Promoting Public Relations and Community Education

This training manual was developed by the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities to be used by ND community provider agencies participating in the Community Staff Training Project through Minot State University. The content was prepared in an effort to meet the training needs of front line supervisors and other agency leaders, who affect quality of service provision through their leadership and supervisory efforts. The content was developed through collaboration with ND community based developmental disability provider agencies and includes topics identified through a statewide survey of middle-management staff and the direct support staff they supervise (Mercer, 2002). Every effort has been made to cover information in a manner that is considered best practice, research based, and generally accepted by ND developmental disability service providers. However, there are areas throughout the module in which you may have to defer to the policies and procedures of your organization.

Suggested citation:

Requests for use of this publication should be submitted to Minot State University, NDCPD, Community Staff Training Project, Minot, ND 58707.

Production of this publication was supported by funding from:
North Dakota Department of Human Services, Disabilities Services Division
North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities/Minot State University

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The North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities is a member of the Association of University Centers on Disabilities (AUCD). AUCD is a national network of interdisciplinary centers advancing policy and practice through research, education and services for and with individuals with developmental and other disabilities, their families and communities.

This product is available in alternative format upon request.
# Table of Contents

Promoting Public Relations and Community Education

Acknowledgements

Lesson 1: Introduction

Lesson 2: Historical Perspective

Lesson 3: Promoting the Agency

Lesson 4: Public Relations Within the Agency

Lesson 5: Public Relations Activities

Lesson 6: Reputation

Lesson 7: Advocacy

Lesson 8: Fundraising

Lesson 9: Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

Lesson 10: Public Relations in the Local Neighborhood

Lesson 11: Planning for Public Relations

Lesson 12: Public Relations – Who are the Players?

Appendix A

Appendix B

Feedback Answer Key

Bibliography
I. Lesson 1: Introduction

When the average citizen thinks of a public relations campaign, visions of large billboards and snappy jingles come to mind. We tend to think of what public relations does rather than what it is. In 1988 the Public Relations Society of America formally adopted a definition of public relations:

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Public relations helps an organization and its publics adapt mutually to each other.
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This definition applies to for profit business as well any group attempting to establish itself as a viable part of the area (local, regional, statewide or national). Public relations serves a wide variety of institutions in society such as businesses, trade unions, government agencies, voluntary associations, foundations, hospitals, schools, colleges and religious institutions.

The definition includes publics - not the singular public. All organizations have multiple publics from which they must earn consent and support. To achieve their goals, a business or agency must develop effective relationships with many different audiences or publics such as employees, members, customers, families, local communities, governmental agencies and regulators, shareholders, other institutions, and the general public at large.

Public relations consists of:

- **Anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion, attitudes, and issues that might impact, good or bad, the operations and plans of the organization.**

- **Counseling management at all levels in the organization with regard to policy decisions, courses of action, and communications; taking into account the ramifications on the organization's social and citizenship responsibilities.**

- **Researching and evaluating, on a regular basis, programs of action and communication to achieve the public's understanding of the organization's mission. These may include marketing, fundraising, employee relations, and community education.**

- **Planning and implementing the organization's efforts to influence or change public policy.**
Organizations may choose to employ a person to carry out these functions or spread the activities or responsibilities across different departments. In a global sense, all employees or supporters of an organization assist in some public relations and education activities.

Public relations and education are vital to a strong growing organization. These efforts pave the way for the sale of products or services, improve morale, and help to recruit and retain qualified people. Proactive agencies keep their partners, policy makers, and the public informed thereby avoiding disruptions from ill-conceived regulations or legislation. Comprehensive public relations and community education plans can help to protect the organization when it is under attack. Public relations efforts also help an organization manage change.

The organization and its mission will determine the priorities and goals of its public relations or community education endeavors. Not all organizations will profit from zippy jingles or colorful billboards. Public relations for agencies serving people with disabilities can include:

- Educating parents and creating positive relationships with guardians and siblings.
- Education of the local, state and regional community about who people with disabilities are.
- Education and promotion of the legal and statutory rights of people with disabilities.
- Promoting the contributions people with disabilities can provide society.
- Promoting and educating the community about the services of the organization.

The public relations and education efforts of human service agencies must stretch beyond the local level. Agencies who serve people with disabilities will be affected by legislation that is authored and approved on a state and sometimes even a national level. It is necessary to educate and promote understanding among those who will be shaping public policy. These efforts are also needed on a regional level for county boards or regional councils or governing boards.
In some cases, advocacy is necessary to alert a public to a myth or skewed perception of people with disabilities. Advocacy does not always have to be adversarial and can be a way for the agency to build its integrity.

Public relations and education at the agency, community, state, and national levels are necessary to ensure that human service agencies survive and thrive. All levels are important to the agency's growth. As an employee of your agency you are a vital part of these efforts.
II. Lesson 1: Feedback Exercises

1. List concepts an organization serving people with disabilities should promote and/or educate community members as part of public relations.

2. List publics an agency must earn consent and support from.

3. T or F Public relations is fundraising only.

4. T or F Public relations includes marketing activities.

5. T or F Public relations is anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion.

6. T or F Public relations helps an organization manage change.

7. T or F Public relations includes community education.
Lesson 2: Historical Perspective

In the past, (20-30 years ago) people with disabilities were isolated. For many, an institution was home. Those who lived in the local community were educated in separate schools or classrooms. Very few adults with disabilities were competitively employed. Generally, they were rarely seen or heard. When groups of people are separated it cultivates myths and half-truths. Fear grows when people are kept apart. During this time, America was comfortable with the way things were until the civil rights movement opened the nation's eyes to the discrimination occurring against many groups. People with disabilities and their advocates began to make their voices heard.

In 1980 the ARC of North Dakota decided that the state must address the needs of people living at the institutions in San Haven and Grafton. With the mandate from the courts to rapidly reduce the population of these centers, local communities were forced to prepare for a group of people they knew little about. There was little time for community education and public relations when homes needed to be built, workers needed to be hired and trained, and programs needed to be organized. Parents needed to see the efficacy of this mass movement, and the people who lived at Grafton and San Haven needed to be prepared for the changes. In some cases, the move to the community resulted in fear. Some local communities and neighborhoods started petitions blocking the construction of group homes. Many feared the residences would devalue their property and questioned how safe their neighborhoods would be.

We know that their fears were without foundation. People in these neighborhoods have not experienced any of the problems they once thought were certain. The mutual understanding that was needed at the time now exists, for the most part, and communities support the existence of group homes, employment for people with disabilities, and participation in social roles that were previously considered off limits.

Opportunities in Community Education and Advocacy

We have come far but the mutual understanding and private policies that communities still hold about people with disabilities are still filled with gaps. Although it would have been ideal to plan and implement a thorough community education program, that was not possible. Sometimes the best and most powerful public relations campaign activity is the one that is spontaneous and focused on immediate needs. The following illustrates this point:

*Agency XYZ served John. He lived in his own apartment without a roommate. He worked part time and had assistance from staff in the*
morning and evening. During his free time he would regularly stand in the entrance of his apartment or in the hallway near his apartment and greet people. He was friendly and did not impose on the people. The people living in the apartment building were uncomfortable with this and called the agency. The staff took the opportunity to converse with the neighbors about John's behavior. Through the discourse the neighbors concluded that they had nothing to fear and that John only wanted to be a good neighbor. Through the careful queries by the staff, the neighbors discovered that assumptions they held were false and they came to a clearer understanding of John.

Not only did John gain the mutual understanding of the neighbors, but Agency XYZ did as well. Similar agencies in that community benefited and the neighbors carried their new understandings to their jobs, churches, families, and friends. The impact of the careful questioning by the staff was far reaching.

Not all opportunities are easy or end as positive as the previous example. Agencies have the obligation to live and teach the basic values of normalization, dignity of risk, age appropriateness, and social role valorization. When situations arise that challenge these values, those nearest must be prepared to handle the circumstances with diplomacy and professionalism. Read the following examples and consider staff responses.

Would direct service staff know what to do or say in the following situation?

**Sister Rosalind, from the local parish, calls and states that their Ladies Circle has been working the past three months on projects to reach out to those less fortunate. They have selected your agency's home for adults with disabilities and would like to visit next Wednesday at 6:30pm. While there they would like to bring Santa along, pass out candy and read the Christmas story to the people who live there. They would also like to bring the materials to help each person make an ornament for their Christmas tree.**

Would staff be prepared for the scenario below?

**The local thrift store is cleaning off their shelves. They called and would like to donate used clothing to your home. It is explained that these items have been not selling and the store does not want to throw the items, as there are many pieces that are useable. When could they drop off their donation?**

Would staff recognize the following as an opportunity to educate a local citizen?
A person served by Agency XYZ is accompanied to the local convenience store and insisted on going in to "look" even though they did not have any money. While the staff is distracted the individual approached the cashier and gained his sympathy. The cashier gave the individual a candy bar and a pop. The staff person became aware of the inappropriate transaction and decided this was an opportune time for teaching.

Public relations for any business, institution or organization will include re-educating and reshaping values about their product, service or mission. In the above examples, assumptions were made that people with disabilities are childlike, they have no preferences about clothes or personal possessions, and their homes are open to the public. The last scenario illustrates the exploitation of a sympathetic citizen.

Agencies serving people with disabilities need to be prepared to handle similar circumstances. All employees of the agency need to recognize and use professional methods to gently teach local citizens. With proper training, coaching, and planning an organization can be a strong and highly respected advocate for the values that produce quality lives for the people they serve.
III. Lesson 2: Feedback Exercises

1. List two reasons people attempted to block the construction of homes for people with disabilities in the community.

2. T or F Staff should be prepared to educate but not advocate in the community.

3. Describe what your course of action should be when an outside individual or organization wants to do an activity or provide a service that is contrary to the agency’s values.

4. What would you say to a community member that referred to an adult with developmental disabilities as a “kid”?

5. What should your first action be when dealing with a person you serve who has convinced a store clerk to give them candy?
Lesson 3: Promoting the Agency

Agency's Mission

The agency's mission is not usually thought of as a tool used directly for public relations or community education, however a mission statement forms the foundation for an agency, and provides the focus for all activities.

The mission statement should state what the agency does, for whom, and where. The mission statement should reflect the reason why your employees come to work everyday. When the mission statement represents and reflects the agency purpose it will attract and comfort consumers and their families, provide inspiration for potential donors and volunteers, provide information and motivation to employees, and produce measurable results. The mission statement should effectively place restraints on decision-making that is inconsistent with the core purpose. Any decision taken by an organization that would result in activities that contradict the mission shouldn't be implemented or should at least require some soul searching and decision-making by the board and agency leaders.

The mission statement can serve as an important public relations tool by explaining to important stakeholders, government regulators, and potential customers what the organization is about. Effective agencies train employees to tell the story (mission) in 30 seconds or less. Staff, agency leaders and board members should be able to tell what the agency does, for whom, and how confidently and concisely. When that is accomplished it can be assumed the inquirer has a reasonable picture of the values, activities, and how the organization serves the community.

Employees

One of the strongest arms of public relations and community education an agency has is their workforce. An employee's response to "What do you do?" can be the first impression the inquirer will have of the agency and of people with disabilities in general. It may be their first exposure to anyone with a disability. How the employee responds will reflect on the agency's competence and integrity. Hopefully staff members will answer diplomatically and professionally.

