Training Validation Methods:  
A how-to guide for assessing participant learning

Staff Skill Building Library  
Raising Voices
This document is part of a Staff Skill Building Library developed by Raising Voices. The Library consists of competency based training modules designed to strengthen skills of staff implementing or supporting community-based violence against women (VAW) prevention programs. The Library is designed for organizations using SASA! An Activist Kit for Preventing Violence against Women and HIV but can be used by anyone working to mobilize their community to prevent VAW. If you are not using SASA!, simply replace the word SASA! wherever you see it in the text with the name of your methodology.

All materials in the Library can be downloaded at www.raisingvoices.org/staffskills.php or requested at info@raisingvoices.org The SASA! Activist Kit can be downloaded at www.raisingvoices.org
## Introduction: Commonly Asked Questions about Training Validation Methods

### Validation Methods:

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A “competency” is a “skill performed to a specific standard under specific conditions”. Competency based training defines specific skills to be learned in each training module, and then sets up methods to validate whether those specific skills were learned by participants. In other words, competency based training allows the facilitator to confirm that participants have the required knowledge and skills to do their jobs or take more advanced training.

Why conduct competency based trainings?

Competency based training is more effective than traditional, time-based training, for several reasons:

- It is easier to evaluate and adapt.²
- It builds on existing participant knowledge and skills.
- It allows for the curriculum to be tailored to participant needs.
- It includes, as an essential component, a skills assessment/validation at the end of each training segment.³, ⁴ If competencies are not demonstrated by participants, it allows for participant-specific recommendations to be made regarding future training and mentoring needs.
- It allows for specific strengths of each participant to be recognized and used to help others. For example, if a particular participant in an organization is really strong at something, they can mentor others.
- Competency based training materials can easily be improved. If it is found that participants generally do not learn what was intended from a specific module, the module can be revised and strengthened.

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¹ Reproductive Health Online Reading Room. The Competency-Based Approach to Training. Available at: http://www.reproline.jhu.edu JHPIEGO, an affiliate of Johns Hopkins University.
³ Ibid.
⁴ Sullivan, R. (Downloaded August 17, 2007.) A Competency based Approach to Training. Available at: http://www.reproline.jhu.edu/english/6read/6training/cbt/cbt.htm JHPIEGO.
What are validation methods?

Validation is another way to say “assessment” or “pre/post-test”. It is a set of ways to determine whether the participants in a training session learned what the facilitator intended for them to learn. For the purposes of creating a participatory, inclusive adult learning environment, the Raising Voices Staff Skill Building Library does not include written validation pre- or post-tests, though validation questions could easily be used in this way, if preferred. Instead, the Library includes several participatory validation methods that tend to be more fun and inclusive for groups—some of whom may not feel comfortable reading or writing in English. For example:

Examples of Validation Methods

- Activity in Training (group validation - knowledge, attitudes and skills)
- Game Show (group or individual validation - depending on question style - knowledge)
- Pick and Play (group validation - knowledge)
- Answers Bingo (group validation - knowledge)
- Card Game (group validation - knowledge)
- Agree/ Disagree/ Not Sure (group validation - attitudes)
- Debates (individual or group validation - knowledge, attitudes and skills)
- Teach Back (individual or group validation - knowledge and skills)
- Exit Interview/ Role Play (individual validation - knowledge and skills)
- Site Visit with Monitoring Checklist (individual validation - skills)
- Written Quiz (individual or group validation - knowledge)

Why validate participant learning?

Validation is necessary for competency based training, because it helps the facilitator determine whether participants learned what was intended. If so, the facilitator can be confident that participants are ready for the next steps—either implementing violence against women prevention methodologies like SASA!, providing technical assistance to others implementing programs or participating in more advanced training modules. Validation is a confirmation that participants have the required knowledge and skills to move on.

If the participants did not learn the intended subject matter, validation helps the facilitator know specifically what each participant may need more support in doing, or what type of additional training and mentoring may be needed to achieve the needed skills. In addition, if many of the participants did not learn what was intended from a training session, it allows reflection and revision of the training material itself to increase effectiveness.

Validation takes active engagement by facilitators and a bit more effort than time-based training—but the benefits are clear—facilitators and participants can know that efforts are producing results!
What is a validation question?

A validation question is something that can be asked of participants to confirm whether or not they learned what was intended from the training module. It can be in the form of a realistic scenario that asks them to demonstrate a skill, or a knowledge or attitude-based question to see if they gained the knowledge.

How and when do I use validation questions?

Validation questions can be used before the training begins, to get a sense of what the group already knows—and then again at the end of the training, to see what has been learned. Generally, it is ok to spend less time on validation at the beginning of a training—and it is best to get this information as early as possible, so it can help in planning what modules to include and what pace can be set. At the end of a training day or the entire training workshop, it is important to focus on validation methods that tell you what the group, or each individual participant, learned.

Validation questions are included in each training module in the Raising Voices Staff Skill Building Library. Most methods are not used at the end of every session but after several sessions (i.e. a day of training, or at the end of a multi-day training). Facilitators can simply choose which method they think is most appropriate and gather the validation questions from each module to form their validation content.

What does validation measure?

Validation methods are designed to measure change in the participants’ knowledge, attitudes, skills, and behaviors over time, related to specific competencies necessary to do quality VAW prevention.

Knowledge questions are easier to measure than attitudes questions, and are more likely to change between the beginning and end of a short-term training. Therefore, many of the validation methods measure change in knowledge.

Attitude change in staff can also be validated over time, through methods like Agree/ Disagree/ Not Sure activities or Debates within the training. However, realistically the attitudes of most adults shift slowly—so these methods can be used each quarter, or over longer-term engagements, rather than pre-or post-training.

