

Pragati Coaching Guide

Who should use this coaching guide?

Project staff or other project partners who may be supporting and enhancing the capacity of community promoters to play Pragati games and facilitate discussion around social norms should use this coaching guide. This guide offers a framework for support visits with these promoters in the community: observing them playing games and facilitating discussions in the community and then helping them identify ways to improve. Such visits provide a less formal opportunity for project staff and stakeholders to reinforce limited initial orientation and practice time, as well as to provide extra support to those promoters who may need it more.

Promoters in the community who are playing Pragati games include Female Community Health Volunteers (FCHVs) and Health Mothers' Group Champions (HMG Champions) that play games with Health Mothers' Groups (HMGs) and Male Champions that can play games with men. All promoters are encouraged to work with other influential people and to look for other opportunities to play games and facilitate reflection.

What is coaching?

Coaching is not an evaluation and promoters are not being graded. It is the responsibility of the coaches to help promoters feel supported and appreciated, even as they learn to improve.

Coaches are people who help other people improve their work and do their best. Good coaches are not negative, and do not focus on mistakes in the past. They provide examples and experience to draw on, including being open about what has or hasn't worked in other situations and why. This helps the person being coached to develop new ideas and solutions.

There are three important aspects of coaching:

Strong relationships. Coaching is an on-going, trusting relationship. The goal is to improve performance, and help the coached person to do a better job.

Talking through challenges. The coaching process helps someone understand her or his own problems, think about solutions, and select a course of action.

Responsibility. The coach can support the coached person. But the responsibility for improvement lies with the coached person.

Why coach for the FACT Project?

The role of the promoters in the community is to start conversations through playing games created for the FACT Project. These games open up learning and reflection on fertility, family planning and the role of social norms in influencing family planning use.

During this project, project staff work as coaches to strengthen promoters' facilitation skills in the community. The coaching process may occur over several months and interactions. It is not the same as supervision. Rather, coaching is a supportive relationship that helps promoters improve their skills, gain confidence, and become better facilitators of the games.

What is the coaching process?

Orientation and Practice: The coaching relationship begins during the Pragati orientation. During orientation, project staff begin working with promoters to develop their role as community facilitators for reflection and learning using the games. This includes developing competency in using the games, as well as developing personal comfort around addressing reproductive health norms and content. During orientation sessions, project staff demonstrate the process and skills for using the games while promoter-participants play, discuss, and reflect on the content – using their participation in the games as a platform for their personal reflection. Promoters then practice facilitation through playing the games with each other, followed by group feedback that also sets the stage for ongoing observation and feedback on the game activities.

Continuing support: After the orientation, project staff will continue to coach the promoters during supervision and follow up visits in their communities. While each promoter or community will be visited once or twice, the frequency of coaching visits will be determined by feasibility and need. The needs and skills of each, as well as their improvement over time, will determine how many observation and coaching sessions they need. Those promoters needing additional support will be identified using the observations and conclusions from the coaching checklist. They will then be prioritized for additional coaching, while alternative forums, such as monthly meetings at the health facilities, may offer alternative coaching opportunities for stronger promoters.

What are key coaching skills?

- **Learn** the materials. It is important for you to be familiar with **all** of the Pragati games and the content for reflection. Know the group engagement skills that promoters need in each session. Read through them and think about the issues they raise, so you can help the promoter think through these same issues. Be aware of how these issues may be challenging to raise in the cultural and social norms context.
- **Model** your own comfort with the gender and family planning themes.
- **Observe** how the promoter interacts with the group and uses the games. Use the Observation Checklist (included below) to remember what to look for.
- **Discuss** sensitive issues with promoters. Help them to learn to raise these issues with the group.
- **Give feedback** in a positive way, so the promoter is motivated to improve and continue using the games. Suggest ways to improve things that are not working well. Help them solve any problems that may come up. Encourage promoters to support and motivate each other.
- **Communicate.** Good communication combines active listening and positive feedback. Listen to the promoters. Ask them how they think they are doing with the activities. Use the **Appreciative Inquiry** approach described in the next section.
- **Reinforce positive aspects** of the promoter's performance. Praise can help motivate the promoter.