Staff need to be able to provide information without being condescending to statements such as "Oh, it must take so much patience to do what you do," or "I would never be able to do what you do," or "Those ‘kids’ are so inspiring." From the community's perspective, these comments are compliments or generalizations they view as positive and good. The challenge is to acknowledge the attribute yet reveal the underlying generalization or stereotype. It is difficult to know how to respond to something so well intentioned. We know that grouping people based on their disability and even grouping people who work for people with disabilities does not leave room for individuality.
Knowing how to respond requires understanding of the damage generalizations can do. Generalizing about any group of people usually happens because very little is known about that group. So how can generalizations that depict people with disabilities (or the people who work for them) as brave, extraordinarily patient, compassionate, deserving of our sympathy, or inspiring be considered wrong? Take a closer look at the result. Any trait, characterization, or attribute that is applied to a whole group of people without taking the individual into account is damaging and promotes segregation. Generalizations prevent the community from seeing individual members of the group as unique. If others don’t see people with disabilities (or any other group) as unique individuals, they have no need to get to know them, include them, or treat them as neighbors, friends, coworkers, parishioners, classmates, or any other valued role in the community.

It is wrong to elevate a person with a disability to be an inspiration when they can tie their shoe or dress independently. It is false to exalt staff who work with people with disabilities to a status of superhuman or having superior qualities. We all dislike parts of our job and we all have different strengths and weaknesses. We want to be seen as individuals and praised for the actual attributes and strengths we have by our own merit.

The feelings of sympathy, compassion, and admiration are not wrong in themselves but the generalizations are. It is the duty of employees to tactfully educate the community on how generalizations about people with disabilities and the people who work for them inhibit mutual understanding. Responding to these comments without creating hard feelings can be challenging. It’s important for employees to develop a response that will work for them but they may need some guidance and practice to be able to send the message that respectfully teaches others. The response should not shame the person but acknowledge the generalization and reveal it as a stereotype. Below are some suggestions:

- "That work must be so rewarding." "Actually, it is like any job, it has its positive and negative aspects. I think the most rewarding part is helping people attain goals and learn things that are important to them."

- "I could never do what you do." "I used to think that myself, but if I can do it, anyone can."

- “Those kids are so inspiring.” “Most of the men and women I work with are over 40 years old. Some days are pretty exciting others are more routine, but I’m glad I picked a career that makes a difference in people’s lives."
It is important that all employees use terms that can be understood by the public yet uphold the values of the agency. Use of people first language is necessary as well as terms that are respectful. A unique opportunity exists to educate the inquirer about appropriate terms used to describe people served by the agency. The terms such as “disabled”, “behavior problems”, “crippled”, “handicapped,” “kids” (when talking about adults), can be gently corrected by responding with the appropriate people first language, i.e., people with cerebral palsy, people with developmental disabilities or just using terms that describe them as living and working in the community. It is important that employees react with diplomacy - especially to those who may unknowingly use the wrong terminology.

People who are employed by an agency may not initially consider their position as part of the public relations department. Staff may possess positive values and advocate for the people they serve, but not view their work as public and under scrutiny by the community. Effective leaders help employees understand the crucial role they play and provide training for that role. They assist staff to understand that all people deserve respect, even those who hold different values and views of people with disabilities. Agency staff members need to understand that they have opportunities to sever relationships or build relationships with the community.

Building public relations skills requires conscious effort to train and coach all employees. The training should include teaching recognition of opportunities to educate, advocate, and promote the agency’s mission. Staff members need to be able to discern when and with whom appropriate opportunities exist. They need to know when it is appropriate to dispel and expose a destructive myth or when to be silent. Will their action perpetuate a negative attitude or will addressing the issue be an opportunity. Consider the following;

A staff person, Jane, was shopping with a person served by Agency XYZ, Nancy. Nancy decided she wanted to shop in a particular store and informed Jane of her intentions. Jane said they would meet at the food court in one hour. Nancy did her shopping but did not return at the appointed time. When Jane found Nancy, she was asking a cashier for free candy. The cashier was willing to give Nancy the free candy, but Jane decided this was an opportunity to teach appropriate social skills to Nancy. She also decided it was a good opportunity to educate the cashier on Nancy's ability to pay for the candy.

Sometimes it is more advantageous to allow the circumstances to speak and consider the cost damaged relationships may have for the future.
Agency XYZ owned property adjacent to a local Senior Citizens Center that was concerned with the proposed expansion of the agency's buildings. The property was appropriately zoned and the expansion was badly needed. The plans were approved but the Senior Citizen group complained that the increased traffic flow would disrupt their operations and made it clear that parking violators would be punished. Agency XYZ decided to abandon the expansion project as the cost of damaging their relationship to the community outweighed the advantages of the project.

Staff need to know how and to whom they should go for the best results. They need to practice restraint and present the violation to those who have the power to change the circumstance.

John was ready and waiting for the cab so he could get to work on time. It was 7:55am and he was to be at work at 8:00am. This was the third time the cab was late. When the cab arrived the cab driver made the comment that he didn't consider John's request as important as others needing rides as John didn't have a real job anyway. Stacey, the staff person, decided to take some action and explained that John paid his bills with the income he earned from his job. She hoped her explanation would assure a prompt response to future requests for cabs. If not, she was prepared to help John notify the company of the issue.
Lesson 3: Feedback Exercise

1. T or F The agency’s mission is not a tool for public relations.

2. T or F The agency’s mission should provide inspiration for potential donors

3. T or F Generalization about any group of people provides for individualization.

4. T or F Generalizations about a group of people promotes segregation.

5. The statement, “You must be so patient.” is well intentioned. How would you respond?

6. An employee’s response to a generalization statement should:
   a. Be diplomatic yet firm
   b. Acknowledge that the comment is wrong
   c. Acknowledge the generalization and attempt to reveal its stereotype.

7. T or F Diplomacy means pointing out the error in an attitude or statement without shaming or criticism.

8. T or F Diplomacy means reacting to a statement or attitude by quoting policy.

9. T or F Community education is not needed, as any agency should have good public relations before it is established.

10. T or F Agency managers are solely responsible for promoting an agency’s mission.

11. Employees of an agency should
    a. view their employment as an extension of public relations
    b. view their employment as being an advocate only
    c. view public relations as part of administration’s responsibility
Lesson 4: Public Relations within the Agency

Employees
Building public relations is usually thought of as activities that are targeted to groups outside the agency. However, agency public relations efforts should also include the employees within the agency. Effective public relations by community-based human service agencies efforts target all audiences vital to the agency’s mission including its commitment to the staff who provide supports.

Positive relationships require mutual understanding and respect between agency leaders and the workforce. The agency needs the consent and support of the workforce and employees require the support of the agency board of directors and administration (middle managers and supervisors). Many managers assume that when employees accept employment, they support the agency and its mission. However, this is not necessarily a valid assumption. The support and consent new employees give to the agency and its mission is determined in part by the methods used to interview, train, and address new employees.

The quality of the employer-employee relationship can be measured by the following criteria (Tarzian, 2002):

- **Control mutuality** – The degree to which the parties in a relationship are satisfied with the amount of control they have over the relationship. Although some degree of power imbalance is natural in organizational relationships, the most stable, positive relationships exists when groups have some degree of control over the other. A party may be willing to cede more control to the other when it trusts the other.

- **Trust** – The level of confidence that both parties have in each other and their willingness to open themselves to the other party. Employees must believe that the agency has integrity – that the agency is just and fair. They must believe the agency is dependable and that it is competent.

- **Commitment** – The extent to which both parties believe and feel that the relationship is worth spending energy on to maintain.

- **Satisfaction** – Employees will believe that they have invested their time and energy in a worthwhile relationship when they believe the agency is engaging in positive steps to maintain the relationship.

The first impressions an employee makes of the organization will affect the future development of these characteristics. How positive is the reception new staff
receive? How are interviews conducted? Are interviews hurried? Are interviewers professional? Do they project a positive image of the agency and the people served? Do interviewees receive timely callbacks? Do those who are not hired receive a phone call? Do managers take the time to give tours? Do potential employees have a realistic preview of what the position requires?

A study by Tarzian (2002) looked closely at the experiences people had during job interviews. Those interviewed defined a “good interview” as one in which:

- The interviewer had a thorough knowledge of the position
- The interviewer posed good questions
- The interviewer displayed a genuine interest in the candidate
- The interview had stimulating dialogue
- The interviewer paid attention to the details that exhibit a true sense of professionalism

A “bad interview” included:

- The interviewer exhibited a lack of understanding of the position
- Displayed unprofessional behavior
- Treated the candidate rudely
- Posed illegal or inappropriate questions
- Gave the impression that the successful candidate had already been chosen

Be it positive or negative, the hiring process can make a lasting impression. A response from an individual interviewed for the study was asked, “Did you ever relay your negative experience to anyone?” The response: “Many times, in fact, I have dissuaded people from interviewing or joining that company. I have also referred business to their competitors.” Results of the survey revealed that a negative interviewing experience stayed with the interviewee a full year longer (6.28 years) than a positive one (5.27 years). **Devoting the time and resources required to train management in strategic interviewing techniques helps support an organization’s positive reputation.**

As the employee commits to the agency, the relationship should move towards mutuality, trust, commitment, and satisfaction. Although the organization cannot control all factors in an employee’s life, it can control the training, opportunities for participation, and communication with employees. New employees watch the commitment and loyalty senior and more seasoned staff have to the mission. In other words, they are continuously assessing whether the agency “walks the talk” regarding respecting human rights and dignity of all people. The well-known employee “probationary period” is a time where the agency is also on trial or under investigation by the employee. They want to see proof of the agencies commitment to staff.
Employees expect that the agency actively live the mission not only to the people served but also to them. Staff members that feel trusted, respected, and satisfied will be the best public relations department for the organization. On the other hand, disgruntled employees will be a damaging force to the agency. Their dissatisfaction can choke budding relationships the agency may have with potential community partners.

Successful agencies commit to ongoing employee training, empowerment, advocacy, and skill development. Methods that worked 10 or even 5 years ago need to be re-evaluated. The next generation brings different values to the workplace. What worked with generation X employees may not work with generation Y.

Each employee’s personal contacts in the community have the potential to positively impact the number and quality of community contacts for people receiving services. The agency must devote ongoing resources to help staff spend time with people in their neighborhoods and the broader community exploring activities, organizations, and environments as well as getting to know people in some of these places. For example:

Keith (an employee of XYZ Agency) had been spending some time each week for the past 12 years at Marty’s Sporting Goods. In the past, Keith interacted with Marty and his wife at the store; in addition he would go to their home for various social gatherings. When Keith began employment at Agency XYZ he included Kevin, an individual served from Agency XYZ, in the social get-togethers. Kevin, the owner of the store, and Keith had the mutual interest in spectator sports. Kevin bought sweatshirts with his favorite team’s logo at Marty’s Sporting Goods and he enjoyed the conversations about sports.

Staff should be encouraged to act as public relations directors for the people they serve. Their goal in these interactions is to develop relationships with the local community. These relationships can open opportunities for the community and the people served. Because each new employee is a potential public relation/community education agent, he/she should be provided with appropriate training and coaching. The employee is an ambassador for the organization.

**Parent and Guardian**

Another public with potential for extensive public relations activity is the parent/guardian/sibling group (PGS). This group provides links to personal networks that can help the agency reach audiences that otherwise may take years to develop. It is
in the organization’s interest to nurture the relationship they have with PGSs to tap into their connections. This group may bring extended networks that contain distant and extended family (grandparents, cousins, aunts), business associates, employers, other friends, and community groups. The PGS group needs to experience the same relationship development as the employee group. They expect mutuality, trust, satisfaction, and commitment from the agency. However, the type and length of nurturance from the agency may be quite different than that provided agency employees.

