

Refresher Training Toolkit



Toolkit to assist practitioners to implement refresher training to promote skill retention following rescue and resuscitation training

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Mohammad Amiral Islam	Centre for Injury Prevention and Research Bangladesh	Bangladesh
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Introduction

This guidance has been developed to assist practitioners to implement refresher training for water-based rescue and resuscitation in low-resource settings.

Training community members in water-based rescue and resuscitation is a key intervention recommended by the World Health Organization for the prevention of drowning. This training should not be considered a one-off event, but a process of lifelong learning, with refresher training occurring at regular intervals to improve skill retention and confidence to perform CPR.

The World Health Organization's publication *Preventing Drowning: Practical guidance for the provision of day-care, basic swimming and water safety skills, and safe rescue and resuscitation training (2022)* recommends that refresher training should be attended at least every 12 months to encourage skill retention. The frequency of and content of subsequent trainings should be explained to trainees at the initial training to encourage an ongoing commitment to learning.

This guide aims to provide useful tools to support with the successful provision of refresher training in low-resource settings.

What is refresher training?

Refresher training is additional training after a certain period to prevent a deterioration of knowledge and skills while encouraging ongoing confidence to undertake the skills learnt.

Why is refresher training important?

While initial training introduces trainees to the skills involved in rescue and resuscitation, CPR knowledge and skills are known to deteriorate within 3 to 6 months of initial training, prompting the requirement for additional training to refresh skills and knowledge.

Frequent short-burst retraining enhances skill retention, while also increasing responder confidence and willingness to perform CPR. Furthermore, in settings with a high burden of drowning, more frequent retraining may be beneficial, given a higher likelihood that the provision of CPR may be required. Refresher training does not have to be a full repeat of the initial training, but a reminder of the key skills and knowledge.

How to use this toolkit

This toolkit has two key tools that can be used to assist with the implementation of refresher training in low-resource settings.

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Guidance for promoting refresher training	Guidance on the provision of refresher training, including suggestions on how to increase engagement	5
Template certification card	A template of a trainee identification card to remind trainees of how and when to engage with refresher training.	8

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Guidance for Promoting Refreshing Training

Engaging with past trainees to encourage them to attend refresher training can be challenging, but it is critical in ensuring that they are able to confidently conduct lifesaving resuscitation if necessary. Several suggested methods have been outlined below to guide the implementation of a successful refresher training programme.

Data collection

Collecting and safely storing data on trainees is necessary to keep in contact with previous trainees and to send them reminders about refresher training. Trainees' basic contact details, such as their address, phone number and/or email address should be collected during the initial training sessions. It may be helpful to ask trainees for their preferred method of communication and store these details accordingly. It is important to also keep a record of the dates of their training to know when to contact them for additional training. When collecting and storing contact details, ensure that all participants have given their consent for their details to be stored and that they understand how their data will be used.

At the time of the initial training, trainees should be asked what their motivation is for attending training. When re-contacting trainees to notify them about upcoming re-training, reminding them of why they undertook the initial training may encourage their attendance. It may also provide an idea of common motivations within the community, which can inform both engagement strategies and training content.

Collecting this data can also help to develop a monitoring and evaluation framework, to help evaluate training and apply for funding. Additional guidance on creating a monitoring and evaluation framework and collecting data can be found [here](#).

Communication strategy

A clear communication strategy is key to ensuring that trainees receive reminders about refresher training in a way that is appropriate and accessible. The concept of lifelong learning should be introduced at initial training, and the importance of refresher training should be integrated into the basic curriculum. This will allow for easier communication with trainees to remind them about the importance of refresher training.

Communication with past trainees should be tailored to the local context, using methods that resonate with the community. This may include television/radio, social media, school or community newsletters, and/or community theatre. Where possible, seek to integrate the training into broader community systems to allow messaging to be shared through local messaging networks. Engaging with local leaders or popular groups/networks within the community can help to spread key messaging. Consider targeting groups used by those most likely to perform rescues, such as parenting groups or youth networks.

Individual communication can also be used to remind trainees about refresher training opportunities when they are due to attend additional training (the WHO recommends that this is no less than 12 months after previous training). Individual communication should also be shared in a means appropriate for the local context, which may include direct contact on the phone, letters, emails or messages on a social platform such as WhatsApp. Communication should be in a language appropriate

for the local community and may require multiple languages and/or clear visual communication techniques if literacy rates are low.

Key messages

Many key messages for community engagement have been identified to encourage trainees to attend refresher training:

Highlight the importance of refresher training: Previous trainees should be aware of the likelihood of skill regression and its potential consequences to encourage their attendance. Referring to common reasons or an individual's motivation for signing up for initial training may also be helpful to remind trainees of their requirement for an ongoing commitment to training. This may include messaging focusing on the likelihood of performing CPR on family members.

Focus on local drowning risk: Reminding the community about local drowning risks may encourage them to engage with the retraining. Consider using local data, if available, to reinforce the serious risk posed by drowning in the community. It may be helpful to remind community members of the importance of their role in the outcome of a drowning incident, potentially referring to the response time for emergency services if this is known to be delayed.