Skills can also be gained within the course of one training session. There are a variety of validation methods to assess skills. For example, role plays or field practices with monitoring checklists are good validations of participant skill.
Activity in Training

Description

Participants practice using a skill or strengthening each other’s knowledge within the training curriculum. The facilitator can determine whether participants learned the skill because they practice it right in the training, and have a chance to demonstrate their understanding through the training activity. In other words, if the facilitator knows what to listen for, they can tell if the participants can demonstrate the competency. For example, a group brainstorm can validate participant knowledge, through listening for the quality of contributions to the brainstorm. Facilitator’s notes are included in text boxes within the Staff Skill Building Library to help facilitators know what to listen for and when.

When to Use

The Activity in Training validation method is used directly within the training content, requiring only a few minutes of the facilitator’s time after each session to write notes of what was learned. It is the preferred validation method whenever possible, because it is not noticeable to participants as a “test” and therefore doesn’t raise any anxiety among participants, and is more likely to get a true picture of competencies. However, in some circumstances, the facilitator may determine the Activity in Training did not provide enough information about participant learning. In this case, it can be used in combination with another validation method.

Note: Agree/Disagree/Not Sure and Debates are two of many examples of activities in training that can serve as validation methods, further articulated in their own sections later in this document.
There are a few challenges to using an Activity in Training as the validation method.

First, the facilitator must be very careful to ensure that all participants are contributing, and that not only a few of the louder/ more confident participants are heard and evaluated. This is a risk with all group validation options, and for certain, important competencies, individual validation methods may be preferred so that this challenge is eliminated.

Second, the facilitator must be skilled enough to simultaneously facilitate and listen to participant contributions—remembering details as much as possible to make notes after the session. Facilitators can manage this through becoming very familiar with training content in advance of the session, or inviting a second facilitator to come in and take notes during appropriate parts of the session. A sample Activity Validation Notes Sheet is attached at the end of this description.

Preparations needed

- Review and understand the potential activities within the training schedule that could provide a group validation of certain knowledge, attitudes or skills.
- Relevant forms and monitoring checklists, as applicable (e.g. Training Facilitation Monitoring Checklist in Staff Skill Building Library Teach Back Training Facilitation Series, SASA! Activity Report Form, etc).
- Copies of Activity Validation Notes Sheet to record specifics about which participants understood which components, and individual participant level of competency.

Activity in Training Steps

Note: No explanation to participants is required with this method. Simply ensure you have time after the session to record on the Activity Validation Notes Sheet or in a special notebook what you noticed about participant level of knowledge, attitude or skill, based on what you saw in the activity.
**Activity Validation Notes Sheet**

Name of training module:  
Facilitator completing notes sheet:

*Level of Competency Ranking: 1=Needs immediate retraining, 2= Needs further training, with time, 3=Demonstrates Competency, 4=Outstanding, could train others, FVN=Further validation needed to determine competency*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Competency</th>
<th>Participant(s)</th>
<th>Quotes / Comments</th>
<th>Level of Competency: *</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>e.g. Explain what it means to be an 'activist'</td>
<td>Grace, Charles, and Aminah</td>
<td>“It is someone who feels something within them—they do it not because they are paid to, but because they care.” They understood that an activist is motivated internally and will work within their own lives, with friends, neighbors, etc.</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Joseph</td>
<td>No comment- silent during activity</td>
<td>FVN</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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A Game Show is one creative way to validate participant learning that makes it fun for participants to show what they learned. A Game Show replicates a TV quiz Game Show, asking participants to form teams and answer questions to gain points for their team. It uses the Validation Questions cards at the end of the Staff Skill Building Library as content. The facilitator simply cuts out the cards from each module covered in the training and combines them to create the Game Show quiz questions.

There are 3 types of Game Show questions:

1. **Beep** questions (This is the default style): Participants are grouped into teams. The facilitator reads a card and first participant to yell Beep! gets a chance to answer the question. If they answer correctly, their team receives a point.

2. **All Play** questions: Participants are grouped into teams. The facilitator distributes small pieces of paper and pens to each participant, and explains the rules. There are no Beep's but every participant must write the correct answer to the question on the piece of paper. The team with the most correct answers (judged by either reading aloud or facilitator going around to look at each answer) wins. If more than 1 group gets 100% correct, both groups receive points.

3. **Team Discussion** questions: The participants are grouped into teams. The first team to Beep has the opportunity to discuss the question as a group, then nominate 1 team member who has NOT shared yet, or who has answered fewer questions, to be the spokesperson. After strictly 3 minutes, the team answer is shared by the spokesperson. If the answer is not correct, the question is opened up to another group.

The Game Show validation method is used at the end of a multi-day training. It takes approximately 1 hour, but varies depending on the number of validation questions that are to be covered. The method works well when there are many validation questions. It is best used for groups who learn well through activities, and who like a little bit of healthy competition. Younger groups tend to enjoy the Game Show format.

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5 Chuck Marquart assisted in development of this validation method.
Tips for Facilitator

First, some groups of participants may see the Game Show as too fast-paced, too competitive, or too childish because it is a game. It is important to assess your group before choosing this method to be sure it is a group that will take it in a spirit of fun. Use of some Team Discussion questions can also assist in changing dynamics to be more consensus-based and less reliant on fast reflexes.

Second, the facilitator must be very careful that all participants are contributing, and that not only a few of the louder/more confident participants are heard and evaluated. This is a risk with all group validation options. Use of some All Play or Team Discussion questions can assist in changing these dynamics.

Third, the facilitator must be skilled enough to simultaneously facilitate, determine who said Beep! first, and weigh the correctness of the answers. Having co-facilitators may be helpful for this session.

Finally, it is very important to debrief after certain questions to ensure participants understood the question. The facilitator should be careful not to forget the purpose of the game—it is for validation and for participant review of material. The competition or finding a “winner” is not the important piece—participant comprehension is.

