

OMOD TEACHING RESOURCES



OMOD and the Ethic of Accommodation

VSA Texas promotes an “ethic of accommodation” that is aimed at providing appropriate accommodations while still encouraging maximum independence in every step of the process. What constitutes an “appropriate accommodation” will differ for each person and “independence” is highly individualized.

As you begin your work as an OMOD workshop facilitator, you will need to know how to provide accommodations, and when and how to ask for and support a participant’s maximum independence. Because there is often an emotional response to asking for, or using, accommodations, it is up to the facilitator to develop a safe context in which the participant can consider the available options.

- Before you offer to provide an accommodation, *Ask First!*
- Keep in mind the push/pull between asking for maximum independence and offering/supporting accommodations. It’s rarely simple to strike that balance.

Three Categories of Accommodation: Physical, Cognitive, Social

Physical Accommodation: Be aware of the need for physical accommodations, which can be as simple as modifying a podium or offering an alternative microphone. Any of the following common accommodations need to be available to OMOD participants.

Common physical accommodations:

- Arranging the physical environment to make it easy for a person who uses a walker or wheelchair to access a table or the stage.
- Finding a “scribe” to write down the story for a person who cannot physically write.
- Accommodating needs for physical breaks, or providing assistance with mobility, bathroom breaks, etc., when appropriate.
- Providing a clip-on lavalier microphone for a speaker who cannot hold or otherwise use a standard microphone

To Evaluate whether an OMOD participant might benefit from a physical accommodation:

- **Is the person able to independently move through the environment, using accommodations they use every day** (wheelchair, forearm supports, scooter, cane, walker, etc.), **or without accommodation?**
- Ask about mobility on temporary ramps (present in many conference speaking venues). *Plan around the mobility limitations of each participant.*
 - Some people who use wheelchairs for mobility can walk a few feet, or can stand to do a presentation in front of a podium. Don't assume that the wheelchair means that they are always "wheelchair bound." *Ask them!*
 - Feel free to use an activity during the first or second class session that will *explore what each person can physically do.*
 - Be careful not to over-assist. Don't assume what someone can and cannot do. **Always ask first.**

What NOT to do:

- *Don't insist on a physical accommodation.* It's up to the person to decide whether to use any accommodation.
- *Avoid suggesting an accommodation while in a group setting.* Try to always ask the participant in private.
- *Unless requested, don't offer your opinion about what the person currently uses as accommodation.* Deciding on which devices or supports to use is a complicated process and OMOD facilitators should be respectful of the person's decision.

Cognitive Skill Accommodation: Each of us has strengths and needs when it comes to what we are capable of doing. OMOD recognizes the need to modify the demands of the writing workshop to accommodate to each person's particular strengths and needs.

How to determine whether an OMOD participant might benefit from modifying the demands of the writing workshop:

- **Is the participant readily participating in the writing session of the workshop?**

- When participants don't know how to start the writing process, or how to relay their story, you may see stalling, inattention, talking with others, etc.
- If you see these behaviors, you will need to interact individually with that participant and determine what the issue is.
 - Ask what's happening.
 - Sometimes difficulty with handwriting is the problem.
 - Ask them what they need. Then try to provide it.
 - A volunteer scribe could write down what they say, or it could be recorded for later transcription.

Ask questions:

- Do you need help deciding on what to write?
- Do you need help writing it? Offer alternatives for generating a story.
- If a participant can't get started on the prompt that has been given, ask him or her to remember a powerful memory, or to talk about something that happened to them that made them have strong feelings. These make good conference stories.
- Accept anything they offer as their "story." The point is to get them started, not to critique the content.

➤ **If a person has difficulty writing (in terms of generating the sentences and expressing ideas), it may be necessary for someone to ask him or her questions about the story they want to tell and then write it down.**

- Writers who have difficulty organizing their thoughts on paper will sometimes come back from the 15 minute writing session with disorganized written notes, or multiple unsuccessful attempts to start a story. That's your cue as facilitator to modify the expectation so this person can succeed.
- For people who cannot write easily, sometimes the story needs to be generated verbally, perhaps as a conversation, and then produced in written form by the facilitator or volunteer.
- The conversation can be recorded and then transcribed, or hand-written

➤ **Sometimes a participant has difficulty staying with a story line.** "Difficulty staying with a story line" means that the person has the central idea in mind, but

what comes out on paper might be a stream of seemingly unrelated ideas or conversational tangents.

