



SESSION 4

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD TRAINER

Learning Objectives

As a result of this training experience, each participant should be able to:

- ◆ List the qualities of a good trainer.
- ◆ Explain the importance of personal support as a vital step in the development of Scout leaders and Scout leader training teams.
- ◆ Describe the difference between personal and practical support.

Methods

Lecture, talk

Faculty Preparation

- ◆ Prepare one set of the game character cards for each team.
- ◆ Prepare one game category board for each team.
- ◆ Review the “[Training Methods](#)” session for tips on the use of talk and lecture.

Materials

- ◆ [Characteristics cards](#) for game—one set for each team
- ◆ [Trainer Characteristics game board](#)—one for each team
- ◆ Signaling device (whistle, etc.), if desired
- ◆ Overhead projector
- ◆ Chalkboard or flipchart pad with markers
- ◆ [BSA 500 Answers sheet](#) for each steward

Overheads

- ◆ Set of 10 overheads to go along with presentation
- ◆ BSA 500 Questions

Handouts

- ◆ “Trainer Characteristics”
- ◆ “A Supportive Environment”

Time

20 minutes

Introduction

Show overhead 1. Say,

Start with a definition. What is training?

Wait for responses and propose an agreement for this definition (overhead 2):

Training is a structured process that provides participants with the knowledge and skills to perform job tasks, and the desire to use them.

In your own words, make the following points (overhead 3):

- ◆ Training encompasses coaching, critiquing, mentoring, and teaching. The trainer is the person who performs those duties.
- ◆ Often a training team is put together to provide a training event for a unit, district or council. You might be included as a member of one of those teams.
- ◆ Not everyone is cut out to be a trainer. A good trainer possesses certain characteristics and skills. Let's take a look at the qualities a good trainer should have and also the ones that are not so desirable. We are going to do this with a game. In this game we will decide what “good” characteristics a trainer should have and the “poor” characteristics a trainer shouldn't have.

Game

Distribute one set of characteristics cards and one game board to each team. Have each crew chief choose a signal person. Explain how the game is played.

The presenter indicates the start of the game. Each team reads each card and places it under the proper heading. Each team crew chief must make sure there is a team consensus on placement of the cards. The signal person signals completion.

When all teams are through, hand out the “Trainer Characteristics” chart.

Review where the teams placed each characteristic and why. Discuss these characteristics, which you can place on a chalkboard, flipchart, or flannel board.

Trainer Characteristics Game Key

Good	Not So Good
“Joe, that really sounds like a problem. Why don’t you give my suggestions a try and here’s my number. Call me if you need help.” “If you’re happy and you know it, Clap your hands. If you’re happy and you know it, Clap your hands.” “I think training is great. I can’t wait to teach this new game I found.” “My session didn’t go so well last time, so I spent some time making some changes. I’m using a flipchart this time.” “Oh, excuse us, folks. It appears the projector lamp blew. We have a spare. It will be just a minute or so.”	“Oh, was I to wear my full uniform? I wore my Cub Scout shirt. Aren’t jeans okay? I need a neckerchief?” “Let’s see. Here’s my flipchart and the holder. Here’s a marker—oops, it’s dried up. Hey, where are my note cards?” “You know Tiger Cubs can’t race in a Pinewood Derby. And you have to have your Blue and Gold in February.” “I keep my eyes on my notes at all times so that I am sure to give the participants the right information.” “You know I just tell them anything even when I don’t know the answer. They don’t know anyway.” “This material is so dry. Look at that guy: he has dozed off twice. And that woman has gotten up twice for coffee just since lunch.”

Discussion

Lead a discussion on why these are characteristics of a good trainer:

Professionalism (overhead 4). Because trainers are role models, they should be mature, confident and enthusiastic. They should view training assignments as opportunities for personal development rather than an intrusion on their daily lives. Remember, a training assignment is not an opportunity to display your talents or extensive knowledge, but rather a chance to develop other skills.

Good Communication Skills (overhead 5). Trainers must foster a learning environment in which trainees feel comfortable taking risks without the fear of ridicule. Such an environment depends on the trainer’s ability to create open lines of communication. Trainers must be not only able to explain tasks and procedures clearly, they must also know how to listen actively and be sensitive to the importance of body language and nonverbal communication. Good communication skills is an absolute must for effective training.

