Environmental Science

Promotor Transferable Training Modules on Environmental Science

Instructor's Guide

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Statement by the Authors

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Acknowledgements

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Module Background

Environmental consequences from population growth, poor infrastructure, increased industrialization, inadequate water, scant waste management, and lack of health services have become major stumbling blocks in the United States-Mexico Border region. In addition, insufficient information has contributed to the development of environmental justice issues.   Access to information is critical when it comes to engaging impacted Border populations in resolving environmental problems.

Transferable Training Module Goal

Address the limited access to information by harnessing and reinforcing community health advocates (*promotores*) in disseminating environmental health facts and advisory notices to vulnerable and difficult-to-reach communities.

Module Introduction

The transferable training modules have been designed to prepare and support *promotores* as conduits of environmental health information to vulnerable populations they serve via flexible training courses. The modules are built on the "train-the-trainer" model (*promotores* train other *promotores*) that can eventually expand environmentally themed trainings, which *promotores* do not easily come by during typical educational workshops they attend. By providing this tool, environmental science information will also multiply into serviced communities. During house, patient, or business visits, *promotores* can provide relevant information that can be implemented to lower environmental health risks in families and workers.

The development of these transferable training modules relied on:

- Determining training needs from pilot groups of *promotores* that were selected from southern Arizona, U.S.-Mexico Border, and northern Mexico.

- Developing transferrable environmental science themed modular training courses.

- Testing the modular training courses on pilot groups of *promotores*.

Input on module subject, design, and content were received by established groups of *promotores* and university investigators situated in the Border or adjacent areas. The initial project incorporated three *promotor* organizations that include:

Partnering Organization	Location
Instituto Tecnológico de Sonora (ITSON)	Ciudad Obregon, SO Mexico
Regional Center for Border Health, Inc. (RCBH)	Somerton, AZ
Sonora Environmental Research Institute, Inc. (SERI)	Tucson, AZ

The module themes reflect issues that are relevant to both the current environment situation as well as the needs of *promotores* in southern Arizona, northern Mexico, and the border region.

Module Themes

Arsenic	Pesticides	Environmental Toxicology	Risk Assessment
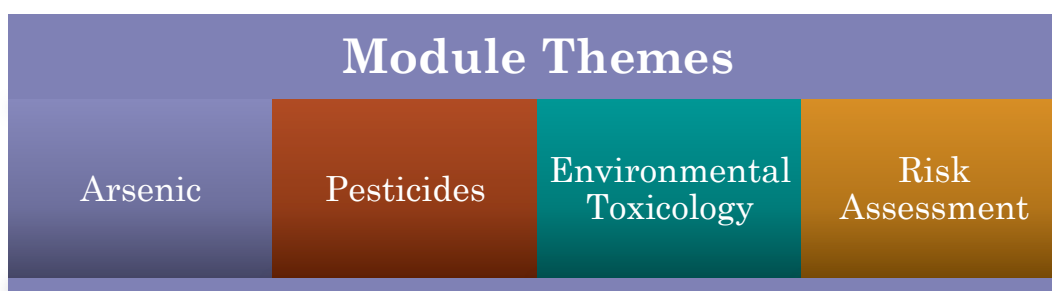
These modules were tested and refined via pilot trainings that spanned from 2011 until 2012 and in 2013. A total of ten of these trainings were completed in addition to five "train-the-trainer" workshops, which prepared trainers to provide the pilot trainings. Various types of trainers (*e.g.* graduate students, science experts, and environmental *promotores*) as well as audiences (*e.g.* clinic workers, environmental specialists, technical college professors, municipal workers, and community advocates) were incorporate in the pilot period. Input was obtained via training surveys and feedback sessions with trainers. Comments obtained were incorporated into this edition and future chapters will incorporate lessons learned in their development. This is a work in progress that can be modified due to new added themes, change in the science information, or feedback received by module users.

The modules are available in both electronic and hardcopy form. "Train-the-trainer" workshops can be provided free of charge by the Superfund Research Program Community Engagement Core via a formal request. Those that will benefit from these workshops are more than likely *promotor* group(s) wanting to implement environmental themed trainings into their ongoing education curricula. These "train-the-trainer" workshops will help prepare *promotores* to provide transferable module trainings to others in their organization or area.

The Role of the *Promotor*

In Latin America, the *promotor* grass roots movement began in the 1960s where peer-education programs were implemented to train women (*promotoras*) in diverse health themes in rural Central American. In the U.S., this model was introduced via the U.S. Federal Migrant Health Act of 1962 and the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964 (Peréz and Martinez, 2008).
In 1968, this model was successfully implemented by the Indian Health Service (IHS), which established a "Community Health Representative Program" (IHS, 2013). In recent decades, with an increase in Latino immigrant communities, especially outside the U.S.-Mexico border region, the *promotor* model has been successfully transferred to various states in the United States.