Preparations needed

- Post a flip chart labeled “Score Sheet”, with dividing lines to tally each group’s score.
- Copy and cut apart validation questions from each of the modules covered in your training.
- Look through validation questions to determine which ones would be important for each participant to answer correctly (individual validation), and label these cards All Play. Decide which would be better if discussed before response (though still group validation), and label these Team Discussion. You may also choose to simply use one style throughout, but if there are many questions, the variety can make it more fun and respond to different participants’ strengths!
- Print and cut apart Beep cards, one per participant.
- Cut apart 1/2 pieces of blank paper for All Play question responses, one per participant per question, with 1 marker available per participant for answers.
- Secure 2 facilitators, if possible, for this validation method—one will be the facilitator/“Game Show host”, and one will help judge who yells Beep! first, keep score, and take private notes in a notebook on which specific participants seemed to understand or struggle with certain points. Activity Validation Notes Sheet, found in the Activity in Training section of this document (page 7), is one possible format for these notes. This information is your validation record, and can help when you make recommendations about future training needs and participant competency.
- If you choose (not necessary) have a small prize for winning team, or for all teams. Prizes can be simple things like candies, flowers from outside, or communication materials to be used in participants’ work, etc.
1. Ask: Has anyone ever seen a game show on TV?

2. Invite participant to explain, as necessary.

3. Divide training group into teams of 4-7 people, ensuring that the skills of each team are relatively even (i.e. do not put all of the really quick, experienced people onto one team—find a subtle way to spread capacities between teams).

4. Adopt the persona of a famous game show host, complete with a fake microphone out of paper if desired.

5. Explain: Today, ladies and gentlemen, we will be seeing what we really learned from this training. I will be asking questions. If you know the answer, your job is to hold up this card that says *Beep!* and yell *Beep!* before any other participant does. If you say it first, you will have the chance to answer a question and earn a point for your team.

6. Distribute *Beep!* cards and demonstrate once as necessary.

7. Explain:
   - There are certain questions that we will have to all answer correctly for our team to gain a point. These are *All Play* questions, and I will let you know when they come up.
   - With these, each participant will silently write down, without talking to anyone, their best answer to the question—then when the time runs out, you will each show your answer.
   - The team with the most correct answers gets a point. If any team gets all right answers, the team gets 2 points!
   - Finally, there are questions which require *Team Discussion*. You will have a specified amount of time to discuss as a team, then a representative will give the team’s answer. If the team answers correctly (as judged by facilitator(s), a point is given.

8. Clarify any misconceptions. Do not spend too much time doing this—the teams will learn by doing it.

9. Before reading aloud each question, tell them whether they should *Beep* or whether it is an *All Play/Team Discussion* question. Distribute 1/2 sheets of paper and markers as needed for *All Play*.

10. Read through each question, tallying points as needed. Be sure the speed is quick, interesting and fun for participants. Ensure all participants are contributing. If needed, set a rule that only participants who have not yet answered a question can respond to certain questions.

11. After all questions are completed, thank the participants for their participation. Depending on the group, you may decide to tally the scores and get the “winning” team, or simply to add together all the scores of all teams, and say that we knew the answers to that many questions together as one large group—and that this is good.

12. Provide any feedback to clarify confusions about questions that seemed challenging.
Pick and Play is one creative way to validate the group’s learning on certain concepts. The instructions are simple:

- The facilitator puts all participant names in one bag, and all validation questions related to the modules covered in another bag.
- A participant volunteer picks one name from the bag.
- The participant whose name was chosen picks a validation question from the other bag, reads it aloud, and answers it.
- The group helps the participant if s/he gets stuck.

When to Use

Pick and Play works best for 10-15 minutes during the morning recap each day of a training session, so the facilitator can validate whether participants learned the concept, while there is still time remaining in the training to clarify and retrain where needed. Due to time, only a few questions should be covered in this method each day.

Tips for Facilitator

Although it is a group validation method, Pick and Play is a good spot-check of participant learning because the participants who answer the questions are randomly selected (through drawing names out of a bag first)—rather than relying on volunteers, who tend to be the more confident, louder participants who also talk within the training itself.

However, some groups of participants may see the Pick and Play as somehow too childish because it is a game. It is important to assess your group before choosing this method to be sure it is a group that will take it in a spirit of fun.

Finally, it is very important to debrief after certain questions to ensure participants understood the question.
Preparations Needed

- Write participants’ names on small pieces of paper and put them into a bag.
- Copy and cut apart validation questions from each of the modules covered in the previous day’s training, and put them into another bag.

Pick and Play Steps

1. Explain: *This activity is going to help us identify what we learned today/yesterday/this afternoon, etc.*
2. Invite a participant to pick one name out of the names bag.
3. Invite the participant whose name was chosen to pick a question out of the other bag, and ask her/him to read it aloud and answer it.
4. If the participant has any trouble, invite the group to help him/her.
5. Discuss and clarify any misconceptions as needed.
6. Repeat process until all of previous day’s validation questions are completed.
Answers Bingo is a game used to validate participant learning that makes it fun for participants to show what they learned, through collaborating with each other to answer questions and win the game. Each participant receives an Answers Bingo card (see attached examples pages 18 and 19) with validation questions on it. Participants are invited to find others to fill in the correct answers on their cards, with only 1-2 questions maximum being answered by each participant. When a participant feels s/he has all answers correct, across or down, on their cards, they yell “BINGO!” Answers Bingo helps participants to mix and learn from each other.

Answers Bingo takes approximately 30-45 minutes at end of a training, depending on the number of validation questions. This method works best when there are not a large number (9-12) validation questions to go through at the end of the training—perhaps if Pick and Play or other validation method has already assessed some competencies, or for a short, 1/2 or 1-day training.
First, as with other game methods, some groups of participants can see Answers Bingo as somehow “too childish” because it is a game. It is important to assess your group before choosing this method to be sure it is a group that will take it in a spirit of fun.

