

# CalSAC Trainer Competencies

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The afterschool field is made up of a diverse and quickly growing workforce. Those entering the field bring with them a vast array of skills and knowledge and range from high school graduates, to community members, to college students, to experienced educators. In order to meet the diverse professional development needs of the afterschool workforce, the field needs highly trained, skilled, knowledgeable and committed trainers.

Given the diversity of the workforce, how can the afterschool field provide training in a way that builds upon the wisdom of participants, while ensuring that participants gain necessary skills and knowledge in a meaningful and effective way?

## PURPOSE OF THE TRAINER COMPETENCIES

CalSAC believes that competencies for trainers in the field of afterschool, based on best practices in training adults, can provide a necessary starting point for ensuring that the training and support the field receives is of the highest quality. CalSAC's Trainer Competencies offer this starting point: a set of competencies that trainers and those who support them can use to assess and build upon trainer skills and knowledge through collaboration and support. These competencies assume that trainers are using a prescribed training curriculum, and therefore do not address skills and knowledge related to designing training activities or curriculum.

The competencies provide a common language to promote dialogue between trainers and those who support them about how the trainer can deepen skills and knowledge and are the foundation of the two assessment tools for CalSAC trainer certification, the *Trainer Self-Assessment* and the *Mentor Observation Tool*. We ask new trainers to complete the *Trainer Self-Assessment*, share their thoughts with their mentor, and use the tool as an ongoing resource prior to their mentor observation. We also feel strongly that the final step in any observation should be the collaborative goal setting that takes place between the trainer and the person supporting them.

## TRAINER COMPETENCIES

CalSAC has developed a set of 25 competencies that address five areas: Adult Learning, Training Delivery, Professionalism and Ethics, Equity and Diversity, and Co-Training.

### **Adult Learning**

1. The trainer understands and applies the stages of the **Adult Learning Cycle**, different kinds of **learning styles**, and opportunities to **promote transfer** of learning during the training event.
2. The trainer assesses and **provides feedback regarding participants' acquisition** of knowledge and skills at the completion of the training and **recommends additional training** to promote skill development.
3. The trainer facilitates **experiential activities** by giving **clear instructions**, providing ongoing **direction and feedback** to participants, and connecting the activity to **learning objectives**.

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4. The trainer ensures the **effectiveness of experiential activities** in achieving objectives by engaging in **problem-solving** when the activity is not progressing or accomplishing learning objectives, **making changes** to the activity (if needed), and **debriefing** the activity to promote application of learning.

### Training Delivery

5. The trainer orients participants to a **comfortable physical learning environment**, including preparing the training room to promote **comfort, interaction, and group development**, greeting and **engaging participants** and attending to the **social, emotional, and comfort** needs of the learners.
6. The trainer uses an **introductory routine** to create a **positive group climate**, including use of name tags/name tents, introductions, agenda review and context setting for the training topic, group agreements or ground rules, and icebreakers/team builders.
7. The trainer maintains a **professional demeanor** appropriate to the topic, audience, and environment, including **introducing oneself** as a representative of CalSAC and the Trainer Network and reviewing CalSAC information at the beginning or end of the training; being **well-organized** and fully prepared for the training with materials, handouts, and visual aids; and adhering to **pre-set time periods** for the training.
8. The trainer adjusts **their presentation methods, use of language, and group management style** to achieve the optimal level of formality/informality for the group, and/or to match learners' level of expertise.
9. The trainer **uses summarization, bridging, and segue** to help preserve continuity when moving between segments of the training.
10. The trainer understands the **factors that can create resistance and dissension** within training groups, including a lack of pre-training preparation, forced attendance at training, pre-existing interpersonal conflict among group members and personal, social, and emotional factors of participants.
11. The trainer uses strategies **to keep the group focused, on task, and within established time periods**, while remaining responsive to group needs and concerns.
12. The trainer recognizes **non-verbal cues** from participants and uses **active listening and reflection** to determine their meaning.
13. The trainer **encourages group involvement, clarifies and expands** upon participant contributions, **guides** the direction of the discussion, and **enhances participants' understanding** of the content and concepts.
14. The trainer effectively handles **confrontation and conflict with and between participants**; uses a series of **verbal and non-verbal interventions** (such as moving towards or away from a participant) to **de-escalate the conflict**, explores and clarifies the issues, and facilitates resolution.
15. The trainer uses **information from written participant evaluations** and feedback from mentors and project staff to identify opportunities for improving the training and their training facilitation skills.

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### Professionalism and Ethics

16. The trainer keeps **current on trends, policies, climate, and best practices** in the field, and **incorporates up-to-date information** into training modules.
17. The trainer works jointly with the person requesting training prior to the training by **conducting a thorough intake** and incorporating agency-specific or region-specific terminology and information into the training.
18. The trainer understands the **roles of agency managers, supervisors, training managers, themselves, and learners in promoting transfer of learning**; knows the importance of **supervisory intervention** with learners both before and after training; understands how **organizational and individual barriers** can prevent transfer; and works collaboratively with others to **implement effective transfer** of learning activities.

### Equity and Diversity

19. The trainer understands and recognizes how their own cultural background, social class or age **affects communication style**, choice of words, body language, and mannerisms; how **their communication style**, choice of words, body language, and mannerisms **influences their training delivery** towards participants from different cultures and ethnicities; and ways in which their cultural perspective or social class may **affect their ability to relate to participants** from different cultural groups.
20. The trainer incorporates **content, examples, and resources** that enhance participants' understanding of and comfort with culture and the cultural issues inherent in the training topic.
21. The trainer **differentiates stereotyping from culturally relevant information** and facilitates discussions of stereotyping and its negative impact on cultural interactions.
22. The trainer identifies when **cultural misunderstanding may be contributing to interpersonal conflict** in the training and uses a variety of strategies to explore possible solutions to conflicts.

### Co-Training

23. The trainer **develops clear and fair roles, responsibilities, and expectations** with Co-Trainer.
24. The trainer works together with their co-trainer to **develop a training delivery plan** which makes the best use of each other's **content expertise, delivery styles, strengths, and personalities**.
25. The trainer constructively **manages the challenges of co-training**, including managing verbal and nonverbal communication; sharing responsibility and authority; responding to **cues from the group** when the co-trainer is leading, respecting the co-trainers lead, while concurrently providing needed support and validation; dealing constructively with differences in opinion; and assuming full responsibility for the training (when needed).