The days of reducing the populations of state institutions have passed. There is a new generation of PGSs seeking and procuring services for their family members with disabilities. They are knowledgeable about laws and services. They know what they want for their relative and will shop to find it. This group includes assertive advocates with the clout to change systems (i.e., ND ARC Lawsuit 1981).

Agencies may use the following partial list of “family friendly” policies developed by Cathy Haarstad, Family Support Project Director for the North Dakota Center for Persons with Disabilities, to evaluate relationships between the agency and families. Does the agency....?

- **Emphasize the value and importance of families in written and spoken comments at all levels.**
- **Work with schools and other providers to educate and support families in preparing their children for the circumstances, risk, and challenges of adult life.**
- **Work with schools/providers to orient families to the adult service system and teach them how they might ease their child’s transition into adult life.**
- **Use feedback and input from families to design or revise programs of support.**
- **Develop policies and strategies that address the unique needs of families whose children have significant and multiple disabilities.**
- **Provide information in a family friendly format using fact sheets, newsletters or handbooks that are brief and easy to read.**
- **Develop an internal system of effectively tracking and resolving concerns expressed by families.**
- **Get families together with administrators who make decisions about services.**
- **Invest time and resources in training staff to respect, support, and collaborate with families.**
• Take families seriously, and take time for families.

Education P/G/S in the core values of serving people with disabilities and the mission of the organization can help build understanding. Sharing values such as normalization, age appropriateness, rights, dignity of risk, and social roles may need to be part of the ongoing communication with this group. It may take several years for some members of this audience to understand and buy into a value that contradicts a longstanding belief about their family member. When agency values conflict with those held by members of this group, a gentle and patient approach will help establish a positive relationship that will allow for discussion and growth.

Employee education should include training on families and family dynamics. Frontline staff will undoubtedly encounter P/G/S in everyday work. They need the tools to address issues and understand the family’s perspective. All staff members need to know how to act professionally when the exchanges become stressed and when and to whom they can refer the P/G/S.

Instead of viewing P/G/S as adversaries, effective organizations capitalize on the great support this group can provide. They bring real life experiences that can provide powerful testimony impacting opinion leaders and policy makers through local, state, and federal advocacy efforts. They bring life-long commitment to their family member and the agency. They can work for a better future in the community for people with developmental disabilities and they can be a source of volunteer time. They know and will connect with other P/G/S to build an invaluable resource network for the organization.

Summary

Good public relations start from within. Everyone within the organization represents the agency. Organizational culture – the way things are done – starts at the top and filters down. Organizations, networks, nonprofit agencies need to step back and take a hard look at the message they are communicating to the outside publics. When an organization commits to the people it serves and the people they employ, they send a positive message. The culture of the organization will be the standard outside publics use to shape their perception of the agency’s mission. What would a caricature of your agency look like?
Lesson 4: Feedback Exercises

1. Check those qualities, on the list below, that measure an employee-employer’s positive relationship.

___ amount of paid time off earned in the first six months of employment
___ the level of confidence the employee and employer have in each other
___ supervisor presence at all times
___ the degree to which the employee and employer are satisfied with the amount of control they have over the relationship
___ the amount of training provided in the first 6 months of employment
___ the starting wage
___ the amount both the employee and employer feel the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain.
___ how much the employee believes the agency is seeking positively to maintain the relationship

2. T or F Control mutuality in an employer-employee relationship is defined as the degree by which power is divided between both the employee and the people served.

3. List some qualities of a good interview.

4. List some aspects of a poor interview.

5. Building trust with employees includes:
   a. preparing employees for change
   b. using employees for public speaking
   c. guaranteeing a flexible schedule

6. T or F An employee’s bad experience with an agency will be remembered one or more years longer than a good experience.

7. T or F An agency’s mission is the responsibility of the administration only.

8. T or F During an interview is it good practice to pose questions about a potential employee's children.

9. T or F An agency should capitalize on the support, connections and expertise parents, guardians, and siblings bring to the organization.
Lesson 5: Public Relations Activities

Local Community

Understanding the community

Poor relationships with the community can result in negative press, permit delays or denials, costly project expenses and delays, poor employment outcomes for the people served, and even lawsuits. An agency must become acquainted with its community before launching a public relations campaign. Every organization should consider the following:

- **What are the community boundaries?** If the agency is located in a large metropolitan area, the boundaries maybe the suburb(s) where services are delivered. Rural areas may have less defined boundaries.

- **How is the local government structured?** Many services are delivered by municipalities or ward councils. Local organizations should understand how the government functions and how to influence it. The agency will be well served by partnerships with local government.

- **What is the capacity and activism of the population?** What are the demographics of the community? What are the prevailing attitudes and how does that coincide with the agency’s mission?

- **What are the economic and social conditions?** These conditions not only reflect on what and how much support/resources the agency can expect from the community, but it can also determine the areas where the agency can help meet the needs of the community.

- **What is the capacity of the local infrastructure?** Does the community have the capacity to provide services such as public transportation, healthcare, recreation, and employment? Are there plans for improvement or change?

- **What is the community’s previous experience with a human service agency – particularly one that serves people with various disabilities?** Has there been opposition in neighborhoods or businesses?

- **What other non-profits exist?** Who can the agency partner with?
Sources and methods that can assist in obtaining this information are:

- Census data
- Regional economic data
- Local service clubs
- City or county board/council meetings
- Local leaders such as school administrator, clergy, and law enforcement
- Archived records of local newspaper(s)

The non-profit agency should enter the community public relations effort with a thorough understanding of the past, present, and future possibilities of the community. The agency should be prepared to receive as well as give.

**Making Your Presence Known**

Advertising is public promotion of a product or service. It is calling attention to the product or service offered and it is usually a paid form of non-personal presentation. Advertising is usually accomplished by using media such as radio, TV, billboards, brochures, displays, videos, slogan, press releases, or inserts. These tools can promote the agency but remember – they need to be timely, accurate and updated consistently.

**Press Releases**

One of the primary ways a non-profit can tell its story to key audiences is through the press. Media relations are only one part of the agency’s advertising plan but it can be a valuable and efficient tool. Good editors and news directors appreciate timely, well-written, and well-organized news releases. Don’t ask for blatant advertising to be used as a press release. Remember it must be news to the public. Follow these guidelines:

1. Recognize the difference between news and advertising. News is something unusual or important and/or affects a large number of people in a significant way. For example:

   A press release on the agency’s receipt of a $500 grant might generate yawns. If the grant (or grants) allows the agency to introduce the city’s first Assistive Dog training program, that’s a story of interest.

2. Learn to write good news releases. Put the news in the first paragraph – don’t hide it in a paragraph about your organization. Be brief and accurate. Make sure you release has the “who”, “what”, “when”, “where”, “why” and “how” within
the text. Double-space your copy. Don’t write more than two pages. Public service announcements should fit in one minute or be 150 words maximum. Be sure to put the name of the person to call for information at the top.

3. Learn media deadlines so that your releases are timely.

4. Get to know your local press so that when you have a good story idea, they will listen.

Organizations that receive public funding have a duty to let the public know what they are doing and how to access their services. That makes good media relations one of the most important roles of your organization.

**Media Watch**

As an agency that supports people with disabilities, it is responsible behavior to monitor the image that the media is projecting about people with disabilities. It is important for organizations, networks, and agencies to realize that they can make a difference. Whenever an article or media presentation is made that depicts people with disabilities poorly it is necessary to take action. The response should be directed to the appropriate person and written with the permission of the agency or organization.

A study by Beth Haller, associate professor of Journalism at Towson University, in 1998 investigated the sources journalists used in their stories about disabilities (Haller, B. 1999). This study found that journalists are not using people with disabilities as sources. The findings suggest that people with disabilities “while not being ignored, are not in control of the disability-related coverage,” said the report. Recommendations of this study suggested:

- Disability spokespeople need to actively work together to get correct information about issues into the news. Disability organizations must be proactive in controlling the news agenda on topics about disability issues.

- Disability topics are part of the diversity discourse that needs to be entering the news. Disability organizations should be aggressive and not wait for journalists to decide it’s time to do a story. They should actively pitch serious story ideas.
Because of today's information overload among news audiences, the public's relationship to different media has been changing. People tend to watch TV for spot news, and those who want to know more about the issues in-depth read newspapers and news magazines. People who make an effort to keep up with the news are the opinion leaders, so disability organizations need to get correct information about the issues before them by getting into the major print news media.

This study shows that many reporters in both print and television media have a limited understanding of disability issues and how to find reliable sources for their stories.

See Appendix A for a sample news release and public service announcements and suggestions to provide to journalists in your community.

Displays

A good display is important to your organization. The purpose of your display is to grab people's interest—then tell them your organization’s story and services, all in the short time people may spend looking at it. The display should stress the most important ideas, then provide some detail once interest has been stirred. If the display is hard to read, if it is cluttered with less important details, or if there is no logical way to follow the project from idea to conclusion, people may not make the extra effort to understand what you have done. The quality of display reflects the professionalism of your organization.

The goal of a good display is to minimize the interface between the user and the critical information he/she needs to make a decision. Good displays will have the following characteristics (Ackert,G. 2002):

- Critical data or information is presented clearly.
- Information is presented in proper relation to other important information.
- The theme of the display can be understood with one glance.
- There is a minimum of decoration or distraction from the information presented.
- The display is consistent in its use of graphical elements.
- The amount of cognitive overhead, or additional thinking required of the viewer to understand the theme is kept to a minimum.

The first step is to decide the theme of the display. The theme should be the main point or the reason for making the display. Is it to give general information about the organization? Is it for explaining some aspect of the services? Maybe it is to expose a need that exists for the people served. Start out with a general topic and then narrow it down. Then take the main theme and state it in a sentence concisely. If it is decided that you want to display an exhibit for Agency XYZ, then the agency would be the topic
but the theme would be the message to tell to the viewer. The theme might be a specific aspect of the agency. For example, supported employment is a theme and the statement explaining the theme may be “Agency XYZ offers trained and loyal workers for your company’s staffing needs.” Everything in the exhibit would relate to this theme.

Decide who the audience will be. Knowing the audience will assist in determining what concepts to cover, what terminology to use and appropriate exhibit design. Consider the socioeconomic background, familiarity with your message, age, and education.

Be brief. It is a mistake to try and tell too much in a single exhibit. On the average, people spend 30-40 seconds at an exhibit.

Use color intensity to get and direct their attention. High intensity color, such as red, catches attention and pulls them toward the object or label. Use blank space as well. The more blank space around labels and objects, the quicker and easier it is to focus on them.

An exhibit is never finished. As it is used, the exhibit should be evaluated. Do people stop? How long do they stay? Take note of the questions people ask. See what they find interesting or confusing.

Brochures

Before putting the effort into making a brochure, the purpose and audience should be identified. Is the brochure being developed to advertise the agency website? Is it going to be used to promote a program or service? The brochure should be written to grab the reader’s attention with a question, declaration, or an appeal to emotions, needs, or wants. Brochures that are informative only may not need to tell the reader what to do. However, if the purpose is to sell or gain support, then it should tell the reader what to do – “call – to – action”. The text should be active and enthusiastic. The reader should move seamlessly from sentence to sentence without getting bogged down in boring text. The following are some tips:

- Put your selling message on the cover
- Use a single illustration on the cover
- Select pictures that tell the story and always caption photographs
- Use photos instead of drawings
- Make your brochure worth keeping by encouraging the reader to keep it handy with valuable information.
Slogans and Logos

Logos and slogans give identity and reflect the organization’s mission. They should be tasteful and positive. It is important that the logo/slogan be on business documents such as stationery, brochures, and business cards. These can be part of the information you give away such as handouts at a conference, on shirts, pencils, key chains, organizers, note cards, or calendars. When the item is attractive and useful, the agency will attract positive attention.