A *promotor* is a community member with an insight to local health and social issues that utilizes their knowledge of resources to educate on various topics, which ultimately promote healthy living in the overall community (Contreras 2005). They are considered conduits of information between their community and an institution or organization. The type of information and outreach that is provided may vary, but it has been traditionally focused on human health. *Promotores* are culturally and linguistically proficient with those they interact. They are also able to provide the information in a relevant manner to their audience.

They also advocate for individual and community needs thus assuring that they receive information or services. *Promotores* provide outreach via patient consultations, home visits, business interventions, and informational fairs. The ultimate goal is to build capacity in disadvantage populations in order for them to make informed decisions about various issues.

How to Use the Transferable Training Modules

The modules offer prepackaged trainings on arsenic, environmental toxicology, and pesticides. They help introduce, reinforce, and supplement knowledge in these themes. The modules are a type of "toolbox" that allows a trainer to put together educational workshop to increase environmental information that will be later disseminated by *promotores*. The trainer can vary, but these specific modules consider *promotor* trainers who would like to expand the environmental science training available to others in their area. The options provided in each module can be utilized in a combination of ways to produce a comprehensive and relevant training for the particular audience that is being is

targeted. Customization of the trainings is flexible to time availability, previous knowledge, environmental issue, or learning style.

Each individual module contains sections that deliver theme background information for the trainer, prepackaged training PowerPoint presentation, complementary training videos, dynamic learning assessments, reinforcing hands-on activities, and additional theme resources to expand the learning level of the training. You can use the "topic background" included as both a refresher on the theme or as an initial introduction to the subject that can then be supplemented with the "additional resources" provided. The background information provided in each of the modules lays out basic information needed that will assist the trainer to implementing a basic training. It is encourage that each trainer should modify the provided "training presentations" and "hands-on activities" since the training should be able to adapt to the audience. "Topic extension" and "additional resources" sections have been incorporated to increase the knowledge level from basic to more advanced considering the competency of the audience that will be taught.

The following is a detailed description of the section found in the modules and their purpose:

- Module Summary – snap shot of the module topic.

- Learning Objectives – summaries of the knowledge the trainer studying the topic background will gain.

- Topic Background – general information on the topic that will serve as the basis to provide a basic training on the topic.

- Additional Resources – serves as additional Internet based information on the theme that can help the trainer further prepare for the training or can be used during a training as a supplemental handout.

- Training Tools – these are tools that have been developed to help assist the trainer provide a training on the selected topic. They include the following:

  o Visual Aids (presentation and videos) – ready-made PowerPoint presentation that can be modified as needed by the trainer depending on the audience knowledge background or learning needs. A video list is also included in the section that can provide audiences with supplemental information during the training.

  o Concept Glossary – includes definitions or summary explanations regarding words or ideas presented not touched on by the module background.

  o Training Assessments and Extensions – quick assessment of training participant's understanding of theme or concept; can serve to make corrections or provide further explanations.

  o Concept Activities – supplements to the training that will make dry-facts more fun and easier to understand.

At the end of the modules a section titled "supplemental materials" has also been provided. The materials in this section can be utilized or applied to the training that is developed. They contain activity handouts to be copied and concept glossary for the bold terms in the background section.

Whether you implement these modules as part of an ongoing *promotor* certification program or as part of a specific training request, you can adjust this toolbox to effectively carry out environmental education. The ultimately goal is to increase the opportunities for training and available information for *promotores* on environmental science that can directly impact stakeholders living in the U.S.-Mexico border or adjacent regions. By training *promotores*, disadvantage populations have the opportunity to received information as well as better understand such information to make a proactive change in their lives as well as their family. This ultimately impacts community choices and wellbeing.

How to Prepare for a Module Training

Module trainings require one or two trainers, depending on the intricacy of what is planned and the experience of the trainer. You have the flexibility to decide exactly how to structure and divide the training since the modules are a "skeleton" that it will be built on. It is important to reemphasize that the goal of these modules is <u>flexibility</u> therefore you can mix and match the components to fit the audience and expectations.

Before the Training

- ✓ Find out critical information about your audience to better plan the training. A good source would be the *promotor* coordinator or lead *promotor*. Some of this information may include previous knowledge, training expectation, and organizational needs.
- ✓ Determine the amount of time available for the training and how many *promotores* will participate.
- ✓ Select and confirm a training space according to the number of participants anticipated. Also, make sure you are aware if the trainings space will be occupied before or after in order to plan accordingly.
- ✓ Become familiar with the trainings space. Space familiarity can help you plan, for example, if you will need to bring additional tables/chairs, do you have enough space to conduct a hands-on activity, or do you need to bring a projector or computer.
- ✓ Review the module "background" information and other associated components. Become familiar with the options available for the training.
- ✓ Depending on the previous knowledge of the audience, you may want to research the "additional resources" in order to modify the education level of the training.
- ✓ Develop a training plan with the components you will uses from the modules.
- ✓ Contact the *promotor* coordinator or lead *promotor* to discuss your training plan to make sure that it encompasses not only individual needs but also organizational needs.
- ✓ Create a training agenda that follows the planned training that you have developed.

