**CPD@RCOT Short Course**

Group Session – Facilitator’s Guide

Forming Your Research Question

**A person sitting at a table using a computer

Description automatically generated**

**Name of Facilitator:** **Click or tap here to enter text.**

**This guide is designed to help you, as the facilitator, to support participants with their learning during the group session of the CPD@RCOT Short Course.**

Facilitator guide introduction

Thank you for being the group session facilitator for the CPD@RCOT Short Course **‘Forming your research question’**.

This guide will help you to understand the role of a facilitator. It gives you some suggestions on how to support participants, and to help everyone make the most of the discussions.

According to the Cambridge dictionary, a facilitator is “someone who helps a person or organisation do something more easily or find the answer to a problem, by discussing things and suggesting ways of doing things” (Cambridge University Press, 2019).

This is exactly what you will be doing in the group session: your role will be to enable the discussions and encourage participants to think critically to enrich the debate. You do not need special skills or previous knowledge of the topic. You can participate in all the group activities. You just need to bring your interest and enthusiasm to the room!

CPD@RCOT Short Courses can be delivered to a group or can be taken on your own. If you are on your own, you are your own course facilitator and this guide will be particularly relevant to you.

Preparing for the group session

**Familiarise yourself with the course**

Before the group session takes place, review the pre-work reading and activities. Compare the group session activities with the presentation. While doing so, study the activity notes in this guide.

Review in your mind what you want to say at each stage of the group session. Write down any questions, examples or scenarios from your own experience that are relevant to the activities. You can use these as a starting point for discussions if the group needs encouragement to engage.

**Planning according to group size**

Parts of this course are designed to be completed in pairs. These sections can also be done with three if there are an odd number of people.

The course is designed for a maximum of 10-12 people, giving all learners a chance to participate and contribute. If the whole group is larger, the course may work better if the group is divided into two.

**Planning according to group needs if meeting in person**

Before the group session takes place, check if any of the participants have special needs or requires specific assistance to attend the course. Some institutions provide guidance to assist you in this activity.

* Disability Rights UK has developed a [Factsheet for Adjustments](https://www.disabilityrightsuk.org/adjustments-disabled-students) for a considerable number of special needs. The document offers a list of adjustments and approaches to improve communication.

Other charities have more information on specific needs. For example the following guidance is available:

* Action on Hearing Loss: [Communication tips for the general public](https://actiononhearingloss.org.uk/coronavirus-response/communication-tips-for-the-general-public/)
* Hearing Link: [How to communicate with a hearing impaired person](https://www.hearinglink.org/living/partners-children-family-hearing-people/how-to-communicate-with-a-hearing-impaired-person/)
* Royal National Institute of Blind People: [Guide on how to meet, greet and guide a blind or partially sighted person](https://www.rnib.org.uk/advice/guiding-blind-or-partially-sighted-person)
* British Dyslexia Association Advice for Educators: [What do I need to know as a teacher?](https://www.bdadyslexia.org.uk/advice/educators/what-do-i-need-to-know/reasonable-adjustments)
* National Autistic Society[Communication tips](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/tips). They also provide [Communication tools](https://www.autism.org.uk/advice-and-guidance/topics/communication/communication-tools) to improve understanding.

**Appoint a timekeeper**

Each section of the group session is timed so that the whole session does not over-run. As facilitator and participant, it is difficult to keep track of the time for each section as well. Appoint a timekeeper before the course starts, or at the beginning of the group session. For the longer activities, it is helpful for the timekeeper to give a two-minute warning before the end of the section (and see notes below).

**Resources you will need to run the session in person**

Make sure you find out the details of the housekeeping points described in the welcome section on page 4, if you do not know them already.

In the following section “Facilitating the group session”, actions to be taken by you are indicated by double asterisks (\*\*).

To run a remote session, some of the points in the **Welcome** section will not be relevant.

**Guidance for sole learners**

CPD@RCOT Short Courses can be taken individually, and in this case, you are the course facilitator and timekeeper. Use the presentation whilst completing the course and follow the “Facilitating the group session” instructions.

Take notes and ask yourself questions at any point of the Short Course. Record what you are learning.

Consider sharing your thoughts and discussing any possible questions with your supervisor or tutor, and debate what you have learned with work colleagues, other occupational therapists and/or other learners.

**Contact details**

If you need further advice, or a participant has a complaint about the course, please contact the RCOT Professional Development team – prof.dev@rcot.co.uk

Facilitating the group session

* **Welcome** (Slide 1:3 minutes)

Welcome the group to the session:

* Introduce yourself if you are not known already to all attendees by giving your name, your job title, your organisation and, in one brief sentence, your interest in the course.
* If the course is being held outside the normal premises of work or study for any of the participants, go through housekeeping:

1. location of toilets;

2. whether there is a planned fire alarm;

3. fire exits;

4. where to congregate if fire alarm activates.

* Nominate a timekeeper if this has not been decided before the session starts.
* If any participants are not known to the others before the start of the session, ask everyone present to briefly introduce themselves by name, job title and organisation.
* Encourage participants to bring their experience to the discussions.
* Remind participants of the following:

1. Only offer information or experiences they feel comfortable about sharing
2. They must act within their professional codes of conduct.
3. Whatever is discussed in the group session must be considered confidential.
4. If they have any concerns about the topic of the course, contact RCOT Professional Development: prof.dev@rcot.co.uk

* **Learning Outcomes**  (Slides 2-3: 2 minutes)
* Briefly review what learners will be able to do as a result of taking this course.

1. Explain that this stage is the foundation of any research. It is important to take the time to work on a good research question. A good research question leads to good research!
2. Sometimes developing and later, refining, the question takes longer than expected. Take the time that is needed – your research will be more rewarding if you stay with this stage until you are confident you have a really clear and specific research question.

