

# THE GROUND RULES – FOR SPRINGBOARD

**Adapted from Developing Women through Training © Liz Willis & Jenny Daisley**

There are several golden ground rules which will help you to set up and run excellent women's development training programmes, at whatever level, in whatever depth and in whatever format. Take account of these ground rules all the way through. Some of them will influence specifics, such as the way you develop your strategy, set up your programmes, run them or evaluate them. Others run like themes through every aspect of women's development training and influence your performance as a trainer and the way you treat your participants.

Taken one by one, they provide you with the criteria to assess your strategy, programme venue, administration, design and your own performance. Taken collectively they provide a whole approach to and philosophy of development training. We've evolved these ground rules over the past 20 years as the vital ingredients which really make women's development training work. Each one is there for a very specific reason, and makes demands on the trainer or the organiser of the programme. The ground rules provide the threads that weave throughout women's development training. Most of them are developed further and discussed on licensing courses run by the Springboard Consultancy. This section gives you an overall picture by introducing each ground rule and looking at the practical implications for you of each one. They are:

1. women-only
2. self nomination
3. wholistic approach
4. no magic answers
5. confidentiality
6. demonstrate equity
7. take action — small steps
8. lead by example
9. accept where people are — it's their programme
10. maximum access
11. believe in them, build them up and stretch them
12. networking
13. role models

## **1. Women only**

The Springboard Women's Development Programme has been designed specifically by women for women. Therefore only women should run and participate in the programme. As a trainer or someone who is organising the training you will need to be able to understand, answer questions on and as you set up and run programmes demonstrate your commitment to 'women only' training.

Women's development training only works in a single-gender environment if it provides a safe place in which women can raise issues, knowing they will not be ridiculed or harassed (verbally or physically), an environment where common themes and issues will be taken seriously, and where they will be able to compare notes and gain encouragement and support.

Most women around the world work in a mixed environment but in some countries women and men are segregated at work. Our aim is not to be separatist: rather, as one takes a holiday in a healing and restoring place, or goes to exciting and hitherto unvisited locations to do completely different things, women-only training can bring the special qualities needed to face the reality of daily life and see it in a fresh new light.

You may say that this safe and supportive environment could just as easily be supplied by a mixed group and some development programmes do run along these lines. However, from our experience of running women-only and mixed groups, and our male colleagues' experiences of running men-only and mixed groups, we come to the following general conclusions.

A women-only group settles down very quickly and provides a conducive learning environment. Almost immediately there is openness and sharing of life situations. In women-only groups women:

- gain support from each other
- recognise they are not the only ones with such problems, questions or issues
- encourage each other
- achieve real, in-depth work quickly
- achieve remarkable openness, support and trust even in a group of total strangers
- can talk about issues personal only to women such as pre-menstrual tension (PMT), menopause, breast cancer, giving birth etc.
- acknowledge that even where they do not share the same issue as another woman they can recognise that whatever another woman raises is an issue for her

A male-only group takes a long time to settle down and needs a different process to do so. There may be 'point scoring' off each other, and off the trainer. Jokes, banter and games abound, and real development work is only possible after an extended period of settling down and a skilled male trainer.

A mixed group settles down more quickly than a male group and the men behave better. However, it is rather like running two programmes at once—the women work quickly, and at a far deeper level, right from the beginning, while the men take time to settle, or the women hold back till they are sure of a safe environment. The women tend to support and encourage any men in the group, even if the men are in a minority. Inevitably, the men end up with more than their fair share of the time, and the women's needs and issues come second. So in mixed groups women, as a stereotype, tend to:

- hold back
- put men first
- be defensive or apologetic
- speak less
- give more time to men's problems
- feel that their problems are different
- let the men do the reporting back

**For example:** A ‘training trainers’ event was attended by 15 women and one man. The man in this case was unfamiliar with the material and behind the women in terms of experience and quality of his training delivery. Everyone, including the man himself and the trainer, recognised this. The 15 women felt sorry for him, coached him and gave him particular help. He seemed happy with this and took a disproportionate amount of the ‘air-time’, to the women’s detriment. It was enormously frustrating for the trainer, as the course ran at a speed and level to accommodate the man, and the women did not develop to their greatest potential.

