Office of the Children's Guardian

Trainer's Guide

The NSW Carers Register Training Package

Contents

Purpose

This Trainers Guide has two purposes:

1. to provide guidance on how to train small groups of staff in the use of the Carers Register
2. to be a self study guide for people who wish to work through the material on their own or as a small group

It will provide a refresher for staff who have attended the OCG training and as an introduction to the Carers Register for people who are new to it.

There are three sections:

Section 1 Group Program Outline

This section contains session plans for small group training sessions in the modules of the Carers Register

Section 2 Self Study Program Outline

This section contains session plans for a self-guided study of the modules in the Carers Register

Section 3 Running Effective Group Training Sessions

This section contains information for facilitators of the group programs from Section 1. It is useful for people who do not have training experience

Section 1: Group Program Outline

In this Section of the Trainers Guide you are provided with outlines for a group training session to accompany each of the modules.

If you are working through this material on your own, you should go to Section 2.

Modules 1 to 4

Modules 1, 2, 3 and 4 are presented as e-books. You can work through these as a group or ask people to ensure that they have read them prior to coming to the training session.

If you would like to discuss these further with the group you would only need one session to do so.

You could use some of the following activities if you wish.

Module 1 Overview

Module 2 Key Concepts

Module 3 Data Requirements

Module 4 Information Exchange

Module 1 Overview

Module 1 gives you an overview of the Carers Register – what it is, its purpose and the types of information that will be held in the database.

After you have read the module, think about the following questions.

1. How will the Carers Register support the effective sharing of useful information?
2. Do you have any concerns about the Register and if so what are they? For example – you may have some concerns about privacy, using the software or making time in your workload.
3. Who can you talk to about the Register and your concerns?

Module 2 Key Concepts

Module 2 supplies you with definitions for the key terms used in the Register. An understanding of these terms will assist you to navigate through the Carers Register more confidently.

After you have read the module, complete the following activity.

Tick the box for True or False about each statement

	True	**False**
A person who lives in a granny flat in the backyard of an applicant or authorised carer is a member of the household.		
An applicant is a person who has attended an information session about foster care.		
A provisionally authorised carer can provide statutory or supported out-of-home care in an emergency to a child or young person who is a relative, kin or a child who knows the carer.		
The meaning of kinship care will vary across cultural groups and may not always be a relative.		
Back capture is used to record already authorised carers and household members.		
Carer authorisation may cease if the carer has not cared for a child or young person in OOHC in the previous year (different rules apply where authorisation relates to a specific child)		
It is only in exceptional circumstances that a carer may be authorised by more than one designated agency at a time.		

The answers to the activities are in Appendix 1.

Module 3 Data Requirements

It is important that the information recorded in the Carers Register is complete and correct. Module 3 introduces you to the types of data that are needed for a complete record and provides some tips on how to ensure that the data is up to date.

After you have read the module complete the following activity:

File Audit

Have a look at some current files for carers and note whether all of the information that is required is in the files. If there is a pattern of missing data you will need to rectify this before doing any back capture records. Talk to your supervisor or manager about your findings and how this will be managed.

Module 4 Information Exchange

With the implementation of the Carers Register there have been some changes to how and when information is shared between agencies. In particular, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person is prioritised over an individual's right to privacy despite other laws that prohibit the disclosure of personal information.

After you have read the module complete the following activity:

Case Study

An individual has put in an application to become an authorised carer with your agency. On searching the Carers Register you find that they had previously applied with another agency but had not completed the process.

Should you approach the previous agency for information?

At what part of the process should this happen?

Some of the information is not satisfactory. Can the individual be authorised?

What policies and procedures exist at your agency that you may need to work with?

How would you work with the individual in this case? Would you ask them for permission to access the information at the other agency?

See Appendix 1 for some suggested responses.

Module 5 Carers Register log-in and access information

The **learning outcomes** for this module are:

- Explain the types of user access and their roles
- Access and log-in to the Carer's Register
- Change your password

The **tasks** included in this module are:

Task 1 Access the Carers Register

Task 2 Change Your Password

Resources

For this training session to be the most effective each participant should have access to a computer. If this is not possible, one computer could be used along with a data projector so that visibility is enhanced for all group members.

All participants should have a printed copy of Module 5.

Questions

Before we move onto this module does anyone have any questions about the previous modules?

Trainer dialogue

This is the first of the modules that are presented in the e-book format. Part of this training session will be spent looking at how to access these modules and navigate through the module. We will also learn how to access and log into the Carers Register website.

Topic 1 – Accessing the e-books

Modules 5 – 11 are delivered as e-books. You can access these on the OCG Website and can navigate easily through the books to find the information you need. If you are after a specific Task, you can click on the link in the Contents table and you will navigate straight to the required Task.

Present the information on the User Access and Roles on page 3 of the Module.

- Explain who will hold each role in your agency.
- Explain which role the group members will have.

Move to page 4 of the Module and clarify the tasks that each group member will be able to carry out.

- Explain where these processes intersect with your agency's procedures. When should the outlined activities be carried out? Have adjustments been made to existing practices to accommodate these new requirements?

