

Set expectations.

Ensure that all participants are aware that there are no stupid questions and that all of the people in the room are there to learn. Seasoned trainers will often relay this idea by first admitting that they may not know all of the answers and that if they get stumped they will do their best to research the answer and provide the best information to the class. This creates an atmosphere that cultivates a network of learning and growth, not judgement and fear.



Value each individual.

No matter how outlandish or silly an idea, value each person and their ideas as they come. One participant may raise their hand and share a story that isn't well-received. As long as it doesn't completely go against licensing and best practice standards, you can show that you respect and value their input. Simple phrases such as "I'm glad you shared that with us" or "what an interesting experience" are neutral enough to not influence one's opinion but still reflect a certain amount of value.



Be a role model.

Exhibit the behavior you would like to see from other participants. Address people professionally and with respect to model how best to interact during a training session. With some challenging personalities you may even need to make a point of praising others in their vicinity for their appropriate interactions.



Be firm.

Unfortunately there may be times when the trainer has to put their foot down and not allow someone's disrespectful behavior to continue. This is rare, but do not be afraid to quickly and professionally address a problem as it begins to arise.