**For example:** A one-day careers workshop was attended by 38 Women and two men. During the day, the trainer noticed that the questions raised by syndicate groups in report-back sessions were the questions which had been raised by the men in discussions, and that the two men consistently did the reporting back for the groups, aided by notes and support from the women. Halfway through, the trainer asked ‘Why is George reporting back again?’ and was openly told, ‘None of us want to do it, and he’s the man. We told him that we’d back him up’.

In both these cases, the individual men had not asked to take centre stage. The Women placed them in the spotlight and the men acquiesced. On both these occasions, the course ended up focusing on the needs of the small minority of men present.

**For example:** A series of pilot courses was suggested as a way of helping the women in a large diverse organisation to move further up the career ladder, However, in order to avoid a negative male backlash, the training department decided that a very few influential men would also be encouraged to attend, the idea being that they would become ambassadors for the course and provide support. As word got around about how valuable the courses were, managers stopped nominating women and nominated men instead. Eventually, the whole course was hijacked by men who certainly did not fulfil the criteria of being the influential opinion-forming type—some were 18 year old trainees! So, a project that was intended as a women’s development initiative became mainstream, and dominated by men.

What this means to you:

- you have to be convinced of the value of women-only training to do it well.
- you have to be prepared to defend the all-women nature of the programme, and not let it be hijacked. This becomes a particularly vulnerable spot when you are developing your strategy.
- you have to be ready for a possible male backlash: ‘where’s the development programme for men, then?’ (to which the answer is; ‘a lot of the others we run are male development courses, as they are mostly attended by men!’) there may also be a need to address men’s development issues in men-only groups in a Navigator programme.
- if you are a woman trainer, you may feel pressure to deliver a women-only programme, whether you personally support the idea or not.
- a man cannot run the programme. He can champion it, mentor it, set it up, design it, support it and nurture it, but he can only be there on the day as a visitor in the breaks unless he is launching or closing the programme or to deliver a specific session, e.g. ‘why the company is bothering to run this programme’, and then go away again—immediately!

During the programme the practical implications for you as trainers are that you need to make sure that:

- the examples and anecdotes are about women
- your vocabulary is such that women will relate to it
- information on a resource table is relative to women's development
- participants on the programme don't either get too cosy or become anti men – a useful phrase is that the programme is pro-women not anti men
- you realise that not all women are comfortable in a women only group for training. Prior to training about half of women surveyed indicated that they were against women only training or uncertain about it. After experiencing women only training over 97% said they would recommend it to others. (Women Singled Out Survey)

In other words, that you create a learning environment conducive to women.

## 2. Self-nomination

Any form of development training demands a great deal from the participant because it is about examining oneself and about making sometimes profound changes in both personal and work lives. It is not a series of techniques, bolted on from the outside, nor is it a skill to be practised parrot-fashion, or copied from someone else.

Development comes from the inside, and grows into the external actions which the participant decides to take. You cannot force someone to develop themselves. It is impossible to do development work with someone who doesn't want to be there unless, of course, you resort to brainwashing!

**For example** a four-day residential course at a luxurious venue included four women who openly expressed their resentment at being there. (The line manager had sent them to make him look good.) They refused to leave the course, as they had decided it would be a pleasant four-day holiday in a lovely place, but they injected such a high level of negativity and cynicism into the course that it was destroyed. The trainer allowed them to stay as she was trying to implement the ground rule of believing in them and not giving up on their development. With hindsight, the trainer realised that she should have insisted that they left.

**For example** on a two-day personal effectiveness course, one woman said that she had been sent by her boss (an enthusiastic, well-meaning person who was sure it would do her good). The woman had doubts; she wasn't sure at all. So the trainer asked her to remain open-minded about the course and to discuss how she felt about it again at the lunch break. She did, and by lunch time was well integrated into the group and had almost forgotten she'd been sent.