What is appreciative inquiry?

- **Appreciation** means to recognize the contributions and qualities of things and people around us.
- **Inquiry** means to explore and discover, and being open to new possibilities.

- **Remember** appreciative inquiry and coaching are meant to help the promoters feel better about what they are doing. It is NOT an evaluation and you, as the staff support person, are their ally.

When we combine these ideas, we get **appreciative inquiry**. By seeing what is good in the present situation, we can learn about how to create positive change for the future. This kind of approach will ensure that promoters are encouraged in their efforts on the FACT Project.

When using the Appreciative Inquiry approach to talk to a promoter about how a session went, ask open-ended questions that encourage them to talk freely. Listen to their comments. For example, you can say:

“Tell me more...”

“Yes, go on...”

To question more deeply, you could say, for example:

“What went well?”

“Why do you think that is?”

“What was the best part?”

“What did you learn?”

“Were there instances where you didn't know how to respond?”

“What could I do to help you to do better?”

What is a coaching session?

Any in-depth discussion between the project staff or other project partners and the community promoters about project activities can be a coaching session! A session could be:

- Observation of the promoter playing games with a group and providing feedback. (This is the best kind of coaching.)
- Meeting with an individual promoter to discuss their activities.
- Meeting with more than one promoter to encourage joint problem solving, learning and support among promoters.
- Meeting with one or several promoters during monthly meetings.

During your coaching session, you can:

- Problem solve with the promoter
- Prepare and plan for future activities or games
- Encourage and recognize the promoter for their efforts

While observing promoters doing FACT activities, facilitators can use the Observation Checklist to help them identify key skills.

When should coaching end?

Staff should coach promoters during the implementation period. Usually, the need for coaching should decrease after a couple of contacts. Some may be doing so well that one visit is sufficient while others may need more than two visits. You can use the Coaching Observation Checklist to determine if you need to keep coaching someone, or if you can stop. If you stop coaching a person who is doing well, you can focus on people who may be having more difficulty. The stronger promoters can also be encouraged to support others.

Some promoters may not do very well no matter how much coaching they receive. This is okay. If you have done several coaching sessions and it doesn't seem like the promoter is making progress,

you will want to think about other ways to support dialogue in the community, rather than continuing to coach someone who is having much difficulty. All promoters will receive a Certificate of Recognitions whether or not they become excellent game facilitators.

Promoter Skills

During the first couple of months, promoters would ideally be observed once or twice conducting games, or at least receive an “activity-review” contact. It will be up to the individual staff persons to balance promoter capacity-building needs with feasibility and available time for multiple visits and/or to cover several games.

Promoter skills that facilitators need to look for include:

- 1) Ability to comfortably facilitate playing the games
- 2) Ability to engage group in discussion
- 3) Ability to talk about sensitive issues

Coaching Scenarios

Ideally, you may be able to coach promoters while observing and providing feedback as they facilitate games for groups. However, this isn't always possible. Alternatives might be to meet individually to go over their experience playing games, even if the staff member can't actually observe. Another possibility is to organize group-coaching sessions where two or three promoters might be able to share observations or suggestions among each other. These might even be organized in association with their monthly meetings. This strategy offers the opportunity to cultivate the expectation that promoters can help each other.

Below you will find some ideas and guidance for coaching in different scenarios.

Coaching as part of preparing to lead a game:

Work with the promoter to prepare before calling the group together:

- If the promoter is unfamiliar with the game, read through it with them. It is best if they are introduced to all of the games during orientation meetings prior to playing in the community. But, you may need to refresh their memory of the content and process before they can facilitate the game to be played.
- Take time to talk about what might go well and where there might be challenges. What are suggestions for managing these challenges?

Coaching after the promoter leads the group activity

Observe the promoter while they play the game with the group.

