

Training



Book Five

A Resource Pack for Local Groups *of*
Disabled People

Published by the BCODP

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About this Booklet

This booklet will not tell you *how* to run your group, or *how* to do things. It is designed to signpost you to the information that you need. It will:

- Give you ideas about areas you need to think about.
- Point you in the direction of books and organisations that may help. Some of these books *will* tell you how to do things.
- Fill-in some of the gaps that these books leave about being a group *of disabled people*.

While we were working on these booklets, we talked to many local groups of disabled people. They told us about the hard work and determination you need to succeed. This Resource Pack has been written to help you find support and information so that your hard work does not go to waste. We hope that you will find these signposts get you where you want to go a bit more quickly than you would get there without them!

Full details of all books and reference materials mentioned in this booklet is contained in Resource Booklet 6

Introduction

What this booklet Covers

This booklet covers training your group:

- Thinking about training
- Training courses
- Other ways of training
- Questions to ask training providers
- Areas you might need training in

There are some good books that will help you understand more about training.
They are:

Just about managing - chapter 17
Training and how not to panic (under £10)
Training and how to enjoy it (under £10)
Assertion and how to train ourselves (under £10)
Change and how to help it happen (under £20)

Thinking About Training

Cost Effective

Training is important if your group wants to achieve its Aims. Your group members probably won't have all the skills your group needs. And most people want to do their job - paid or unpaid - well, and they want to develop their skills. Training helps to motivate your Committee, volunteers, paid members of staff or group members. Having your own members trained to do a job is usually far more cost effective and worthwhile than paying someone outside your group to do it for you.

Time and Energy

The most valuable resources your group has are time and energy - but they are also the most easily wasted. Training your group to get things done effectively will save these limited resources.

Skills Audit

If you want to find out what training your group needs, list the skills your group could use, and the skills that people in your group already have. There will probably be a gap between the two lists - this is your 'training need'. In addition, there may be skills you want to improve - perhaps someone has a little experience of chairing meetings, but wants more training. Don't forget some of the skills your group needs that may not be obvious, such as equality skills. List your training needs in order of importance - you will almost certainly not be able to sort them all out at once.

A Difficult Word

Training is a difficult word for some people. For instance, it sounds like school, and that might have been a bad experience. Or they may think they don't need to be trained, even if they don't have the skills. Try to find other ways of describing it, without using the word. How about "Someone is coming to talk to us about at the end of our meeting"?



List your training needs in order of importance -you will almost certainly not be able to sort them all out at once ...

Right for You

Training uses your group's resources - money *and* time and energy. Find out if you used them well, and got you wanted. Ask yourselves if the training was right for you:

- did the course teach what it promised to?
- did it help people to learn what they needed to?
- was it non-discriminatory and accessible?
- did it include any action planning or next steps for those who did the training?

Making the Most of it

To make the most of training, make sure people put what they have learned into practice as soon as possible. If you have all done the training together, you can practise together. If one of your members has been on a course, get them to tell you what it was about and think of ways they can keep what they have learned up to date. The sooner you do this after the training, the more likely people are to remember what they have learned.



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Training Courses

Disabled Trainers

Disabled people's groups are more likely to understand the problems and opportunities for other disabled people's groups. So it is worth looking first for trainers from other groups, or trainers who are disabled themselves. SCOOP should be able to point you in the right direction.

Local Help

Some organisations provide reasonably priced training courses to voluntary groups. If your local authority has a community development unit, they may know of trainers in your area. Your local authority may give free or subsidised places on some of its own training courses to voluntary organisations. Some local authorities run or fund courses specifically for voluntary groups. Your local TEC (Training & Enterprise Council - goes under another name in many areas) and your local Chamber of Commerce may also help. The TEC has a list of trainers in your local area. Both the TEC and the Chamber work mainly with business training, but you do need to be 'businesslike' in running your group. Your TEC may have money available for training.

Further Education

You may be able to get some help from a local (Further Education) College. Some colleges are not very accessible, but some try to include disabled people on an equal basis. Some Adult Education classes are not expensive - or may even be free for people on benefits - and may be just what you need. At the very least, college lecturers may be able to point you in the direction of some training packages that you could use.



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Another group may have recommended a trainer, but it's still worth asking the 'Questions to ask trainers' later in this Booklet, to check whether they are suited to your group ...

Ask the Questions

Another group may have recommended a trainer, but it's still worth asking the 'Questions to ask trainers' later in this Booklet, to check whether they are suited to your group.