Share success stories: The success of promoting refreshing training attendance relies heavily on effective communication and a clear demonstration of the training's relevance and benefits to the community. It can be easy for community members to detach their training from its application and the possibility that they may face a situation where their skills may be able to save a life. Sharing and celebrating stories of trainees who have successfully performed CPR and saved a life helps remind trainees of the real-life application of their skills. This messaging can also be used to foster a wider sense of community achievement and collective action, encouraging community members to stay motivated. Local community networks, families and groups may be involved in celebrating success stories to reinforce the importance of the training within the community. During initial training, trainees should be encouraged to share success stories to support with this messaging. This data can also help with the development of a monitoring and evaluation plan. More information on this can be found [here](#).

Provide clear contact information: It must be clear to trainees how they can attend refresher training, including contact details of the organisation, or details of upcoming training sessions that they might be able to attend. It may be helpful to remind trainees that refresher training is quick and manageable, highlighting that it is not the full course but a shorter reminder of key skills. If relevant, it might also be useful to invite trainees to bring family members to encourage greater participation in the community.

Feedback and evaluation

Providing trainees with an opportunity to leave feedback and suggestions after each training session will help ensure that the training meets the wants and needs of the community and can increase the chances of retaining for refresher training if training courses are adapted accordingly. This can be done in line with a monitoring and evaluation plan, which is designed to allow for ongoing review of training sessions. More guidance on creating a monitoring plan can be found [here](#).

The communication strategy can also be reviewed at regular intervals to assess the effectiveness of the strategy, allowing them to be adjusted as needed to ensure maximum participation. Returning

trainees may be asked for their reasons for re-training to understand what elements of the communication strategy are the most useful.

Accessibility of training

To encourage participation, training sessions should be accessible and as manageable as possible. Refresher training does not have to be a repeat of the whole course, but a shorter reminder/overview of the key skills, or specific skills that the trainees feel less familiar with or any new techniques.

There should be consideration into the location, timing and cost of training to minimise disruption to trainees' lives. If possible, reducing fees for refresher training may also help to encourage participation.

As with initial training, refresher courses should be established in the community. Collaboration with community leaders, schools or other community groups can ensure the successful integration of the programme into the community.

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Certification Cards

Identification or certification cards can be given to trainees at the end of the training course and can yield many benefits for skill retention and trainees' confidence.

Certification cards can provide a clear reminder of refresher training and details of how to access this. Adding a date of certification and an expiry date reminds trainees of when they are due for refresher training. It is recommended that the expiry date is no later than 12 months after the initial training. Adding clear contact details for the training organisation on the card allows trainees to contact the training provider to sign up for refresher training, recommend the training to others, ask any questions, and/or share details of a resuscitation attempt.

It is recommended that the card has simple illustrated guidance for CPR on the back, covering key details that may help to improve outcomes. If applicable, this can include local emergency numbers that can be called. This can help to improve skill/knowledge retention by providing a reminder of the details of the CPR process and may be shown to others to introduce them to the concept of CPR.

Some organisations also recommend using certification cards to legitimise the actions of the person providing CPR. These cards can be shown to members of the community if CPR is administered to inform them that the person providing CPR has received this training. This is particularly helpful if CPR is not common practice for the resuscitation of a drowned person in the local community as it can help to justify the actions of the person delivering CPR.

It is recommended that identification cards include the following details:

Front

Name and ID number (if applicable)

Date of certification

Date of expiry

Details of training provider

Back

Clear, illustrated CPR guidance

An example of this certification card can be found on the following page.



FIRST RESPONDER IDENTIFICATION CARD

This card certifies that this person has completed the necessary accredited training to perform CPR on an adult and child if they stop breathing and require immediate medical assistance.

Name:

ID Number:

Upazila:

Name of Instructor

Instructor Signature

Airway



Check the airway
Check for breathing

Breathing



No breathing?
5 rescue breaths

Circulation



Check for signs of life.
No signs of life?
30 compressions
followed by 2 breaths,
Repeat.

Glossary

Community-Based Training	Training targeting members of the community to provide bystanders with the skills to conduct a rescue/resuscitation if necessary. This does not include the training of lifeguards or other professional rescue personnel.
CPR	Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation: a series of chest compressions and mouth-to-mouth ventilation intended to resuscitate a drowning victim
Participants	All of those present and participating in the delivery of rescue and resuscitation training, including trainers, trainees, any additional support staff, assistants or managers.
Refresher Training	Additional training provided after a specified amount of time to remind trainees about key skills/knowledge and increase confidence performing skills.
Rescuer	A person performing a rescue and/or resuscitation.
Resuscitation	The action of attempting to revive a person from unconsciousness following a drowning incident.
Skill Decay	The gradual loss of knowledge or skills over time after training. Skills are expected to be the strongest after training but reduce over time as elements are forgotten and confidence is reduced.
Trainee	A person receiving training.
Trainer	A person providing training.
Water-Based Rescue	Rescues conducted while the rescuer is in the water.