Events

Special events or activities can be a very effective way to draw attention to the agency or an issue. With careful planning and attention to detail, events can be a very positive attention getter.

Events may include open houses, ribbon cutting ceremonies, an informational meeting or conference, a series of activities related to a theme to raise public awareness or just a fun activity that includes the general public, e.g., a May Day celebration with free hotdogs. The agency can decide to make the event an annual occurrence or just a one-time event. In any case, special events can attract the attention of the entire community and be very cost effective.

Special themes and events should be planned around other community happenings and should not be a duplicate of a previous event. The community should benefit as well as the organization. A conference sponsored by the agency should be related to the services of the organization and should target people who could benefit from the speaker(s) knowledge. For example, the organization may decide to invite a speaker whose expertise is in making living environments more accessible to people with disabilities. This meeting would benefit contractors, construction companies, caregivers, parents and other providers in the local area. It is important to use the event as publicity by inviting the local press to feature the event in their medium.

Public Information Campaigns

Campaigns are considered events with themes that continue over a period of time. They are used to draw attention to an issue or just promote awareness. Teacher appreciation week, fire prevention month, are examples of some familiar campaigns. These ongoing activities provide time to draw attention to several aspects of the theme. Some of these activities may be public displays in libraries or shopping malls. The local newspaper or television may assist with the kick off and employees or people receiving services may make presentations to schools and community groups. The promotional campaign can be easily forgotten if it does not focus on issues of public concern. Issue oriented campaigns are valuable in solidifying long-term relationships with other corporations and other agency sponsors.
Unit 5: Activities of Public Relations

1. List some ways an organization can become familiar with the hosting community.

2. Information an agency should become familiar with to understand the hosting community is (check those that apply).
   ___ Demographics of (average citizen age, average household income, average educational level)
   ___ cost of paper for brochures
   ___ investigating the community’s past experience with similar organizations
   ___ finding out if similar organizations exist in the community
   ___ developing a mission to fit the needs of the community
   ___ unemployment rate
   ___ crime rate
   ___ average cost of housing
   ___ how is the local government structured

3. Good press releases have which of the following characteristics:
   ___ include the mission
   ___ 150 words or less
   ___ double spaced
   ___ is news and not advertising
   ___ 3 or more pages
   ___ written to cover facts of the agency
   ___ single spaced
   ___ brief and accurate
   ___ includes what, when, where, why, and how

4. T or F To assist in making press releases more likely to be printed it is wise to get acquainted with the local media and follow deadlines.
5. T or F Agencies should actively see media attention and promote stories about their mission and activities

6. T or F It is not the duty of the organization to correct the media’s depiction of people with disabilities

7. List some qualities of good displays.

8. T or F A good display will target an audience

9. T or F A good display is brief with blank space around labels and objects

10. List some elements of a good brochure.

11. T or F An agency that does not advertise may risk negative publicity

12 T or F Fund raising is the goal of public information campaigns

13 T or F An example of an issue related public campaign would be a capital campaign.
Lesson 6: Reputation

Reputation is the current sum total of the specific traits attributed to an organization by people, inside and outside the agency. Reputation is an intangible asset the organization has accumulated over time. This asset, like finances or property, is vital to the agency. Reputational capital includes the principles of integrity, fairness, honesty, and ethics practiced by the agency. The success of an organization is determined in part by its ability to develop and maintain business principles that will enable them to build a formidable reputation.

One intangible component of reputational capital (Gaines-Ross, L. 2002) is the reputation of the CEO (Chief Executive Officer). The CEO and company reputation are almost inseparable. His or her reputation plays a large part in how the agency is perceived. While it may be most apparent in external relationships, it is first established internally. A strong management team also impacts reputational capital.

Every employee makes decisions that affect public views of their organization. It is critically important that organizations become known as ethical organizations that "do what is right". Together the CEO and employees build a corporate culture that can attract talent. This reputation helps build strong employee commitment. Employees who believe their companies have strong values also have a higher level of job satisfaction and feel more valued.

The company’s reputation can be monitored and nurtured through training and discussion on a consistent basis. Core values and guidelines about what is and is not acceptable behavior in ethically sensitive issues should be included. The agency core values should be observed in the everyday life of the agency. Rules or standards should be enforced by management. For example, when employees disregard the dress policy they should be sent home to change. When staff show up late or not at all, the established guidelines for discipline should be enforced. People are naturally attracted to high standards and excellence. Cutting corners or fudging the facts may provide temporary solace but eventually it will harm the organization.

Image is part of a reputation. Image is a mental impression or record made in the short term and stored in the long term memory. Things that convey image are:

- Location of buildings
- Condition of facilities
- Employee dress
- Media - print or electronic
- Events and displays
• How the agency employees demonstrate its mission in their interactions with people served and the community

Other things that contribute to the image or reputation of the agency are:

• Recognition and awards received locally and nationally
• Conduct standards - drug testing, health and safety standards, consequences for use of alcohol and drugs (These all speak of the company's commitment to a safe and productive work environment.)
• Respect for other businesses - paying bills on time, respectful and timely communication
• Competing fairly with other agencies that provide the same service
• Monitoring conflicts of interests with board members and employees

Agency leadership is responsible for guarding the company reputation as if it were a tangible asset. Organizations that are not prepared for change such as downsizing, reduction of funds, employee mistakes or bad publicity will not be able to rescue their reputation once disaster hits. The agency that looks forward and plans for public relations will make adjustments as events begin to impact their image. A company's reputation is produced by the memory impressions of its perceived actions over time. The memory will be with past employees, people served, suppliers, and community but also with present publics. This doesn't mean that there will not be unpleasant events or memories but that overall - the positive reputation will be preserved.

**National Easter Seal Society Case Study**

The National Easter Seal Society had a goal to reposition the agency as a respected advocate for people with disabilities within the disabilities rights movement. A secondary goal was to encourage contributions. These goals were developed as a result of a national poll. The poll revealed that 90% of the public recognized the Easter Seal name but only a third of that group could identify what the organization did.

The National Easter Seal Society targeted the message more specifically as "a realistic positive portrayal of children and adults with disabilities - to help the public view them as everyday people living everyday lives." The Society used a multi-media campaign that consisted of television spots, radio public announcements and a series of print ads. Part of the campaign was named "Friends who care" which pointed out how name-calling hurts and how kids with disabilities are stigmatized. A curriculum was written and distributed to schools. Another campaign was launched titled, "Awareness is the first step towards change." This was a multi-media campaign and was centered on disability rights.
The National Easter Seal campaign spanned five years and has some very positive affects. Gifts to the organization increased by 10% and awareness increased 30%.

Even though the National Easter Seal campaign involved a national effort, it offers some good insight for small organizations or agencies:

- **Do research.** It is important to survey the attitudes and issues before spending money to change them. This data can be used for post evaluation to determine the effectiveness of the campaign.

- **Define your goal.** Develop clearly defined, measurable goals for public education that are linked to the organization's mission.

- **Use quality multi-media execution.** Use professionals to develop high quality messages that are issues oriented, positive, and realistic.

- **Be creative** in all media uses to capitalize on the inherent differences between media types and to reach special audiences.

- **Have awards for supportive partners and make this a special event.** Be sure to send letters of appreciation.

It is important to note that the National Easter Seal Society kept the focus of the campaign - attitude change. The secondary goals of raising funds did not determine the success of the campaign.

"In the final analysis, however, it is not media awards, a strong balance sheet or public recognition that determines success. It is the ability to fulfill the mission of the organization. For the National Easter Seal Society, advocacy and issues-oriented medial campaigns have made it possible for us to make a difference in the lives of people with disabilities, their families and their communities - to fulfill our basic mission." (Gordon,S.)

**Summary**

Any organization or agency does not want to be the best-kept secret in their local community. If a concerted effort is not made to advertise the who, what, and why of the organization, there will be little growth and possibly negative stereotypes fostered. The organization should not
allow negative assumptions to persist. The methods cited in this chapter do not represent a complete discussion of effective advertising, only a small sample. Organizations and their publics vary and the methods to advertise must be geared to the needs of the agency and its community.

See Appendix B: Communication Ideas
Lesson 6: Feedback Exercises

1. An organization’s reputation is (check those that are true statements):

   __ intangible (something not able to touch or feel)
   __ can be damaged by CEO’s reputation
   __ evaluated by outsiders to the organization
   __ a measure of the organization’s profit statement
   __ specific traits or attributes of the organization
   __ is made up of the parents, guardians and siblings of the publics
   __ once damaged it cannot be repaired
   __ represents principles of integrity, honesty, and fairness
   __ is measured by the activity of the organization’s public relations campaigns.

2. What factors contribute to the reputation of an organization?

   a.
   b.
   c.
   d.
   e.

3. One way an organization can build reputation is:

   a. disregard rules that might cause employees to quit (i.e., standards for appropriate attire during work hours)
   b. use cheap stationery
   c. monitor and nurture ethical behavior through training activities
   d. cutting corners and fudging facts

4. List activities of an organization that contribute to a positive reputation:
Lesson 7: Advocacy

To advocate, according to Webster, is to argue or plead on the behalf of another. Human service providers inevitably find it necessary to advocate for change - change in attitudes, change in the structures of the community, and change in systems locally and statewide. Community education is often necessary to accomplish the agency’s mission but advocacy is also necessary on an individual, group, and system level.

While the agency is an advocate for change, it needs to balance that role with being part of the community it is asking to change. Community service providers acting as advocates are required to balance the needs of the people served and the needs of the whole community. The organization should be perceived as a champion for the people it serves but not as radicals willing to sever all ties for an issue. Advocacy should be an ongoing activity - its purpose should be to broaden and strengthen the system for serving individuals with disabilities - not just single-issue campaigns. Change that is brought about by education and building partnerships with the community will be less painful than the change forced by litigation or legislation.

Advocacy is the responsibility of direct support staff, programmatic staff and agency leaders. As they perform their various job responsibilities, staff may be confronted with attitudes and actions that deny what is due to the people they serve. Circumstances that require personal or individual advocacy develop quickly. It is sometimes hard to think clearly in the heat of the moment. The agency should be confident that staff will advocate with professionalism and avoid alienating people in the community. To accomplish this, it is best to analyze potential problem areas in advance and train employees how to respond appropriately. Discussing and role-playing before the need arises, prepares staff and allows them to respond confidently if the need arises. When issues do arise, it is important to involve administration or someone specifically designated as a spokesperson for the agency. They would be responsible to follow-up with a community member, business and with the support staff that was on the frontline.