- Use the Coaching Observation Checklist. You can use the checklist to remember what to look for and note comments, but keep this private. Do not show it to promoter – this is not a report card, but rather to guide the Project Officer in providing supportive feedback.

Talk with promoter after session using an “**Appreciative Inquiry**” (AI) approach.

- After the group meeting is over, meet with promoter somewhere private where others cannot hear you.
- Ask the promoter how they thought the session went. Use **Appreciative Inquiry** questions, like the ones listed in the appreciative inquiry section. Give the promoter a chance to speak freely. Listen to their comments.
 - Discuss areas for improvement that you saw during the session, and help the promoter to think of solutions. Be supportive and not judgmental while giving feedback.

Individual coaching without a group meeting:

Sometimes a Project Officer may meet with a promoter without observing them conducting a game. It could be difficult to schedule an observation, or there could be other reasons a facilitator is in the village. In this case, you can still coach the promoter. During these coaching sessions, you can:

Review roles and responsibilities with promoter.

- Promoters conduct sessions using the Pragati games, and also keep track of information about each session on their Activity Sheets. Look at the information about the sessions and ask questions about what happened during the session. Use the questions from the Appreciative Inquiry approach, which are listed in the previous session.

Review the different games with the promoter.

- Help the promoter prepare for their next group activity.
- Look through the games content with them.
- Help with any translation they might need.
- Give them an opportunity to practice with you.
- Talk about the issues that can arise during the discussion and discuss how the promoter might handle them.
- Talk about what is going on in the pictures and how the pictures can be used to stimulate reflection and discussion.

Group coaching with several promoters

Sometimes a Project Officer can meet with two or more promoters while in the village, or during the monthly meeting. Depending on what is most needed among the group, they can use the time to review **Preparation, Roles and Responsibilities**, or **Pragati games** using the steps outlined above.

In addition, this is an opportunity to help promoters learn from each other. This can lead to mutual support among promoters. Promoters can learn to rely on each other so that when the implementation ends, they may still work together.

Community Group coaching meetings with promoters can include the following steps:

- **Ask** promoters to share their experiences about games they have conducted with the others.
- **Tell** promoters that they will be able to give feedback to each other, after you have asked a few questions.
- **Give** each promoter a chance to share if they want to do so; if not, they should be allowed to just listen to the others.
- **Ask** questions about what happened during their games, using the **Appreciative Inquiry approach** described earlier.
- **Ask** for comments and suggestions, after the promoters have shared. Remind them that this is an opportunity to help each other with challenges and give useful suggestions.
- **Lead** the discussion between the promoters. Make sure everyone gets a chance to speak. Step in if anyone starts being critical or taking over the conversation.
- **Finish** the conversation by highlighting the most useful suggestions and positive ideas.
- **Thank** everyone for participating. Encourage them to support each other whenever possible.

Coaching Observation Checklist

(For facilitators to use while observing promoters playing games with groups)

Directions: This tool is to help facilitators remember what to look for when observing promoters. As you observe the promoter, tick off the items yes or no, and note any comments you may want to remember for coaching the promoter and giving feedback. **Remember that this is for facilitator use only; do not show it to the promoter as it is NOT a grading sheet.**

Promoter Name _____ Facilitator/Coach Name _____

Skill	Yes	No	Comments for feedback to Promoter
Able to comfortably facilitate games and discussion with group			
Speaks clearly, loudly			
Welcoming body language, facial expressions, makes eye contact			
Able to talk about sensitive issues			
Familiar with game and uses game materials appropriately			
Uses suggested reflection questions to create open and reflective discussion in group			
Makes sure the group understood the game and thought about how it can influence them personally			
Respects time			
Able to talk about sensitive issues			
Encourages quiet people to speak			
Can talk about sensitive subjects			

Able to respond to participants without value judgments			
Able to share/demonstrate how activity themes impact their own lives			
Expresses own feelings with regard to gender norms and FP			
Encourages women and men equally to express views			
Guides discussion and draws conclusions			

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