

## **Guidelines for Facilitators of Satellite Videoconferences**

### **Transcript\* of the video/audio clips**

#### **The Day of the Videoconference**

**16. Enhance the educational impact of the session by facilitating any activities described in the site-facilitator packet. Encourage your participants to submit questions during the videoconference's live interactive question/answer session(s).**

**Dr. Carter McNamara, Leaders Circle Program Director, MAP for Nonprofits, St. Paul, Minnesota:**

We learned the most important ingredient in a local learning community is that each learner participates fully and honestly. That sounds superfluous, I know, but how many learners truly participate fully in a program or a course? We've learned that if the learner gets the time and the support to participate fully, the necessary outcomes will follow for that learner. So we strive first to provide a trusting environment where peers support other peers to participate fully.

One very useful approach we've found in developing a local learning community is what we call leader circles. In the Leaders Circles, there are five to seven members who have similar needs, for example to learn a certain topic or solve a complex problem. The members help each other by exchanging practical materials, giving advice, giving supportive challenges or posing meaningful questions. The outcomes for each member in a Circle depend very much on what the member wanted from their Circle in the first place, for example ongoing support, problem solving or continuous learning.

Universal benefits from the Circles include a great deal of useful resources: cost savings, problem resolution, renewal and ultimately, knowledge and wisdom. A real value of Leader Circles is that it helps each of the members take new information from a course or feedback offered in the meeting and then apply it in their workplace. Because circle meetings continue to meet each month, they continue to apply that information and take it well beyond the course into their lives or their workplaces where the learning becomes deep learning for each of the members.

***Leaders Circles:** Leaders Circles are a proven, practical and collaborative model that sustains commitments among participants as they help each other resolve major issues in their workplace. Dr. Carter McNamara (MAP, St. Paul MN) has developed a guidebook*

*that orients participants to the circle process. For more information see:*

<http://www.mapnp.org/library/circles/theory.htm>

**Bill Rizzo, Community Resource Development Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Dane County:**

We did a brown bag series with some success, identifying people who might want to come before the program and discuss specific issues relative to the program that's going to be broadcast, and just talk generally about issues that they're dealing with. We also are part of a conference that will be held this September on non-profit organizations, not so much on the issues or the curriculum that the Learning Institute has developed, but more generally about where non-profits are going. We want to be able to encourage the development of leadership circles on a local basis. Hopefully, that kind of structure will encourage people to participate more generally in education for non-profits and the Learning Institute program.

**Joe Moskol, Community Development Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Rock County:**

I hope to involve more local experts who can work with our learners. Peers teaching peers is an effective technique. Also, I need more local media involved with the program. Feature articles on upcoming videoconferences and local support networks would be a step in the right direction here. Something else that needs to be experimented with is follow-up with participants who attend the videoconference. They may need help planning and designing new organizational systems. Organizations need to have a plan of action if they expect anything to change. Keep in mind that videoconferences are simply a way to help people raise their awareness. Planning is about change in their organizations in the way they work day-to-day.

**Susan J. Ellis, President, Energize, Inc., Pennsylvania:**

I recommend a number of things, some of them obvious. One is, be prepared. People are very aware when someone is just going through the motions of hosting, but not really facilitating. I think that means reading the leaders' packets, possibly looking at some videos that were done the past and generally being knowledgeable or having somebody there who is knowledgeable.

The second is the importance of setting climate. That means opening it up to people who are going to be asked to share, where there is going to be an opportunity to talk, that it's nonjudgmental, there's some fun, and that kind of thing. A lot has to do with room arrangement, having coffee and tea available, etc. I also think it's very important for the facilitator to deal with latecomers. There are always people who wander in at odd times. I think they should be met at the door and brought up to speed on what's going on.

The final thing is, this may sound funny, but act interested. It's clear that some facilitators are really not involved in non-profit management and they're doing this as part of many, many, many programs. Do not sit in the back of the room doing paperwork or other things or leave the room. If you want to demonstrate to learners that this is a total package of learning experience, you really need to be involved and engaged. They need to see it because you're modeling the behavior.

**Claudette Green, Director, Volunteer Baton Rouge!, Nonprofit Resource Center, Louisiana:**

We've found that with a facilitated discussion thirty minutes prior to the actual start of the broadcast as well as when there's a break in the middle, most people pick up a cookie and

continue the facilitated discussion. We also provide additional handouts that complement the participant's information packet. Some of the materials we hand out are from the Learning Institute, from their website or from *Non-Profit World*, as well as from resources that we have here.

**Dr. Joseph A. Lessard, County Extension Director, MSU-Extension, Ingham County, Michigan:**

I prepared about a twenty-five item check-off list that had to do with just about every detail you could think off in terms of being prepared for the event. The mention of enhancing the educational impact is to have a well-organized program that has a very user-friendly, learner-oriented environment. I think we worked hard to provide that kind of environment for our participants. During the program, it was important that our facilitator was organized and knowledgeable, not only in the content of the meeting, but the flow of the meeting. She was prepared to use the time that was provided at the end to bring closure to the participants and to ask the questions that would help them reflect on next steps for their own organizations.

**Bill Rizzo, Community Resource Development Agent, University of Wisconsin-Extension, Dane County:**

We tried the brown bags and they worked pretty well. I think for participants it was a good way to load up before the sessions and get their minds moving on the topic. We also download copies of the articles that they were asked to read in advance. We found that people simply didn't download them, or if they did, didn't read them. We made them available during every program.

We feel that it's very important to have a comfortable, informal kind of atmosphere, so we always provide refreshments, give people a good orientation to the program and the facility and encourage people to simply be comfortable in what they're doing that day and to speak with each other. We definitely encouraged people to network and get to know each other.

\*Transcript edited for continuity and clarity.

For additional information, contact: Program Development and Evaluation, University of Wisconsin-Extension, 432 North Lake Street, Madison, WI 53706  
Telephone: (608) 262-9940  
[www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande.html](http://www.uwex.edu/ces/pdande.html)

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