The responsibility for advocacy on an individual basis, is sometimes delegated to internal case managers or QIDPs (Qualified Intellectual Disability Professional). Whenever appropriate, however, the most effective individual advocacy occurs when direct support staff seize natural opportunities to teach people with disabilities how to advocate for themselves. The best way to teach these skills is during day-to-day interactions in natural settings (i.e., at the bank, in-line at the grocery store, etc). If staff are asked a question that should be referred to the individual served, encourage the consumer to speak for themselves and voice their opinion.
An agency needs to stay true to its mission. The needs of the people served come first. When systems, organizations or groups refuse to provide what is due service recipients, then the organization needs to advocate. This means that the organization should pursue the people who have authority to make the changes and present their grievances. There is usually time to plan systematic and coordinated advocacy to attack issues that affect more than one person. Examples might include:

- Lack of employment opportunities in the local community for people with disabilities
- Inadequate accessible transportation
- Lack of inclusive social opportunities
- Inadequate psychiatric care
- Unequal treatment in the criminal justice system (or any other system)

This type of advocacy should involve not only employees of the agency, but families and members of the community. Each issue should involve people who are close to the topic and have expertise to share or power to influence change. This type of advocacy requires recruiting community members to serve on teams to address issues. The team needs to have knowledge of local, regional, and statewide legislation, policies and practices. Often team members will need training to build advocacy skills. Planning, training, and consensus decision-making ensure all team members are committed to the goal. Poor planning or lack of commitment can lead to unresolved issues, which can cause discouragement and abandonment of the cause.

Non-profit organizations can make a difference. It takes people with a common cause, committed and working together to make the difference. The agency is closer to the real problems of people with disabilities than other community groups. They see problems first-hand and know what works and what doesn't. The organization can find people and situations that help make problems real to policy makers. Their passion and perspectives need to be heard.

Increasingly, the federal government is allowing local governments to decide how to spend federal money and make more decisions than in the past. This change gives local human services organizations more responsibility to educate local policy makers about pressing needs, proven practices, and how they can help the community do “the right thing.” Agency presence on community task forces can be another avenue to bring attention to issues that otherwise might be overlooked. For example, a community might bring together a working committee on the problem of attracting businesses and labor to their community. A representative from Agency XYZ would have opportunity to bring attention to the labor force they can offer and provide a voice for job and career development for people with disabilities.
People who are united, passionate about their cause, and experience it first hand are a strong voice. For example, Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD) convinced dozens of states to toughen their drunk driving laws. As a result, attitudes towards drinking and driving have changed dramatically and the number of deaths related to drunk driving has decreased.

Following are some steps an organization can take to strengthen their impact on government policy:

- Recruit board members that serve in the state legislature. Having a person in the organization that knows how laws are proposed, debated, and become law can save time and resources.

- Build support at the grassroots level. Keep employees, parents, guardians, and other stakeholders informed on the activities of the policymakers and how it will affect the people served.

- Be knowledgeable about what constitutes lobbying and the rules non-profit organizations must follow. The organization should be clear about what is allowable and what is not.

- Show unity. The organization must speak and be heard. Change is more likely to occur when similar human services agencies unite and build a strong voice.

- Understand how to communicate with legislators. When you are ready to talk about supporting or opposing legislation, decide who to approach. Contact the "undecideds". Prepare fact sheets. Summarize the cost and impact of responding to or ignoring your issue. Use testimony to strengthen your case and anticipate compromises.

- Be a resource to local and state elected officials. Building public trust is essential to non-profit organizations and increases the agency's visibility.
• Understand local legislators. Get to know their political philosophies, areas of interest, and status among other legislators. Learn what districts they represent and their personal background. The more that is known about them, the better able the organization can relate to them.

• Promote news stories, editorials, and letters to the editor in support of the organization's position. Press coverage creates an opportunity to have an impact on public policy issues.

Summary

Many people feel helpless to change policy or make a difference. It is hard work to change attitudes, actions, and legal systems, but it can be done. Our American history is full of stories of people and groups that fought great odds to make changes. The act of telling policy makers how to write and change our laws is at the very heart of our democratic system. Advocating for individuals, groups, or for system change has improved the lives of people with disabilities.
Lesson 7: Feedback Exercises

1. List five ways an organization can strengthen their impact on local government.

2. Of the strategies listed below, which one would be a recommended way for the organization to advocate for the people it serves?
   a. develop a task force or committee to address known problems
   b. organize a sit-in at the local business
   c. boycott local businesses
   d. take data on the problems of the community

3. T or F Advocacy in the local community should be done only on the administrative level:

4. T or F Staff should know how to deal with community members that deny what is due to people with disabilities.

5. T or F An organization can advocate for the people they serve by joining community task forces/committees regarding issues important to the community.
Lesson 8: Fund Raising

Some claim that fund raising is the litmus test of good public relations. However, a human service organization would likely fail if the sole purpose of its public relations plan was to raise funds. It is wise for an organization to utilize multiple methods and sources of revenue. Avoid soliciting funds based on pity. This approach is contrary to the desires of the people served and to values of independence, dignity of risk and social role valorization. Individuals, corporations, and foundations give money for different reasons, at different levels, and in response to different needs and opportunities. It is essential to develop and sustain relationships with donors and keep informed on other opportunities to raise money. Donors give to people they know and trust. The person doing the asking is just as important as the cause.

Methods and opportunities to raise funds include:

- As a recipient of the community’s United Way campaign
- Grants
- Endowments
- Website with a "donate now" button
- Workplace funding (paying a dollar to wear jeans)
- Gifts in-kind from retailers and manufacturers
- Planned giving
- Telethons, phonathons
- Direct mailing
- Annual giving
- Capital campaigns
- Presentations to local service organizations

In any fund raising activity, it is important to keep meticulous records. The records should include information on donor contacts, designation of funds received, e.g. funds earmarked for an air conditioner, expenses of the activity, amounts given, date, portions that are tax deductible and any other information that will help in future fund raising efforts. Records are necessary for legal and fiduciary reasons.

It is also essential to keep promises made to donors. Use the funds raised for the publicized use and then make sure those who contributed have an opportunity to read about the fulfillment of their generosity. Individual and corporate donors should be thanked. The best thank you is done in person but a timely one via phone or mail is also good.
Donors should be kept up-to-date on the agency's activities, awards/recognition (local, state, and national achievements) and projects. Informing agency partners of improved performance in program quality and efficiency provides evidence of accountability and hopefully will attract new funding sources. The ongoing communication can be accomplished through newsletters or direct and periodic mailings. The goal is to develop long term relationships with the people who have decided the organization is worthy of their support.

Some fund-raising efforts may be assigned to professionals who are trained in cultivating prospective stakeholders and donors. They have experience getting commitments from donors. They know how and what to ask and have systems for following up on requests. Large and complex fund-raising shouldn’t be left to amateurs. Professional fund raisers help an agency generate the vision, mission statement and case statement needed for successful campaigns.

Suggested ways to raise funds that just require a little creativity and energy include:

- Community auction - Ask families, friends, community businesses to donate their specialties. Be creative. People can auction their services such as babysitting or housecleaning.
- Seasonal celebration - Have a potluck dinner with special foods. Eat outside and have activities and prizes. Charge admission.
- Employee play off - Compete for the benefit of others. Choose a sport and invite other agencies, parents, and guardians to watch and cheer. Sell tickets or charge admission.
- Car-wash - Make up fliers and explain where the money will be used.
- Flea market - Families, people served and employees can gather their used books, clothes or handmade crafts to sell.
- Birthday donations - On birthdays, employees or people served can make a donation to an identified need instead of buying a gift.
- Costume ball - Hold this around Halloween or a special holiday. Give it a theme and charge admission.

Grant monies exist in the national, state, and local sources, but it takes persistence to develop a successful grant application. Don’t let the stiff competition be a discouragement. The following tips will help in seeking funds from grants from the Internet:

- When a website is found that is compatible with the organization's services, bookmark the site and return on a regular basis to watch for funding announcements.
- Look for any automatic newsletters or e-mail services and subscribe.
- Be sure the organization or agency's mission fits the eligibility statement.
• Look for contact information and use the source to address any questions you might have during development of the proposal.
• Don't become overwhelmed or discouraged. The job of searching for funding sites could be a great volunteer opportunity.
• Look at past organizations and projects that have been funded. This will give some direction in determining the focus of the foundation and the types of projects they support.

**Summary**

Raising revenue for any organization can be a daunting task. Complex efforts need the expertise of professionals. Fund raising can be as simple as a bake sale or as complex as a capital campaign. Most human service organizations will need to plan for large and small projects to meet the needs of the people served and the organization.
Lesson 8: Feedback Exercises

1. T or F  Successful fundraising targets only one or two ways to raise revenue.

2. T or F  Solicitation of funds should be done based on the community’s commitment to those less fortunate than them.

3. T or F  Some fund raising requires the expertise of professionals.

4. T or F  Record keeping is essential to good fund raising.

5. List some methods to raise funds:

6. List records that should be kept for fund raising campaigns:
Lesson 9: Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers

The advantages of having volunteers include:

- Volunteers are good connections to the community.
- They provide valuable resources in the form of talent, expertise, and they can enrich the lives of the people served with long-term relationships.
- They help offset labor expenses that, in human service organizations, can be 95% of all operating costs.

A strong volunteer program is a great asset. Yet many organizations delegate the volunteer coordination to the human resources department or to the specific program (i.e., supported employment, residential, or day supports) that will be hosting the volunteer. Employees already working with other duties have neither the time nor expertise to devote to volunteers and as a result the volunteer effort is minimal or fails. Strong volunteer programs include the following:

- Coordination - One person who has the expertise, authority and resources to develop the program. Volunteers need a single point of contact for direction, training, and recognition.
- Volunteer friendly - Volunteers are not taken for granted. The organization views each volunteer as a valuable resource and makes it easy and convenient to volunteer. They offer flexible hours and work assignments that interest the participants.
- The organization takes the extra effort to match the volunteer's ability, interests, and skills to the work opportunities.
- Screening, training, and development are part of the volunteer program.

To build a strong program, managers need to understand the reasons why people volunteer. Successful programs fulfill as many of these purposes as possible. People volunteer:

To use their talents and skills developed during their careers. Some retirees are not ready to retire entirely and some want to use their skills in a fresh place.

- Some volunteers are just looking for a social outlet and fun. They need a place to meet people and enjoy their work.
- Some volunteers hope to learn about an organization or career. They use the volunteer experience to see if this type of work is what they really want.
• Some are looking for connections or relationships. They volunteer because they are lonely and they need the community.

• Some volunteers hope to gain experiences that will make them more employable. They hope to gain new skills to enhance their job possibilities.

• Some want to give back to their community. They have a relative that received excellent care or they had a mentor from the organization that made a difference in their life. (Ancans, I. 1992)

After identifying why the volunteers want to participate, use the information to match them with a need or project. Good interviewing and position descriptions are important to place volunteers in appropriate settings. Position descriptions should be clear about the responsibilities of staff, volunteers, and coordinators. Once designed, the position descriptions can contribute to planning and making the volunteer roles more effective and mission oriented. View the position from the perspective of the volunteer. Following are some suggestions for developing the descriptions:

• Is the need long or short-term?

• If the needs are short-term would this position be more appealing for a practicum student or intern?

• Does the position require professional skills?

• Does the need target multiple volunteers with varied skills?

• Is the training component clearly defined?

• Will the position clearly support the people served and/or the staff of the organization?

• What aspects of the position most appeal to the volunteer pool?

• Are benefits clearly designated within the description?