Second, there are a couple of challenges when creating the Bingo cards related to the training. Find the Validation Questions from each module used in the Staff Skill Building Library and fill them in on the card. If there are not the correct number of validation questions to fill either the 9-question or 12-question card templates (attached), simply split apart certain validation questions into two sub-questions, or ask additional questions about the group, for fun (e.g. Who has the highest number of children in the group?) or make them FREE spaces. Be sure to set up card questions so that no row or column is “too easy”—participants should have to think and talk a bit before getting “Bingo”.

Finally, it is possible that some of the stronger participants will quickly win the game, when slower participants are still struggling to fill in one or two squares. The debrief of the activity is as important as the activity itself. After the winner has read all of their correct questions and answers and explained them, go through every question as a group, asking if anyone had that one filled in or can answer the question.

### Preparations Needed

- Create an Answers Bingo Card with the validation questions related to the training modules conducted, using one of the templates provided (pages 18 and 19).
- Photocopy the completed Answers Bingo Card, one per participant.
- If you choose (but not necessary) gather a small prize for winning participant, or for all participants. Prizes can be simple things like candies, flowers from outside, or communication materials to be used in participants’ work.

### Pick and Play Steps

1. Ask: Has anyone played the game “Bingo” before?
2. Invite participant to explain, as necessary.
3. Explain:
   - We are going to play a game that is a modification of bingo to see what we learned in this training.
• Each person is going to get one Answers Bingo card, with questions on it. You may ONLY answer one question on your own card. When I say “go” the rest of the questions must be answered by other participants. If you ask someone and they answer and you think their answer is correct, have them write the answer on your card and sign their name to it. If you feel their answer is not correct, keep trying other participants. When you fill up the card with all the correct answers, either across or down, yell “BINGO!”
• We will check the answers, so be sure they are correct!

4. Clarify any questions or confusion.

5. Distribute Answers Bingo Card to each participant, ensuring everyone has a pen and something to write on.

6. Shout “go!”

7. When a participant shouts “BINGO!” stop the game, and ask them to read their winning questions and answers. If any answer is not correct, discuss it as a group and then start the game again until someone new wins. If the answers are correct, congratulate the winner and give a small prize (if desired).

8. Invite participants to take their seats.

9. Ask others if they had any of the other, non-winning answers filled in on their cards. Go over each of the other answers to ensure participant understanding, assuring even quiet participants contribute. Clarify any misconceptions.
Find someone who can accurately answer a question described in a square, as quickly as possible, and have them write the answer and their name on your card in that space. When you complete a row of answers, across or down, call “Bingo!” We will ask you to read aloud your questions and answers. The first one to do this correctly wins the game!

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>B l a c k</th>
<th>I n f o</th>
<th>N g o n e</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>B I N G O</strong></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is one thing you can do to mentor community activists?</td>
<td>Name one group you would like to engage more and on what</td>
<td>Name at least one benefit of nonviolence at each of the following levels:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Community:</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Society:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Why is mentoring important in preventing GBV and HIV?</td>
<td>Name at least one benefit of nonviolence at each of the following levels:</td>
<td>What are 2 characteristics a good mentor based on reflections about a personal mentor?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Individual:</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Relationship/ family:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Name 1 M&amp;E tool you can use to measure GBV prevention work?</td>
<td>If you want to mentor someone, why is it important to build a relationship with them?</td>
<td>What are 2 differences between participatory facilitation and conventional teaching?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Find someone who can accurately answer a question described in a square, as quickly as possible, and have them write the answer and their name on your card in that space. When you complete a row of answers, across or down, call “Bingo!” We will ask you to read aloud your questions and answers. The first one to do this correctly wins the game!
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Description

A Card Game is a series of cards with validation questions on them, to make it fun for participants to show what they learned. Participants sit in a circle and pick up validation cards, which have been stacked, face-down in the center of the circle. A participant must correctly answer the card s/he receives, and can keep the card if their answer is correct. Whoever collects the most cards wins!

When to Use

The Card Game takes approximately 30-45 minutes at the end of a multi-day training, depending on the number of validation questions. The method works best when there are a large number of validation questions to go through at the end of the training, but not a very large number of participants. This is because it is more fun in a Card Game if each participant has the opportunity to answer several questions.

Tips for Facilitator

First, as with many game-related validation options, it is important to use the Card Game with a group who recognizes the spirit of fun in it and is willing to play.

Second, although it is a group validation method, the Card Game is a good spot-check of participant learning because participants take turns, everyone getting the chance to answer questions. This eliminates the tendency to rely on volunteers, which tends to leave out quieter or less confident participants.

Third, it is very important to debrief after certain questions to ensure participants understood the question. The facilitator should be careful not to forget the purpose of the game—it is for validation and for participant review of material. The competition or finding a “winner” is not the important piece—participant comprehension is.
Preparations Needed

- Photocopy and cut apart validation questions from each of the modules covered in the training.
- If desired (but not necessary) gather a small prize for winning participant, or for all participants. Prizes can be simple things like candies, flowers from outside, or communication materials to be used in participants’ work.

Card Game Steps

1. Invite participants to sit in a circle.
2. Place validation question cards face down on a table in the middle of a circle, so that no one can see the questions.
3. Explain:
   - We are going to see what we learned in this training through playing a short Card Game.
   - We will go around the circle and take turns. On each player’s turn, s/he will select a card from the pile.
   - The player will read the card aloud and try to answer the question.
   - If the other players think the answer is right, the player can keep the card. If not, we can discuss and help the person answer the question. In that case, I as the facilitator will keep the card.
   - Once the cards are finished, the person with the most cards wins!
4. Play the game until the cards are finished, and have had good answers. Discuss as needed.
5. Give the winner, or all participants, a small prize, if desired.
Agree/ Disagree/ Not Sure, also known as “vote with your feet”, is an activity used to generate discussion in a training and bring out participant attitudes about violence against women and HIV. The facilitator sets up three islands around the room—one for “agree”, one for “disagree” and one for “not sure”. The facilitator reads aloud controversial statements, one at a time. After each, participants vote about whether they agree, disagree or are not sure with the statement by walking to the island that states their views. They then discuss to explain and defend their views—and attempt to convince the participants who are “not sure” to join them.

