1

Planning INSET and Using the Training Materials in your Setting.

> This section will examine different ways of delivering INSET to colleagues, giving details of the issues for consideration, such as where should the INSET take place? What media should I use? What is the message I want to convey? Is there going to be a follow-up session? It will also suggest different ways in which schools can build up a resource bank of materials on ASDs. It will tell the reader about the ways in which the training package can be used in school. Some schools may want to focus on one or two particular sections e.g. 2 and 3 to raise general awareness of ASD in the school, others may wish to focus on an issue that is causing concern e.g. challenging behaviour. This section also offers examples of how the package can be used in a flexible way to meet individual needs.

Learning outcomes

This Toolkit can be used to deliver INSET at a number of levels. It may be important in some schools just to concentrate on raising awareness of ASDs, using Section 2, whilst in other schools that have a number of pupils with ASDs, it might be considered essential to work through a number of the sections over a period of time. It is advisable therefore to think carefully about the needs of the audience before planning a training package. Training is only valuable if participants leave enthused and ready to improve their practice. Very often people attend training sessions because they have to, not because they want to. In such circumstances, training becomes a waste of time and effort for both facilitator and participant.

School staff are constantly bombarded with paper work so another questionnaire to complete may not go down very well. However, it is important to have some idea of what people want to know and their existing knowledge base of ASDs. A selection of short sharp points with a tick box may be the best option. Examples of questions may include:

- Would you like to know more about Autistic Spectrum Disorders?
- Do you teach any pupils with ASDs at the moment?
- If the answer is 'No', have you ever taught a pupil with ASDs?
- Do you know about the Triad of Impairments?
- Would you like to know how to help pupils with ASDs maximize their learning potential?

A short questionnaire for this purpose is included on the CD-Rom as Figure 1.1.

Having the answers to just a few questions like this can help the facilitator to plan to meet the needs of an audience. He/she will be able to judge their level of knowledge and understanding of ASDs and whether or not the potential audience is interested in the proposal for training. Making a list of the Learning Outcomes or Expected Goals on a flip chart and referring to them at the beginning and at the end of your training can help keep facilitator and participants focused.

It is important to remember that not everyone is going to be enthusiastic about ASDs and so training does need to be as motivating as possible. Using videos/DVDs often helps in this respect. Each Section of the Toolkit gives ideas about useful resources that can be used to this effect.

When and where?

The length of the training will vary depending upon the needs of your audience. The facilitator may have been tasked with raising awareness during a staff meeting, and if is this case, may have to be selective in the slides that are used. For example, he/she might decide to use a few slides from each of the first three sections – Living with ASDs, the Triad, and Sensory issues or alternatively, may decide to concentrate on issues addressed in section 6 – 'Creating an ASD-friendly Environment' and Section 12 which focuses on schools' access plans and the Disability Equality Duty. He/she may find it useful to supplement basic training like this with some information about ASDs, e.g. a poster on the staff noticeboard or in reception area highlighting some of the issues relating to the Triad or containing a list of what makes an ASD-friendly environment.

It is important that at the very least staff are made aware of the issues in a staff meeting or for some time in a whole school professional development day. ASD is a disability and so the school has a legal obligation to meet the needs of pupils with ASDs as best it can. If it is difficult to persuade some staff that it is important to know about ASDs, this might be a good argument.

The Toolkit can also be used to put together a training day. Some issues or sections might be essential in this situation especially if the audience has a mixed knowledge of ASDs. We would recommend that it is important to cover issues relating to the Triad, sensory anomalies, environment and curriculum. It is also important to point out that breaktimes and lunchtimes may be particularly stressful for individuals with ASDs.

Once the core content/sections have been decided upon, the audience can then be given a choice of one or two other topics, e.g. Behaviour Management (Section 7), Tried and Tested Strategies (Section 11) or Working with Parents and Professionals (Section 9). In order to break the day, and if two or more trainers are available, the audience could be given a choice and split into groups. This would give participants the opportunity to move around at the end of the day thus improving their concentration span and would allow them to focus on a topic that is of relevance/interest to them.