Topic 2 – Access the Carers Register

Trainer actions

- Access the Carers Register
- Provide each group participant with their User Identification and Password to the Carers Register

Trainer dialogue

You will be provided with a separate operational User Identification and Password that are unique to you. Your User Identification will stay the same, however the password will need to be changed every 6 weeks. We will work through that process later in this session.

Trainer Action

Direct attention to page 6 of Module 5 and work through each step on the computer. Before clicking on the Sign In button, check with the group whether there are any questions for that screen.

Trainer dialogue

If you can't log in there are some steps you can take before contacting your IT department or the OCG office. Although these seem like basic steps, it is worthwhile checking them first.

- Is your computer connected?
- Is your internet working?
- Are you using the right internet browser? The recommended browsers are Mozilla Firefox, Google Chrome, Internet Explorer 10 or higher.

Identify any specific people within your agency who can assist if there is an issue with log in.

Identify who is keeping the User Identification and password details in case they forget or lose their details.

Topic 3 – Changing the password

Trainer dialogue

Passwords are only valid for 6 weeks from the first day of activation.

You cannot use the same password as any of the last 24 passwords.

If you do not meet the password rules when you change your password the system will issue an error message, but it will not tell you what the rules are. You will need to refer back to the e-book Module to refresh your knowledge of the password rules.

Activity

Using the password rules listed in the Module, write a password you might use.

Then swap passwords with a partner and check whether this is an accurate password.

Let people know that there will be a quiz at the end of this module and the password rules will be included in the questions.

Discussion

- What are some of the issues that might arise with the passwords for this system?
- How can you keep your password securely so that you can remember it, without having it easily accessible to others?
- Why is it important to keep access to the Carers Register secure and open only to certain people?

Activity

Either

Access the Register using your own log in details as an example to the group

OR

If each group member has their own computer, ask the group members to log in and click on the My Profile button, then select View Profile

Activity

Select Change Password

Enter the old password and then the password that was created in the earlier activity.

Select Save Profile

Closing Activity - Quiz

1. Who is the primary administrator for your agency?
2. Who do you go to if you can't log in to the Register?
3. How long does a password last for?
4. What is the minimum number of lower and upper case letters you can have in your password?
5. How are you going to keep your password secure?

Module 6 The Back Capture Process

Introduction

Please note – as back capture can only happen prior to 1st September 2015, this module need not be included in the training program after this date.

The **learning outcomes** for this module are:

- Access the Back Capture function
- Record household details
- Search for and create an authorised carer
- Search for and record a household member
- Complete the process with a declaration and receive confirmation

The **tasks** included in this module are:

Task 1 Getting Started – accessing the Back Capture function

Task 2 Recording household details

Task 3 Recording authorised carers

Task 4	Record a Household Member
Task 5	Declaration
Task 6	Confirmation and Receipt

Resources

For this training session to be the most effective each participant should have access to a computer. If this is not possible, one computer could be used along with a data projector so that visibility is enhanced for all group members.

All participants should have a printed copy of Module 6.

If only one computer is available, one sample record should be provided for entry into the Register. Each participant should have a copy of this Record.

If all participants have a computer then a different record should be provided to each participant for entry into the Register through this Module.

Group agenda

Trainer Questions

This module is about the Back Capture process. Why do you think it is important to gather historical information?

Answer – we need as much information as possible about people who may apply to be foster carers or are in households of authorised foster carers. It is important to note though that the historical information in the Carers Register cannot be considered complete information. Also, the information that is recorded is that which was required by legislation prior to 1st June 2015.

Trainer Input

The Back Capture function is a time limited process for the purpose of recording carers authorised (and their household members) prior to the commencement of the Carers Register. Individuals that had their carer application refused or authorisation cancelled due to concerns prior to the commencement date can also be included on the Register. The Back Capture form will only be available for data entry up until 1 September 2015. All the data must be entered by this date.

Note to trainer – the time limitation on the data entry for Back Capture may mean that there needs to be changes to work allocations. This should be discussed with the group members now, so that any fears or concerns about their ability to carry out this work can be addressed prior to the actual means of data entry being addressed. Not understanding how this data entry will be completed may reduce their levels of concentration through the remainder of the module.

Trainer Input

Direct the participants attention to the data requirements on page 5 of Module 6. Explain that all of this information must be recorded for the data entry to be complete, and that progress through this will be noted on summary screens throughout the Carers Register.

Point out the information on the identification numbers issued by the Carers Register on page 6. Allow participants time to read this in the group.

Question - there is something in the Identification numbers that lets you know that this is a back capture record. What is it?

Answer – the letter B.

Activity

Work through Pages 7 - 8, using the steps in the Module. This will familiarise the group with using the Register.

Then use page 9 to talk through the Authorisation Summary.

Ongoing Activity

Work through the remainder of Module 6, using the e-book as a guide and completing each of the functions as described.

If working on the one computer, ask members of the group to take turns to work through the tasks. Otherwise all members should carry out the tasks on their own computers using the sample record provided. Your role as the trainer is to provide advice and support as they do the data entry.