Note: This validation method can also be seen as a part of the Activity in Training validation method, since Agree/ Disagree/ Not Sure may be included in trainings as an activity to generate group discussion and shift—not only validate—participant attitudes.
When to Use

Agree/Disagree/Not Sure can take 15 minutes or more, depending upon the number of controversial statements the facilitator wishes to explore. It is a fun way to validate group knowledge and to get a snapshot of current group attitudes. Participants generally enjoy the activity and do not recognize it as a validation method—and feel freer to express their opinions than with many other methods. However, it is typically less useful as a pre/post exercise because attitudes change slowly, over time and not usually within one short training. For example, once participants begin to debate on a certain side of an argument, they typically defend their position within that discussion. Then after the training—or even days, weeks or months later—they often self-reflect about the idea and, depending on the other opinions they have heard in the interim, and some rethink their original position on the issue. In other words, it is not likely that, by doing an Agree/Disagree/Not Sure exercise at the beginning and end of a multi-day training, there will be much sign of progress. However, with groups being engaged over the long-term, this method can be used periodically—every every quarter, biannually, etc.

Tips for Facilitator

First, a challenge of measuring attitude change is that people tend to vote with the more socially acceptable statement within that group they are in—rather than what they truly believe—unless they have very strong personal views one way or another about a statement. With violence against women issues, a training participant might come to know what the facilitator or an influential participant wishes to hear and then vote that way about a statement, since the vote is public. However, when that same participant returns to the community, where social norms often tend to be less supportive of balanced power between women and men, that person may express very different views than those voted for in training.

It is important for the facilitator to be aware of these dynamics, and to carefully choose wording of statements so that it is not clear what the “correct” answer would be. Also, it can be useful for the facilitator to play “devil’s advocate” (to argue for the opposite point of view) when the group tends to vote the same way with each other, to ensure that they can back up their vote with rational debate arguments.

Second, real attitude change is a slow process that takes more than a 1-off training to shift. It is necessary to use a holistic community mobilization approach to truly shift attitudes and behavior, of which training is one of several strategies used. It is still possible to validate attitude change, but it may not be possible to validate the extent to which a particular training module or training workshop contributed to that shift. Facilitators can use Agree/Disagree/Not Sure as one of many validation methods to keep track of participant progress.

Third, there are many attitudes that reflect social norms important to preventing violence against women and HIV. Not all will have been addressed in the training, or directly within a community mobilization approach. It is important to discern which attitudes the training and community mobilization work are focused on shifting, then select Agree/Disagree/Not Sure statements related to those topics.

Finally, strong facilitation is often needed in Debates to ensure participants all have an equal opportunity to speak and the activity keeps within the time allotted.
Preparations Needed

- Prepare list of controversial statements about violence against women and HIV, related to attitudes the training or holistic community mobilization approach seeks to shift.
- Prepare 3 large cards or flip charts, labeled “Agree,” “Disagree,” and “Not Sure”. Post them at 3 different locations around training room.
- Pre-arrange to have an extra facilitator, if possible, to quietly observe and take notes on participant votes and debate arguments used.

Agree/Disagree/Not Sure Steps

1. Invite participants to stand up in the middle of the room, and clear any chairs that might get in the way.
2. Explain: We are going to do an activity that asks about your opinions about certain statements. There is no right or wrong answer to the statements I am about to read. All you have to do is listen carefully to the statement and make up your mind if you agree with it, if you disagree, or if you are not sure about what you think of it.
3. Point out the islands and where they will stand.
4. Clarify any questions
5. Read the first statement aloud. E.g. “The way the women dress these days causes men to rape them.”
6. Ask: Do you agree, disagree, or are you not sure about what you think about that statement?
7. Reread as necessary, and wait until all participants have walked to the island with the sign that expresses their views.
8. Invite 1-2 participants from each island to explain why they voted as they did.
9. Allow further debate, depending on time and how useful the debate seems to the training content. When appropriate, thank participants and say we can come back to these discussions at another time.
10. Read another statement, as desired, and repeat the process, or continue with further training topics.
11. During or after voting, take basic notes or invite another facilitator to assist in doing so. Record participant number of votes each way for each statement, taking down major quotes participants use to support their statements.
12. After the training, go back and reflect on notes, determining which statements it will be useful to ask again at a later stage.
Debates are activities used to generate discussion and bring out participant attitudes about violence against women and HIV, similar to Agree/Disagree/Not Sure. The facilitator can set up a debate in a few different ways, depending on the group and the topic to be covered:

- **3-minute debate:** 1 spokesperson from each point of view has 3 minutes only to argue their position. There is 1 opportunity for rebuttal/closing statement for each point of view. *(Serves as group validation).*

- **Group work debate:** Participants divide into groups, based on their position on a specific issue, and have a certain amount of time to prepare their arguments. The teams then debate each other in a semi-structured way, with each participant getting a chance to speak at some point. *(Serves as individual validation).*

- **Spontaneous group debate:** Participants divide or are divided on different teams representing different viewpoints about an issue. Apart from keeping basic order, the debate that ensues is unstructured. The facilitator’s role is simply to ensure less assertive participants have the opportunity to speak and respect is maintained toward all. *(Serves as group validation).*

With any of these debate options, one possibility is to generate a controversial topic to be debated, then randomly assign participants to argue “for” or “against” the statement/topic. The other main possibility is to state the topic and allow participants to self-select whether they are for or against it, forming groups based on true personal beliefs.

Participants generally enjoy Debates and do not recognize them as validation methods, which helps them to feel freer to express their opinions than with many other methods.

