

Briefing for specialist advisers

Thank you for agreeing to make one or more inputs to an action learning group.

The specialist adviser plays an important role in supporting a process that is owned by the action learning group members. Each learner has their own personal plan for learning and questions to research, with small group working and meetings with the whole group to draw on inputs as needed and to share insights and experiences. The aim here is to profile the role of specialist advisers in supporting workplace action learning. If you are new to this role, the group facilitator will provide additional briefing information.

What does a specialist adviser do?

As a specialist adviser you either provide a training and/or consulting input or specialist resource expertise to one or more learners. Here is an overview of the terminology we use:

- The person with overall responsibility for the group is called the facilitator.
- Each group is responsible (with the facilitator) for deciding when and where it wishes to meet and for making its own arrangements.
- The steps or levels (1-5) of professional certification are known as a pathway and group members or a specialist facilitator (if available) will compile a quarterly group progress report.

The facilitator and/or the learners themselves will have asked you to participate because they have recognized the skills and expertise that you possess. In addition to learning from formal inputs (e.g. training sessions) and informally via questions from learners, each group member will each have their own web of learning support, with numerous sources of assistance. As there are many routine activities that they might utilize as a basis for self-help, we hope that each learner will harness them, along with their non-work activities and networks.

Preparation

We encourage all learners to enlist expert support for aspects of their work. If you are acting in this capacity on an informal basis, the learner will brief you on their work and the way(s) in which you might assist. If you are making a formal input, the facilitator will brief you beforehand. In addition to a specific brief, they may provide you with:

- A list of group members.
- Details of the agenda and timetable.
- A briefing on how your session(s) fit with prior and future input activities.
- A time allocation for your input(s).
- Briefing resources about the action learning process.

As the facilitator is your session guide, you may wish to ask him/her about the use and availability of supporting resource materials for your session (e.g. reports, readings, cases, exercises, training resources, textbooks, etc.) as well as pre-agreeing practical items such as the presentation equipment available to support your session.

Running your session

The facilitator will normally be present at the beginning of your session to introduce you to the group. All learners are encouraged to write up their personal learning in log book format and in so doing, to note down questions, insights and issues that they might need assistance with. If you have any feedback comments on your session and/or interaction with the learners, do please direct these to the facilitator.

Feedback

If you have any general or specific suggestions for future sessions and/or ideas as to how you might continue to provide support to one or more group members, do please discuss these with the facilitator.

Thanks again for sharing your time and expertise.