- For these participants, facilitators can offer to modify the task from a 1-person writing requirement to a 2-person project. Help the participant select another participant, or facilitator, to develop a coherent story.
- You can use the two-person writing idea as a way to generate the story, but you can also use it in presentation. To do this, the facilitator will need to offer a sample or example of how the piece could be edited to include another person.

Once the initial writing is done, each story will need to be edited for clarity and to make sure that the writer’s message comes across to the audience. For OMOD, “editing” is always *collaborative*.

A word about editing: In OMOD, facilitators aren’t so much editors as *partners*. We call it “editing” because facilitators are asked to help a participant generate more or different content in order to complete a story, or perhaps cut down the length of a piece to fit the venue you’re imagining, or accommodate for a person’s speech patterns. Or sharpen the content focus so that the meaning is clear. None of this is done with a red pencil! It’s done with a genuine sense of collaboration, in an effort to make sure that the person’s message comes across in a way that is understandable and satisfying to the participant and his or her audience.

In the “editing” phase of your work as an OMOD facilitator, you will:

- Work with participants to develop their “best story” by editing and revising and expanding (or re-focusing to shorten) the content of their work as needed.
- The “best story” is the one that the participant wants to share.
- Recognize what’s missing in a piece (detail, clear theme, meaning, attitude, personal details)
- Teach all participants to listen for “power punches” in each story (handout)

➤ ***Does the person have a clear idea of what the story is about?***

- If you have to ask yourself this question, the story as written or presented lacks focus.

- Your job will be to help the writer discover what the message is, and then show the participant how to get that message across. *(This will be reviewed in the writing example portion of OMOD Train- the-Trainer workshop.)*

➤ ***Does the person routinely rely on others to read or share their stories for them?***

- Some people who are initially reluctant to read or present their own material are simply fearful and lacking in confidence. Facilitators should ask if such participants can speak, and if they are willing to.
- Sometimes all it takes to help a participant speak up is permission to do the best you can and not worry about perfection.
- Make sure that the other workshop participants are listening. A shy participant who attempts to speak needs a ready audience.
- Shorten the piece to fit into the allotted presentation time if the person's delivery is too slow to use the original (longer) story script. However, use caution to not significantly dilute the story's message.
- For those who actually cannot speak effectively (speech/language impairment), the facilitator will need to support whatever alternative communication system the person already uses, or invent a new one.

➤ **Does the person speak clearly and with good control of their voice volume and rate of speech?**

- If you have a participant whose speech is difficult to understand, it's important to acknowledge that problem. Ask the participant to repeat what was said, then repeat it back to him or her to see if you have correctly understood. If that doesn't work, you can ask the participant what he or she usually does to repair a communication breakdown. Many people with significant speech impairments have someone in their lives that might be willing to help others get accustomed to their unusual speech pattern. Often, once someone familiar with the speech patterns can "interpret" in new situations, people in the group begin to understand more of what is being said. That's a win for everyone.
- If volume is a problem, try coaching for more sustained breath support.
- Be open to offering a microphone for performances if volume is an issue, and even in the workshops if volume is consistently a problem.

Social Accommodations: Social anxiety can cause an OMOD participant to lose focus, to have difficulty in group activities, and make it hard to write a story. Difficulty interpreting and responding to peers makes it hard to be a team player and to stay involved in activities.

If a participant exhibits this kind of social difficulty, try:

- First, ask the participant how they are doing (if they want help, if they need a break, etc.). Many times, OMOD participants know what they need and can tell you if you ask.
- Offering to pair the person with someone he or she knows, as a partner.
- Modifying the task to make it easier/more comfortable.
- Soliciting help from someone who knows the participant better. Just having a familiar person nearby can make a significant difference in how it feels to work with others in OMOD.
- Finally, you can offer a different task to do, just to break the tension.

