



# WorkLife Support Activity

## COMPASS

Oregon Healthy Workforce Center  
Oregon Health & Science University  
[www.YourWorkpath.com/COMPASS](http://www.YourWorkpath.com/COMPASS)

**GROUP NAME** \_\_\_\_\_

## COMPASS WorkLife Support Activity

Supportive groups to advance the safety & health of home care and personal support workers.

The COMPASS (COMmunity of Practice And Safety Support) program was developed and evaluated by investigators in the Oregon Healthy Workforce Center based at Oregon Health & Science University. The project was completed in collaboration with the Service Employees International Union Local 503 and the Oregon Home Care Commission with funding from the National Institute of Occupational Safety & Health (grant# U19 OH010154).

COMPASS is a fun and effective way for home care workers to:

1. Enhance their professional support network
2. Reduce hazards and improve safety at work
3. Increase health promoting behaviors

The COMPASS WorkLife Check-in and WorkLife Support activities were adapted from processes used in the **Ignatian Faculty Forum (IFF)** at Santa Clara University. The IFF was created by **Andre Delbecq and colleagues**, and integrated an Ignatian focus on the health and development of the “whole person” with elements of a supportive group process established for small business leaders in 1957 called The Executive Committee, now Vistage International (A. Delbecq, personal communication, Dec. 14, 2010). The COMPASS WorkLife Support activity also adapted structured problem-solving steps used in a supportive group program for family caregivers developed by **Toseland and colleagues**.

For research results and worker testimonials visit: [www.ohsu.edu/compass](http://www.ohsu.edu/compass)

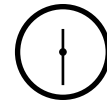
For additional information regarding this toolkit, visit: [www.yourworkpath.com/compass](http://www.yourworkpath.com/compass)

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## EXERCISE 10

# WorkLife Support



30 MIN

Have a participant read the points below.



- ← Unlike most workers, home care workers can't go to the person in the next office for advice or help. So, the last part of every COMPASS meeting is for WorkLife Support and to provide a chance to draw on each other's ideas to help us solve issues or discuss opportunities. An issue is anything you might want help or advice with, such as a safety problem with a consumer-employer or if you need help with reaching a health goal. An opportunity could be a need for help making a positive decision, like moving or how you commute.
- ← Each week, we will select one issue from members of the group. Then we'll follow the steps described on the next pages to help brainstorm solutions and help the person with the issue pick a plan of action.
- ← As a reminder, when we are discussing our issues, please remember that anything shared within this group is confidential, and we should not share any details that would identify our consumer-employer.
- ← We will keep track of WorkLife Support discussions and action plans using an Action Planning Worksheet like the one shown on pages 30-31.
- ← Today we will read about each step on the worksheet and then try it out. We should each fill out our worksheet on pages 30-31 as we go. After looking at the worksheet, go to page 25 to start reading through the steps.

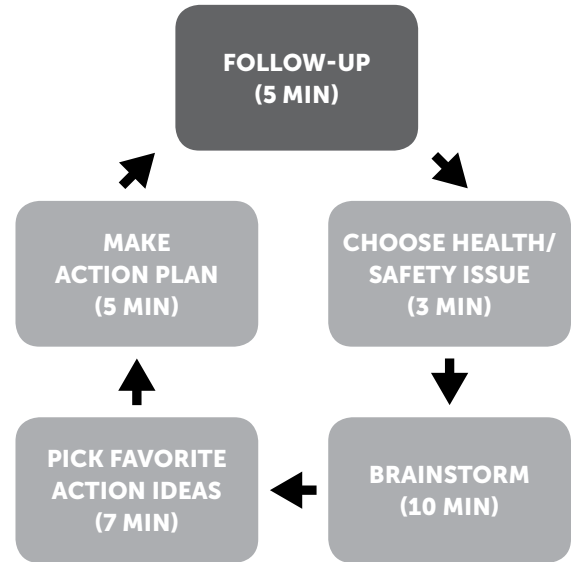
Have participants take turns reading the points below. Direct them to the WorkLife Support Action Planning Worksheet on page 30.