Closing Activity

Ask:

How did you find the experience of entering data into the Register?

What would help you to cement this learning?

Modules 7 – 11

Introduction

Modules 7 - 11 follow a similar pattern to Module 6.

Resources

For each module participants should have:

- A copy of the e-book for the Module
- A record to enter into the Register through the session. If there is one computer being used, each participant should have a copy of the same record. If each participant has a computer then they should all have a different record.

Process

For each module work read through the introduction and then work through each task.

If working on the one computer, ask members of the group to take turns to work through the tasks. Otherwise all members should carry out the tasks on their own computers using the sample record provided. Your role as the trainer is to provide advice and support as they do the data entry.

You can end the session with a review of the content or by asking for any final questions or comments. Remember to point out some good points about the training session. Alternatively you could use one of the closing exercises outlined below.

Module 7 Record an OOHC Application

Introduction

Module 7 will take you through the process of recording an OOHC application.

Note: If the carers were authorised before 1 June 2015 they should be entered through the Back Capture system as described in Module 6.

The tasks that you will complete in this module are:

Task 1	Accessing the Record an Application function
Task 2	Application details
Task 3	Household details
Task 4	Applicants
Task 5	Household members
Task 6	Provisional authorisation
Task 7	Finalise the application
Task 8	Confirmation and receipt

Closing Activity

Think back through the module and list any tasks or steps that you are still unclear about. Work through this part of the module again. If you still have questions seek advice from your Supervisor or Manager.

Module 8 Search

Module 8 outlines the different types of search functions that are available in the Carers Register.

To begin this module you will need to read through pages 4 – 15. These pages describe the search functions. Then use this knowledge to follow through Section 2 and complete a search for an individual.

Closing Activity

Identify the meaning of these traffic lights. Some can be used in more than one situation

Module 9 Individual Management

This module works through the tasks involved in managing the individual after authorisation.

The tasks included are:

- Task 1 Accessing individual management
- Task 2 Edit or add a name
- Task 3 Mark as deceased
- Task 4 Individual checks

Task 5 Reportable allegations

Task 6 Cancel carer authorisation

As with Module 7, read the introduction and work through the Tasks in order. Take note on the way of any issues that you are having, or any data requirements that are missing.

It is very important that you understand the material outlined in Task 5 Reportable Allegations. The accuracy of the Carers Register in recording reportable allegations will support the safety of children and young people.

Closing Activity

I Care Why? Write a short paragraph on why you care about the topics in this module and there importance in your work role.

Module 10 Household Management After Authorisation

This module outlines the tasks that can be carried out in the Household Management function and is for use once the household has been authorised.

There are ten tasks described in Module 10:

Task 1 Accessing Household Management

Task 2 Add or edit an applicant or authorised carer to a household

Task 3 Add or Edit a Household member

Task 4 Cancel a Household

Task 5 Suspend a Household

Task 6 Change Decision Correction

Task 7 Change Responsible Location

Task 8 Change or Edit Household Address

Task 9 Remove (end-date) authorised carer's/household member's association with a household

Task 10 Using more than one Household or Individual Management function

Again, read through the instructions and then work through each of the Tasks in order. Make note as you go of any issues or areas that you need to learn more about.

Closing Activity

The 3 -2 -1 Activity

Write down a list of:

- 3 things you learned
- 2 things you have a question about
- 1 thing you want to tell someone else about Review this list with your manager or supervisor

Module 11 System Generated Reports

The Carers Register will issue reports as required.

This includes:

1. Applications or authorisations by Responsible Location
2. Status of application (household)
3. Status of authorised carer (individual)

Module 11 takes you through the generation of these reports and has only the one task.

The Carers Register issues the reports as a .csv file. Your IT department will be able to manage these files for you, but they will generally export them into an Excel file. This will mean that you can use additional filters.

Read through the information in Module 11 and generate a report using the instructions in Task 1.

Closing Activity

This is the last module in the Carers Register Training Program. It is a good opportunity to reflect back on the whole program and identify what you have learnt, and any areas that you require further assistance in. Remember that the modules will be accessible to you to look at when you need a refresher.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident are you that you can use the Carers Register?
2. What will change about your work as you start to use the Register?
3. What do you still need to know more about?

Section 2 Self Study Guide

The modules of the Carers Register Training Package are designed in a way to make self study possible. Working through the modules by yourself may be necessary if you are the only person in your workplace who has not completed the material.

Learning is generally put into practice more easily if you share your learning with someone else. That is why each module includes a reflective activity for you to discuss with your supervisor. Some modules also provide you with some questions to ask other staff.

Module 1 Overview

Module 1 gives you an overview of the Carers Register – what it is, its purpose and the types of information that will be held in the database.

After you have read the module, think about the following questions.

1. How will the Carers Register support the effective sharing of useful information?
2. Do you have any concerns about the Register and if so what are they? For example – you may have some concerns about privacy, using the software or making time in your workload.
3. Who can you talk to about the Register and your concerns?