In the interview, the volunteer coordinator should note interests, expectations, desired working style (set schedule or flexible, group or alone) and constraints such as lifting, driver's license, etc. When a well-written position description is used, it will target the volunteer most interested, explain the requirements, and help shape the volunteer’s expectations in terms of the purpose and benefits. See appendix C for sample position description forms and interviewing forms.
An organization that recognizes the service of volunteers is practicing one of the best volunteer components of retention and recruitment. Recognition is the most potent way to say thank you. Often, volunteer recognition comes in the form of banquets and awards but it may be wise to seek more creative ways, such as:

- Provide recognition at the volunteer's work site. Take a picture of the volunteer in action, frame it and place it at their workstation.
- Start a scholarship in their name.
- Use the media to run a story in the local newspaper about a particular volunteer.
- Send thank you notes specifically stating what the volunteer did.
- Run a volunteer of the month in the agency newsletter.
- Remember important dates, such as birthday, anniversary, etc.
- Hold an event just for volunteers with food, games, and entertainment. Invite the current volunteers to each bring a potential volunteer.
  - Host a "breakfast of champions". All volunteers who attend get a free breakfast but bring a box of cereal for the local food pantry.
  - Have a volunteer sharing event where they discuss their volunteer experience.
- Involve volunteers in ongoing training and development available for paid staff.

Volunteers need to know the purpose and impact of their work. They need to know that their labor counts. The more they care the more they will take ownership. Work should be given with the explanation of the purpose and why it is meaningful. The volunteer should be told how their assignment will help the agency and how it will allow other paid staff more time for specific duties.

A study conducted in Canada surveyed volunteers to ascertain what was good and bad about their volunteer experience. (Ancans,I.1992) Most were happy in their assignments but they did identify factors that had acted as “turnoffs” for them at one time or another:

- Disorganized management
- Lack of board support
- Staff indifference
- Limited training and orientation
- Lack of support or contact
• Poor assignment or match
• Perks that were offered and later withdrawn

One volunteer expressed dissatisfaction with the lack of agency contact while background checks were conducted. Many volunteers heard nothing back from the organization until this process was completed. While most waited it out, they feared that others might have been lost to the organization and they suggested a phone call or some kind of reassurance while the paper work was being processed. Volunteers appreciated the care that was taken to ensure that the right people were selected. They said this increased their feeling of pride and accomplishment when they finally got started. Volunteers do judge organizations in the early stages of a relationship to see if their own needs will be met.

Dr. Christopher Cihlar, Director of Research, of the Points of Light Foundation (www.pointsflight.org) suggests the following formal activities for a volunteer program:

• Examine policies and practices of coordination, information, and evaluation of the volunteer program.
• Include training for staff on how to interact with volunteers. Regularly evaluate the interactions of paid staff with volunteers and provide corrective feedback when necessary.
• Evaluate volunteer attraction and recruitment. There should be a written plan with target goals. The procedures should include formal ways to solicit prospective volunteers and how responses to inquiries will be provided.
• Provide orientation and ongoing training for volunteers.
• Offer flexible schedules and assignments.
• Match volunteers according to their interests and motivations.
• Conduct volunteer satisfaction surveys.
• Monitor the plan regularly and implement strategies to develop the weak areas.
• Keep data regarding:
  o number of volunteer hours
  o length of service of each volunteer
  o demographics
  o hours of workload displaced as a result of volunteer efforts
  o method of recruitment for each volunteer
Summary

Well-designed volunteer programs contribute to the achievement of the organization's goals. Volunteers are committed to the same purpose and in many cases will have the same motivations as paid staff. Good supervision, coordination, and volunteer/staff development makes a strong volunteer program. A company that values volunteers and considers their talents and contributions a vital part of public relations will enhance their ability to carry out the mission.
Lesson 9: Feedback Exercises

1. T or F All volunteers like banquets and awards.

2. T or F Position descriptions are not always needed to make a volunteer experience a positive one.

3. T or F Disorganized management can cause a volunteer to become dissatisfied.

4. List some advantages of having volunteers in an organization.

5. List some considerations to make when writing position descriptions for volunteers.

6. T or F People volunteer because they want to learn about the organization or related careers.
Lesson 10: Public Relations in the Local Neighborhood

Whether the organization is presently settled in the community or is considering expanding services to other areas, it is important to practice good public relations at home, in the immediate neighborhood where services are housed and delivered. Being a good neighbor is basic.

When preparing to expand or start services, agency leaders need to consider some of the potential reasons neighborhoods may object and prepare for opposition. Let the community know why this service will address unmet needs. Planners should understand every detail about agency operations and be prepared to make concessions to the host community, without compromising the integrity of the service. Enlisting the support of reputable individuals and organizations (local and national) helps build public support. Develop partnerships with community leaders for support in the form of advocacy and advice. Gather information on neighborhood demographics (e.g., education levels, age norms, income levels) and their previous experience, if any, with human service facilities.

It is important to understand any opposition's motivation, objectives, and actions. The organization should talk with neighbors, teachers, and other community leaders. As much as possible should be done to know and prepare for the opposition before attempts are made to engage them in dialogue. Whether expansion of services is in the form of buildings, moving into an apartment, or recruiting new businesses for employment opportunities, planning and communication with key players is vital.

Most people like to be kept informed about what is happening in their neighborhoods. This curiosity is understandable, but it can also create an ethical problem regarding rights to privacy and freedom of association for service recipients. An informed neighborhood is not necessarily an accepting one. Thankfully, acceptance of people with disabilities has improved over the last several years. However, this acceptance is proportionate to their awareness and familiarity with different types of disabilities. Those in opposition are generally those who live in close proximity to the physical structure being proposed. However a small, vocal minority with exaggerated and/or inaccurate fears can still damage the image of the organization, interfere with the agency mission, and further segregate people supported by the program.

Knowing the opposition helps formulate the most effective communications with these groups. The goal of communication strategies is to increase the familiarity and awareness to the extent that opponents become supportive or, at least silence their opposition. Communication should also reassure the "silent majority" that its supportive sentiments are well founded. Care should be
taken to avoid giving the impression that Agency XYZ is jumping into the local neighborhood to tell it how to feel or behave.

Once established as a reputable organization, it is important to maintain that integrity in the small day-to-day interactions with the local neighborhood. If the agency is a good neighbor, it is providing the best possible relations for the people it serves. Being a good neighbor means being considerate, responsible, and communicating with neighbors. Organizations can reduce hassles by analyzing their practices. It is much easier and cheaper to prevent problems from escalating into conflict by communicating and building a trusting relationship with neighbors. When problems do arise, the discussion will be much easier.

There are steps that any organization can take:

First, comply with all regulations and covenants of the neighborhood. Respect and appreciate neighbor's concerns about the agency's operations and the impact it will have on the quality of life and property values.

Second, emphasize the agency’s positive attributes and improve understanding of its services. Get to know your neighbors. Have an "open door" policy (without infringing on privacy rights of service recipients). This will make it more likely that when they have a concern they will work directly with you rather than state or government agencies or, even worse, word-of-mouth gossip throughout the community. It also means that if the agency has a complaint about a neighbor - such as trespassing or littering - the neighbor may be more open to discussing it with the agency. Encourage two-way communication.

Third, talk to neighbors. Let the neighborhood know the “who” and “what” of the agency. Good communication builds trust and allows discussion about problems in a peaceful and respectful way. This strategy helps the neighbor's understand that the agency is approachable and interested in their concerns. Keep them informed via newsletters. Notify neighbors if there are any future changes, such as more traffic, parking, or events. When new neighbors move in, visit with them and invite them over. Think of neighbors as customers. After all, their taxes are paying for the agency's operations.

Fourth, be a good neighbor. Being neighborly means being friendly, helping others when needed, and being willing to accommodate. It’s the small things that matter when establishing and maintaining good relations. This is not only the responsibility of administration but an essential part of the job description for direct support staff. Support staff should model and teach good neighbor practices.
Encourage individuals with disabilities living or working in the neighborhood to be helpful. When the snow flies, consider helping neighbors dig out. Being a good neighbor means using common sense. When your trash blows into a neighbor’s yard - pick it up. If you plan to burn leaves, don't burn when the wind will take the smoke to their front door.

**Fifth**, be active in the community. Support the local neighborhood association. Support local events such as school programs or community celebrations.

**Sixth**, maintain property. Lawns, landscaping, and general upkeep of the property are expected in any neighborhood.

**Summary**

Demonstrating respect for neighbors and community through words and actions will build trusting relationships that will return unlimited benefits. It cannot be assumed that new employees will understand their role and responsibility for being a good neighbor at work. It is naïve to believe that all employees will know how to be good neighbors or even perceive that as part of their job. Employee orientation should include training on how to be a good neighbor.
Lesson 10: Feedback Exercises

1. T or F One way to dispel an oppositional group or neighbor is to keep them informed about the agency's intentions.

2. T or F People are usually not accepting of people with disabilities.

3. T or F Usually those in opposition are a small vocal minority.

4. T or F Being a good neighbor is not the responsibility of direct support staff.

5. T or F Newsletters to the local neighborhood is one way to communicate as a neighbor.

6. Being a good neighbor means:

7. List 5 things staff can do to be good neighbors:
Lesson 11: Planning for Public Relations

Public relations is not just a few bake sales to raise funds or advocacy to correct an injustice. It is all of these and more. Public relations is about building trust and partnerships. It is about educating the community and changing attitudes. An organization that wants to broaden and strengthen its ability to serve individuals with disabilities must allocate resources toward a deliberate, focused plan to achieve that goal. Organizations that understand the benefits of a public relations plan and commit to the plan will undoubtedly reap the rewards.

Developing a plan requires an evaluation of the current public relations efforts within the agency. An assessment of the current practices will reveal strengths and identified areas for improvement. Questions that should be asked include:

- **Coordination and management:** How much time and effort is devoted to public relations activities? Is there a systematic, continuous process or separate, disconnected efforts?

- **Present public relations and community education skills of the organization:** What experience or expertise does the agency possess in risk communication techniques? Has the media ever interviewed people of the agency? Is management acquainted with key leaders in the community? Does the agency participate in community organizations/events?

- **Current visibility:** What comes to mind when community members hear the agency's name? What do they know about the agency? What do community members think and feel about people with disabilities? How and where do they see them live, work, and recreate? Who are the audiences/publics important to the agency?

- **Communication:** What communication strategies are used, how often, and what are the results?

- **Fund and resource raising efforts:** What methods are used? What dollar amount has been raised? How many donors? Who are the donors (corporate, foundations, individuals)? Is there a volunteer program? Have grants been awarded?

An in-depth look of what is currently being done, the results, and the costs will help reveal where the plan is weak. From this information, more decisive plans can be made with goals and objectives.
When the assessment is complete, it is necessary to step back and ask, what is the real purpose for public relations in the organization? Is it to make the organization more visible? Will it be only to manage any negative issues? Or, is the purpose to build long-term relationships and bring value to the group? It would probably be the latter for any human service agency. Long-term relationships require building strategic plans around the organization's publics and target audiences.

The planning process is outlined below in five steps, but any process will work if a good assessment has been conducted. The organization needs to determine the amount of detail they want.

**Step one:** Identify the audiences. Who is important to the organization and why? What view does the organization want its audiences to have?

**Step two:** Gather and report the findings. What are the current public views of the organization? What issues and appeals are important to these audiences? What media do these audiences use and trust the most?

**Step three:** Assess and plan development. How do these audiences’ current views differ from the desired one? What messages or themes will have the greatest impact on these audiences? What are the best ways of reaching these audiences? Who will serve as the organization's primary contact for working with each audience?

**Step four:** Selecting and setting goals. What short-term objectives will lead to the goals of the strategic plan?

**Step five:** Identify the actions needed. What specific actions or messages will lead to achieving this objective? What resources will be needed for these tasks? When should each task be done? How will success in achieving each objective be evaluated? (Grunig, J.)