Rapport (overhead 6). Capable trainers demonstrate good interpersonal skills when they interact with participants. Qualified trainers who are also friendly and congenial exhibit the ability to handle conflict without losing their cool.

Good Organizational Skills (overhead 7). The ability to balance various responsibilities and manage time is critical to successful training.

Other Good Characteristics (overhead 8). Other personality characteristics of a good trainer include patience, flexibility, empathy, ability to nurture others, creativity, commitment to the job and the ability to be a team player.

Personal Support

(Show overhead 9.) Say,

The most obvious qualification of a good trainer is the ability to do the job well; for example, Scouters who have appropriate levels of technical knowledge and experience have an edge. But, remember that technical proficiency alone does not make a trainer. As human beings we always have room for improvement. One important way to affect growth in Scout leaders and trainers is through personal support.

The personal support that occurs outside formal training provides us an opportunity to reinforce the learning objectives of training. But, that motive is secondary. Your primary objective should be to help a friend.

(Turn off overhead.) Ask:

When do Scout leaders need personal support?

Allow enough time for the participant responses. List answers on flipchart pad or chalkboard. Try to arrive at these answers:

- ◆ When they don't know how to get started.
- ◆ When they need more information.
- ◆ When they need help interpreting information.
- ◆ When they are undecided or confused.
- ◆ When they need someone to help them put their leadership roles in perspective.
- ◆ When they need encouragement.
- ◆ When they need a pat on the back.

Ask,

Are there any others?

Things to Remember

Make these points (overhead 10):

- ◆ We should be sure we understand what kind of help the leader is asking for. (Relate a personal experience about a misunderstanding on the kind of help needed.)
- ◆ Personal support and practical support are different: Personal support helps leaders have self-confidence or helps them work out a relationship situation. Practical support helps leaders with materials or equipment: When a trainer needs an overhead projector for a training session (practical support), he doesn't want to sit down over a cup of coffee to talk about it (personal support).
- ◆ There are no standard answers. No two Scout leaders are exactly alike.

Say,

Another skill of a good trainer is the ability to develop a supportive environment. This safe and caring situation helps Scout leaders feel at ease and free to talk. We have covered some suggestions on how to create such a setting in a handout.

Turn off overhead and distribute copies of "A Supportive Environment."

Summary

Summarize with these comments:

As trainers we need to keep skills sharp, our knowledge current, and our hearts and minds always open.

Our personal support helps to develop more effective Scout leaders.

It's exciting to see lasting friendships welded together by a spark that was created by the fun that we have in Scouting.

Personal support can help build a strong team of leaders having fun working together.

In providing personal support to Scout leaders, trainers are doing what our Scouting principles have told us:

Cub Scout Promise—	“... to help other people ...”
Law of the Pack—	“... The Cub Scout gives goodwill.”
Boy Scout Oath—	“... To help other people at all times ...”
Boy Scout Law—	“... A Scout is helpful ...”
Boy Scout Motto—	“... Do a good turn daily.”
Varsity Scout Oath—	“... To help other people at all times ...”
Venturing Oath—	“... to help others ...”

BSA 500 Game

Place the BSA 500 questions transparency for this session on the overhead projector, but do not turn the projector on. Announce that when the questions appear on the screen, each team will have exactly one minute to answer as many of the questions as they possibly can. The answers are to be given to the race steward at each table by the team's crew chief.

Turn the overhead projector on. After exactly 60 seconds turn the projector off, and announce that time has expired. After the stewards have determined the number of correct answers for each team, allow a little time for the crew chiefs to move their team's racecar along the track.

Pizzazz

Add a song, stunt, run-on, or other morale feature to lead into the next session.