What this means to you:

- your participants need to be, at best, enthusiastic volunteers and, at worst, open-minded women who have been encouraged to come on the programme and are prepared to learn
- if the participants truly are volunteers they will be likely to be more committed and positive about attending the programme

The practical implications for you as trainers are that:

- your PR messages whether in leaflets, posters, internet, intranet, radio or TV need to make clear that women must want to be there

- potential participants must know that they have to do work in the workbook between the workshops
- you need to devote a good deal of time and energy to making sure that the right people are on the programme
- your communications with people responsible for nominations (Human Resources and Learning and Development staff, managers, etc.) need to be very clear in this respect
- you need to discover, right at the beginning of the programme, why people are there. If you discover that someone doesn't want to be there, have a private conversation with her and explain the nature of the programme— ask her to remain open-minded for a few hours but then leave if she is not convinced about the value of the programme for her
- do not be perturbed if people decide the programme isn't for them. As long as you've had a conversation with them about it, let them go. In fact encourage it.
- make it easy for anyone who doesn't want to be there to leave.
- explain about the programme and the results that any potential participant might gain, encourage and persuade, but don't push anyone into attending a women's development programme against her will
- be prepared to deal with the difficulties which arise if someone stays who actively doesn't want to be there. You cannot ignore the situation, and you may need to use your strongest assertiveness!
- you can create a really positive developmental environment knowing that each woman really wants to be there
- women will feel more relaxed knowing that they have all chosen to be there and this again will create a conducive learning environment

### **3. Wholistic approach**

Many women lead extremely complex and busy lives, constantly balancing the multi-roles of cook, mother, nurse, wife, business woman, daughter, wife, partner etc. Women's development training accepts the whole woman. The woman who is seen at work is only one part of her. To separate out the work aspects from her personal and domestic aspects is distorting the reality of her life and will give you an unbalanced and mostly irrelevant programme. Having a wholistic approach also means that a woman can relate the programme to her own specific situation, knowing that her life circumstances are seen as a valid part of the programme. This is particularly important for a group of women returning to work after a long gap or joining the workforce for the first time – at whatever age.

What this means to you:

- emphasise the wholistic nature of the programme in your PR and in your introduction to the programme
- encourage the women to relate all the content to their lives as a whole, e.g. applying assertiveness at home is as relevant as at work

The practical implications for you as trainers are that you need to:

- ensure that you have a wide variety of examples and anecdotes that include all aspects of women's lives
- stress the importance of including all the parts of their lives when you're briefing any exercise or group discussion
- you need to work wholistically on yourself too
- reveal a variety of different aspects of your own life but be sensitive to your boundaries
- remember to stay non-judgemental as you cannot know all the aspects of another woman's life
- help to keep the focus balanced among the many aspects of the women's lives—if it becomes too home-oriented, bring in work examples, and so on

#### **4. No magic answers**

Women come on a Springboard women's development programme with some expectations. One common expectation is that, during the programme, they will discover, or be given, some kind of magic formula which will tell them exactly how to live the rest of their lives. This is often because they have seen the positive changes in a friend or colleague who has previously attended the programme. Some people are hungry to develop themselves and may feel cheated as they discover that there are no magic solutions which will result in the jigsaw puzzle of their lives falling neatly into place. Often women are disappointed when you tell them there are no magic answers because they have an expectation that you will provide them with a theory, materials, or guru figure that will change their lives.

What this means to you

- make it very clear at the beginning that there are no magic answers on this programme, and be prepared for their disappointment.
- encourage group members to come up with ideas on and individual's issues.
- have plenty of practical tips and examples to help them work out their own answers.
- do not tell people what you think they should be doing—your opinion is relevant but they need to work it out for themselves. Be wary of the value attributed to the trainer's words.
- when women get stuck, even offering options carries too much weight because they come from someone called a 'trainer or facilitator'
- discourage any dependency on you for ideas and solutions – in other words don't be tempted!

## 5. Confidentiality

We always agree a contract of confidentiality with women at the beginning of women's development training programmes. It means that the women are able to share personal situations knowing that they will not be talked about outside the programme. This enables them to talk about themselves and their real situations freely rather than discussing hypothetical situations or a mythical friend. This is especially important for women who are unfamiliar with attending courses or for a group with especially low self-confidence. Every participant and all the trainers and speakers are included in the contract of confidentiality.

What this means to you:

- outside the programme you can never talk about the situation of a specific individual
- no reports on progress during the programme or assessments of the women will be given to the organisation – you may only indicate whether she attended or not

The practical implications for you as a trainer are that you will need to:

- find a suitably encouraging way of agreeing the contract at the beginning of the programme. The contract must be made very clearly in a light and non-judgemental way
- specify any exceptions when briefing confidentiality e.g. company policy on equity, fraud, lawbreaking etc.
- make sure that any examples you give from other programmes need to be anonymous, unless you have gained permission from the women concerned.
- resist any temptation you may have to 'show off' about how much women confide in you!
- remember that on later programmes you may meet other people who have been talked about under the contract of confidentiality. You will need to remain open-minded when meeting them.
- take action if you find the contract of confidentiality is being broken.
- remind the group about confidentiality particularly before guest speakers and on the assertiveness workshop.