In the case of a staff meeting or a slot in the whole school professional development day, it may not be possible for the facilitator to influence where the training will take place. However, this is an issue that needs careful consideration for a whole day's INSET. The budget may be such that the training does have to take place at school and the audience may be happy with this. However, the venue still needs to be as comfortable as possible and times set aside at approximately 90-minute intervals for comfort breaks and refreshments. Seating can often be an issue. There is a need to consider how seating will be arranged based on numbers in the audience, e.g in rows (theatre style) or in groups around tables (cabaret style). If it is likely that the audience will be seated at a distance from the trainer, it may be necessary to use microphones or at least check for audibility at the start. Always make sure that any audiovisual equipment is working and can be seen and heard by the audience. However, in this respect always expect the unexpected and have contingency plans in place if a DVD/video player suddenly breaks down.

Plastic chairs can get quite uncomfortable after a long period so it is important that trainers are sensitive to this fact and watch out for times when participants are at their most fidgety. It may be that participants need a five-minute break to stretch their legs or stand up for a few moments. Some exercises suggested by the trainer in a humorous way, e.g. 'Everyone stand up. Shake your left leg! Now, shake your right leg!' can provide a bit of light relief and make people feel relaxed and ready to concentrate again.

At the end of any session, whatever the time span, provide participants with an evaluation form. Include on the form a question relating to future training needs on ASDs. Evaluation forms can be a bit daunting for the trainer/facilitator to read, especially if some participants have been negative about the presentation. It is important to view them objectively and not take any criticism too much to heart but bear any constructive comments in mind for the future. It is not unusual for some participants to comment more on the venue and the refreshments than the course content and skills of the trainer!

Building a resource bank of materials

To supplement training, it is important to build up a resource bank of materials in school. Resources might be housed in a large storage box in the library or in the staffroom. There could be a dedicated bookshelf or section in a filing cabinet with information about ASDs. Voluntary sector groups will often provide some useful information booklets and many useful articles can also be found on the Internet via the websites listed throughout this book. A number of texts and DVDs have been listed in Section 2 that can help raise awareness in a less formal way. The staff also need to be made aware that the resource bank exists via staff bulletins or the staff noticeboard.

Hints and tips for raising awareness in addition to formal training

- Information booklets for all school staff, containing basic overview of the impact of the Triad of Impairments and Sensory Issues on everyday life and what staff can do to help.
- Using moveable displays or posters in strategic places throughout the school, e.g. a large visual display or poster with a picture of child in the centre and highlighting difficulties he/she might have and how they can be overcome on either side.
- A film night to watch 'Snow Cake' or 'Rain Man' or any other dramas or films about ASDs.
- Circulating texts such as Mark Haddon's *The Curious Incident of the Dog in the Night Time* (Vintage/UK) or Kathy Hoopmann's *The Blue Bottle Mystery* (Jessica Kingsley Publishers).
- Circulating a list of quotations from individuals with ASDs or putting them up on the staff noticeboard.
- Asking pupils with ASD to state what helps and does not help in school and circulating the information as a newsletter. It might be a good idea to include some quotations from some individuals with ASDs outside of the school to justify the points of view given (See Section 2 for examples). Do highlight pertinent issues such as bullying and getting over-stressed.
- Using a true-or-false quiz on ASDs at lunchtime (See Figure 1.2 on the CD-Rom).
- Posters that state what makes an ASD-friendly school or conversely what does not! Sometimes people absorb what they should not do quicker than what they should do. (See Figure 1.3 on the CD-Rom.)

Go to the accompanying CD-Rom for the full selection of slides that accompany this section and remember you can also access detailed speaker notes to use with each slide.

Figure 1.1 Planning INSET: Questionnaire for Participants Prior to Training

Do you have any knowledge and understanding of individuals with an Autistic Spectrum Disorder? Yes/No

If yes, please give a brief explanation

....
....
....

