



# Oregon WIC Listens – Continuing Education: *Dealing with Resistance*

**Time:** 30 minutes

**Objective:**

1. Staff will be able to identify strategies for dealing with resistance.
2. Staff will be able to discuss how they could apply these strategies.

**Instructions:**

1. Briefly review the information included in the **Content** section of this CE with staff.
2. Conduct a facilitated discussion with staff using the **Sample Questions** from the **Facilitated Discussion Guide** section in this CE.
3. Provide time for staff to practice using different strategies for dealing with resistant participants.
4. Debrief with staff about their experiences using different strategies for dealing with resistant participants.

**Introduction:**

Sometimes a participant is not ready to play a part in their appointment or even to engage in a conversation. Other times, a participant may be openly disruptive, uncooperative or even abusive. Regardless of the type of resistance, these appointments are uncomfortable, challenging experiences that impact the flow of the day and take extra time and energy.

**Content:**

Dealing with a resistant participant can be a challenge. Fortunately, there are some strategies that will facilitate communicating with these participants.

**Set the agenda with the client:**

- ❖ Time available
- ❖ Desired outcome of the interaction

**Acknowledge client's feelings and concerns up front:**

- ❖ Paraphrase, making a guess to the unspoken meaning
- ❖ Ask permission to complete the appointment so they can get vouchers and move on
- ❖ Affirm, acknowledging the participant for what is going well
- ❖ *"You can take or leave what I'm about to share...."*
- ❖ *"You are the expert about your own child"*
- ❖ *"I'm not here to talk about anything you don't want to do... when you leave, it's up to you to do..."*

- ❖ Contrast two ideas: *“Tell me what you like about giving Sally a bottle at bedtime....OK, now tell what you don’t like about it....”*
- ❖ Ask what advice they might offer to other mom’s with children the same age as theirs

**Remember the roadblocks to good listening:**

- ❖ The urge to set things right, to fix everything
- ❖ Personal judgments or personal feelings that interfere with ability to listen, reflect, provide affirmations
- ❖ Communicating with clients from different cultures

**Facilitated Discussion Guide/Sample Questions:**

1. How do you recognize a resistant participant? How would you describe the behavior of a resistant participant?
2. What feelings do you have when you are working with a participant that is resistant? What impact do those feelings have on our interactions with participants?
3. What strategies do not work well for dealing with resistant participants?
4. What are some strategies that you have found to work well?
5. What do you think would be the difference in the response you would get using some of the strategies discussed here?
6. Can you think of any other strategies that might be effective?
7. What are some ideas for working with a participant who obviously does not feel that WIC has anything to offer them?

**Practice Activity:**

1. As a group or with a partner, share an experience when you had a resistant participant.
2. As you reflect back on this experience, brainstorm ways you could have dealt with this participant in a participant centered way. (You may use the strategies outlined in this CE.)
3. Keep a list of any new strategies you discuss. Over the next few weeks, experiment with one or two of these strategies to see which ones worked for you. Consider sharing your experience with a co-worker or at your next Oregon WIC Listens discussion.