More Questions

If you are going to get someone to train your group, don't just take the first trainer you find, even though this might seem easier at the time. You need to know:

- how much do they charge?
- what does the course cover?
- will they arrange a place to do the training, or do they expect you to? (If you have to arrange it, that may increase the cost to your group.)
- will they supply all the materials (for example, do they expect your group to do the photocopying - and if so, how much will there be?)
- get at least a couple of trainers to quote for you. Until you are used to buying training, you will find it easier to have something to compare.

Other ways of training

Different Sorts

There are many different sorts of training. We often think of training as going on courses, but there are a number of other options available. You can get quite a few videos and training packs that you can use yourselves. They may well be cheaper than sending someone on a training course, and they can be used by more than one person.

Video and Audio

You may not find an off-the-shelf training package for your needs. But don't just think about group training. Organisations like CareerTrack and Successories (see Booklet 6) produce self-development audio- and video- tapes on a wide range of subjects. So if you want to learn how to negotiate with your local authority, you could find a self-development audio-tape package on negotiating, and use it as a group. You will learn a lot that way, because listening to the tapes, and talking about it, will help you identify what you already know, and you can bounce new ideas off each other.

Manuals

Some of the self- and group-development packages mentioned above are not expensive. The Directory for Social Change (DSC) produces a good set of training manuals called *How to be a Better Trustee*. There are three manuals in the set, each priced £35. The address of DSC and other suppliers of such packs are listed in Booklet 6.

How it's Done

People who may not think of themselves as trainers may be happy to show someone else how something is done. This could be someone in your group, or someone from another group. Contact BCODP to find out if other groups have skills that you need.



Organisations like CareerTrack and Successories (see Booklet 6) produce self-development audio- and video-tapes on a wide range of subjects ...

Questions to Ask Trainers

- Have the trainers worked with groups of disabled people like yours before?
- **What is their understanding of disability?**
Do they think disability is your problem, and they will 'help' you to 'cope' with the course? Or do they understand that disability is caused by barriers in the way they train and they will work to remove them?
- Can all training materials be made available in accessible formats, for example written material in large print or subtitled videos?
- **Is the training room fully accessible -with a loop system, adequate lighting, wheelchair access, suitable seating and so on?**
If people will be staying overnight for a course, make sure that the place they are staying in is fully accessible as well. *It is advisable to check access with the hotel or training centre, not just with the trainers.*
- **Is equality built into every part of the training?**
For example, in a course on assertiveness, do the trainers consider the reasons why some groups of people may be less assertive than others, and tackle those reasons?
- **Does the training material use language that does not discriminate and positive images of all groups of people?**
For example, in a video on managing meetings, are all the managers white and male? Are support staff female? If so, are the trainers willing to change the material, or do they not see it as a problem?
- **Can you talk to another group that has used this trainer, and get a reference from them?**

Specific Training Courses You May Want To Take

Counselling / Listening

Why do the training? -

We are not born with the skills to counsel people well or even to listen well. Good counselling and listening have 'rules' that it is useful for your group to learn, even if you do not want to run a formal counselling service.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

Coming into contact with your group may be the first opportunity that some disabled people have had to talk with someone who really understands the discrimination they face.

Conflict management

Why do the training? -

Conflict will happen in your group, no matter how 'friendly' you are. It is not a bad thing, but you need to learn to manage it if it is to help you develop and grow.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

As disabled people we have not been allowed to express our opinions by society (or even to hold them). Once we get the opportunity to say what we think we can be very forceful and that can itself lead to conflict.

Teamworking / Group skills

Why do the training? -

If your group learns to work together as a team, it can get more done. You can learn teamworking skills to help you.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

As disabled people we may not be used to working without someone 'in authority'. We are used to 'being done to' rather than doing. It helps if we can learn teamwork skills.

Effective meetings (including chairing, minute taking)

Why do the training? -

Meetings are very time consuming -they use a lot of your group's resources of time, energy and money. If they are to be useful they need to be run properly, and there are skills you can learn to do this.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

Disabled people often aren't used to speaking up, and we often have limited time and energy. The group can be much more effective if meetings are well managed.



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Disabled people can't always access information if it is presented in standard ways ...

Problem-solving / Decision-making

Why do the training? -

Your group will have problems to solve, even if it's only "where do we get the next bit of funding from?". You can just argue about it, or you can use problem solving skills. Big companies spend a lot of money training their staff to solve problems - it saves time, energy and money.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

It is a waste of time and energy to argue -and you can easily end up with a bad solution. Using problem solving skills values everyone's contribution, and helps you look at all the possibilities.