### **FOLLOW-UP ON ISSUE(S) FROM LAST MEETING (5 MINUTES)**

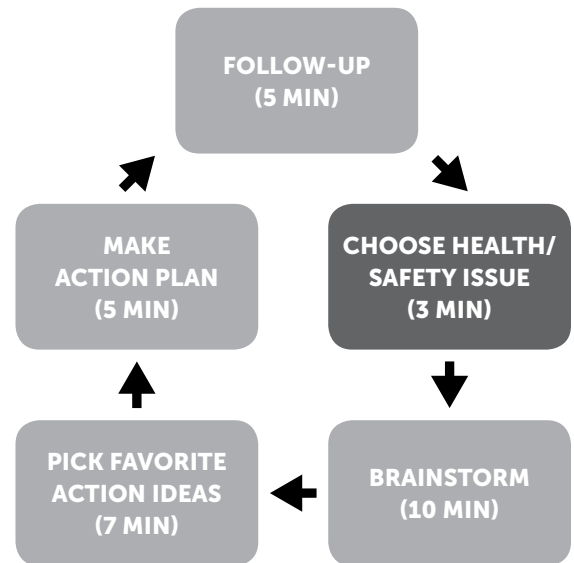
- ← We will first use the Follow-Up worksheet to follow up with people who presented issues and made action plans at the last meeting. We'll ask them what they did and how things turned out.
- ← Since this is our first meeting, we don't have an issue on which to follow up from last meeting, so we'll continue on to the Action Planning Worksheet. Unlike other areas of the guidebook, you can see the leader instruction text in the grey boxes on these worksheets.

That text will help keep us all on track while we support our group members.



### **STEP 1: CHOOSE A HEALTH OR SAFETY ISSUE (3 MINUTES)**

- ← After follow-up, we'll choose an issue or opportunity to discuss. This can be any kind of safety or health challenge or opportunity we need help with.
- ← The way we'll pick an issue works kind of like our WorkLife Check-In. While we are having our healthy break, each group member should think of one issue or opportunity they are facing and write it on the board using a short label. The issue or opportunity can be big or small, but every person needs to write something that they could talk about.





← If we feel that our issue is urgent and we need help immediately, give it an A or B rating. If we feel it is less urgent but you'd like to talk about it if we have time or it could wait until another time, give it a C rating.

← The issue board might look like the example shown below.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Problem</u>	<u>Rating</u>
Susan	Bathing gone bad	B
CAROL	NO SUPPORT	A
Laura	Case of the Mondays	C
Rebecca	Exercise woes	C
Sally	Abusive Client	A
Fred	Mt. Dew Withdrawal	B
Natalie	Client communication	B
Diana	Transportation Help	C



← If there is only one "A" rating, we will discuss that issue this week. If there is a tie for an "A" level issue, the people who have the tie will decide who will discuss their issue this week.

**Read the next point aloud.**



In order to practice how WorkLife Support works, we will each think of an issue or opportunity we are dealing with and write it on the board like the example shown above. Let's all do this now. I will go first and get us started.

**Pause to give group members a chance to write their issues/opportunities and ratings on the board. When they are done, read the points below aloud.**



Now that we have the issues on the board, we can choose an issue to talk about. Whoever has an "A" rating will need to tell us about their situation. If there is more than one "A" rating, the people with those issues can decide between themselves who will discuss their issue with the group today.

Could the person with the highest-ranked issue or opportunity please give a description of what they wrote on the board?

Have the person with the “A” rating describe their issues to the group. If there is more than one person, ask these members to decide between themselves who wants to discuss their issue. If they can’t decide, turn to the group to pick.



Now turn to the worksheet on page 30 and write down the person and the issue that was selected.

While working through the rest of the steps, the person with the chosen “A” rating can ask for ideas, think about how different ideas might work for them, and pick the plan of action they think will work best.

Finally, while we discuss the issue or opportunity, let’s focus on the issue and not on the person. By doing this, we take the pressure off the person and make the discussion more effective.