Module 2 Key Concepts

Module 2 supplies you with definitions for the key terms used in the Register. An understanding of these terms will assist you to navigate through the Carers Register more confidently.

After you have read the module, complete the following activity. Tick the box for True or False about each statement

	True	**False**
A person who lives in a granny flat in the backyard of an applicant or authorised carer is a member of the household.		
An applicant is a person who has attended an information session about foster care.		
A provisionally authorised carer can provide statutory or supported out-of-home care in an emergency to a child or young person who is a relative, kin or a child who knows the carer.		
The meaning of kinship care will vary across cultural groups and may not always be a relative.		
Back capture is used to record already authorised carers and household members.		
Carer authorisation may cease if the carer has not cared for a child or young person in OOHC in the previous year (different rules apply where authorisation relates to a specific child)		
It is only in exceptional circumstances that a carer may be authorised by more than one designated agency at a time.		

The answers to the activities are in Appendix 1.

Module 3 Data Requirements

It is important that the information recorded in the Carers Register is complete and correct. Module 3 introduces you to the types of data that are needed for a complete record and provides some tips on how to ensure that the data is up to date.

After you have read the module complete the following activity:

File Audit

Have a look at some current files for carers and note whether all of the information that is required is in the files. If there is a pattern of missing data you will need to rectify this before doing any back capture records. Talk to your supervisor or manager about your findings and how this will be managed.

Module 4 Information Exchange

With the implementation of the Carers Register there have been some changes to how and when information is shared between agencies. In particular, the safety, welfare and wellbeing of a child or young person is prioritised over an individual's right to privacy despite other laws that prohibit the disclosure of personal information.

After you have read the module complete the following activity:

Case Study

An individual has put in an application to become an authorised carer with your agency. On searching the Carers Register you find that they had previously applied with another agency but had not completed the process.

1. Should you approach the previous agency for information? At what part of the process should this happen?
2. Some of the information is not satisfactory. Can the individual be authorised?
3. What policies and procedures exist at your agency that you may need to work with?
4. How would you work with the individual in this case? Would you ask them for permission to access the information at the other agency?

See Appendix 1 for some suggested responses.

Module 5 Carers Register Log In and Access Information

This module explains how to access and log in to the Carers Register. It also identifies the different types of access and provides information on the requirements of the password.

This module is quite short so take a few minutes to read through the module.

Activity 1

If you don't have your User Identification and password ask you Primary Administrator to give them to you.

Then follow the log in instructions on page 5.

Activity 2

Read the password instructions on page 7 and write down a new password that complies with the password rules. At this stage you need to think about where you are going to securely store your password. As you need to change them every 6 weeks you may find it hard to remember them.

Then follow Step 2 and 3 to change your password.

Activity 3

Answer these quiz questions

1. Who is the primary administrator for your agency?
2. Who do you go to if you can't log in to the Register?
3. How long does a password last for?
4. What is the minimum number of lower and upper case letters you can have in your password?
5. How are you going to keep your password secure?

Module 6 Back Capture

This module refers to the capturing of information about carers who were authorised prior to the commencement date of the Carers Register. This part of the Carers Register will only be available for data entry up until 1st September 2015. You do not have to complete this module if you are not responsible for back capture.

The module begins with a table outlining the data required to complete the entry of a back capture record on page 4.

On page 5 there is information on the system allocated numbers. If you look carefully at the number you will note that the set of letters ends with the letter B. This is how you will know it is a back capture record if you access this record at a later date.

Activity 1

Work through Pages 6 - 7, using the steps in the Module to familiarise yourself with the Carers Register.

Activity 2

Work through the remainder of Module 6, using the e-book as a guide and completing each of the functions as described.

To do this you will need to use a record that has to be entered. If you don't have access to a back capture record then read through the module without completing the tasks.

Activity 3

Reflect on your experience of using the Register. Make a note of any questions that you have.

General Notes for Modules 7 - 11

The remaining modules will take you through the various functions of the Carers Register and outline the tasks that you need to carry out.

For each module, work through the e-book and complete the tasks. You will need access to records to be entered into the Carers Register in order to do this. If you don't have access to records but you do have access to the Register, you will be able to search for existing records and observe the information that has been entered.

Each module then concludes with a review activity.

You should discuss your learning with your Supervisor or Manager to make sure that you are entering data correctly.

Module 7 Record an OOHC Application

Module 7 will take you through the process of recording an OOHC application. If the carers were authorised before 1 June 2015 they should be entered through the Back Capture system as described in Module 6.

The tasks that you will complete in this module are:

Task 1 Accessing the Record an Application function

Task 2 Application details

Task 3 Household details

Task 4 Applicants

Task 5 Household members

Task 6 Provisional authorisation

Task 7 Finalise the application

Task 8 Confirmation and receipt

Closing Activity

Think back through the module and list any tasks or steps that you are still unclear about. Work through this part of the module again. If you still have questions seek advice from your Supervisor or Manager.

Module 8 Search

Module 8 outlines the different types of search functions that are available in the Carers Register.