Note: This validation method can also be seen as a part of the Activity in Training validation method, since Debates may be included in trainings as an activity to generate group discussion and shift—not only validate—participant attitudes.
When to Use

The 3-Minute Debate method can take 15-30 minutes in total, where the other group debate options require up to 2 hours to explore the topic, depending on time available and what the facilitator is attempting to validate.

*Debates* yield varied results, if used to validate attitude change. Measuring attitude change is difficult for a couple of reasons, articulated below. Group work debate, where participants choose which side of the debate they wish to argue for, is the best debate type to validate current individual participant attitudes. In this method, each participant must debate and defend their points of view. *Debates* can also easily be used to validate skills related to defending an argument or explaining/arguing a particular view.

Tips for Facilitator

First, if used to validate attitude change, there are few challenges to use of this method. These include:

- Participants tend to argue for more socially acceptable points of view within the group they are in. It is important for the facilitator to be aware of these dynamics, and to carefully choose issues for debate so that it is not obvious what the socially "correct" opinion would be.

- Real attitude change is a slow process that takes more than a 1-off training to shift. It is necessary to use a holistic community mobilization approach to truly shift attitudes and behavior, of which training is one of several strategies used. It is still possible to validate attitude change, but it may not be possible to validate the extent to which a particular training module or training workshop contributed to that shift. Facilitators can use *Debates* as one of many validation methods to keep track of participant progress.

Second, if used to validate knowledge on a topic or skills like the ability to respond to common arguments in the community, it requires a skilled facilitator to validate competency. It is necessary for the facilitator to pre-determine what competencies exactly are being validated by the debate and then—as with any *Activity in Training* type validation method—take detailed notes, including direct quotes, on each participant’s level of competency. A modified version of tools like the *SASA! Activity Report Form* (downloadable in *SASA!* at www.raisingvoices.org) may even be useful as notes sheets to record participant contributions in the debate.

Finally, strong facilitation is often needed in *Debates* to ensure participants all have an equal opportunity to speak and the activity keeps within the time allotted.
Preparations Needed

- Determine a controversial topic related to violence against women and HIV, about which it would be useful to measure attitude change, or level of knowledge or skill.
- Determine which debate method will be used.
- Photocopy or adapt SASA Activity Report Form, Activity Validation Notes Sheet (page 7), or other tool to take select notes.
- Pre-arrange an extra facilitator, if possible, to quietly observe and take notes on debate arguments used. (If not, facilitator will have to take brief notes).

Debate Steps

1. Introduce topic for debate and debate method, choosing from one of the below:
   - 3-minute debate: 1 spokesperson from each point of view has 3 minutes only to argue their position. There is 1 opportunity for rebuttal/closing statement for each point of view. (Serves as group validation).
   - Group work debate: Participants divide into groups, based on their position on a specific issue, and have a certain amount of time to prepare their arguments. The teams then debate each other in a semi-structured way, with each participant getting a chance to speak at some point. (Serves as individual validation).
   - Spontaneous group debate: Participants divide or are divided on different teams representing different viewpoints about an issue. Apart from keeping basic order, the debate that follows is unstructured. The facilitator’s role is simply to assure less assertive participants have the opportunity to speak and respect is maintained toward all. (Serves as group validation).

2. Moderate debate, taking brief notes or asking another facilitator to take detailed notes. Note takers should focus on documenting salient, direct quotes, comments on level of knowledge and skill, etc.

3. Ensure all participants, including less assertive ones, have the opportunity to participate.

4. Close debate with appropriate debrief discussion.
Teach Back is a validation method that can be used to see how well participants understood the content of the sessions you have covered, at the same time as validating their training facilitation skills. Participants simply become facilitators for certain sessions, teaching back the content they have learned to another group.

When to Use

The time required for Teach Back depends on what session content is being covered (e.g. SAGA! Root Cause- 50 minutes, etc). It also depends upon the number of participants who will be facilitating a Teach Back session. Groups of 1-4 can facilitate a session, depending on the session’s content—as long as each participant has the chance to demonstrate their facilitation skills. As explained further in the Teach Back Training Facilitation Series of the Staff Skill Building Library, Teach Back can be useful when there is limited time for the number of topics you want to cover in a multi-day training, or when there is a large discrepancy between the skill levels of different participants—and basic topics need to be covered without boring the more advanced participants.
Participants tend to enjoy this method, as it gives them a chance to get in front of the group and teach what they know, adapting training content they have been through. It gives other participants a chance to evaluate each other, and learn from other facilitation styles.

However, it is quite time consuming. Care must be taken to arrange the schedule so content does not seem repetitive to participants (e.g. the topics being “taught back” are not ones they have all had in many other trainings, and are different from each other—not just having participant facilitators repeat the same modules).

Finally, the feedback given to participant facilitators after their Teach Back session is extremely important. Many adult learners gain the most by doing something themselves, and often participants are very aware of things they might have done differently after the session, and very open to other feedback.

**Tips for Facilitator**

**Preparations Needed**

- Read Teach Back Training Facilitation Series of the Staff Skill Building Library for further description of how to use Teach Back as a validation method, practically within the training schedule.
- Photocopy Training Facilitation Monitoring Checklist (Staff Skill Building Library Teach Back Training Facilitation Series) for each participant doing a Teach Back facilitation.

**Teach Back Steps**

1. Introduce Teach Back participant facilitators to the concept of Teach Back (Introducing the Teach Back Concept section).
2. Hold separate content sessions (facilitation skills, VAW basics, etc) for participants who will be facilitating Teach Back topics.
3. If desired, teach participant facilitators to use Training Facilitation Monitoring Checklist (Using Training Facilitation Monitoring Checklist section).
4. Help participants create a Teach Back facilitation plan for their sessions (Planning Teach Back Content section).
5. Participant facilitators practice and receive feedback on their facilitation skills while non-facilitating participants learn training content (Teach Back Facilitation Practice, with Training Facilitation Monitoring Checklist section).