Read the next point aloud and then have group members take turns reading aloud the next section.

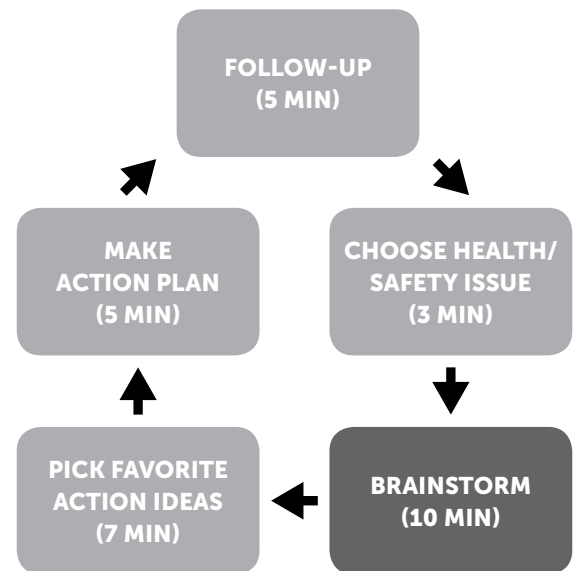


Now, let’s take turns reading the points on page 27 about brainstorming. Please do not discuss solutions to the issue until after we are done brainstorming. There will be time for discussion at the end.



## STEP 2: BRAINSTORM ACTION AND SHARE EXPERIENCES (10 MINUTES)

- ← Brainstorming means that we share lots of ideas or thoughts about how to manage or resolve the issue. We need to get at least 2 or 3 ideas or shared experiences.
- ← If anyone has experience with this issue, they can share it briefly. The goal is to let the person with the issue tap into the wisdom and experiences of our teammates. In the next step, the person with the issue will reflect on their favorite ideas. For now, we are just brainstorming and sharing experiences.



**Read the next point aloud.**



At this point I will ask *[name of group member]* to act as the scribe for the brainstorm. They will write all the ideas we share on the board. We will also jot down the ideas discussed on our Action Planning Worksheet.

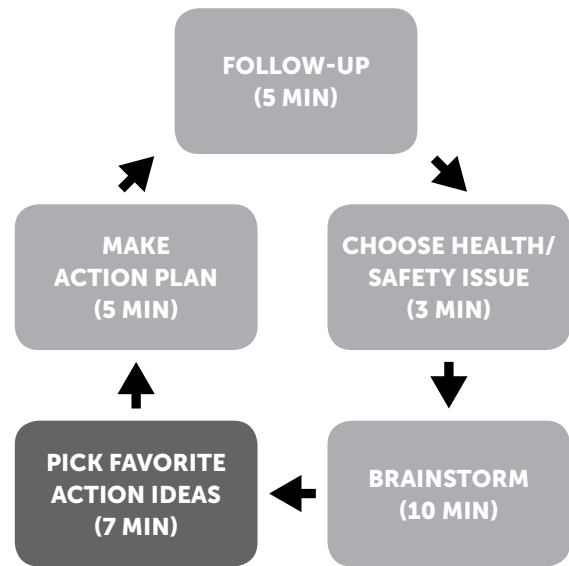
So, who in the group has an idea, thought, or experience related to this issue that might help?

**Allow brainstorming. Try to get ideas from several people. If the discussion strays, it is the job of the Group Leader to bring the group back on track. Have group members take turns reading aloud Step 3 points. As the group discusses ideas, list them on the board.**



**STEP 3: PERSON WITH ISSUE PICKS FAVORITE ACTION IDEAS (7 MINUTES)**

- ← Now it's time for *[name of the person who shared the issue]* to reflect on and pick their favorite ideas from the brainstorm. The scribe will put a star by the person's favorite ideas.
- ← The person can also ask questions of group members if needed.
- ← We will move on to the next step when the person who shared the issue feels like they are ready to pick a plan of action.



