Training for Front Line Staff

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*"Good training! I was legit dreading it. But I **wasn't even bored**."*

Pop Quiz

Street Outreach

Training is Important

*"There is **less consistency in service delivery** due to insufficient training. Supervisors are typically too busy trying to hire people to train the ones they already have. **The newbie is thrown into new challenges without knowing what they need to**.*

*There is such a high demand for services but regardless of how busy we are, **the client deserves that support person to be competent and well-trained**."*

Working in Homeless Services: A Survey of the Field (2023)

12-18 months

Average length of time frontline staff stay in the same role

Understanding the Needs of Workers in the Homelessness Support Sector (2021)

Learning Styles

Learning Styles

The major types of adult learning styles

Visual

Auditory

Linguistic

Logical

Intrapersonal

Interpersonal

Kinesthetic

edgepoint learning

Training Modes

One-on-One Training

E.g. job shadowing

- **Great for**: kinesthetic and interpersonal learners
- **Responsive** to the learner's questions and training needs
- **Inefficient** - takes longer to get everyone trained
- **Inconsistent** - different trainers may do things differently
- **Unverifiable** - hard to confirm that everyone received full training

In-Person Group Training

E.g. first aid class

- **Great for**: auditory, kinesthetic and interpersonal learners
- Might be **responsive** to the learner's questions and training needs, depending on how large the group is
- More **efficient** - you're training everyone at the same time
- **Venue and timing constraints** - fitting it in to everyone's schedule
- **Consistent** - everyone is getting the same training
- Could be **verifiable** - you can take attendance and confirm that the curriculum was completely covered, but some people may not have paid attention

Remote Synchronous Training

E.g. webinar, Zoom meeting

- **Great for**: auditory learners, maybe visual and linguistic learners
- **Efficient** - you're training lots of people at the same time
- No **venue** requirement, but you do need to worry about **scheduling**
- **Consistent** - everyone is getting the same training
- Not very **verifiable** - ever been in a Zoom meeting where everyone's camera was off…?
- **Unresponsive** to the learner's questions and training needs

Pre-Recorded Videos

E.g. YouTube video

- **Great for**: auditory and intrapersonal learners
- **Very efficient** - everyone gets training, and the trainer doesn't need to be there
- No **venue** or **scheduling**
- **Consistent**
- Not very **verifiable** - "of course I watched that video"
- **Unresponsive**

Learning Management System (LMS)

E.g. Moodle, Teachable, Thinkific, Udemy (there are lots)

- **Great for**: depends on the content, but not interpersonal or kinesthetic learners
- **Very efficient**
- No **venue** or **scheduling** requirement
- **Consistent**
- **Verifiable** - often have built-in requirements to complete videos or quizzes, progress is tracked
- **Unresponsive**

Supplemental Training Modes

Evaluation

E.g. quiz, role-play

- Many of the training modes are **unverifiable**
- This can be addressed by administering some sort of **evaluation** of how well the student learned the content
  - Short quiz
  - Case study
  - Role-play (what would you do in this situation?)
  - Reflection
  - Formal exam

Written Materials

E.g. training manual, user guide, cheat sheet

- **Great for**: visual, linguistic, and logical learners
- Useful as a **reference** - what do I do in *this specific circumstance?*
- Probably should not be relied on as a primary training mode. Nobody wants to read 50 pages of training manual.

E.g. podcast, audiobook

- **Great for**: audio learners
- Why? **Listen to it in your car** while you're driving to/from work
- Useful to **build background knowledge**, like listening to interviews with people in the sector
- Probably should not be relied on as a primary training mode. It's too limited and also unverifiable.

