

Positive Approaches Institute Task Analysis

prepared by Paul Tabor



Handcrafted quilt by Nicole Guenette. Art work by the graduates of the 2005 Maine Positive Approaches Institute.

PLANNING: Start at least 6 months before the Institute

1. Decide why you want to sponsor the Institute. There are lots of good reasons, but what is/are yours? You'll need to be able to communicate this clearly to sponsors, potential participants and, perhaps, opponents. Some possibilities:
 - Improve awareness and practice of positive approaches
 - Decrease use of restrictive or punitive programming
 - Build teams within participating agencies
 - Build networks among people from different agencies
 - Create a foundation of common understanding and shared experience in order to develop and implement policy initiatives
2. Identify other people who want the Institute to happen for similar reasons. Line up administrative/political support within your own organization and at the state level, especially if David's message is likely to draw skepticism or opposition.
3. Get them together and think of ways they can help make it happen
4. Decide who should be there, numerically, demographically, politically, and personally. We decided that a group of about 40 would allow for interaction and group cohesiveness. People applied to attend. The application encouraged teamwork (2 or more people from the same agency or area committed to working together during and after the Institute) and asked for experience as a trainer/consultant as well as intentions for implementing Positive Approaches, and a signed statement of support from the executive director. The application process contributed to a sense of being part of a selected group. I will be glad to share our application.

In addition to the participants, think about potential small group leaders/mentors - people who have a good grasp of positive principles as well as good group facilitation skills. Will you need to pay any of them, or cover their expenses?
5. Think about what it will take for everyone to get there: Are there issues of time, travel costs, policy or philosophy? In retrospect, it would have helped to have the Institute at a location that also provided lodging for all participants so there would be shared mealtimes and informal networking during free time. A ski area (in the summer) or a retreat-style setting might work well for this. Are you able to offer scholarships to help with travel/lodging

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costs?

6. Schedule and confirm meeting space: We held 4, 2-day sessions at roughly monthly intervals, and this worked well. People had a chance to think and try some things between sessions, but the interval was not so long that we lost momentum. For a group of 40 we broke into 5 smaller groups, so we needed breakout space for those small group times. One or more small groups can meet in the main meeting room.
7. A-V needs: LCD projector and spare laptop, screen, TV/VCR and CD/DVD player with good audio. A thought - David send PowerPoint/s ahead of each session just in case his laptop crashes, God forbid.
8. Talk to David about "local experts" who might contribute to the Institute by presenting for a day or an evening session. Work out scheduling and budget for them. Peter Leidy is great re. supporting direct support staff.
9. Build in strategies for measuring outcomes (see #1 above).
10. Think about supporting people following the Institute. We are scheduling follow up days every 6 months to help people regroup, compare notes, share successes, problem-solve and keep the flame alive. Budget for this.
11. Start getting the word out early - build the buzz about the event. Do a Save-the-Dates notice.
12. Get official notices (and applications if you go that route) out at least 6-8 weeks ahead of the Institute.
13. Line up someone with status and credibility to do an official welcome at the first session, and schedule them to be part of the graduation as well.
14. Select applicants and send acceptance along with info about dates and locations
15. Notify applicants who were not selected
16. Confirm numbers with meeting site/caterer

DURING THE INSTITUTE

1. Have someone available to handle technical issues (laptops and LCD projector, last-minute photocopying, copies of handouts from previous sessions, liaison with meeting site, etc.). This person may be a partial participant in the Institute, but their primary role is troubleshooter/gopher.
2. Have 2" binders available for participants with tabbed dividers for each day, if possible

3. Name tags - permanent clip-ons save making up new ones every day
4. Seating: if possible, arrange tables in a large horseshoe so everyone can see and hear everyone else.
5. Have a display table for books, journals, etc.
6. Flip charts, easels, markers and masking tape. Post-it flip chart pads are good (be sure it's OK to post them on the walls)
7. Provide contact lists with names, address, telephone and e-mail of all participants

GRADUATION DAY

1. Get advance estimate of number of guests and have enough room for them. We moved to a different site for the day.
2. Print really nice certificates. Additional mementos would be nice, too
3. Have the person with status and credibility there to congratulate participants and give a little message about carrying the flame into their ongoing work
4. Announce/repeat the plans for follow up

For additional information, contact:

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