

# CHARACTERISTICS OF ADULT LEARNERS AND TRAINER STRATEGIES

## **Adult learners want to know why they should learn.**

- Relate the training to problems or situations learners will encounter.
- Create real-life scenarios.
- Show how the learning process will help the learner and others with whom the learner interacts every day.
- Show how learners can improve or advance in a life role.

## **Adult learners have expectations for learning that are based on their experiences.**

- Respect and value their experiences. Ask what they would like to know more about.
- Ask questions to draw upon their experiences.
- Link new information to learners' existing experience and knowledge.
- Ask for their input and adjust.
- Plan alternate activities and choices.

## **Adult learners are independent, self-directed, and self-motivated.**

- Actively involve learners in the learning process.
- Act as a facilitator and guide, rather than as the source of all knowledge and facts.
- Give learners the opportunity to be responsible for their learning; engage in discussions and use presentations and group-oriented activities.
- Recognize that not all learners will want to learn all the time.

## **Adult learners are goal- and problem-oriented.**

- Refer to the objectives of each training module and relate content to the objectives.
- Stay on task; respect the real-life demands that learners face each day.
- Give lots of examples to connect information and application.

## **Adult learners appreciate feedback.**

- Give feedback immediately.
- Include a discussion item, case study, or short review quiz to summarize one or more objectives.
- Create a safe, encouraging, and collaborative environment that supports all learners.

## **Adult learners want to be respected.**

- Know learners' names.
- Know how to pronounce learners' names.
- Use active listening skills for paraphrasing, clarifying, reflecting, and summarizing.
- Avoid placing a learner in an embarrassing situation, such as highlighting a mistake.
- Provide low-risk activities in small group settings.
- Be flexible. Allow time for learners to use their digital devices.
- Respect learners' caregiving and employment responsibilities.
- Start and end the training on time and honor scheduled breaks.