To begin this module you will need to read through pages 4 – 15. These pages describe the search functions. Then use this knowledge to follow through Section 2 and complete a search for an individual.

Closing Activity

Identify the meaning of these traffic lights. Some can be used in more than one situation


Refused


Refused


Current


In Progress


Surrendered


Surrendered

Module 9 Individual Management

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The tasks included are:

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As with Module 7, read the introduction and work through the Tasks in order. Take note on the way of any issues that you are having, or any data requirements that are missing.

It is very important that you understand the material outlined in Task 5 Reportable Allegations. The accuracy of the Carers Register in recording reportable allegations will support the safety of children and young people.

Closing Activity

I Care Why? Write a short paragraph on why you care about the topics in this module and there importance in your work role.

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Task 10 Using more than one Household or Individual Management function

Again, read through the instructions and then work through each of the Tasks in order. Make note as you go of any issues or areas that you need to learn more about.

Closing Activity

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Write down a list of:

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Read through the information in Module 11 and generate a report using the instructions in Task 1.

Closing Activity

This is the last module in the Carers Register Training Program. It is a good opportunity to reflect back on the whole program and identify what you have learnt, and any areas that you require further assistance in. Remember that the modules will be accessible to you to look at when you need a refresher.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how confident are you that you can use the Carers Register?
2. What will change about your work as you start to use the Register?
3. What do you still need to know more about?

Section 3 Running Effective Group Training Sessions

A group training session will be effective when the person facilitating has a clear understanding of what the purpose of the group is and the required end result, and has some strategies to use when running the group to encourage participation and learning. This section of the Trainers Guide provides you with basic information on group processes and encouraging participation.

There are three parts:

Part A Fulfilling the Group Purpose

Part B Effective Group Processes

Part C Conflict Management

Part A Fulfilling the Group Purpose

The purpose of this Carers Register Training Package is to give staff the skills to carry out all the functions in the Carers Register, so that the Register can be an up to date picture of authorised foster carers and households in New South Wales. It is important that these skills are taught during the training program.

However skill is only one part of what is needed to work effectively. The other part is will, or motivation. Recent studies on learning in adults show that skill and will work together to create behaviour change. When one is not present, there is generally no behaviour change unless external pressure is applied.

We define will and skill in the following ways:

- Skill: Experience with the task, training, knowledge, and natural talents.
- Will: Desire or achieve, incentives to do task, security surrounding job, confidence in abilities, and feelings about task (“attitude”)

You can ensure that both will and skill are being taught by:

- Determining where people are at with both aspects at the beginning of the training sessions
- Using strategies to increase the levels of both during the training
- Measuring the level of both aspects in the evaluation of the program.

Strategies for all of these areas are included in the Group Program and the Self Paced Program included in this Guide. Table 1 below places people in one of four different categories, depending on their ratio of will to skill.

Table 2 then outlines specific strategies for each ratio type.

Table 1

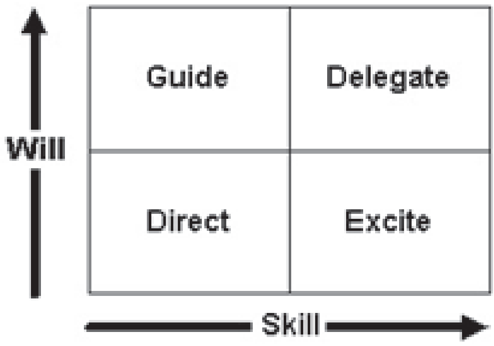

Table 2[1]

Guide Be clear regarding expected outcomes or goals Discuss methods to be used during the training Regularly check for understanding Accept early mistakes as important moments for coaching Give responsibility and authority for the pieces of tasks the employees can do Provide frequent feedback Praise and reward success	**Delegate** Be clear regarding expected outcomes Involve in decision making Frequently ask for opinions Set as mentors and guides for those who need directing Provide feedback Praise and reward for success
Direct Discuss what would motivate the employee and agree on what is possible Be clear regarding expected outcomes and limitations of time etc Set clear rules, methods and deadlines Check regularly for understanding Give responsibility and authority for the pieces of the task that the employee can do Structure tasks into small chunks for quick wins Provide frequent feedback and require frequent check ins from the employee Relax control as progress is shown Praise and reward for success	**Excite** Discuss why the task is important Discuss what would motivate the employee and agree on what is possible Be clear regarding expected outcomes Check for understanding Give responsibility and authority because the employee is competent Require frequent check in and provide feedback Praise and reward for success

[1] Both Table 1 and 2 accessed at http://primarygoals.org/general/skill-will-matrix/ Other work on the Will/Skill concept by Hershey and Blanchard

Exercises:

Assume that the following people are in your group. Identify where they sit in the four quadrants and one strategy that you could use to assist their learning.

A. Carly pays attention and completes the exercises accurately in the group but always finds an excuse to not do the homework exercises that you set for them
B. Hamish is a fantastic group member. He does all of the homework exercises and catches on to the material quickly in the group sessions
C. Shubha is keen to use the Register but when you check her work you notice that there are quite a few errors. The last time she entered a carer that person was already in the system.
D. Andy is a very new worker and does not have much experience in his role as foster care caseworker.