Do you teach any pupils with an ASD? Yes/No
If yes, please give details
....
....
....

If no, have you ever taught a pupil with ASDs? Yes/No
If yes, please give details
....
....
....

Do you understand what is meant by the Triad of Impairment? Yes/No

Would you like to know more about ASDs? Yes/No

If yes, what topics would you like your training session to include? Please tick as appropriate:

The Triad of Impairment
Sensory Issues
Educational Implications of the Triad of Impairment
Environmental Issues
Transition
Pupil Participation
Access and Inclusion and Disability Equality Duty
Behaviour Management
Strategies and Interventions
Working with Parents

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

The Autism Inclusion Toolkit, SAGE, 2008 © Maggie Bowen and Lynn Plimley

Figure 1.2 True or False Quiz

TRUE OR FALSE?

  1. There is no currently known cure.

  2. There are more boys than girls affected.

  3. The ratio of boys to girls in Asperger syndrome is 20 :1.

  4. Pupils with ASD do not benefit from inclusion.

  5. ASD is most prevalent amongst the middle classes.

  6. ASD has close links with epilepsy.

  7. ASD has only been written about in the last twenty years.

  8. Families of a person with an ASD have pay a lot of money for help.

  9. People with ASD function best in a specialist environment.

10. Families often spend a lot of time finding out more about ASD.

11. Over 75% of people with ASD have additional learning difficulties.

12. People with ASD often have unusual responses to sensory stimuli.

13. There can often be another member of the wider family who is somewhere on the spectrum.

14. ASD is caused by the spending too much time in front of the TV.

15. Sometimes specific drugs can help the condition.

16. Everyone with ASD has a talent in art or music or drawing.

17. Most people with ASD have an excellent memory for something that

     interests them.

18. People on the spectrum exist in all walks of life.

19. I will not need to alter the way I work/teach for the child with an ASD.

20. Individuals with ASD can often like routine and structure in their daily lives.

The Autism Inclusion Toolkit, SAGE, 2008 © Maggie Bowen and Lynn Plimley

Figure 1.2 *Continued*

ANSWERS

1. **True.** ASD is a lifelong disability.

2. **True.** For Classical (Kanner's) Autism around four boys to one girl.

3. **False.** The ratio is higher in Asperger Syndrome but more like eight or nine boys to one girl.

4. **False.** By careful assessment of individual need and targeted support individuals with ASD can function well in a mainstream environment.

5. **False.** The original research carried out by Kanner and Asperger drew this conclusion because the range of individuals they studied. ASD cuts across all races, classes and ethnic groups.

6. **True.** By puberty, around a third of people with ASD have some form of epileptic activity.

7. **False.** But there has been an explosion of literature and speakers with ASD appearing at conferences over the last twenty years. For a historical look at ASD read Frith (1989) or Waltz (2005).

8. **False.** This is the impression people can get from fund-raising stories in the media.

9. **False.** Some people with ASD do live and work in specialists settings. However, each person with an ASD is unique and will have their own individual needs.

10. **True.** Many families will use the Internet and support services to find out as much as they can about ASD.

11. **True.** Additional learning difficulties can occur because of the way in which they best learn.

12. **True.** Many people with ASD write and talk about their unusual responses to sensory stimuli.

13. **True.** Research in genetics has confirmed a link between ASD and the wider family.

14. **False.** There is no proven link.

15. **True/False.** There are no specific drugs for ASD but like everyone else Individuals with ASD may need drugs for other medical problems.

16. **False.** This is another impression given by the media's coverage of people like Stephen Wiltshire and in films like 'The Rain Man'.

17. **True.** They have an outstanding capacity to retain information on a 'special interest'.

18. **True.** The characteristics of ASD can exist in all of us to a greater or lesser extent. Some people with ASD have very successful careers.

19. **False.** Even minor adaptation in the way that you work will benefit someone with ASD.

20. **True.** Structure and routine represent security and predictability to a person with ASD.