## 6. Demonstrate equity

Women's development training is for all women whatever their race, age, religion, social standing, physical ability or indeed any circumstance that is part of the rich tapestry of women's lives. Women's development training aims to help women to overcome the prejudices that they have experienced because they are women, but sexism is not the only prejudice that women have to overcome. The training offered should demonstrate all aspects of equality and encourage women from wide-ranging backgrounds to work together on their own development. Remember too that the programmes are pro-women, not anti-men!

What this means to you:

- understand 'equity' and its implications in the context of your country, religion, culture and traditions

- take the widest view of equity – women can be prejudiced about such a range of things e.g. style of dress, affluence, where people live, size and shape and so on...
- set up programmes to make sure that women feel included as opposed to thinking that the programme is not really meant for them
- examine your own prejudices or gaps in your knowledge about particular women and work to eliminate them
- check the organisation's equal opportunities or diversity policy and your country's laws.

The practical implications for you as a trainer are that you will need to:

- challenge assertively any prejudices and assumptions which you perceive being applied to the women on the programme or generally to other people
- have a wide range of examples that represent the broad spectrum of women, their circumstances and backgrounds
- find out about and meet where possible the specific needs of women for example in terms of access for disabled women, suitable transport to the venue for less well off women, specific dietary requirements etc
- aim to demonstrate the view that 'all human beings are capable of development', even those who seem very stuck.

## **7. Take action – small steps**

Any action is an achievement. Action is encouraged right from the beginning of the first day. None of the Springboard Consultancy's programmes expect the participant to wait till the end to take action. Programmes are run over a period of weeks or months so that means there is time to take action and report back on it during the programme. Writing down and sharing what you are going to do usually means that you are more likely to do it. People often have good ideas that are inspired by part of the programme or a guest speaker but if they don't write them down at the time they forget them.

Small steps enable women particularly to gain confidence and are much easier than big leaps. One small achievable step is less frightening than a big leap. Of course, as when crossing an abyss, there may be times when big leaps are needed too! Action plans need to have small achievable steps and huge goals are more attainable for being broken down into manageable chunks.

Although you may frequently mention small steps and big steps you will never categorise what a small step is or give an example that relates to that particular category. For example – 'I made a phone call to my sister' could be seen as a small step but if I hadn't spoken to my sister in ten years it could be a huge leap!

The practical implications for you as a trainer are that you will need to:

- ask 'so what are you going to do about it?'
- avoid categorising a step that someone has taken as 'small'
- encourage the participants to come up with their own ideas of steps to take



- remember that any step or action that you suggest may have more value than any that anyone else comes up with – so don't! Participants will only come back and say 'I did what you suggested – it didn't work?'
- encourage someone who is about to take big leaps to break the leap down into more manageable steps
- you can help encourage participants to see how far they have travelled by the small step method

## **8. Lead by example**

You may prefer to be a low-key trainer or you may like to be the up-front leader with a high profile. Wherever you fall along the spectrum of training style, your credibility is inextricably linked with your ability to demonstrate that what you are talking about works and that you have personal experience of it. You are in front of the group more than anyone else.

If you are not actively pursuing your own personal and work development while urging others to do so, then you are a coward, a hypocrite or a workaholic who's forgotten about herself! And you'll be found out!

We believe this to be a really fundamental ground rule. You do not need to have got your personal development right (who has?), but you have to be working on it.

What this means to you:

- just have to be working on it
- really have to know what the programme is about and particularly what is in the written material
- will do better if you have worked through it for yourself

The practical implications for you as a trainer are that you will need to:

- have examples of your own struggles, successes and failures ready to be prepared to demonstrate what you are talking about. For example: in assertiveness practice, be prepared to participate if they're getting stuck, and accept that you may get it wrong
- when you are wrong – admit it!
- avoid pretending to be Superwoman; in fact, it's better if you don't even try!
- recognise when you're not fit to train, either physically because of illness or emotionally because you are facing your own life crisis or very challenging situation
- be open to be challenged about your or the programme's viewpoint

## **9. Accept where people are - it's their programme**

A trainer's life would be so easy if everyone arrived on the programme on time and at a set stage in their lives, with a common basis of understanding and co-ordinated issues. Thankful this is not so – everyone is at her own specific stage and place in her life and it is not for us to judge where that is. This groundrule means accepting that people's lives are not neat and tidy and being aware that it is all too easy to slot people into categories. It is vital in women's development training to accept totally where people are in their lives, in relation to the material and ideas that you are

putting across. Do not fit them into preconceived boxes or judge them in any way for being where they are.