Part B Effective Group Processes

Group dynamics are the ways in which group members work together. When group dynamics are healthy, the goals of the group are more likely to be achieved.

The facilitator of the group influences group dynamics by the style of their facilitation.

Here is a quick summary of some facilitator styles:

1. Directive: When the facilitator is providing instruction and information.
2. Exploratory: When the facilitator is asking questions to explore experience and ideas.
3. Delegating: When the facilitator is assigning tasks, roles, functions to group members.
4. Participative: When the facilitator is participating in and guiding group discussion, sharing experiences with the group and encouraging group members to do likewise.

Exercise:

One of the ways in which the four styles differ is in the difference in the levels of power and control held by the facilitator and the group. For each of these styles identify where the power is held and think about how this might affect how the group will interact with each other.

All four of these styles are effective in the right context. It is how much they are used in each session that it is important to consider. All sessions should include some time where direction is given, balanced with some time for participants to discuss how this will work in practice, talking about past experience and deciding how to move forward. The delegating style can be used to allocate follow up or homework exercises. Group dynamics will be at their optimum level when the correct mix of styles is used in a session.

The evaluations of each session will provide you with some information about how your facilitation style and the group dynamics are affecting the group. However it is really with experience that you are able to make assessment of where your group is at and what style to adopt to move it to the next stage.

The other part of group dynamics is concerned with how the group members relate to each other. It is the responsibility of the facilitator of the group to observe group interaction and make sure that it is a healthy place for members to be. Listed below are some unhealthy group behaviours and one strategy for dealing with these.

Members who interrupt others:

- You need to deal with this directly. Say to the interrupter “Can you hold that thought please until X is finished" Then ensure that you ask the interrupter to speak as soon as X has finished.

Members who talk in a small group when the larger group process is still happening (eg when the trainer is presenting material):

- Physically move yourself to stand near to those people if this is possible.
- Make a general comment that if people have questions or comments they should write them down so that they can all be addressed together at the end of the group and everyone can hear the information.
- Only when this doesn’t work, and if the behaviour is continuing, do you need to directly ask them to not speak while someone else is.

Members who never ask questions:

- If you have asked all people to speak in the warm up stage of the group this is less likely to happen
- Other responses should vary according to your knowledge of that person. If they are normally quiet in a group, or take a while to process information, it is better to ask them outside of the group how it is going and if they have any questions.
- If you think they will not feel too threatened, ask them if they have any questions or comments.
- Do not point out that they have been quiet so far – this won’t achieve anything and may make them feel pressured.

Members who talk a lot and prevent others from participating:

- If this is happening, ask directly for input from other people eg “Y, what do you think about this?” Continue to do this for the next few minutes. You can also ask “Does anyone else have a different experience?”
- Wait for the person to take a breath and speak into the gap.
- Move towards them, giving them your attention, and then direct that attention to someone else in the room as soon as there is an opportunity to do so.

Exercise

Reflect on some training sessions that you have participated in where some of these behaviours were occurring.

- What effect did they have on you personally and on the group?
- How did the facilitator deal with this and how effective was this?
- Which of the strategies outlined above would have worked in this situation?

What would your natural reaction be to the behaviours outlined above? If this is not useful, how are you going to prepare to use one of the more useful strategies?

Part C Conflict Management

Conflict, in the form of an argument, is rare in a training session. If it does happen, the cause may lie outside of the training session. When this is the case it should also be dealt with outside of the session. State clearly and calmly that this will happen and return to the group agenda.

In this type of training session conflict will be more in the form of a disagreement.

Typical examples of disagreement are:

- How a procedure should be carried out
- Types of issues that arise in the work role
- The value of a new process or theory

It is important that disagreements receive some air time in the group. They should not be avoided or shut down every time they occur. If there is a genuine reason for the disagreement, ignoring it will not assist to resolve the issue.

Other reasons to manage rather than ignore the conflict are:

- The experience and wisdom of some group members could be of value in resolving the issue.
- Allowing people to express how they have been feeling can help them to move forward
- It is important to create an environment where questioning is encouraged so that quality work can result

Conflict needs to be diverted or shut down when it is making the group an unsafe place to be. Learning cannot happen when people are guarding themselves from conflict. The group will not be able to meet its aims or goals.

Here are some basic principles to keep in mind:

- Most sides in a disagreement have some value. Find this value and point it out.
- There may be some clear issues that the organisation has a policy on. Bring attention to these also.
- Offer to take concerns to a third party eg management, for consideration and comment
- Remind people that it is natural and normal for people to disagree
- Find areas of agreement where they exist. The sides may have more in common than they think

- Discuss whether total agreement is needed or whether it is possible for people to continue to do as they prefer, and still achieve what is needed
- Offer to do some research and report back, or delegate research to people who have a particular interest
- Not all parts of the issue are likely to be relevant to the purposes of the training session. Park all other parts of the issue for consideration later
- Follow up with individuals after the session. This includes individuals who were not directly involved in the conflict
- At times, you will need to make a decision as the trainer to cut the discussion where it is and move on with the group agenda. Do so firmly but respectfully and allow opportunity for follow up after the session.