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CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD TRAINER

BSA 500 ANSWERS

1. What are three duties that training encompasses?

- ◆ Coaching
- ◆ Critiquing
- ◆ Mentoring
- ◆ Teaching

2. What is the difference between personal support and practical support?

- ◆ Personal support deals with people issues
- ◆ Practical support deals with materials and equipment

3. Give three times when leaders need personal support.

- ◆ When they don't know how to get started
- ◆ When they need more information
- ◆ When they need help interpreting information
- ◆ When they are undecided or confused
- ◆ When they need help seeing their leadership role in perspective
- ◆ When they need encouragement
- ◆ When they need a pat on the back

4. What are four characteristics of a good trainer?

Preferred answers:

- ◆ Professionalism
- ◆ Good communication skills
- ◆ Rapport
- ◆ Good organizational skills

Also acceptable:

- ◆ Patience
- ◆ Flexibility
- ◆ Empathy
- ◆ Ability to nurture
- ◆ Commitment to the (training) job
- ◆ Team player

TRAINER CHARACTERISTICS GAME BOARD

GOOD	NOT SO GOOD

Signal steward when task is completed.

TRAINER CHARACTERISTIC CARDS

T1 Oh, was I to wear my full uniform? I wore my Cub Scout shirt. Aren't jeans ok? Neckerchief?	T2 Oh, was I to wear my full uniform? I wore my Cub Scout shirt. Aren't jeans ok? Neckerchief?	T3 Oh, was I to wear my full uniform? I wore my Cub Scout shirt. Aren't jeans ok? Neckerchief?	T4 Oh, was I to wear my full uniform? I wore my Cub Scout shirt. Aren't jeans ok? Neckerchief?
T1 Let's see. Here's my flip chart and the holder. Here's a marker—oops it's dried up. Hey where are my note cards?	T2 Let's see. Here's my flip chart and the holder. Here's a marker—oops it's dried up. Hey where are my note cards?	T3 Let's see. Here's my flip chart and the holder. Here's a marker—oops it's dried up. Hey where are my note cards?	T4 Let's see. Here's my flip chart and the holder. Here's a marker—oops it's dried up. Hey where are my note cards?
T1 You know Tiger Cubs can't race in a Pinewood Derby. And you have to have your Blue and Gold in February.	T2 You know Tiger Cubs can't race in a Pinewood Derby. And you have to have your Blue & Gold in February...	T3 You know Tiger Cubs can't race in a Pinewood Derby. And you have to have your Blue & Gold in February...	T4 You know Tiger Cubs can't race in a Pinewood Derby. And you have to have your Blue & Gold in February...
T1 Joe, that really sounds like a problem. Why don't you give my suggestions a try, and here's my number. Call me if you need help.	T2 Joe, that really sounds like a problem. Why don't you give my suggestions a try and here's my number. Call me if you need help.	T3 Joe, that really sounds like a problem. Why don't you give my suggestions a try and here's my number. Call me if you need help.	T4 Joe, that really sounds like a problem. Why don't you give my suggestions a try and here's my number. Call me if you need help.
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T1 I keep my eyes on my notes at all times so that I am sure to give the participants the right information.	T2 I keep my eyes on my notes at all times so that I am sure to give the participants the right information	T3 I keep my eyes on my notes at all times so that I am sure to give the participants the right information	T4 I keep my eyes on my notes at all times so that I am sure to give the participants the right information
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WHAT IS TRAINING?

ONE DEFINITION OF TRAINING:

Training is a structured process that provides participants with the knowledge and skills to perform job tasks and the desire to use them.

TRAINING ENCOMPASSES:

- ◆ Coaching
- ◆ Critiquing
- ◆ Mentoring
- ◆ Teaching

The “trainer” is the person who performs those duties.

CRITERIA FOR A GOOD TRAINER

Professionalism

- ◆ Is a good role model
- ◆ Demonstrates maturity, confidence, and enthusiasm

CRITERIA FOR A GOOD TRAINER

Communication skills

- ◆ Creates a supportive environment
- ◆ Clearly explains tasks and procedures
- ◆ Listens actively and sensitively

CRITERIA FOR A GOOD TRAINER

Rapport

- ◆ Is friendly and congenial to all
- ◆ Is skilled at conflict resolution

CRITERIA FOR A GOOD TRAINER

Organized

- ◆ Can balance multiple responsibilities
- ◆ Manages time effectively

CRITERIA FOR A GOOD TRAINER

Other characteristics

- ◆ Is patient
- ◆ Is flexible
- ◆ Can empathize with others
- ◆ Can nurture others
- ◆ Is creative
- ◆ Is committed to the job
- ◆ Can be a team player

GOOD TRAINER EQUATION

Technical proficiency

+

Personal support

=

Effective training

The primary objective
should be to help a friend.

