



# Tips Sheet for Program Leaders





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This summary of best practices for program leaders and facilitators is based on lessons learned from Hispanic researchers and practitioners and is not intended to be an exhaustive list of recommendations.

### PROGRAM PLANNING

- **Meet with stakeholders in the community before providing services.**
  - Obtain recommendations from community leaders about where services should be delivered.
  - Learn about the specific needs in the community and the population served such as employment, literacy, etc.
  - Understand the core cultural values that inform the attitudes and behaviors of Hispanics in the community being served.
- **Hire and train Hispanic facilitators to lead the groups, and coordinate child care through licensed child care providers.**
  - Actively recruit facilitators from the community or those who share the same cultural background as the group. Increased retention and satisfaction occurs when participants can identify with the facilitator(s).
  - Engage licensed child care providers to create a safe, fun environment for children (may need to be bilingual).
- **Incorporate values and issues specific to Hispanics in curriculum delivery.**
  - Plan to use examples and activities that reflect the Hispanic culture. Examples and activities that include children and extended family members is one way of incorporating the value of “familismo” in curriculum delivery.

### PROGRAM IMPLEMENTATION

- **Create an inviting environment.**
  - Greet each couple and participant by name.
  - Begin by engaging couples in a culturally-relevant activity before introducing curriculum content.
  - Provide refreshments and entertainment.
  - Observe couples’ comfort level and make adjustments as needed.
  - Explore some of the barriers that may keep couples from participating in the group such as time, location, child care needs, etc.
- **Assume that each participant has valuable contributions to offer to the group discussion.**
  - Notice participants’ strengths and incorporate appropriate examples into curriculum content.
  - Invite comments, questions, and participation without pressuring participants to contribute.
  - Enhance the content with culturally relevant metaphors, examples, and opportunities for practicing the skills.
- **Be flexible and sensitive to the process and group dynamics.**
  - Be flexible when couples shift discussions away from the curriculum. Be open to discussing the issues that are important to them and the impact they have on the couple relationship.
  - Be aware that couples may express a need that is beyond the scope of the relationship education program. Be prepared to provide general referrals for additional services, perhaps in the form of a resource contact list.
- **Ask for clarification of words or phrases that may be unclear.**
  - Words and phrases may mean one thing in one Latin American country and something different in another. Understanding the colloquialisms of the population being served is important.
- **Model effective communication skills.**
  - Summarize observations made by participants and highlight, whenever possible, the strengths of the comments made.

### PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

- **Ask for feedback from group participants as to how the program may be improved.**
  - Use evaluation forms as a way to obtain specific feedback from couples.
  - Invite couples who enjoyed the program to help with recruitment.