Exercise

Knowing how you respond normally to conflict will help you to make adjustments to your natural style that will assist with group leadership. Answer the questions below and then read through the descriptions at the end.

Source: Reginald (Reg) Adkins, PhD, Elemental Truths

We each have our own way of dealing with conflict. The techniques we use are based on many variables such as our basic underlying temperament, our personality, our environment and where we are in our professional career. However, by and large there are five major styles of conflict management techniques in our toolbox. In order to address conflict we draw from a collaborating, competing, avoiding, harmonizing or compromising style of management. None of these strategies is superior in and of itself. How effective they are depends on the context in which they are used. Each statement below provides a strategy for dealing with a conflict. Rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 4 indicating how likely you are to use this strategy.

1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Always

Be sure to answer the questions indicating how you would behave rather than how you think you should behave.

	Statement	Rating
1	I explore issues with others so as to find solutions that meet everyone's needs.	
2	I try to negotiate and adopt a give-and-take approach to problem situations.	
3	I try to meet the expectations of others.	
4	I would argue my case and insist on the merits of my point of view.	
5	When there is a disagreement, I gather as much information as I can and keep the lines of communication open.	

6	When I find myself in an argument, I usually say very little and try to leave as soon as possible.	
7	I try to see conflicts from both sides. What do I need? What does the other person need? What are the issues involved?	
8	I prefer to compromise when solving problems and just move on.	
9	I find conflicts challenging and exhilarating; I enjoy the battle of wits that usually follows.	
10	Being at odds with other people makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious.	
11	I try to accommodate the wishes of my friends and family	
12	I can figure out what needs to be done and I am usually right	
13	To break deadlocks, I would meet people halfway	
14	I may not get what I want but it's a small price to pay for keeping the peace.	
15	I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself.	

How to score the Conflict Management Quiz:

As stated, the 15 statements correspond to the five conflict resolution styles. To find your most preferred style, total the points in the respective categories. The one with the highest score indicates your most commonly used strategy. The one with the lowest score indicates your least preferred strategy. However, if you are a leader who must deal with conflict on a regular basis, you may find your style to be a blend of styles.

Style Corresponding Statements: Total:

Collaborating: 1, 5, 7 ________

Competing: 4, 9, 12 _______

Avoiding: 6, 10, 15 ______

Harmonizing: 3, 11, 14 ______

Compromising: 2, 8, 13 _______

Brief Descriptions of the Five Conflict Management Styles

Collaborating Style: Problems are solved in ways in which an optimum result is provided for all involved. Both sides get what they want and negative feelings are minimized.

Pros: Creates mutual trust; maintains positive relationships; builds commitments.

Cons: Time consuming; energy consuming.

Competing Style: Authoritarian approach.

Pros: Goal oriented; quick.

Cons: May breed hostility.

Avoiding Style: The non-confrontational approach.

Pros: Does not escalate conflict; postpones difficulty.

Cons: Unaddressed problems; unresolved problems.

Harmonizing Style: Giving in to maintain relationships.

Pros: Minimizes injury when we are outmatched; relationships are maintained.

Cons: Breeds resentment; exploits the weak.

Compromising Style: The middle ground approach.

Pros: Useful in complex issues without simple solutions; all parties are equal in power.

Cons: No one is ever really satisfied; less than optimal solutions get implemented

If you are competing:

- Let go your position for a moment. Think about what the other person needs and wants.
- Work with others to identify underlying concerns and issues.
- Consider all the options, and how all the parties stand to benefit from each one.

If you are accommodating or avoiding:

- Focus on your own concerns. What are your needs and goals?
- Give yourself time to gather data that support your case — your goals and reasons they matter.
- Take a deep breath; calmly state your concerns and why they are important.
- If you sense that a confrontation is brewing, don’t just give up. Objectively present your point of view while providing data to support it.

If you are compromising:

- Slow down. Don't always choose the fastest solution. Take your time to find alternatives that really work for everyone.

If you are collaborating:

- Make your thinking explicit when you’re at the table. Help your colleagues understand how you work with others to find solutions that benefit everyone.

Introductory Exercises

Following are a range of introductory exercises that will help to focus people's attention on to the group and away from the work they have just come from. These exercises will also get people talking and make it easier for them to ask questions and participate in the group.

Choose exercises that you are comfortable with running and be well prepared.

You do not have to do an exercise in every group. If you think your group is working well together, are focused on their learning and do not need one of the exercises then you don't need to use one.

If you are not using an exercise, then start the session by asking how things have gone since the last session. If you have had issues arise then discuss these and their resolution. You will start to build up organisational understanding of how the Carers Register tasks fit in with the work that you were already doing.

You can also ask if anyone has suggestions about changes that are needed to agency processes in order to make the Carers Register tasks more efficiently incorporated.