No plan is ever final and the planning isn't truly finished until all the goals are reached or determined to be unattainable. A plan is a guide or working paper, a suggestion of things to try to achieve specified objectives. It is a draft document that needs to be changed and modified to fit the evolving conditions. The portion of the plan which identifies critical audiences and desired relationships may remain unchanged but the rest of the plan will constantly evolve. Plans should be revisited often.
Another strategy for planning for public relations is to look at just one aspect or need and build a public relations plan around it. Maybe the greatest need is to improve employee recruitment and retention, or to start a volunteer program. Below are some suggestions.

- Manage change. Help the agency make a smooth transition through necessary change.
- Develop social responsibility. What and where can the organization give back to the community?
- Overcome isolation by keeping current on local, state, and national issues. How will the agency be affected by these events or changes in public policy?
- Help protect the current status of the agency when it is under attack.
- Enhance productivity and morale internally.

**Summary**

Any planning involves assessing where the agency is now, identifying where it wants to be and what it will take to get there. Problems arise when little thought is given to the planning process and resources are expended in isolated activities that yield few long term results. Planning will assist in developing communication strategies that allow the agency to assess the situation, establish objectives and maintain greater control. These strategies will help the agency set priorities for those activities which can be supported within the budget and provide the best bang for the buck.
Unit 11: Feedback Exercises

1. T or F  Most organizations do not need to plan for public relations activities, they usually happen spontaneously.

2. T or F  Before starting to plan new public relations efforts it is important to evaluate current public relations efforts, results, and costs.

3. One of the activities of evaluating the organization's current public relations efforts is
   a. assessment of the profit statement
   b. surveying satisfaction of administration staff
   c. assessing the current public relations and community education skills of the organization
   d. finding more ways to raise funds

4. List some public relations needs of your organization:
Lesson 12: Public Relations - Who are the Players?

The term “public relations” refers to any activity that helps earn the consent and support of multiple publics. Unless there is a concerted effort to gain the approval and support of various audiences, there may be little growth in services. For organizations that serve people with disabilities, public relations is more than just making the community aware of who the agency is and what they do. It also includes education and advocacy, Human service organizations depend on the community and their interaction to carry out the mission. That type of relationship requires close ties, growing associations, and consistently seeking other publics.

It is evident that public relations and community education are not the sole responsibility of the development or the human resources department. Many opportunities to educate and promote are spontaneous. Employees need to be aware of occasions that could foster better understanding and "seize the moment". Organizations that devote resources to educating employees will spend less time putting out small misunderstandings and more time nurturing and developing new relationships.

Some activities of public relations are not spontaneous and need someone to coordinate - or take the lead. Some efforts, such as capital campaign drives, need to be professionally done to represent the best of the agency and the event. News releases, fund raising events, membership on community task forces, in-house committees, public speaking, and campaigns all require specific skill sets. Since not all organizations have the ideal employee to fill the position or have the funds to employ a development officer, the agency may have to narrow their focus and target specific needs in a systematic way.

The work of public relations and community education is shared but the administration (board and CEO) set the priorities. The administration’s ability to match strategies to effectively fulfill these priorities will influence the organization's ability to thrive in local neighborhoods, communities, state and region. Efforts in public relations typically match fiscal health, quality of services and sustainability of a community agency. When little is done, there will be little growth. When the same activities are implemented year after year, then the agency will stay on course. When resources, expertise, and innovation are sought, change and growth will occur.
Appendix A

Sample news release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 10, 200X

For details contact: John Doe, (303) 555-1234

DENVER--The Adams County Easter Seal Society's drive to fund a treatment program for the county's youngsters with developmental disabilities received a substantial boost with the announcement today that WonderCo will underwrite half the equipment costs.

“WonderCo has contributed $15,000 towards the purchase of special exercise equipment geared toward the needs of youngsters handicapped by arthritis and other crippling diseases,” said the Society's Executive Director, Margaret Thomas. "With such a substantial initial gift, I know that it will not be difficult to persuade other potential donors of the importance of this project."

Ms. Thomas estimated that there are more than 2,000 youngsters in the county who will benefit from the treatment center, to be housed at the Society's clinic, 222 Third Street Mall. She noted that to reach all of the youngsters, a van will be outfitted with portable equipment that can be quickly erected in school gyms, churches and other public halls.

The equipment utilizes tension and resistance in unique ways to strengthen muscles without overtaxing them. "This equipment has been successfully used elsewhere," Ms. Thomas noted. "We are enormously grateful to WonderCo for its faith in our ability to establish a treatment center here.”
Sample Public Service Announcement

PUBLIC SERVICE ANNOUNCEMENT (PSA)

(run on your letterhead)

ANNOUNCER COPY:

OCTOBER IS PLAY IT SAFE MONTH. . . THIS WEEK’S FOCUS IS PERSONAL
SAFETY WITH SENIOR CITIZENS GETTING SPECIAL TRAINING ON
WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 16, AT THE ELLA HILL HUTCHCENTER. MOST
IMPORTANT THING TO REMEMBER--NO MATTER WHAT YOUR AGE, STAY
ALERT TO WHAT'S GOING ON AROUND YOU. STOP TROUBLE BEFORE IT
HAPPENS SO YOU HAVE TIME TO TAKE EVASIVE ACTION. FOR MORE SAFE
TIPS. . . CALL 701-SAFE.

As we have discussed, your willingness to run this spot for us will contribute greatly to
the success of the senior event. We appreciate your help enormously.

Sincerely,

Executive Director

Sample Radio spot

Not only is it important for people with disabilities to feel a part of our community, it’s
important that they be given the opportunity to make choices about employment, where
they want to live, and lifestyle. Let’s remind ourselves that everyone, including people
with disabilities, has hopes and dreams and desires. Let’s create a world that allows
them to participate and make choices for a better future.

This message brought to you by _________________. 
Suggestions for Journalists

Please consider the following when writing about people with disabilities:

**DO NOT FOCUS ON DISABILITY** unless it is crucial to a story. Avoid tear jerking human interest stories about incurable diseases, congenital impairments, or severe injury. Focus instead on issues that affect the quality of life for those same individuals, such as accessible transportation, housing, affordable health care, employment opportunities, and discrimination.

**DO NOT PORTRAY SUCCESSFUL PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AS SUPERHUMAN OR HEROES.** Even though the public may admire superachievers, portraying people with disabilities as superstars raises false expectations that all people with disabilities should achieve this level.

**DO NOT SENSATIONALIZE A DISABILITY** by saying “afflicted with”, “crippled with”, “suffers from”, “victim of”, and so on. Instead, say, “person who has multiple sclerosis”.

**DO NOT USE GENERIC LABELS** for disability groups, such as "the disabled," "the deaf." Emphasize people, not labels. Say, “people with intellectual disabilities” or “people who are deaf.”

**PUT PEOPLE FIRST**, not their disability. Say, “woman with arthritis,” “children who are deaf,” “people with disabilities.” This puts the focus on the individual, not the particular functional limitation. Because of editorial pressures to be succinct, we know it is not always possible, however, “crippled”, “deformed”, “suffers from”, “victim of”, “the disabled”, “infirm”, the “deaf and dumb”, etc. are never acceptable under any circumstances. Also, do not use nouns to describe people, such as “epileptic”, “diabetic”, etc.

**EMPHASIZE ABILITIES**, not limitations. For example: uses a wheelchair/braces, “walks with crutches”, rather than “confined to a wheelchair”, “wheelchair-bound”, “differently-abled”, “birth difference”, or “crippled”. Similarly, do not use emotional descriptors such as “unfortunate”, “pitiful”, and so forth.

**DO NOT USE CONDESCENDING EUPHEMISMS.** Disability groups also strongly object to using euphemisms to describe disabilities. Terms such as “handicapable”, “mentally different”, “physically inconvenienced”, and “physically challenged” are considered condescending. They reinforce the idea that disabilities cannot be dealt with up front.

**DO NOT IMPLY DISEASE** when discussing disabilities that result from a prior disease episode. People who had polio and experienced after effects have post-polio syndrome. They are not currently experiencing the disease. Do not imply disease with
people whose disability has resulted from anatomical or physiological damage (e.g., person with spina bifida or cerebral palsy). Reference to disease associated with a disability is acceptable only with chronic diseases, such as arthritis, Parkinson's disease, or multiple sclerosis. People with disabilities should never be referred to as patients or cases unless their relationship with their doctor is under discussion.

**SHOW PEOPLE WITH DISABILITIES AS ACTIVE** participants of society. Portraying persons with disabilities interacting with nondisabled people in social and work environments helps break down barriers and open lines of communications.
Appendix B: Communication Ideas

- Develop a systematic, two-way process of communication between the organization and its external and internal publics.
- Develop a sound communications policy for your organization.
- Be creative in your approach to designing messages for your publics. Try a "fridge foldout" or an "annual notebook" instead of an annual report.
- Establish a citizen's advisory group.
- Issue a report card. Allow employees, parents, guardians and people served to grade the organization.
- Provide certificates of achievement and thank-you or recognitions notes.
- Have a set program to welcome newcomers, both employees and people served.
- Hold breakfasts for parents, employees or people served.
- Maintain attractive, well-kept grounds. A non-verbal type of communication
- Develop a logo for your organization
- Good news notes. They are an excellent way to tell about positive things.
- Develop a working relationship with the media. Know their needs.
- "Project Coffee Cup" --- This is a coupon that is "Good for one cup of coffee at _____on _____between______ with members of the staff. No RSVP needed but we hope you can join us.
- Place suggestion boxes in well break rooms, copy rooms.
- Information sheets included in the paycheck to staff.
- Do something about the PR training of your staff. What they say and how they say it affects the organization's image.
- Speaker's bureau. This provides community groups with information and gives them opportunity to ask questions.
- Public service announcements and public affairs programming. This can be arranged through local television and radio stations.
- Press review. Invite your local media people in for coffee and a quick look at what the year will be like --such as new people, new programs, new directions and new policies.
- Public tour week.-- bus an walking tour of facilities. The participants are given a quiz to be completed as they tour.
- Purchase video tapes of television news coverage of your organization.
- Provide buttons, posters, and post cards about your organization.
- Special display posters with built-in pockets for printed materials concerning the organization. Use at grocery stores, banks, churches etc.
- Sponsor mini contents for staff on "How can we make our organization better?" and publicize the winner.
- Have a monthly think tank session for staff members who are interested in attacking problems and finding alternatives.
- Have a brainstorming day to get several hundred workable communication ideas that are uniquely appropriate to your organization.
- Have an alumni day for former employees and people served.

Feedback Answer Key

Lesson 1: Introduction

1. List concepts an organization serving people with disabilities should promote and/or educate community members as part of public relations.
   - Promotion of the legal and statutory rights of people with disabilities
   - Promotion of the contributions people with disabilities can provide society
   - Promoting and education of the services of the organization
   - Education and promotion of the local, state and regional community about who people with disabilities are.
   - Educating parents and creating positive relationships with guardians and siblings.

2. List publics an agency must earn consent and support from:
   - Employees
   - Customers
   - Families
   - Local community members
   - Governmental agencies
   - Legislators
   - Local businesses
   - Other institutions

3. T or F Public relations is fundraising only. (F)
4. T or F Public relations includes marketing activities. (T)
5. T or F Public relations is anticipating, analyzing and interpreting public opinion. (T)
6. T or F Public relations helps an organization manage change. (T)
7. T or F Public relations includes community education. (T)

Lesson 2: Promoting Mutual Understanding/Historical Perspective

1. List two reasons people attempted to block the construction of homes for people with disabilities in the community.
   - Fear of the unknown, they felt they wouldn’t be safe.
   - Devaluation of their property
2. T or F  Staff should be prepared to educate but not advocate in the community.  
   (F)

3. Describe what your course of action should be when an outside individual or 
   organization wants to do an activity or provide a service that is contrary to the 
   agency’s values.  
   