Generating Draft of Showcase Lineup

Facilitators complete this after Session 4 and before Session 5

Facilitator Homework: Whenever possible, do this with another person who is involved in the workshop. Two heads are better than one. Review the copy of everyone's writing that you have compiled. Look for thematic links and/or potentially collaborative pieces. Draft a presentation lineup for solo and group pieces to present to the participants during Session 5.

Three most important parts of the process:

1. **Topic** – assign each piece a general topical category. This is critical to having a show that has thematic coherence
2. **Establishing a “Topic Arc”**
3. **Properly allotting time:** Facilitators impact the success of the lineup by timing each piece to reinforce the topic arc (giving proportionate amounts of time)

Generating a tentative draft of the lineup for solo and group pieces

- Determine how much time the group has for the presentation/performance.
- Gather all the pieces you would like to use.
- Print out all of the available writing that you'd like to use. Even short, “incomplete” homework assignments can be useful.
- Facilitator(s) read through (or listen to) all of the writings.

TOPIC: When all the pieces of writing have been read, the facilitators discuss each one and assign it a possible “topic” area. They have to agree on what the piece is saying, or trying to say, in order to assign it to a topic. Here is how OMOD has done it in the past, but you may need to do it differently, depending on who is involved in the process and what their specific skills are.

- If you are both working with printed stories, physically lay out the pieces on a table or other flat surface, putting “like” items together (all the pieces that have to do with riding the bus go in the same pile. All the pieces about work go into another pile. Etc.) If you are using a different medium, modify the process to fit what you're using (audio recordings, etc.)

- If a piece doesn't fit into a category, then identify it as a separate item. For instance, if someone writes about loving animals or pets, and nobody else does, but that piece is really good, put into the "loves animals" category, all by itself. It's often easy to fit something like that into a lineup even if it doesn't seem to "fit" on the first reading.
- Don't worry if you don't agree with each other as to which category a piece belongs in. You're going for a first sifting of these materials. The pieces may jump around into other categories; they often do with inexperienced writers.
- Now try to imagine these pieces in a show lineup order. Write the tentative lineup down, discuss your decisions about where to put each piece, but don't spend hours on this. Once you read through the pieces in the order you've created, you may want to change the order anyway.

A TOPIC ARC: Even if your group has not produced many stories that have obvious connections with other stories, you can create the connections by the way you put the show together. You don't want the show to appear to be like a talent show, a look-at-what-I-can-do kind of experience. Almost any set of writings, when the writing is about real life, can be arranged to make an overall "point" or have a recognizable theme. Here are some hints to use in creating the "arc," or the sequence of stories.

- Start with quick, easily accessible and intelligible pieces that will get and keep audience attention. Starting off with an ensemble piece is great if the people involved in it can be relied on to keep the timing of the piece going. If the timing of an ensemble piece doesn't work, the piece will fail, no matter how cleverly written. Also, in ensemble pieces, the writing doesn't have to be that sharp because people have short bits to deliver and there is movement between speakers.
- Remember that whatever you do as the first piece in the show will set the tone for the whole thing.
- If you're going to shift from ensemble to individual pieces, think about links between writings. Does the piece about work go ahead of the piece about dating? Or can you make a link between them?

- **If you have a solo piece written by someone who doesn't speak well, but the piece is good, could that one become an ensemble piece?** If Priscilla writes a great piece about disability and online dating, but usually can't get it together to actually speak in front of people, use some alternative methods.
 - Enlist three or four other people to do the piece with her.
 - Four people, with their backs to the audience. Each with a poster board sentence (or two) that they read out loud once she moves toward them and taps them on the shoulder.
 - She can have her own poster board sentence, and read it if that works.
 - Or use a background video, or have other women in the cast add their own experiences to her piece, but let her story be the most fully developed one.
 - Or let her pull her "ideas" (written on large cue cards) out of a big box with a funny label on it, and she reads the card (1 sentence only!) and drops it on the floor. Repetition adds humor to the piece and saves her from having to remember anything.