✓ If appropriate you may also want to design a training flyer that may be used internally or to invite additional *promotores.* It can also provide needed information such as directions to the training location and date/time of training.

✓ Write out a list of the training materials in addition to those associated with the hands-on activities/assessments (*e.g.* flip chart, easel, extra pens, name tags, audio-visual equipment, participation certificates, speakers, workshop packets, sign-in sheets etc.).

✓ Collect all of the hands-on activity supplies and training tools you will need. Make sure that you will have theses materials in enough time that you may practice the hands-on activities or assessments before hand.

✓ Customize the module presentation incorporating special requests, available time, or audience knowledge level.

✓ Put together packets that contain copies of the presentation, training agenda, extra paper, activity handouts, photo release forms, and other resources that you would like to provide.

Day of the Training

✓ Arrive early (45 minutes) before the start of the training in order to prepare hands-on activities, audiovisual equipment, sign-in sheets, training packets, and other materials you will need.

✓ Set-up the tables in a U-shape, if possible, so that everyone can talk to each other easily and also view the trainer or any hands-on activities with ease.

✓ Make sure to arrange hands-on activity materials so they are at hand when you need them.

✓ Write you name and contact information on the board or flip chart.

✓ Welcome them at the door (or have a greeter) and have them sign in as they arrive as well as provide them with the training packets.

✓ Once everyone is seated, introduce yourself to the group and tell them about your background. You may then go around the room to find out who they are by having them state their name, what is their work experience, what special resources do they have to share with their fellow leaners, what problems, questions or concerns do they hope to address, and why they are a *promotor*. You may also opt to implement one of the activities provided in the "ice breaker" section (page 12) if you would like to get more creative.

✓ Review the agenda with the training participants so they are familiar with what you have planned.
✓ Mention to them that they will be filling out training surveys at the end. Emphasize to them that this helps to better create and prepare future trainings.
✓ Begin the planned training after these house keeping and introductory steps have been taken.

After the Training

✓ Ask them to complete the training surveys and provide them to you once they are done.
✓ Thank participating *promotores* for attending and contributing to the training.
✓ Read the surveys that were provided by the training participants. If you are working with another trainer, debrief each other.
✓ Make note of any relevant feedback and incorporate them into future trainings.
✓ Contact training participants to provide any missing information or answers to questions that could not be answered during the training.
✓ Talk to the coordinator or lead *promotor* to get any additional feedback. You may also want to share any glaring comments or the overall sentiment of the training.

Remember to

✓ Stay within the time allotted! You may have a lot of material to cover or things may come up the day of the training. Be realistic with time management. It is common courtesy to respect people's time and it is a golden rule of workshop professionalism.
✓ Be flexible! *Promotores* are very interested in the themes and may ask more questions than anticipated.
✓ Have fun! *Promotores* are energetic outreach professionals that enjoy personal interaction. If you are too formal, the training might be…too boring.

Tips on Presenting

It is important to be comfortable with the material(s) that you will be presenting, but you do not have to be an expert. Remember to rehearse the presentation in order to feel confident. Prepare to the best of your ability (at least a week or more in advance) and remember if you cannot answer a question there is no harm in saying, "I do not know the answer, but if you give me your contact information I can provide you with the answer." Even the experts do this; don't pressure yourself to know everything since it is simply impossible.

Be sure to layout the expectations that you have as a trainer from the beginning. This will help the participants know what to expect and how to conduct themselves during the training. Make the learning environment confortable and nurturing for everyone.

Be able to adapt to the diverse learning styles. If you find it difficult to get a point or concept across, you may want to ask the training participants to help you. If not, try different techniques.

Adults have been shown to learn best when they are actively engaged in the learning processes. Therefore it is important to involve them in the training and listen to their experiences on the topic. This will help them become more comfortable and more interested.

- Face the trainees and have eye contact with all of them, not just a selected few.
- Avoid distracting behaviors (e.g. looking at your notes at length or playing with your hair).
- Dress appropriately and professionally according to the situation.
- Observe body language of the training participants for clues on what they are feeling (e.g. bored, hungry, angry, interested).
- When a participant is talking, look at them and listen, do not turn your back on them.
- Ask open-ended questions and respond positively no matter if they are right or wrong.
- Make sure to paraphrase a question or comment received by a participant so the others hear what was said and you truly understand what they are saying.
- Engage the participants when comments or questions come up since they can be helpful adding to the response or adding their experiences on the topic.
- Rest up and eat well before the training
- Use humor and avoid jargon during training.