   Any answer that would depict upholding the value yet reacting in a professional and 
   diplomatic manner.

4. What would you say to a community member that referred to an adult with 
   developmental disabilities as a “kid”?  
   
   Any answer that would depict upholding professional standards and instruction of 
   using people first language.

5. What should your first action be when dealing with a person you serve who has 
   convinced a store clerk to give them candy?  
   
   Any answer that would depict using gentle and professional interaction with the 
   store clerk and teaching the individual about begging.

Lesson 3: Promotion of Agency

1. T or F  The agency’s mission is not a tool for public relations. (F)

2. T or F  The agency’s mission should provide inspiration for potential donors. (T)

3. T or F  Generalization about any group of people provides for individualization.  (F)

4. T or F  Generalizations about a group of people promotes segregation.  (T)

5. The statement “you must be so patient” is well intentioned. How would you 
   respond?  
   
   Any answer that depicts a professional response. Should include how they 
   would use the opportunity to gently teach and educate.
6. An employee’s response to a generalization statement should:
   a. Be diplomatic yet firm
   b. Acknowledge that the comment is wrong
   c. Acknowledge the generalization and attempt to reveal its stereotype. (correct)

7. T or F Diplomacy means pointing out the error in an attitude or statement without shaming or criticism. (T)

8. T or F Diplomacy means reacting to a statement or attitude by quoting policy. (F)

9. T or F Community education is not needed, as any agency should have good public relations before it is established. (F)

11. T or F Agency managers are solely responsible for promoting an agency’s mission. (F)

12. Employees of an agency should:
   a. view their employment as an extension of public relations (correct)
   b. view their employment as being an advocate only
   c. view public relations as part of administration’s responsibility

Lesson 4: Public Relations Within the Agency

1. Check those qualities, on the list below, that measure an employee-employer positive relationship.
   ___ amount of paid time off earned in the first six months of employment
   ___ the level of confidence the employee and employer have in each other. (correct)
   ___ the presence of a supervisor at all times
   ___ the degree to which the employee and employer are satisfied with the amount of control they have over the relationship (correct)
   ___ the amount of training provided in the first 6 months of employment
   ___ the starting wage
   ___ the amount both the employee and employer feel that the relationship is worth spending energy to maintain. (correct)
   ___ how much the employee believes the agency is seeking positively to maintain the relationship. (correct)
2. T or F  Control mutuality in an employer-employee relationship is defined as the
degree by which power is divided between both the employee and the people served. (F)

3. List some qualities of a good interview.
   a. Interviewer had a thorough knowledge of the position
   b. The interviewer posed good questions
   c. The interviewer displayed genuine interest in the candidate
   d. The interviewer had stimulating dialogue
   e. The interviewer paid attention to the details that exhibit a true sense of
      professionalism

4. List some aspects of a poor interview.
   a. The interviewer exhibited a lack of understanding of the position
   b. The interviewer displayed unprofessional behavior
   c. The interviewer treated the candidate rudely
   d. The interviewer posed illegal or inappropriate questions
   e. The interviewer gave the impression that the successful candidate had already
      been chosen

5. Building trust with employees includes:
   d. preparing employees for change (Correct)
   e. using employees for public speaking
   f. guaranteeing a flexible schedule

6. T or F  An employee’s bad experience with an agency will be remembered one or
   more years longer than a good experience. (T)

7. T or F  An agency’s mission is the responsibility of the administration only.  (F)

8. T or F  During an interview is it good practice to pose questions about a potential
   employee's children. (F)

9. T or F  An agency should capitalize on the support, connections and expertise
   parents, guardians, and siblings bring to the organization. (T)
Lesson 5: Activities of Public Relations

1. List some ways an organization can become familiar with the hosting community.
   
   - Viewing census data
   - Attend local service club meetings
   - Attend county or city board/council meetings
   - Get to know local leaders
   - Read archived records of local newspapers

2. Information an agency should become familiar with to understand the hosting community is (check those that apply).

   ___ demographics of (average citizen age, average household income, average educational level) (correct)
   ___ cost of paper for brochures
   ___ investigating the community’s past experience with similar organizations (correct)
   ___ finding out if similar organizations exist in the community (correct)
   ___ developing a mission to fit the needs of the community
   ___ unemployment rate (correct)
   ___ crime rate. (correct)
   ___ average cost of housing (correct)
   ___ how is the local government structured (correct)

3. Good press releases have which of the following characteristics?

   ___ include the mission
   ___ 150 words or less (correct)
   ___ double spaced (correct)
   ___ is news and not advertising (correct)
   ___ 3 or more pages
   ___ written to cover facts of the agency
   ___ single spaced
4. T or F To assist in making press releases more likely to be printed it is wise to get acquainted with the local media and follow deadlines. (T)

5. T or F Agencies should actively seek media attention and promote stories about their mission and activities. (T)

6. T or F It is not the duty of the organization to correct the media’s depiction of people with disabilities (F)

7. List some qualities of good displays:
   - Critical information is presented clearly
   - Information is presented in proper relation to other important information
   - The theme of the display can be understood with one glance
   - There is a minimum of decoration or distraction from the information presented
   - The display is consistent in its use of graphical elements
   - The amount of additional thinking required to understand the theme is kept to a minimum

8. T or F A good display will target an audience. (T)

9. T or F A good display is brief with blank space around labels and objects. (T)

11. List some elements of a good brochure:
   - Put your selling message on the cover
   - Use a single illustration on the cover
   - Select pictures that tell the story
   - Caption photographs
   - Make it worth keeping by including valuable information

11. T or F An agency that does not advertise may risk negative publicity. (T)

12. T or F Fund raising is the goal of public information campaigns. (F)

13. T or F An example of an issue related public campaign would be a capital campaign. (F)
Lesson 6: Reputation

1. An organization’s reputation is: (check those that are true statements)

  __ intangible (something not able to touch or feel) (correct)
  __ can be damaged by CEO’s reputation (correct)
  __ evaluated by outsiders to the organization (correct)
  __ a measure of the organization’s profit statement
  __ specific traits or attributes of the organization (correct)
  __ is made up of the parents, guardians and siblings of the publics
  __ once damaged it cannot be repaired
  __ should represent principles of integrity, honest, and fairness (correct)
  __ is measured by the activity of organization’s public relations campaigns.

2. Factors that create the reputation of an organization are
   a. strong management team
   b. the reputation of the CEO
   c. the image of the organization
   d. business principles (integrity, fairness, honesty, and ethics)
   e. standards for excellence and employee behavior
   f. image conveyed through location and condition of buildings, employee
try and events and media used to promote the agency

3. One way an organization can build reputation is:

   a. disregard rules that might cause employees to quit (i.e., standards for
      appropriate attire during work hours)
   b. use cheap stationery
   c. monitor and nurture ethical behavior through training activities (correct)
   d. cutting corners and fudging facts

4. List activities of an organization that contribute to a positive reputation:
   • Compete fairly with other agencies that provide the same service
   • Monitor conflicts of interests with board members and employees
   • Have conduct standards such as drug testing, employee background checks,
     health and safety standards
   • Make sure the community knows about the awards and recognition the
     organization has obtained nationally and locally.
Lesson 7: Advocacy

1. List five ways an organization can strengthen their impact on local government.

- Recruit board members that serve in the state legislature
- Build support at the grass roots level
- Be knowledgeable about what constitutes lobbying
- Show unity
- Understand how to communicate with legislators
- Be a resource to local and state elected officials
- Promote news stories, editorial and letters to the editors
- Understand local legislators (their areas of interests, expertise, etc.)

2. Of the strategies listed below, which one would be a recommended way for an organization to advocate for the people it serves?

a. develop a task force or committee to address known problems (correct)
b. organize a sit-in at the local business
c. boycott local businesses
d. take data on the problems of the community

3. T or F Advocacy in the local community should be done only on the administrative level. (F)

4. T or F Staff should know how to deal with community members that deny what is due to people with disabilities. (T)

5. T or F An organization can advocate for the people they serve by joining community task forces/committees regarding issues important to the community. (T)

Lesson 8: Fund Raising

1. T or F Successful fundraising targets only one or two ways to raise revenue. (F)
2. T or F Solicitation of funds should be done based on the community’s commitment to those less fortunate than them. (F)
3. T or F Some fund raising requires the expertise of professionals. (T)
4. T or F Record keeping is essential to good fund raising. (T)
5. List some methods to raise funds:
• Being part of the United Way
• Grants
• Endowments
• Planned giving
• Website “donate now” button
• Capital Campaigns
• Gifts in-kind from local retailers and manufactures
• Annual giving

6. List records that should be kept for fund raising campaigns:

• Demographics (name, address, phone)
• Expenses of fund raising activity
• Surveys of fund raising participants
• What the donation was earmarked or designated for
• Amount of donation per donor
• Follow up with donor

Lesson 9: Volunteers

1. T or F All volunteers like banquets and awards. (F)

2. T or F Position descriptions are not always needed to make a volunteer experience a positive one. (F)

3. T or F Disorganized management can cause a volunteer to become dissatisfied. (T)

4. List some advantages of having volunteers in an organization:

• Volunteers are good connections to the community
• They can provide valuable resources and talent
• They help offset labor expenses
• They can become long term relationships for the people served

5. List some considerations to make when writing position descriptions for volunteers:

• Is the need short or long term
• Does the position require professional skills or does the need target multiple volunteers with varied skills
• Is training clearly defined
• Will the position support staff or people served
• Would the position be more appealing to a college intern or another age group

6. T or F People volunteer because they want to learn about the organization or related careers. (T)

Lesson 10: Public Relations within the Neighborhood

1. T or F One way to dispel an oppositional group or neighbor is to keep them informed about the agency's intentions. (T)

2. T or F People are usually not accepting of people with disabilities. (F)

3. T or F Usually those in opposition are a small vocal minority. (T)

4. T or F Being a good neighbor is not the responsibility of direct support staff. (F)

5. T or F Newsletters to the local neighborhood is one way to communicate as a neighbor. (T)

6. Being a good neighbor means:

   a. keeping information about the agency and its services a secret to neighbors
   b. talking to neighbors (correct)
   c. parking in front of the neighbors property
   d. smoking in the neighbors driveway

7. List 5 things staff can do to be good neighbors

   • Don't park in front of the neighbors house or take their parking spots
   • Pick up garbage that has blown into their yard
   • Help out with occasional snow removal
- Keep yards properly cleaned and maintained
- Talk or visit with neighbors when there is an opportunity

**Lesson 11: Public Relations Planning**

1. T or F  Most organizations do not need to plan for public relations activities, they usually happen spontaneously. (F)

2. T or F  Before starting to plan new public relations efforts it is important to evaluate current public relations efforts, results, and costs. (T)

3. One of the activities of evaluating the organization's current public relations efforts is:
   
   a. assessment of the profit statement
   b. surveying satisfaction of administration staff
   c. assessing the current public relations and community education skills of the organization (correct)
   d. finding more ways to raise funds

4. List some public relations needs of your organization.

   Answers will vary.
Bibliography


Resources

www.pointsoflight.org
eexamples of volunteer job descriptions

www.nonprofitbasics.org
A good source for information on public relations, lobbying and general topics for
Nonprofits.

www.larclansing.com/volunteers.htm
volunteer job descriptions

www.nationalserviceresources.org
This site has many articles related to public relations and many practical ideas.
Use the search tool - search for "public relations"