- **Look for "performability."** If someone writes a short piece about advocacy and it feels dry and not very original, but advocacy is something that all of the cast members are interested in, look for the one sentence in there that makes you interested as a reader.
 - *Example 1:* Maybe there's a sentence in there about joining with others in advocacy issues, like "When we all get together, we're a big noisy group and we can really get things done!" That's a performable moment. It invites you, as facilitator, to make the piece an ensemble piece. To give each of three or four other people lines from her story, to have them interact with each other using (most likely somewhat modified versions of her text) and to have them all end with being a big noisy group!
 - *Example 2:* Someone writes a piece about prayer. That person has a hard time remembering lines, but really enjoys the speaking part of this project. He's written a piece about prayer and meditation that he learned after his head injury. He cannot be expected to present the piece as a stand-up piece because of his memory problems, but it's such a good piece you would like to use it. Maybe end the lineup with this lovely text about finding a way back to life. He talks about sitting in a meditative posture, about

prayer beads, etc. So, you try having him tie specific lines in his piece to specific physical actions. He can remember a sequence of physical actions, and that helps him to associate which lines go with which postures. And, it gets the audience's full attention, because he is moving a little bit while he's talking, and the movement complements the narrative. You've found a performative aspect that will help him deal with his problem with memory, win/win.

A piece for opening the show.

- Always start with something on the short side, 2 – 4 minutes, unless you've got a terrific first speaker/presenter
- What do you want the focus of the overall presentation to be? Pick a piece that heads the audience toward that topic or issue.
- Who's your best presenter? Don't feel obligated to use that person first. Sometimes it's better to put that person in to reboot after less capable participants have slowed down the energy, etc. But DO start with someone who is a reliably strong speaker.
- Never start with something sad or emotionally complicated. You have to earn that with an audience. It comes later.
- Humor is always good, but you have to make sure that your audience will "get" what is supposed to be funny. Sometimes audiences don't think it's ok to laugh.
- Start personal: Have you heard "The personal is political"? Well, it is, and it's also very compelling if it's done right. If you start the show off with something that audience members will easily be able to understand, you've got them right from the beginning.
 - Try something like a piece about childhood memories, or having sisters, or trying to ride a bike, or not being able to cook well. Something simple and personal, a piece that most people can identify with. OR, do the opposite, and start out with something that people have never thought about, like how it feels when somebody asked you "What happened to you?" or "What's wrong with you?" in public. Start with a challenge, or with a simple personal connection. Either one, done right, serves to get your audience in tune with your speakers.

Potential closing for the lineup

- Bringing the group together for a short ensemble piece helps audiences remember each person in the group, and signals to them that the presentation may be drawing to a close. That's a good thing.
- Use "What you don't know about me" - a quick piece where people talk about what they are like in private, in 1 or 2 sentences. *Example:* "What you don't know about me is that I taking care of my 7 year old niece. Every afternoon, we go for a walk and I buy her a treat at the store near where she lives." Or "When you're not looking, I'm trying to learn how to sew. I made a pot holder last week, and it works!" or "What you don't know about me is that I go to the gym. I ride the bus. I do weight work Tuesdays and Fridays." These are just small facts about their lives, but taken as a whole, what comes out is that everyone who has been a speaker has things in their life that are exactly like what's in the lives of everyone in the audience.
- **Or try, "I'm from."** A short and deliberately poetic or lyrical statement of what has influenced their lives most and/or how they have tackled limitations. Very short, very to the point, as poetic as anyone wants to get, as long as it's short. *Example:* "I'm from special education just because people didn't know what I could do, but I know what I can do" or "I'm from small towns in south Texas, from living in a state institution for 10 years, and now I'm from that place where you learn to live on your own." Or "I'm from being that girl with the crutches, from 'You need to look elsewhere, you don't fit here.' Now I'm fitting in just fine." "I'm From" can really finish off just about any showcase with a sense of pride and sincerity without being sentimental. It can be done by each person moving to a designated spot on the stage or in the room, saying their name first, and then their sentence, and then the next person comes into that space and does the same. You can arrange them in a tableau, with the final person completing the tableau and that gives you a good visual, unified image to the end the show.