If you were able to see the DVD of another woman's life and hear her commentary about how she was feeling and what she was thinking at every moment of her life then you would understand why she is the way she is and why she is where she is in her life.

What this means to you:

- listen and suspend judgement; accept that you cannot know a woman's whole life story and so you do not know or understand why she is as she is.
- know your material well, so that when you are running the programme you can speed up, slow down or go into greater depth, if someone needs you to do so.
- really understand what the women's lives and work are like. At best, conduct a familiarisation exercise beforehand and, at the very least, get out there and walk around and talk to people before the programme.

The practical implications for you as a trainer are that you will need to:

- be aware of any topical issues that may crop up
- have a good stock of positive anecdotes and examples to draw on
- be patient and determined
- stamp ruthlessly on any sign of cynicism (cynicism is the major enemy: healthy scepticism is fine).
- challenge negative examples and comments
- make sure you get enough personal space to keep yourself positive and energised
- use their vocabulary and jargon
- use their examples and credit them: 'as Sara said earlier...'
- use their real situations to work on in groups and individually. Keep case studies and invented scenarios to an absolute minimum.
- be wary of telling your own favourite stories regardless of whether or not they fit in
- monitor the length of your inputs and check that they aren't becoming an ego trip
- be open to what the women have to say even though you think you've heard it all before
- be prepared to tackle an issue, if it's getting in the way
- structure your exercises so that participants give and receive feedback first and keep your comments to the end as a summary.

## **10. Maximum access**

This is the whole purpose of the Springboard Consultancy – to help women to gain access to good quality development training. There are not exceptions in that statement. It does not say all women except..... so begin by making the programme as accessible as you possibly can.

Think about the venue and how women will get there. What prayer facilities does it have for women? Think about the toilet facilities. What about disabled women? Choosing a venue that is not accessible will make some women assume that the

programme is not meant to be for them. Be specific in your publicity that all women are included and not only women of a particular status or education, from a particular background or circumstances, of a particular age or experience.... the list is endless. Why would we exclude a particular woman? That would be sad and not the purpose of the programme.

People change their lives for themselves, by trying things out, learning from the experience, and moving on, however small the step. The emphasis of women's development training, therefore, is away from the theory and heavily weighted towards trying things out and learning through experience. So keep the programme accessible in the language that you use. Make the programme accessible by keeping it practical.

With an intellectual group of women, you will have to be particularly tough in getting them to put things into practice (for example, in practising assertiveness), as they may prefer to discuss the conceptual aspects! However, time and time again, we see that the real shifts that take place inside people do so through a personal experience, through doing as well as thinking. However satisfying the intellectual debate is it is important to make sure that people 'have a go' at new things. Often after a programme women say that it was being encouraged (sometimes almost pushed!) into having a go, that enabled them to learn.

What this means to you:

- do all the thinking about access well in advance of your programme
- understand the equity as well as the very practical arrangements needed
- women will realise quickly and feel excluded if something has not been thought of in advance.

The practical implications for you as a trainer are that you will need to:

- get the venue sorted out early so it is accessible
- make your PR material suitable and think carefully how to reach everyone – remembering not everyone has internet or intranet access
- inside organisations identify the 'gatekeepers' and minimise their influence
- dress to blend with your participants and not compete
- ask participants what they need to access the material and the programme
- use only small amounts of theory (e.g. to introduce a new subject) and move swiftly on to the practical implications
- pull all discussions down to earth by asking for real examples or by trying things out in small groups.
- use real examples and anecdotes that are appropriate for the group you are working with
- refuse to discuss hypothetical situations
- give real examples. Start to log examples that you hear which you can use on another programme (ensuring that the woman's identity is protected).