Note: Read Teach Back Training Facilitation Series of the Staff Skill Building Library for further description of ways to use this validation method.
An **Exit Interview** is simply an interview scheduled with a facilitator and each participant at the end of training. It may include asking validation questions of each participant separately to see what they have learned. An **Exit Role Play** is a demonstration of a certain skill—such as a Local Activism activity, or how to frame the benefits of nonviolence to a local community leader, etc. **Exit Interviews** and **Exit Role Plays** can easily be combined to validate both participant knowledge and skill-related competencies, which is why they are described together.

**Description**

**Exit Interview/ Exit Role Play**

**When to Use**

**Exit Interviews/ Exit Role Plays** take approximately 1 hour for each participant, depending on the number of validation questions and role plays to be included. Suggestions for reducing time required for these methods are included below in **Tips for Facilitator**.

While **Exit Interviews/ Exit Role Plays** can be more time consuming than other methods, they are the most effective ways to validate individual participant learning in cases where it is necessary to have a detailed assessment about each participant. For example, if each participant is going to be working independently at different locations, etc, it may be necessary to validate that each person has the needed knowledge and skills to continue effectively. These validation methods also allow participant-specific mentoring programs to be designed to enhance progress.
Tips for Facilitator

Time is a challenge in use of individual Exit Interviews/Exit Role Plays, but there are a few ways to work through this challenge.

- If participants and facilitators work in the same location, the Exit Interview/Exit Role Play can be scheduled another day after the training.

- Exit Interview/Exit Role Play can be used along with another, group validation method, to cut down on the number of questions and role plays needed per interview—which therefore reduces the time needed for the method. For example, the facilitator may decide to do Pick and Play each day throughout the training to validate competencies at a group level, choosing only a few important questions and an individual role play demonstration that are important to validate at the individual level.

- If multiple facilitators are available, each can take a few participants to reduce time needed.

Second, these methods are challenging in that they can be intimidating for certain participants. The manner in which the facilitator introduces the methods can reduce this anxiety. It is important to emphasize that the Exits are to help tailor further mentoring support to specific participant strengths and needs. It is necessary to do all possible to put participants at ease before and during the Exit Interview/Exit Role Play.

Finally, the feedback given after each Exit Interview/Exit Role Play is extremely important. It should be given positively and gently, modeling the “sandwiching” technique discussed in the Giving and Receiving Feedback module in the Staff Skill Building Library. It should also be specific and should be utilized to create a follow up support plan to mentor the participant and support their strengths and continued growth.

Preparations Needed

- Confidential or quiet location.
- Agenda for interview, including validation questions to cover and any scenarios or supplies needed for role plays.
- List of competencies to be validated and validation questions.
- Photocopies of any monitoring checklists or Activity Validation Notes Sheet to record notes on participant level of competency.
Exit Interview/ Exit Role Play Steps

1. Schedule interview times with each participant.
2. Explain: This interview is simply to help us to see what you have learned from the training, so we can better prepare our support to you to be sure we are providing everything we can to each participant to help you do effective work.
3. Explain the agenda.
4. Go through agenda, staging any role plays needed and taking notes on Activity Validation Notes Sheet or in other desired format about participant strengths and areas for improvement. Clarify that more detailed feedback can be given, and make a plan for how and when to get that feedback to the participant.
5. Give basic, verbal feedback to the participant at the end of the Exit Interview/ Exit Role Play, including both strengths and areas we can focus on in the next phase of training and mentoring. Clarify that more detailed feedback can be given, and make a plan for how and when to get that feedback to the participant.
6. Thank the group for their participation.
A Site Visit with Monitoring Checklist is a visit that a facilitator conducts with a small group of participants to view an activity, training or the daily work of the participants. Monitoring checklists are lists of what specifically to look for and validate; they are helpful tools in Site Visits to assure the information needed to validate competencies is gathered. In the Staff Skill Building Library, Practicing Local Activism - Community Practice is one good example of a Site Visit with Monitoring Checklist. The Activity Report Form or the Facilitation Skills Monitoring Checklist within the Training and Mentoring series are also good tools for facilitators to use when evaluating certain participant competencies. See attached as examples at the end of this section.

When to Use

The time required for this method depends on the travel time to the selected site and the competencies to be validated. If the site is nearby and the skill can be validated through a short office visit to see the work in action, the visit may only take 1 hour. If the site is far, or the competencies to be validated include watching activities or training sessions in action, the method can take 1 day or more.

This method is best used within a training or long-term mentoring support and technical assistance relationship. By far the most realistic and accurate of all validation methods, it is an ideal way to validate participant learning and competency progress in action.
Tips for Facilitator

First, time is a major challenge in using Site Visit with Monitoring Checklist, but there are a couple of ways to work through this challenge.

- If participants and facilitators work in the same location, the visits can be more impromptu, and competency validation can be spread out into shorter visits on more than one day. This actually assists in relationship development between facilitators and participants, mentors and people being mentored, as well as validating participant competencies.

- If multiple facilitators are available, each can take a few participants on the Site Visit to minimize time needed.

Second, it is very important to structure the Site Visit well. Monitoring Checklists are one tool to help facilitators do this, but other planning is also needed. It may not be the best use of time, for example, to travel for several hours to watch a short activity. In order to be effective, this method requires some critical thinking to get the most realistic picture of participant competencies.

Finally, the feedback given at the end of or after the Site Visit with Monitoring Checklist is extremely important. It should model the “sandwiching” technique discussed in the Giving and Receiving Feedback module in the Staff Skill Building Library. It should also be specific and should be utilized to create a follow up support plan to mentor the participant and support their strengths and continued growth.

Preparations Needed

- Create Site Visit appointments with relevant participants and organizations and organize any needed logistical arrangements.
- Photocopy monitoring checklists and/or Activity Validation Notes Sheet to record notes on participant level of competency.