Negotiating

Why do the training? -

Your group will have to negotiate in lots of areas of the work you do. Some negotiation will take place within your group, between members, staff and volunteers. Much of the negotiating you do will be with people outside the "group, in order to get important resources.

Impollant points for groups of disabled people -

The people that your group has to negotiate with to get resources are usually professionals. Negotiating is part of their job - and they are almost certainly trained for it. Training can make you more powerful and more likely to get what you want.

Office skills / Record-keeping

Why do the training? -

There are always administrative tasks to do in a group no matter how small it is. And if things get into a mess, they are harder to sort out.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

If you have smooth and efficient office procedures, it will help you be taken seriously. It will also save you time and energy, and perhaps money.

Accounts and Finance

Why do the training? -

Your committee is personally responsible for the financial management of the group. Most people will not have the skills to understand money management unless they are trained.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

For many disabled people, the risks of personal liability if group finances are not well managed are much more serious than for non-disabled people (see Booklet 3).

Disability Equality Training

Why do the training? -

If your group can clearly explain how discrimination works in society, and what prevents us taking our full part, it will be taken more seriously by others.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

As disabled people we may have absorbed the stereotypes of disabled people that society uses. We may need to learn how society's discrimination excludes us.

Effective communications

Why do the training? -

Unless your group communicates well -both with those inside it and those outside it - you will not make any progress. Bad communication wastes the valuable resources of time, energy and money.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

Disabled people can't always be physically present at meetings, and can't always access information if it is presented in standard ways. If you understand the basic principles of communication, you are more likely to be able to manage this well.