### **11. Believe in them, build them up and stretch them**

As women's development training is primarily concerned with developing self-confidence and self-esteem, demonstrating your respect is a major factor. However short the time you are with the participants, however unresponsive they are, however much they rub you up the wrong way, or however much you dislike them personally,

you must always believe that they are capable of more and better and that they will change when they are ready. It is your job to believe in them more than they believe in themselves, and more than others believe in them.

Your task is to build on existing levels of skills, determination, confidence and courage, and take them further by 'stretching' and challenging. You are not there to break people down deliberately, upset them, intimidate them, or reduce their confidence further, in order to build them back up again. We're aware that there are trainers and consultants who work on this basis, but there is no place for them in women's development training.

If a programme is truly developmental, it will involve women in 'stretching' and doing things they wouldn't have done before and this is not necessarily comfortable or the bigger the stretch definitely not familiar. 'Stretching' means achieving just a little bit more than you may have done before. Like stretching physically, it needs to be done gradually and in small steps. Sudden, large, physical stretches lead to muscle pain; developmental stretches that are too big lead to emotional pain. Usually nobody minds a bit of an ache if they know they are getting fitter!

You are not there to provide light entertainment. Nor are the participants there to jump through hoops to please you. It is a partnership between you and the group, but ultimately it's their programme. They must know that it's their issues that are being addressed, in a way that they can use and relate to.

What this means to you:

- respect a woman's belief in herself
- never ever give up on anyone
- believe that they will change when they are ready.

The practical implications for you as a trainer are that you will need to:

- remain non-judgemental of someone as a person—you must use your judgement of their behaviour (especially when training in assertiveness), but not judge them as a person
- be patient or rather be interested and then wait!
- go on working with people up to and after the last closing moments of the programme. We've experienced the difficult sarcastic participant, who's been really negative for the whole programme, but suddenly switches in the closing moments, or sometimes after the programme.
- accept that you'll never know! Women's development training is often like sowing seeds, except that you may never know which take root and grow and which do not. Remain open-minded—you're guaranteed some surprises!
- remember your objectives in running women's development training— you will get better results from building people up
- resist the temptation to make a clever comment at someone else's expense
- make sure that negative feedback is given constructively
- give lots of encouragement and praise
- deal assertively with cynicism and sarcasm
- spot when the women need to be challenged
- do the 'stretching' activities even when they (or you) aren't popular

- include confidence-building activities even if they need persuasion to do them
- always push people a bit further, both individually and in the group.
- beware of overstretching just to please you or to fit in your favourite exercise
- keep 'stretching' yourself.

## 12. Networking

Networking is an integral part of women's development; i.e. networking for their own development rather than for the development of a family member or friend. Women need to be encouraged to network and make the best use of opportunities to build up new contacts or get to know more about the contacts they already have. Thinking in a networking way about every aspect of women's development training from pre-programme familiarisation exercises to post-programme activities positively increases the range and use of contacts.

What this means to you:

- use every opportunity to build up their networking skills.
- make the most of cross programme networking particularly in linking to other participants if that is part of the aim of running the programme
- build up your own networks and expand your horizons.

The practical implications for you as a trainer are that you will need to:

- keep your own contact list of local women's networks and put information about them on the resource table
- tell participants that you expect them to network and encourage the swapping of phone numbers and email addresses
- make the most of the networking exercises
- think in a networking way—'I don't know, but I know someone who does'
- encourage the women to set up their own network – just one meeting after a programme
- let them set their own aims and do it their way
- give them moral support and encouragement

## 13. Role models

Role models give us pictures of how we might be or how we definitely don't want to be. For most women in organisations there are not enough role models to copy on the route ahead. Sometimes the role models that are there are negative ones – women who have become pseudo men or who appear to be so far ahead that the gap is huge. So take every opportunity to introduce a wide range of women from the organisation as role models on your programmes as speakers, talking about their own careers and development, or their specialist subjects, being involved as champions who present certificates etc. Don't forget yourself as a role model too. Role models inspire other women to action.

What this means to you:

- identify positive role models for the women in your target group
- include role models in all of your programmes

The practical implications for you as a trainer are that you will need to:

- be aware of the kind of role model that you are where your strengths are and where the gaps or vulnerabilities are in your experience
- include a variety of role models from different races, religions, ages, abilities and disabilities, backgrounds and current situations
- encourage participants from previous programmes to be role models for future ones
- learn how other women have overcome obstacles and use their stories
- keep positive and upbeat as a role model – it's infectious.