KEY POINTS

- ◆ Understand the type of help that the leader is asking for
- ◆ Personal support and practical support are different
- ◆ There are no standard answers—no two leaders are exactly alike
- ◆ Create a supportive environment

CHARACTERISTICS OF A GOOD TRAINER

BSA 500 Questions

What are three duties that training encompasses?

What is the difference between personal support and practical support?

Give three times when leaders need personal support.

What are four characteristics of a good trainer?

TRAINER CHARACTERISTICS

+	—
Good inflection, Tone of voice: Helpful, unruffled	Monotone/irritating voice or laugh Tone of voice annoyed, exasperated
Good visual contact	No visual contact
Solid knowledge base—Credibility in area	Doesn't know material/program
Organized and prepared	Disorganized/unprepared
Understanding and attentive	Critical
Willing to share knowledge	Know-it-all
Enthusiastic—excited about message	Apathetic (indifferent, uninterested, unconcerned)
Authenticates material with experiences and practical applications	Dwells on personal life/experiences
Receptive to questions; listens to the whole question before answering	Defensive, intolerant
Flexible; willing to stop and find a new approach	Says things in the same way repeatedly
Good presentation skills	Lack of presentation skills
Handles the unexpected calmly and efficiently	Can't deal with surprise hurdles (i.e. machines don't work, etc.)
Can gauge the mood of the room	Can't gauge the mood of the room
Professional appearance (clothes, body language, attitude, self confidence)	Unprofessional appearance (incorrect/no uniform, poor attitude)
Has a sense of humor—someone who can make us laugh in the first few minutes	No sense of humor
Likes to have fun	Too proper, stiff

A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

To help Scout leaders feel at ease, we need to provide a supportive environment. Here are some suggestions on how to accomplish that.

Let them know we really care.

Our responses and reactions must grow from a genuine concern for the leader. Neither responses nor reactions can be forced or faked, but must be natural and real. Let leaders know we are genuinely interested in helping them do a good job.

Establish a friendly relationship of trust.

Let leaders know they can count on our help. Let them know where and how to reach us. Be available to help when needed. Let leaders know we don't have all the answers, but together we can either find or work out the answers.

Be a good listener.

God gave man two ears and one tongue, which seems to indicate that we should listen more than we talk.

Be able to share their pleasure in successes and have empathy for their failures.

"Empathy" and "sympathy" have two very different meanings. Empathy is being able to put yourself in another person's shoes so you can see his viewpoint. Empathy doesn't require that you agree, just that you understand. Sympathy is sharing an emotion, interest, or desire. It is compassion or pity. Sympathy indicates that you agree with the other person's feelings.

Maintain a positive attitude.

We can complain because rose bushes have thorns or rejoice because thorn bushes have roses. It all depends on how you look at it.

Be able to read body language.

Read between the lines (or words). Sometimes a person's actions and expressions tell us more than his words.

Show them that you respect them for what they are.

Put God first, others second, and self last.

A SUPPORTIVE ENVIRONMENT

WORD OF CAUTION FOR TRAINERS

As trainers, we should be concerned with helping leaders find the answers to their own problems.

Give the leader additional information.

Encourage the leader to think of several ways to accomplish whatever it is you've been talking about. Then let him make his own decision.

Do not give advice.

The advice you give just might be the wrong advice for that particular person. Advice and practical help are not the same thing.

Sometimes when we provide personal support, we find ourselves in a counseling situation. Trainers should only apply "first aid" to these situations. If personal support is required in areas other than Scouting, we should know to turn the situation over to qualified counselors.

We must realize our own limitations. In problem situations, trainers sometimes do not know the real problem—and may never know it. If we persist in trying to solve problems with incorrect or incomplete information, we may do serious harm.

Personal support is more than a hug or a pat on the back. Some people are uncomfortable with physical contact. People uncomfortable or uncertain about physical contact still need personal support, but the support must be given or shown in other ways.