The Autism Inclusion Toolkit, SAGE, 2008 © Maggie Bowen and Lynn Plimley

Figure 1.3 How 'ASD-Friendly' are you?

If you agree with the statement put a tick at the end.

- Do you think that pupils with ASD are naughty and awkward and need to mind their manners?

- Do you enjoy using sarcasm with your pupils?

- Do you insist upon blanket conformity, regardless of need and ability?

- Do you ignore the noise levels in school?

- Do you shout at pupils that you think are misbehaving or appear to be ignoring your whole class instructions?

- Do you make pupils sit and wait a long time for instruction and activity?

- Do you think that pupils with ASD are the responsibility of support staff?

- Do you think that differentiation is a waste of time and if pupils cannot understand they need to go to a special class?

- Do you always give oral instructions? After all pupils should be paying attention?

- Do you think that it is a waste of time analysing behaviour for its communicative function?

- Do you think that parents are better kept at arm's length should not contribute to planning?

- Do you think that parents are responsible for their children's problems?

- Do you think pupils with ASD who say they are stressed out and need some time to themselves are trying to avoid work?

- Do you punish pupils with ASD who do not bring their homework to class on time?

IF YOU HAVE ANSWERED 'YES' TO ANY OF THESE
QUESTIONS– YOU ARE NOT ASD-FRIENDLY!
DO TRY AND CONSIDER THE ISSUES THE QUESTIONS RAISE

**REMEMBER SCHOOL CAN BE A VERY STRESSFUL PLACE
FOR PUPILS WITH ASD**

The Autism Inclusion Toolkit, SAGE, 2008 © Maggie Bowen and Lynn Plimley

SECTION 1:
PLANNING INSET AND USING THE TRAINING MATERIALS IN YOUR SETTING

1

Running INSET for Colleagues and Pupils

Key Points

- Consider your audience
- Remember about concentration spans
- Keep it light and positive
- Encourage personal reflection
- Provoke discussion
- Value feedback

2

Points for consideration

Is it of relevance to the participants ?
Does it show them respect ?
Is it objective, factual and informative?
Is it succinct and explanatory?
Is it delivered in an accessible way ?
Does it give consideration to different perspectives ?
Does it impart information that is worthwhile?
Is it realistic?
Does it encourage reflective practice?
Does it act as a catalyst for improvement ?
Do not expect things to change overnight

3

Other considerations

The use of an adult/child with ASDs is a powerful tool
The use of an outside speaker can help dissolve some of the boundaries
Video/Audio always helps
Find out what your audience know and want to know
Use a drip,drip message
Maximise your approachability
Be creative in your follow up - like a focus group/visits/further reading/resource finding

4

Responding to your audience

- Is the location comfortable?
- Is the session going to be informal e.g. lunch time discussion or formal e.g. staff meeting or whole school INSET day?
- How will the seating be arranged- theatre style or cabaret?
- Will group discussion be easy to arrange?
- Will there be any refreshments?
- Where will you have a comfort break?
- How long will you wait for late comers?

5

Responding to the audience

- Are you preparing/giving out any handouts?
- If so, will this happen at the beginning or at the end of the session?
- Do you need to provide any background information prior to the session?
- Find respectful ways of agree or disagree with any questions

6

Taking care of yourself!

- Prepare well in advance and think about any resources you will need to hand
- Get to the venue early and test any equipment
- Prepare an opening and closing remark and point out any house/health and safety regulations
- Think about the volume and pace of your voice. If you rush too much you can make an audience feel tense!

7

Take care of yourself!

- Have a cold drink to hand
- Do not be afraid if a question is difficult-admit that you do not know the answer!
- Thank everyone for coming to the INSET at the end
- Evaluation forms can help your confidence and assist in future work
- Will you be arranging a follow-up session?
- Things can go wrong so always have a contingency plan if equipment does not work.

8

Summing Up

- Think about your presentation in relation to the audience
- Know exactly what you want to achieve and how you will evaluate your success
- Remember that comfortable surroundings and refreshments are always appreciated!

9