LIHEAP Training Best Practices

Before Training

Before training, be sure to do the following:

- Review the content and notes.
- Make detailed outlines or speaker notes to help.
- Practice conducting any activities prior to the session.

Opening

Open the training by doing the following:

- Introduce yourself and explain why you are there.
- If the participants do not know each other, encourage brief introductions, focusing on experience with the topic.

Training Presentation

Present the training by doing the following:

- Allow participants to share their experiences and what has worked/not worked.
- Explain the "why," not just the "what."
- Use real-life examples whenever possible.
- Incorporate personal experiences and stories to connect to the participants and the topic.
- Allow time to practice. This may include doing a hands-on activity on a computer, solving a problem, or handling a scenario-style situation.
- Provide time for quiet and reflection so the concepts "sink in."
- Do not rush. Speak slowly and allow time for the participants to think.
- Schedule breaks every 60 - 75 minutes.
- Do NOT lecture more than 20 minutes at a time. Switch to discussion, practice, or small group work every 15 - 20 minutes.
- Do not assume the participants know something. If in doubt, ask questions to determine if they have specific background knowledge.

Check for Understanding

Check for understanding by doing the following:

- Do not rely on the participants to ask questions to ensure they understand.
- Ask probing questions or stage practice techniques to ensure the participants "get it."

Questions

Keep the following in mind in relation to questions:

- Allow time for questions.
- Ask, "What questions do you have?" instead of, "Do you have questions?"
- Allow questions throughout the training, not only at the end.
- Be prepared to table questions if they are off-topic, are not off-topic, with the knowledge that you will discuss them after the training.
- Do not be afraid to admit if you do not know the answer. Provide a resource for the answer or promise you will follow up. (Make sure you do!)

Closing

Close the presentation by doing the following:

- Provide your contact information for any follow-up questions.
- Provide additional resources that can be accessed after the training (e.g., handouts, job aids, Web site information, articles to read, etc.).