**Ask the person with the issue to reflect on the ideas they think will work best for them and to ask any questions they might have. Ask the person if they are ready to make a plan of action.**

Read the point below aloud.



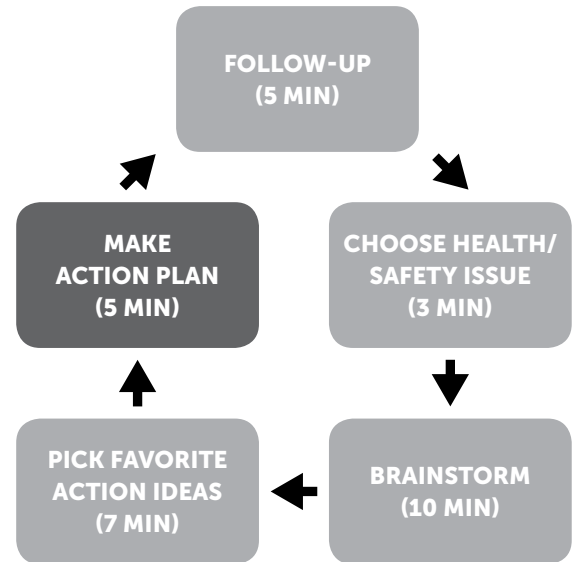
Next, the group will help *[name of person who shared the issue]* put together an action plan, or some things they will do to manage or solve the issue.

Have group members take turns reading aloud Step 4.



### STEP 4: MAKE AN ACTION PLAN (5 MINUTES)

- ← In the final step, the person with the issue should tell the group what they are going to do specifically to take action during the next two weeks.
- ← The person with the issue may need help getting specific about what they will do and when they will do it.



Remind group members to go to pages 30-31 to fill out the worksheet while the scribe writes it out on the board. Ask the questions below pausing for discussion after each question.



**[To the person with the issue]**

So, what is the action you want to take, and when do you want to do it by?

Pause for discussion

Group, is there anything *[person's name]* can do to make this plan more specific? Any further thoughts to help them be most effective in dealing with the issue?

Pause for discussion



**[To the person with the issue]**

Are you happy with this action plan?

If the person is satisfied with the action plan, continue on to page 32.



# Action Planning Worksheet

Check off the next three steps as they are completed:

	1. Make sure everyone has written their issue and rating on the board
	2. Have the people with the highest ratings review the issues they listed
	3. Select one issue to discuss this week

Take notes as you go.

## STEP 1: ISSUE SELECTION

Ask the person with the issue to briefly review his/her challenge/opportunity.

Group member with new issue: \_\_\_\_\_

Description:

Once the person with an issue for discussion is selected, ask the group to help the person brainstorm and take notes below while the scribe writes ideas on the board.

## STEP 2: BRAINSTORM IDEAS AND SHARE EXPERIENCES

Ask the person with the issue to pick their three favorite action ideas from the brainstorm list. Have the person with the issue discuss pros and cons of each during this step. They should write these on the worksheet while the scribe puts stars next to these ideas on the board.

### STEP 3: PERSON WITH ISSUE PICKS FAVORITE ACTION IDEAS

Favorite Action Ideas
1.
2.
3.

Ask the person with the issue to get specific about their action plan, timeline, and what kind of follow-up they want. Fill in the table below with their answers.

### STEP 4: MAKE AN ACTION PLAN

What is the action?
When will it be done?
Is any follow-up wanted before our next meeting?

**If the person is satisfied with the action plan, read aloud the following points.**



Today we have practiced supporting one member's issue.

We will always follow up on group members' action plans at the next meeting. But we can also help each other between meetings if the person asks for this. This can be a phone call, an email, or another kind of encouragement or support. It is optional whether we want to share our contact information. If we want to do this as a group, our facilitator can collect contact information and share it with us.

These are the steps in the WorkLife Support process. By using these steps, we will be able to support each other with challenging issues or opportunities and improve our overall health and safety.

In the future, after WorkLife Support we will end our meetings with a reflection and review of our goals. Since this is our first meeting, we have a couple of things to do before our reflection.

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