



Job Performance
Situation 3:
Building Essential
Skills in Facilitation,
Decision-Making, and
Communication

HEAD START
MOVING AHEAD
COMPETENCY-BASED TRAINING PROGRAM



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REFERENCE

This activity presents a type of situation that often confronts Head Start and that involves both federal and local grantee staff. It prepares participants to embark on training activities in three skill categories: *facilitation*, *decision-making*, and *effective communication*. Learners will analyze a hypothetical Head Start case and will draw on their individual experiences in meeting similar situations.

Related skill activities include 3–C, Facilitation: Fundamentals of Leading Meetings; 3–D, Decision-Making: Building Consensus; 3–E, Communication: Effective Spoken Communication; and 3–F, Communication: Active Listening Skills; and 3–G, Communication: Effective Written Communication.

The Hillside Challenge

Outcomes. Participants who complete this activity will be able to put themselves in the shoes of other Head Start staff in order to consider the challenges presented by a commonly occurring job performance situation. They will assess the role played by the presence or absence of skills in *facilitation, decision-making, and communication.*

Materials. Newsprint and markers

Components

This activity can be done by one person, an informal group, or a formal workshop. We have provided suggested times, but participants and facilitators may wish to adjust these to their own timetables.

Step 1. Handout: The Hillside Challenge	10 min.
Step 2. Worksheet: Case Questions and Discussion	20 min.
Suggested total time	30 min.

This activity contains 5 pages.

STEP 1. HANDOUT: THE HILLSIDE CHALLENGE



Suggested Time: 10 min.

Read and reflect on the following case to deepen your understanding of the situation—not to address the problems or find solutions. Following this activity, participants will work on specific skill-building activities; after that they will have the opportunity to come back to the scenario and complete an application activity, to apply their increased skill competencies to addressing the issues it presents.

Sally is a federal office review team leader. During a review team meeting at the Hillside Head Start program on day two of the on-site review, two of the consultants disagree on their evaluation of the program's human resources system.

“From the staff group interview that I attended in the program's main satellite center,” says Frank, “It sounds as if the Hillside human resources system is full of holes. Several of the staff have had no performance review for over a year. When I asked about staff development, they said that they attend the same, tired, inservice workshops year after year. I asked about the personnel policies, but staff couldn't remember seeing a copy and didn't know how to get one. Between you and me, I think this is a major problem. One of the family workers said her manager had never once accompanied her on a home visit. I have a lot of concerns about this part of the program.”

“Really?” says Lena, another the member of the review team. “That's not what we heard in the Management Team Interview yesterday. They told us that each center manager meets regularly with the staff she supervises and schedules performance reviews twice a year. Staff participate in setting goals and deciding how to achieve them. The program's training plan grows out of these goal-setting sessions.” Lena turns to Sally. “Maybe it's just a center-specific problem, and not a programwide problem at all.”



STEP 2. WORKSHEET: CASE QUESTIONS AND DISCUSSION

Suggested time: 20 min.

Part I (10 min.) Use the following questions to reflect on the case and record your answers in the space provided. Question 1 applies only to grantee staff, question 2 only to federal staff, and questions 3 through 5 to both. Each participant should take about 10 minutes to answer the questions by herself or himself.

1. Grantee staff: What about this situation seems familiar? What potential problems do you see coming up in the program? How will these problems affect areas of the program? How will they affect the program overall?

2. Federal staff: What about this situation seems familiar? What potential problems do you see coming up in the program? What role can a federal staff person play in helping the program director to identify and address these problems?

3. Both: From your experience, how has the presence—or absence—of skills in *facilitation* affected programs, in both the short term and long term?

4. Both: From your experience, how has the presence—or absence— of skills in *decision-making* affected programs, in both the short term and long term?

5. Both: From your experience, how has the presence—or absence—of skills in *communication* affected day-to-day program operations?

Part II (10 min.) If you are working in pairs or a group, take another 10 minutes or so to discuss your answers, why you gave them, and any points of difference.