\*\*Now divide the participants into small groups if appropriate\*\*

* **1. Your general research topic** (Slide 4 - 10 minutes)

Referring to Activity 1 from the pre-group work (pages 3 and 4 of the workbook), ask participants to share in turn:

* 1. What general topic they have chosen;
  2. Specific aspects that interest them or they want to explore further;
  3. Any particular reasons for their choices, if they feel comfortable doing so.

Be prepared to go first before asking other members of the group in turn.

\*\* Ask the timekeeper to warn the group when 8 minutes have passed, so the remaining 2 minutes can be used to summarise the discussions. \*\*

* **2. Structured frameworks** (Slide 5: 10 minutes)

\*\*This is an activity for working in pairs. Ask participants to work with a partner.\*\*

This activity is designed to help participants discuss the process of using structured frameworks, how they used their concept maps to prepare the completed frameworks, and linking them to the characteristics of a research question.

Highlight to participants that structured frameworks are useful tools to clarify thinking. Explain that frameworks help us to think carefully about each part of the question, considering every element and exploring whether there may be more components relevant to the topic than first appears. This structured process helps to build a query without ambiguities.

Point out that the example demonstrates how the question does not need to follow the framework component order. Here, the question starts with the intervention and is put together as “IOPC”.

Reassure participants that the process of narrowing questions down and thinking about components can be hard. This is why mechanisms such as structured frameworks have been developed. By breaking aspects of a given topic down into component parts, they support us in the process of writing a question.

\*\* Ask the timekeeper to warn the group when 8 minutes have passed. \*\*

* **3. Draft your research question** (Slide 6: 5 minutes)

Participants should write their research question first draft on their own. Attempting to write the question is part of the developmental process. Participants will have time to discuss their questions on the next activity, this time is dedicated solely to the writing of the draft.

Some participants may feel uneasy trying to write a complete question. Remind them that:

* This is only a draft. They will be able to think further about their question and polish it later;
* They can use their notes from the pre-group session and activity 2 of the group session to support them. Using the connections with their original ideas and their structured frameworks may help them draft their question;
* Writing something down is important, even if it *feels* incorrect or imprecise. Putting ideas on the page is just another step in the thinking process and helps participants organise their thoughts.
* **4. Discuss your draft research question** (Slide 7: 15 minutes)

Ask participants to return to their pairs.

During this activity, some participants might express how hard writing was for them.

Reassure them that the mechanisms in this course – structured frameworks, discussions with peers, step by step approach – were designed to help us all in this challenging and complex process.

\*\* Ask the timekeeper to warn the group when 8 minutes have passed. \*\*

* **Conclusion** (Slide 8: 10 minutes)

Concluding points:

1. Research questions should be clear, focused and simple (pre-session Activity 3).
2. Frameworks help us to construct a clear research question (pre-session Activity 4; group session Activity 2);
3. The draft question produced in this course may need more work: keep returning to it until you are satisfied it captures the elements of a good question in line with your interests.

Direct participants to the further resources provided from page 12 of the course workbook. They can refer to them as they refine their questions further.

Remind participants to complete their certificate at the back of the workbook.

Allow 5 minutes for participants to record immediate reflections and plans of action on page 10 of the workbook.

Encourage participants to return to page 12 and following pages in the next few days, and not longer than a week, to review their learning points and add further thoughts and ideas.

Thank participants for their participation and engagement.

Facilitator post-course follow-up

As possible after the course, complete the Facilitation reflection on the next page. Then complete your course facilitator certificate on the following page. File these pages in your CPD portfolio.

Send your feedback about the course to RCOT as described in the next section.

Feedback

Your views are important to us! Please send us your feedback about this Reflective Scenario so that we can make improvements for future participants. You can get in touch in any of the following ways -

* Click to fill out our [feedback form](https://forms.office.com/Pages/ResponsePage.aspx?id=7-ghQ1rN2Eadr3VQBbQNOWV-zdEtQytAgGHq4NY2vXhUMjZEVE9ERkQwOEQ1NlVEN0RLV0ZXS05KNi4u)



* Find the feedback form at <https://bit.ly/3kRLt6S>
* Get to the feedback form through the QR Code.
* Email your suggestions to [Prof.Dev@rcot.co.uk](mailto:Prof.Dev@rcot.co.uk).

Facilitation reflection

Forming Your Research Question

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Date of course | Click or tap here to enter text. |

Did you have concerns about facilitating the course before you started? How realistic were these in retrospect?

Consider what went well. What were the elements that made these aspects work? If you were to facilitate again, how would you make sure you include these elements?

Review what you would do differently next time. What do you want to change and why? If you were to facilitate again, what would you put in place to make this happen?

Do you have any unanswered questions about facilitating the learning of others? Who could you discuss these questions with?

Record your reflective learning points on facilitating the learning of others. If you have more than three, add them on the back of the page.

|  |
| --- |
| **My reflective learning points on facilitating the CPD@RCOT Short Course ‘Forming your research question’** |
| 1. Click or tap here to enter text. |
| 1. Click or tap here to enter text. |
| 1. Click or tap here to enter text. |

**Certificate of**

**Facilitation of Learning**

This is to certify that:

**Your name**

facilitated the CPD@RCOT Short Course

for Number of people people on Date of course

**Forming Your Research Question**

**The learning outcomes for this course are:**

1. Identify a potential research theme within a general topic that interests you;
2. Understand how Structured Frameworks are used to construct a research question;
3. Draft a research question that relates to your interests;
4. Evaluate your learning to plan the next steps of your research.