Site Visit Steps

1. Explain that the facilitator will accompany participants and watch the activity or training the participant is conducting.

2. Accompany the staff member on the activity, using the relevant monitoring checklists and recording notes as needed.

3. Provide feedback on strengths and areas to improve to the staff.

4. Create a training and mentoring plan for next steps in support to build on participant strengths and support participant in improving areas of weakness.
A Written Quiz is simply a traditional pencil-and-paper quiz, with validation questions from the training on it, for their individual, written response and facilitator evaluation.

The main advantage of a Written Quiz is that they can be used as a pre and post assessment of participant learning. Select validation questions from proposed training topics to assess the level of the group’s pre-training understanding and better tailor training content. The method can also be used for about 20-30 minutes (depending on the number of questions planned) at the end of a training session, to validate change in each individual participant’s level of competency. A Written Quiz is best used with groups who do not seem to enjoy the game/activity style of other validation methods, and who are all highly literate in the language being used on the Quiz.

First, Written Quizzes are challenging because they are, in many contexts worldwide, more an assessment of participant ability to write in English or the training language than an actual validation of competency.

Second, Written Quizzes can be intimidating for participants, or make adult learners feel like they are being treated as school children. There is no way of ‘hiding’ the fact that participants are being assessed within a Written Quiz.

Third, many participants feel very nervous about taking a Written Quiz. Quizzes do not lend themselves to group discussion or debrief in the same way that many of the other validation options do.

Fourth, Written Quizzes are only good validation methods for knowledge-based questions, and some attitude based questions. Skill level cannot be accurately assessed through a Written Quiz.

Fifth, in multi-day training workshops, there are often many validation questions recommended to determine participant competency. The Written Quiz can easily become long and intimidating.
For the above reasons, it is suggested to use Written Quizzes carefully. There is often no other alternative for assessing participant competency level before a training workshop, and a Written Quiz can be sent via email or dropped off with participants to complete before the workshop, to assist in preparations. However, for post-training validation, other validation methods are recommended for most groups. If individual validation is needed for certain, knowledge-based questions, it is possible to use the Written Quiz validation method along with other validation methods in the training, for only those competencies.

Preparations Needed

- Create and photocopy Written Quiz by selecting realistic Validation Questions from the module topic areas covered in training.

Written Quiz Steps

(For pre-training assessment)

1. Create a Written Quiz related to requested or planned training topics, estimating the level of participant learning. Include a range of difficulty of validation questions, because this allows a determination of where participant knowledge stops.

2. Distribute the Written Quiz to all participants, via email or delivered to them at their workplaces. Explain the quiz is not to judge them in any way, but simply to be sure that the training can be planned to fit their needs, not covering information they already know. Make a deadline and a plan for the quizzes to be returned, preferably in advance of the training.

3. Look through completed questionnaires, watching for areas of participant strength and weakness. Create a training agenda accordingly.

(For post-training validation)

1. Create Written Quiz from the validation questions in each of the modules of training.

2. Distribute quiz at the end of training session, and answer any questions to the entire group to avoid bias.

3. Collect quizzes from participants after allotted period of time in training schedule, assuring participant names are on each quiz, if desired.

4. Look through completed questionnaires, watching for areas of participant strength and weakness. Give feedback and create any future training and mentoring plans accordingly.

5. In cases where none or few of the participants gained the desired competencies, re-evaluate training content.
This document describes a number of participatory ways to validate participant learning—but they are only the beginning! Training facilitators are encouraged to think of new and innovative ways to validate learning, based on their own needs. Training validation methods can be adapted and used with any training module, and were integrated into each module in the Staff Skill Building Library as a way to help staff of violence against women prevention programs to measure the progress of staff in achieving the skills needed for quality activism and programming.

The Staff Skill Building Library includes four main components related to validation:

1. **Competencies** are listed at the beginning of each module, and are specific enough to be easily measured.

   ![Image of What is Mentoring? Stations of Reflection](image)

   **Objective**
   - Participants reflect on personal experiences of being mentored and comment on how those experiences can mentor others.

   **Competencies**
   - By the end of this session, participants will be able to:
     - Compare and contrast.
     - Discuss why mentoring is critical to preventing violence against women and HIV.

   **Preparations**
   - Write 5 stations of reflection questions in Handout: "Who Mentored Me? Stations of Reflection Questions" at the top of 5 different flip chart papers and post around the room, with multiple markers and a couple of chairs at each station.
   - Photocopy Handout: "Who mentored me? Stations of Reflection Questions".

   **What is Mentoring? Stations of Reflection** (1 hour 30 minutes)

   Participants reflect on personal experiences of being mentored and connect those experiences with how they can mentor others.

   **Validation Option: Activity in Training**
   - This activity allows for group validation of the competency: Explain what mentoring is.
   - During Stations of Reflection exercise and debrief, are participants able to fill in the "Who Mentored Me? Stations of Reflection Questions"? Are participants able to describe mentoring experiences, as well as in their lives? If so, then they as a group have demonstrated the competency. If not, further training is recommended.

2. **Activity in Training text boxes** are included within many modules, detailing what the facilitator can look for to validate learning on particular competencies, using the Activity in Training validation method.

   ![Image of Activity in Training](image)
3. Validation Options tables are included toward the end of most modules, depicting which training validation methods are appropriate to validate the particular competencies in that session. This table often outlines more than one choice for validation, so the facilitator can choose which methods they prefer for the group they are training.

![Validation Options Table]

4. Validation Questions are included in relevant modules, as suggestions for what to ask participants to validate the competencies in that module, if using Game Show, Card Game, Answers Bingo and Pick and Play methods.

![Validation Questions]

Participatory training validation is a relatively new concept to the violence against women prevention movement, and Raising Voices welcomes feedback on any of the methods described in this document, or suggestions of other participatory validation methods! Please write to us at info@raisingvoices.org.