

STEP 1. DETERMINE TRAINING NEEDS

An effective TB training program is one that focuses directly on what its particular audience must know and do in order to contribute to TB control efforts. The planning begins with an assessment of what the jurisdiction and staff need with regard to TB-related skills and information, what the current epidemiological situation is, what resources are available, and where gaps exist in staff skills and knowledge. The needs can differ greatly from one locality to another, depending on such factors as:

- The overall level of incidence of TB infection and disease
- The ethnic, cultural, and social characteristics of local at-risk or high-incidence populations
- How much experience local healthcare and social services professionals have had in working with TB patients and individuals who are at risk of infection or disease. (Their experience level most likely will vary according to their job categories and the type of settings in which they work)
- Specific skills that your program staff need to improve (according to the findings of needs assessment activities)

It is important to conduct a formal needs assessment—communicating with the program’s staff and clients and reviewing epidemiological data to gather information and suggestions that can be used to guide planning. The most commonly used approach is a written survey, which can be conducted by mail or electronically via email. Focus groups and one-on-one interviews (possibly by telephone) with key informants can also be of considerable value. Local professional associations, healthcare organizations, and social services organizations can help you identify prospective participants.

When designing a written survey form (see associated tool #5 Needs Assessment Survey), keep in mind two objectives: (1) it should encourage recipients to respond, and (2) it should allow for easy tabulation and analysis of the results. Keep the questions direct and brief. Where possible, offer choices and use checkboxes to permit answers to be marked quickly. Allow space for respondents to make additional comments, and encourage them to do so.

PRE-COURSE TASKS

ACTIVITY 1-A

Collect clinical, epidemiological, and sociological data regarding TB in your jurisdiction to use as a guide for needs assessment activities.

ACTIVITY 1-B

Decide if a formal needs assessment will be helpful and, if so, what approach will be used—print survey, electronic survey, focus groups, key informant interviews, or a combination of these approaches.

ACTIVITY 1-C

Develop a survey form or questionnaire that can be completed by survey respondents or used to guide the discussion in focus groups or interviews.

Associated Tool #5 Needs Assessment Survey

(Source: Francis J. Curry National TB Center, San Francisco)

ACTIVITY 1-D

Compile a list of individuals or groups whose responses will be solicited; that is, who will be asked to complete the questionnaire or participate in the focus groups or interviews.

ACTIVITY 1-E

Determine how the written survey will be distributed (U.S. mail, e-mail, fax), the due date by which it should be returned, and a method for follow-

up. If using regular mail, set a due date that allows for time in the mail each way. Including a return envelope will increase the return rate. Providing a fax number for responses is also helpful.

ACTIVITY 1-F

Arrange times and places for focus groups if any will be held.

ACTIVITY 1-G

Draft a cover letter (for the written survey) and invitation letters (for focus groups and interviews) to explain the purpose and importance of the needs assessment and solicit the recipient's participation.

ACTIVITY 1-H

Distribute the written survey by the means you have selected and, if appropriate, make it available on your organization's website.

ACTIVITY 1-I

Contact focus group invitees by phone to confirm their participation, and schedule interviews with key informants.

ACTIVITY 1-J

Conduct focus groups and interviews.

ACTIVITY 1-K

Tabulate, analyze, and document the survey responses and information from the focus groups and interviews. Once results are available, they should be shared with program staff (especially those who helped with the needs assessment).

Associated Tool #6 Needs Assessment Survey Summary

(Source: Francis J. Curry National TB Center, San Francisco)

ACTIVITY 1-L

Use the results to set priorities and determine which needs should be addressed in your training event.