* Arriving early to set up for the training and welcome attendees
* Allow “arrival time” for attendees, perhaps offering refreshment as individuals gather. Be ready to accommodate latecomers once the training starts, although restricting introductions for them to quick recaps, not re-running everything you may already have covered!
* When the course begins, a trainer will usually first introduce the objectives for the course, its timings for any break times, explain anything that anyone needs to know about the venue (such as where toilets are located, what to do if a fire bell sounds), then allow each person in turn to introduce themselves, and say any particular aims that they have for the training. Of course, if everyone knows each other already, or the training is being run informally, such introductions may not be necessary
* Allow time for breaks if the training is expected to run over several hours. Let attendees know ahead of the training if you will provide any refreshments
* Ensure that everyone in the group has a chance to speak and take part in exercises. This may mean occasionally asking questions of individuals by name or requesting that others who may want to dominate to allow others a chance to share
* Keep a watch on timings, but be prepared for the training to go off course from the timings you may have planned. This may happen especially if the group wants to explore specific topics in more depth, or wishes to take more time to share, discuss, and experience the labyrinth. Be flexible to go where the group wants to go, while keeping in mind content that you feel is important to introduce (which may involve bringing the group back to your agenda, if time is running short).

5. TRIALING TRAINING, RESPONDING TO FEEDBACK

If you are able, you may wish to pilot your training with a small, friendly audience, who are ready to give you honest and considered feedback. Such a ”dry run” can help you refine how you want to deliver the training, as well as pick up on any possible loose ends with it, and invite suggestions from the initial trainees about what might be improved.Such a ”dry run” is not always possible, of course–and it may be that you only plan to run the training on one occasion, in any event, perhaps informally. If this is so, it is still beneficial to seek feedback following the training, as well as carefully reflecting yourself on what you might aim to do differently were you to run the training again.

Gathering feedback and reflecting are ongoing activities for each run of a program. These may identify possible changes that you may wish to make, which might include exercises in the training, reordering some sections, adding or taking away information, and revisions to some of the notes. A useful guide to remember might be – **do more of what works / participants want, and less of what doesn’t!**

Inviting honest and specific feedback Is important. Ask people to give examples if they can to explain the points that they make. Narrative feedback (descriptions and explanations) is normally far more valuable than simple evaluation that asks people how they feel about particular aspects of the training by giving a score out of 10 (or some other number). Make a little time before the training course is due to close for gathering feedback. Few people will take time to do this following the course. Time for discussion, perhaps inviting comments from each individual as well as openly within the group, is valuable, and offering a *brief* evaluation form for individuals to give written feedback can also be very helpful.If you use an evaluation form, be wary of making it too complicated. One effective approach for encouraging thoughtful feedback is simply to ask two questions:(1) *On a scale of 0-10, where 10 represents ”very strongly,” to what extent would you recommend this training for someone who is seeking to gain confidence as a labyrinth host?*(2) *Please* ***explain*** *why you gave this score, considering what might be changed or given emphasis in the training.*Remember to **thank** individuals for giving feedback, and be prepared to consider carefully and objectively the observations that they offer, especially if these are well explained and backed up with examples, or are points that, with an open mind, you can relate to.

6. CERTIFICATION AND ACCREDITATION

You may wish to provide a certificate for individuals who have undertaken the training, or even extend this to offer an accreditation process.Individuals who are planning to work with a labyrinth in professional context, such as in hospitals or schools, sometimes ask for proof that they have undertaken relevant training, or that they are otherwise equipped to offer the skills that they claim to their host organizations. A certificate or accreditation can provide them with credibility, in turn giving confidence to hiring organizations.A certificate may confirm no more than that an individual has attended and completed a training course. It does not normally need to indicate whether they have demonstrated understanding of the subject matter or any level of proficiency.

Nevertheless, to complete a training program is normally sufficient for hiring organizations to have confidence that the person they are hiring is a ”safe pair of hands,” and who is committed to their own professional development.Accrediting an individual takes this one step further, since this aims to confirm that an individual has gained a level of proficiency and experience in hosting labyrinth walks. To accredit a host, you should you be sure that they have demonstrated understanding in what they do and that they are competent to perform their role as host.

This means having evidence of what they have put into practice, such as written feedback from a number of different observers, who might typically offer testimonials covering more than one walk that the individual seeking accreditation has hosted.

You may wish to design a feedback form to offer to observers, including the questions and prompts that you specifically wish them to give feedback for. These might take the form: *“Comment on the extent that the host demonstrated [a skill/attribute/appreciation]…”*

7. ADAPTING LABYRINTH LAUNCHPAD NOTES

The training notes and reflective exercises that we provide may be adapted in any way that you wish, according to your particular need. Often, this may involve adding additional information, as well as giving emphasis to your specific cultural or other contextual situation.Except where otherwise indicated by © symbol, the notes are copyright free, and you are free to brand them with your own identity. **Please note that many images do show attribution for their photographers or owners, and these therefore need to be credited.**

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