

Guidelines for observation and interviews Crosstalk

Observation

Observation is, of necessity, usually incorporated into other things one is doing, but at discreet moments it helps to write down notes.

Communication and self-expression

Team co-operation

- successful work in small groups?
- respect for others' contributions?

Recognition of complementary strengths

- mutual support provided?

Achievement of tasks

- success?
- satisfaction with performance?

Passive/active role

- active contribution to discussion?
- new ideas offered?

Digital, writing, interviewing skills

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Interviewing

Ask 'how things are going' and, when appropriate, probe for specific information related to the core aims of the activity/training. Try to secure concrete examples. Compose (brief) notes on these interactions; relate the specific examples given and provide your own assessment or reflection. Where more precise information is needed, it helps to list topics to be addressed during the course of the session. There needs to be flexibility in the order and manner in which the topics are addressed; in this sense the interviews are open-ended and allow both the interviewer and interviewee to collectively explore topics as they see fit. If one decides to tape record the interview, a note should be made of the main responses. These will assist in identifying the portions of the interview that need transcribing precisely.

An interview schedule or guide will contain specific questions around the following list of general topics:

description of and reflection on *objectives* of the activity

description of and reflection on *what actually happened*

description of and reflection on *participants*

reflection on contribution of the *interviewee and his/her colleagues*

summary of *positive aspects* of activity

summary of *negative aspects* of activity

specific recommendations for *improving* future activities