Exercise 1 - Two truths and a lie

This is useful for groups who know each other quite well.

Each person writes 3 things about themselves on a piece of paper. 2 of these statements and true and 1 is a lie, but this should not be noted on the paper. However the person's name should be written on the paper.

Papers are swapped between participants and each one is read out in turn. The group must guess which statement is a lie.

The person gets one point for every person that they fooled.

Exercise 2 - Where are you from?

This exercise needs a fair amount of space.

The centre of the space is labelled as the town where you are now. Assuming that the room is a large map, people are to place themselves according to where they were born.

Each person then identifies where they were born and gives a history of how they got to where they are now.

Exercise 3 - If I was in charge I would.

In this context, this statement should be considered in the light of the Carers Register and would be best used in one of the later modules or at any time when you feel a level of frustration with the Register rising.

Each participant completes the statement "If I was in charge of the Carers Register I would…" Ask participants to try and provide a solution if they identify a problem. This exercise may help to adjust workplace procedures so that the use of the Carers Register is more effective.

Exercise 4 – Jumbled Steps

To prepare for this, choose one of the tasks from the previous session. Write each step on a separate slip of paper. Hand these out in a random order and time how long it takes the group to put the steps into the correct order. If there are more than 4 people in the group you could divide into 2s or 3s and compete against the other groups.

Exercise 5 - Mystery Objects

Collect a range of objects, at least one for each group member and put them in a bag that can’t be seen into. Ask each group member to pull out an object and talk about why that object is so important in their life. Obviously a lot of creativity is required.

Exercise 6 - Birthday order

The whole group has to line up in the order of their birthdays from Jan to Dec. To make this harder you can ask them to do it without talking or writing – they have to mime their birthdates.

If you want to make them run more – follow it up with some other orders, such as length of time in that workplace and see how fast they can do it.

Exercise 7 - Pictionary

Break groups into pairs and write several work related words on pieces of paper. Start the session with a game of Pictionary that is related to the topic. For example, words could be household, carer, authorise, register.

Closing Activities

Use these activities to debrief the group at the end of a training session. This is particularly important of there has been some issues discussed in the session.

Frame Game

Give each learner four blank cards and instruct them to fill in four different responses on the subject: "What were the main concepts or learning points of the material we just covered?" Give them about five minutes to complete the exercise, then collect the cards, shuffle them, and randomly deal three cards to each learner. (Note: If desired, the trainer can make up four cards of her own, but they should be philosophically unacceptable with the principles presented. That is, play devil’s advocate.)

Ask everyone to read the cards they just received, and then to arrange them in order of personal preference.

Place the extra cards on the table and allow them to replace the cards in their hand that they do not like. Next, ask them to exchange cards with each other. They must exchange at least one card.

After about three minutes, form them into teams and ask each team to select the three cards they like the best.

Give them time to choose, then have them create a graphic poster to reflect the final three cards.

Select or vote on best poster that best represents the topic.

Evaluation

At the end of the session ask the same three questions and compare how responses change over time.

1. On a scale of 1 to 5, how useful was today's session for your work role?
2. What will change about your work?
3. What do you still need to know more about?

Take Away Art

Give the group playdough, papers and pens or other art objects and ask them to make something that will remind them of the group session, or the training so far, and keep it on their desk until the next session

Rating Scale

Give each participant a list of the tasks that were taught in the session. Ask them to rate how well they would go if they had to do each of those tasks right now.

Then ask them to write what they are going to do in the next few days to improve their worst score.

Appendix 1

Module 2

	True	False
A person who lives in a granny flat in the backyard of an applicant or authorised carer is a member of the household.	✓	
An applicant is a person who has attended an information session about foster care.		✓
A provisionally authorised carer can provide statutory or supported out-of-home care in an emergency to a child or young person who is a relative, kin or a child who knows the carer.	✓	
The meaning of kinship care will vary across cultural groups and may not always be a relative.	✓	
Back capture is used to record already authorised carers and household members.	✓	
Carer authorisation will cease if the carer has not cared for a child or young person in OOHC in the previous year (different rules apply where authorisation relates to a specific child)		✓
It is only in exceptional circumstances that a carer may be authorised by more than one designated agency at a time.	✓	

Module 4

Case Study

An individual has put in an application to become an authorised carer with your agency. On searching the Carers Register you find that they had previously applied with another agency but had not completed the process.

1. Should you approach the previous agency for information?

Yes – you are required to complete a designated agency check and request information on the applicant.

2. At what part of the process should this happen?

Before authorisation

3. Some of the information is not satisfactory. Can the individual be authorised?

No. This is one of the reasons why the information in the Carers Register must be accurate – it will be taken into consideration for later applications.

4. What policies and procedures exist at your agency that you may need to work with?

This response will vary with agency but will mainly be in the area of Information Exchange.

5. How would you work with the individual in this case? Would you ask them for permission to access the information at the other agency?

You do not have to ask for permission but, depending on the relationship that you have already built up with the individual, you may decide to talk to them about it.