TIMING: Once you have a preliminary draft, consider:

- How much time does each piece take to perform?
- Do you have that much time?
- If not, you can either
 - Cut an entire piece
 - Shorten existing pieces
 - Combine two stories that might be complimentary into one to shave off some time

Who's My Audience? (Session 3 Optional Activity)

In Session 3, OMOD participants are asked to review what they've written and begin to imagine presenting their Best Story to a live audience.

As a facilitator, this gives you an opportunity to think and talk about "audience" and to teach participants to consider their audience when they prepare their presentations. You are not obligated to have this conversation as part of Session 3, but if you want to introduce this concept, here are some questions that could frame that discussion.

1 Who might be interested in hearing your stories? (5 minutes)

- Guide them to identify potential audiences for their selected stories, including the OMOD Showcase and possible future audiences.
 - **Possible audiences:** Friends, families, and professionals/attendants who know the participants, *Goodwill Industries* conference, *Inclusion Works* Conference, Self-Advocacy conference, Youth Leadership conference, etc.

#2 How do the people in your audience determine how you tell your story?

(5 minutes)

- **Discussion Example:**
 - If I know that my audience consists of therapists (OT, PT, SLP, PA, etc.) there is a good chance that they will be open to stories about how I have learned to be independent, about my job, or my dating relationships.
 - On the contrary, if my audience is a parent group, they might be interested in hearing about family relationships, families working together, family life, ways to have fun together, redefining what "family" means, etc.
- **The more attention OMOD participants pay to who constitutes their audience for any given presentation, the more successful they will be.**

#3 How can I keep the Showcase audience interested? (10 minutes)

- **First**, imagine what the Showcase audience will be interested in (Showcase is the first audience they will perform for)
 - **Consider things such as:**
 - Humorous stories about exciting real life experiences (travel, sports, music, learning to cook, helping your Grandfather, etc.)
 - Stories that explain or describe their daily life and living situations (Where do you live? What supports do you need? How is your life different from/same as mine?)
 - Work, education, dating, religion
- **Second**, briefly discuss, and identify the “power punches” (the strongest part of their piece, the “message”) in their stories and verify that their message suits their audience.

At the end of the group discussion, instruct the participants to return to the main group and briefly discuss the messages they want to share with their Showcase audience. (5-8 minutes)

Writing Exercise: Revisions (25 minutes)

Instruct the participants to make the changes discussed in small groups to their stories. Encourage them to break their stories up into one- or two-sentence paragraphs for the microphone activity following the break.

Video Coaching (Session 5 Optional Activity)

Learning Objectives:

Participants will learn to self-assess their story delivery through a guided group review of their videorecorded presentations.

Supplies:

1. Video camera (This activity can be done with a number of different cameras, but some models may be more conducive for immediate playback, which is necessary for completing this activity within the typical three-hour session).
2. Video playback equipment (this should include a computer connected to a projector or other monitor large enough for the entire class to view clearly and speaker(s) loud enough for the whole class to hear).
3. Copies of the Showcase Lineup for all participants

Basic Instructions:

To maximize the use of time, facilitators who plan to use Video Coaching will set up Session 5 to look like this:

- Facilitators distribute the draft of the Showcase Lineup to all participants and helpers.
- 1:1 coaching takes place with participants in the regular Workshop space
- Videotaping takes place in a separate space so as not to interrupt the larger group's work, and to minimize distractions while participants are being videotaped.
- Use the Showcase Lineup to set the order for videotaping so that participants begin to understand who will go before them, and after them, in the actual presentation.
- Videotape each participant practicing their presentation.
- Once all the videotaping is complete, reassemble the entire group for a review of the videotaped presentation.