In-App Training

E.g. product tours

- **Great for**: kinesthetic learners
- More interactive than a video
- Only works for software
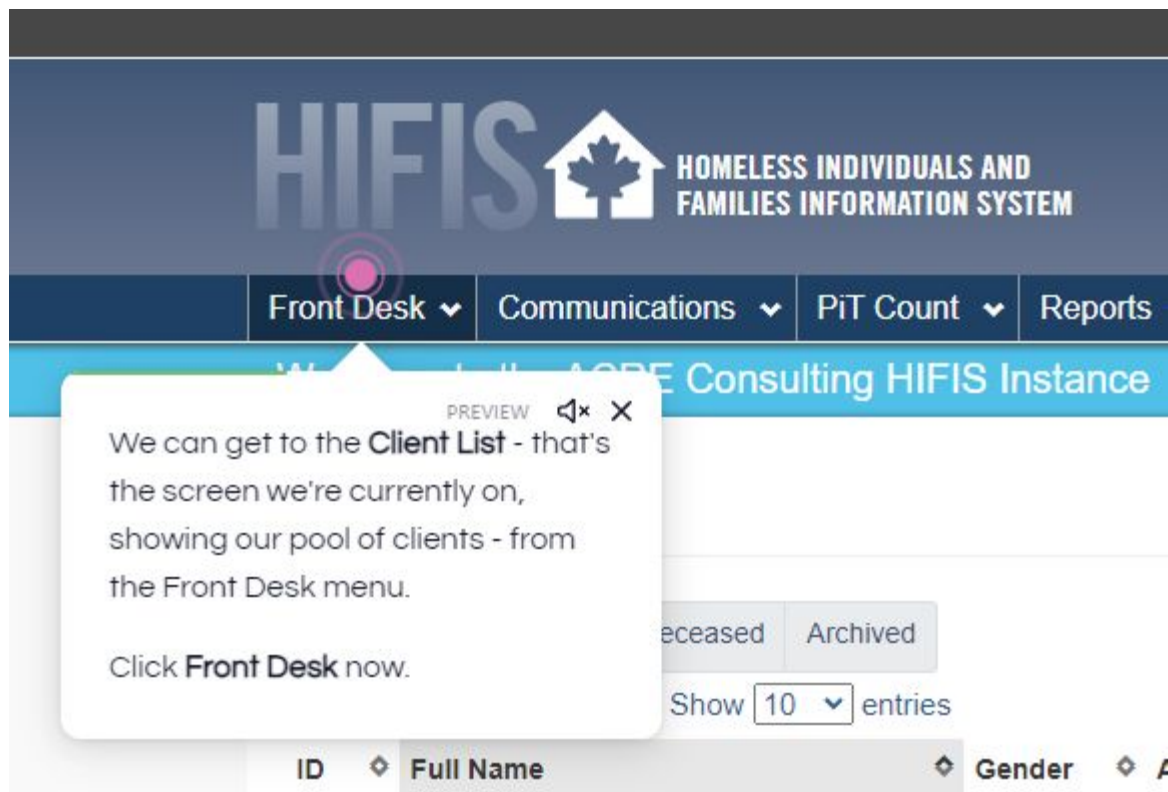
Building a Training Plan

Who **needs training**?

- Front line staff, supervisors, managers, executive directors, volunteers?
- New hires or all staff?
- Are there multiple different groups with different needs?

Who is qualified to be a **trainer**?

- One trainer or many?
- If many, which trainer is responsible for which trainees?

What

What do staff need to be **trained on**?

- Create a list of training requirements
- Multiple training courses (probably) or just one?
- What's the curriculum for each course?
- Are there key messages that need to be communicated?

When will staff **be trained**?

- Live training needs a schedule.
- Asynchronous training needs a window (e.g. "complete this by Friday")

How long will training take?

- 10 minutes here and there? A full-day workshop?
- Will staff be compensated? Is there coverage?

When do staff need **re-training**?

- Is there a point at which this training expires?

Where

Where does **training occur**?

- Is a venue required for a group class?
- Does a staff need a quiet area with a computer/coworker/workbook?

How is training **delivered**?

- Which mode(s) will be used
- Any equipment/materials required?

How is training **evaluated**?

- Evaluate if the students are learning, but also
- Evaluate if the trainer is doing a good job

How will you accommodate **alternative training requests**?

- How can you make sure everyone is appropriately trained?

Summing it Up

Key Takeaways

- There's high **turnover** in the sector, and lots of training is needed
- People have different **learning styles**, so the same training might not be equally effective for everyone
- Consider a **variety of different training modes**, since they all have different pros and cons
- Build a **training plan** so you're not winging it

Thank you!

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