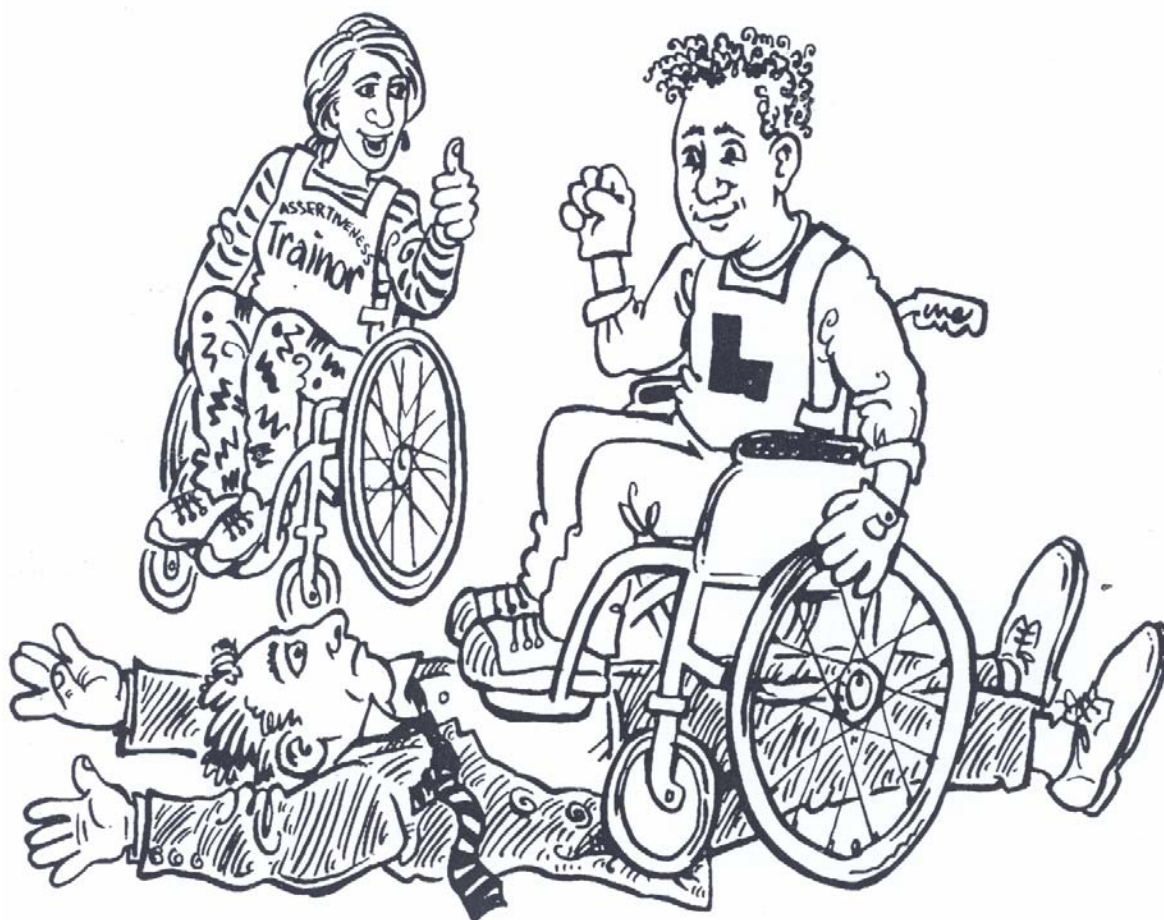
Assertiveness and self-advocacy

Why do the training? -

When your group is sharing out work, making decisions, and so on, members need to be able to say what they think and what they want. This is often not a natural thing for people to do in a way that others can accept, and training will improve people's ability to do it.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

As disabled people we have often accepted society's view that we should be grateful for what we are given, so we find it hard to say what we want. And because society says we are no good, we 'try hard' to be acceptable, and that often means *not* saying 'no' if we don't want to do something. Assertiveness and self-advocacy training will help overcome this.



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Assertiveness and self-advocacy training will help overcome this ...

Equal opportunities, access and awareness

Why do the training? -

We are fighting for our equality. We can do this more powerfully if we join with others who are fighting for equality. Equal opportunity is about access to all that society has to offer. Ensuring equal opportunity does not come naturally.

Impollant points for groups of disabled people -

Just because we are discriminated against and excluded from society, does not mean that we are good at providing access and equality for others. If we exclude people from our groups, even if we don't do it on purpose, we will not be taken seriously when we ask for equality.

Recruitment and interviewing

Why do the training? -

If your group is to be effective, you need good staff and volunteers. Recruiting the right people is a good start.

Impollant points for groups of disabled people -

Few disabled people have the opportunity to learn these management skills as part of a paid job, so training is the only way to get them.

Managing staff and / or volunteers

Why do the training? -

Even if you recruit the best staff and volunteers, they still need support to do the job well. Stress levels in voluntary work (even if paid) are higher than in any other jobs, and good support will prevent 'burnout'.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

Again, disabled people may not have had the opportunity to learn these skills. And some of the problems you may face are about disability -for example, managing the relationship between non-disabled staff and a committee of disabled people.

Fundraising

Why do the training? -

There are more and more groups applying for funding from the same 'pots' of money. Your group needs to learn how to do it well if you are to get the funding you need to survive.

Impollant points for groups of disabled people -

You can expend a lot of time and energy applying for funding that you do not get. If you sharpen your skills, you can save on these valuable resources.



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If your group learns to work together as a team, it can get more done

Training for Trainers

Why do the training? -

As your group grows, you may want to provide training yourselves - and it is a way of bringing more money into the group. You need to do it well - and it is a skill that can be learned: it doesn't have to come naturally.

Important points for groups of disabled-people -

Disabled people often don't have training skills. Even being in front of an audience, no matter how small, can be difficult. And if the training is on disability, there are difficult and sensitive points to put across which can add to the pressure.



Most of our funding comes from organisations that require evaluations ...

Health and Safety

Why do the training? -

You are legally responsible for making sure that you follow Health and Safety laws and regulations. So it is important that you know how these laws affect your group and its activities.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

Your insurance probably won't cover you if you ignore your legal responsibilities. If you break the law, and you are fined for it or someone takes your group to court, your members may have to payout of their own pockets.

Designing and using publicity materials

Why do the training? -

No matter what Vision, Aims and Values your group has, you will have to tell people about it. Whether those people are future members, the public, or your funders, good publicity materials will tell them what you want them to know.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

It can be difficult to develop good publicity for a group of disabled people, because the public is used to seeing disabled people as objects of charity. But putting your group across well is part of the process of being taken seriously.

Monitoring and Evaluating

Why do the training? -

There will be many projects that you are involved in (including training!) that you need to monitor and evaluate. These are skills that you can transfer from one project to another.

Important points for groups of disabled people -

Most of our funding comes from organisations that require evaluations, to make sure that their funds have been spent well.

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This booklet is one of six that form
the BCODP Resource Pack
for Local Groups *of* Disabled People

- Booklet 1 - About your Group
- Booklet 2 - The Environment
- Booklet 3 - Money, Workers & other Resources
- Booklet 4 - The Disabled People's Movement
- Booklet 5 - Training
- Booklet 6 - More Help and Information

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