Instructions for the Video Review:

- **Review Audience Etiquette**
 - Before viewing the videos, the instructor will reiterate key points from the previous session's discussion on proper audience etiquette. For example: refrain from talking or texting; silence your phone, give full attention to speaker, etc.
- **Remind participants to look carefully at their own video and do a simple self-assessment** (Ask them to answer the questions out loud):
 - Was I easy to understand? (rate of speech, volume, clear pronunciation)
 - What did my body say about me while I was speaking?
 - What was the Greatest Thing about me?
 - What could I improve?
- **Then, ask these four questions to their peers.**
 - Was the speaker easy to understand? (rate of speech, volume, clear pronunciation)
 - What did her body say about her? (nervous, happy, angry, shy?)
 - What was the Greatest Thing about the speaker's presentation?
 - What could the person improve?
- **End by identifying two or three main things for each person to focus on during the week as preparation for the Showcase.**

Remember:

When coaching individually or employing videotape feedback in your OMOD workshop:

- **Always be supportive:** no room for negativity on any level
- Look for changes **participants are willing to make**
- **Respect the story**, make suggestions, don't take over!
- **Nothing is ever perfect and nothing ever needs to be!**

Including All Learners:

- Encourage participants with visual impairments to pay special attention to the vocal aspects of each presentation:
 - Could they understand the speaker?
 - Did the speaker pronounce clearly?
 - Did the speaker sound nervous or confident?
 - Did the speaker speak too slowly or quickly?
 - Was the speaker loud enough?

- Encourage sighted participants to visually describe or explain the physical aspects of each presentation. For example:
 - If a participant observes that the speaker is nervous, ask them to explain why. What specifically about the speaker's body language suggests she may be nervous? Was she avoiding eye contact during her presentation? This serves the double purpose of audio describing the video presentation and reinforcing what different body language communicates to the audience.

- Encourage hearing participants to do the same for deaf or hard of hearing participants, but describing the vocal qualities instead.
- Offer to replay brief excerpts of each presentation that exemplify different observations, which may also coincide with each other. For example:
 - When a speaker looks down and avoids eye contact, their voice may also become quieter and less clear, as their speech is directed downwards. This may give the audience an impression that the speaker is either nervous or uninterested in their own story. Point out these connections to participants who are visually impaired or hard of hearing and may not be aware of them.

Extensions:

- You may want to brainstorm about ways for participants to assess their own presentations using the technology they have available at home. This may include their phones, webcams or built-in computer cameras for recording video, voice recorders or built-in computer microphones for isolated recorded audio review, etc. Ask the participants what kind of technology they have available and provide basic instruction in how to utilize that technology for video or audio self-assessment.

- You may also choose to incorporate an alternate prompt during the filming portion of this activity to demonstrate the contrast between a more conversational, off-the-cuff presentation and a prepared reading of a story. For example, asking a participant to tell a story about something funny that happened to them in the last few weeks may draw out a more relaxed and engaging delivery than the story they are preparing for the showcase which they have read over and over again. Play back one presentation after another for the participant, point out these differences, and encourage them to memorize or familiarize themselves enough with their story that they can go off script more frequently and/or incorporate more conversational elements in their showcase presentations.

Feedback:

- When you bring the group together before leaving the workshop on Session 5:
 - Ask the participants how they are feeling about their stories, their presentations, and any other concerns they might have.
 - Ask if anyone has any questions or concerns about the upcoming showcase.
 - If any participants feel nervous about the upcoming showcase, offer tips about how to cope with stage fright.

OMOD Volunteer Training Guide

Volunteers are essential to the success of any OMOD workshop. Volunteers may assist with a number of tasks throughout the six weeks of the OMOD class, including but not limited to:

- Classroom setup and cleanup
- Making copies of handouts and/or participants' stories
- Scanning and emailing participants' stories to the workshop facilitator
- Taking notes on a flipchart(s) or whiteboard/chalkboard during select activities
- Facilitating small group discussions and/or activities
- Setting up microphone(s) and PA equipment and adjusting the microphone(s), volume levels, and/or microphone stand(s) for OMOD participants during class readings, rehearsal, and even the final showcase
- Audio describing videos or other visual media used in the classroom for people who are visually impaired
- **Note:** We do not, however, recommend using a volunteer American Sign Language (ASL) interpreter unless he or she is a professional, offering their time to the project.

The two most important tasks OMOD volunteers are called on to do are:

- **Scribing and/or prompting**
 - “Scribing” means physically writing or typing for participants who cannot write themselves. This primarily consists of simply writing down word for word what the participant is saying. There may be times when the volunteer will need to stop to clarify something the participant said, but everything written down should be in the participant’s own words.
 - “Prompting” means asking pertinent questions of a participant so that, when answered, may reveal a coherent story. These questions often include the “who, what, where, when, why, and how” of the story, but may also include questions for clarification on what the participant said or meant to say. Participants who require prompting may be able to physically write with little difficulty but struggle to think of something to write about or structure their story into a clear beginning, middle, and end with a strong message.

- Most OMOD classes will include a combination of participants who need assistance scribing and participants who require prompting. Many times you will not know who will need exactly what kind of help until the first session, so it is important that your volunteers have a basic understanding of how to do both.
- **Coaching**
 - The fifth session of every OMOD class includes one-to-one coaching, which means each OMOD participant will have their own coach, usually a volunteer, to listen to the participant's story and offer constructive feedback and positive encouragement to facilitate the best possible presentation of the participant's story. To ensure the success of this coaching session, there must be at least one volunteer or other staff person per participant. Each volunteer will receive individualized coaching instructions for each participant (see *NOTE FOR FACILITATORS at the close of Session 4* for more on how to generate individualized coaching instructions), but all volunteers should be familiar with the principles of coaching before the start of class.

To best orient your volunteers, you should organize a three-hour volunteer training ideally at least one week prior to the first session on the same day of the week and time and in the same location as the class itself, so you can assess your volunteers' punctuality and ability to travel to the classroom location.

(Refer to *Volunteer Recruitment Packet* on OMOD website for more information on how to recruit volunteers for an OMOD class and sample training packet forms mentioned below.)

Here is a sample schedule, with brief explanation, for a typical OMOD volunteer training:

- **Welcome and Introduction to OMOD** (5 minutes)
 - Review the goals of the six-week course and showcase.

- **Read and Sign Training Packet Forms** (20 minutes)
 - General Policies
 - Volunteer Contract
 - Emergency Contact Information
 - Media Release Authorization
 - Volunteer Timesheet
 - Confidentiality Agreement

- **Tour Classroom Facility** (10 minutes)
 - Emergency Exits
 - Bathrooms
 - Break room, if available

- **Microphone Equipment Demo** (15 minutes)
 - Show the volunteers how the microphone(s) and PA equipment are set up and turned on, and have each volunteer, if able, practice adjusting the microphone stand.

- **Review Six Sessions** (45 minutes)
 - Provide an overview of each of the six sessions' activities and the accompanying volunteer responsibilities.

- **Break** (10 minutes)

- **Practice Writing Activity** (45 minutes)
 - Pass out writing pads and pens to the volunteers and ask them to each spend 15 minutes writing a personal story using the prompt: "Write about a powerful memory."
 - Let the volunteers know when there are two minutes remaining.
 - When the 15 minutes is up, ask each volunteer to read what he/she wrote aloud to the group.
 - After each volunteer reads, ask what the others thought and prompt them with the following questions:
 - What was the story about?
 - What was the best part of the story?
 - What did you want to know more about?
 - Was anything unclear? If so, what?

 - End this activity by explaining to the volunteers that this is the same process the participants will be going through during the OMOD writing workshop. Participants will similarly make themselves vulnerable, and it's important to first focus on the positive aspects of each story before discussing areas where revision may be needed. The actual editing is about clarification and making sure the audience understands the writer's message, not grammar.

- **Review Scribing/Prompting Duties** (10 minutes)
 - Briefly explain the distinction between scribing and prompting assistance to participants. More information about these duties is included in the first page of this volunteer training guide.
 - Draw connections to the previous practice writing activity, where applicable.

- **Screen OMOD Coaching Video** (10 minutes)
 - Play “Coaching a Writer” video found on the VSA Texas YouTube channel, found here: <https://youtu.be/p5eKy7YPVnl>
 - This video offers a thorough explanation of the OMOD coaching process. Reiterate that one-to-one coaching takes place in the fifth session and that each volunteer will receive individualized coaching notes for the participant they will coach during that session.

- **Answer Questions and Wrap Up** (10 minutes)
 - Answer any questions the volunteers may have about any of the material covered during the training and reiterate the six session dates, times, and locations before dismissing the volunteers.



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