Debrief questions after training

Debrief questions after training help participants examine a specific practice activity and decide what to try next. Choose from 42 original questions grouped by situation, then use the 15-minute plan, printable cards and action worksheet to connect an observation to a practical next step.

15 minutes | 4–16 participants | Online and adaptable in person

Updated 2026-09-22

The outcome

Adult workplace learners record one observation from a completed training activity, one possible explanation to check, and one next action with an opportunity and review date.

Before the session

- Use this after a completed, low-stakes workplace training activity. The 15 minutes cover the debrief only, not the activity. Tell participants the learning objective again.
- Select at most three questions: one about an observed action, one about its possible meaning, and one about the next use. Read the relevant group guidance before using a randomly picked question.
- Share the action worksheet and questions in accessible text. Allow speaking, typing, private notes or passing. Keep personal and client details out of group notes.
- For more than eight participants, prepare pairs with a written prompt and return time. Invite only two or three voluntary reports in the main room.

Included in this kit

A facilitator run of show, participant worksheets with real tables, reference tables, debrief questions, adaptation notes and a follow-up plan. Use the editable Word copy to tailor examples and prompts before delivery.

Original material by Superglue. Timings are suggestions; adjust them to your participants. This resource has not been independently evaluated.

What is inside

The participant sheets come first so you can print one page per person. Your own facilitator section follows them.

- My next practice — Keep this sheet for yourself.
- After a hands-on task — Start with visible actions and the task result before drawing conclusions.
- After a paired conversation — Invite examples of words and actions.
- After a group decision — Separate the decision process from whether people liked the final choice.
- When results differ or an attempt stalls — Ask about the process without demanding agreement or assigning blame.
- When contributions are quiet or uneven — Offer private writing first.
- Before returning to work — Choose a realistic next use and a way to review what happens.
- Facilitator run of show, reference tables, debrief questions and adaptation notes — for you, after the participant sheets.

My next practice

Keep this sheet for yourself. Use one concrete example from the completed activity and share only what you choose.

Reflection	My notes
An action or result I observed	
A possible explanation and what remains uncertain	
One small action I will try	
The next opportunity and any support needed	
My review date and the sign I will check	

After a hands-on task

Start with visible actions and the task result before drawing conclusions. Print this page and cut between rows for seven question cards. Choose a card for its purpose, not by chance alone.

Card	Question
1	Which instruction did you use first, and what did it help you do?
2	At which step did you stop to check your work?
3	What did you change between your first and final attempt?
4	Which part of your result can someone else inspect?
5	Where did your approach differ from the demonstration?
6	Which detail in the task needed more attention than you expected?
7	What would you keep on a reminder card for your next attempt?

After a paired conversation

Invite examples of words and actions. Avoid diagnosing someone’s personality. Print this page and cut between rows for seven question cards. Choose a card for its purpose, not by chance alone.

Card	Question
8	Which words helped you check that you understood your partner?
9	When did you give your partner time to finish an idea?
10	What did you hear after asking for a specific example?
11	Which question narrowed an unclear request?
12	Where did your partner’s response change your next question?
13	What would you say differently if you repeated the opening?
14	Which conversational move could you try in a routine work discussion?

After a group decision

Separate the decision process from whether people liked the final choice. Print this page and cut between rows for seven question cards. Choose a card for its purpose, not by chance alone.

Card	Question
15	Which piece of information did the group actually use to choose?
16	What option received little discussion, and what remained unknown about it?
17	How did the group check that everyone understood the choice?
18	Which assumption could change the decision if it proved wrong?
19	What helped a different viewpoint enter the discussion?
20	Where did the group spend time that did not move the decision forward?
21	What would trigger a review of this decision in a real project?

When results differ or an attempt stalls

Ask about the process without demanding agreement or assigning blame. Print this page and cut between rows for seven question cards. Choose a card for its purpose, not by chance alone.

Card	Question
22	What was the last step you completed before progress stopped?
23	Which information would have helped you choose the next step?
24	What difference between the two attempts can we describe without guessing motives?
25	Which explanation for the result could we check with another attempt?
26	What part of the task was outside your control?
27	What smaller version of the task would let you practise the difficult part?
28	What support would you request before trying again?

When contributions are quiet or uneven

Offer private writing first. Participants may share a short answer or pass. Print this page and cut between rows for seven question cards. Choose a card for its purpose, not by chance alone.

Card	Question
29	Which moment from the activity would you like more time to think about?
30	What did you notice from your position that others may not have seen?
31	Which question could you answer more clearly in writing?
32	What useful detail can you add without repeating the previous answer?
33	Which part of the group’s summary would you qualify?
34	What would make the next practice round easier to enter?
35	Which point should remain open because we have not heard enough evidence?

Before returning to work

Choose a realistic next use and a way to review what happens. Print this page and cut between rows for seven question cards. Choose a card for its purpose, not by chance alone.

Card	Question
36	In which upcoming task could you try one part of this approach?
37	What will you do differently in the first two minutes of that task?
38	What sign would tell you the new approach was useful?
39	Which workplace constraint will require you to adapt the practice?
40	Who could give you feedback on the attempt, if they agree?
41	When will you look back at the result and decide what to change?
42	If the first opportunity does not happen, what is your alternative?

Facilitator run of show

1 Set the focus | 2 minutes

Say: “We will examine the practice, then choose one small next step. Describe actions rather than label people. You can write, speak or pass.” Name the learning objective and show your three selected questions.

2 Record an observation | 3 minutes

Ask the selected observation question. Give everyone one minute to write privately. Invite two brief examples in the main room, using the remaining two minutes. Ask what was seen or heard when an answer is a broad judgement.

3 Explore an explanation | 4 minutes

Ask the second question. Use pairs for groups above eight; otherwise stay together. Spend three minutes comparing examples and one minute noting a possible explanation or unanswered question. Label guesses as guesses. Do not force a shared interpretation.

4 Choose the next use | 4 minutes

Ask the transfer question. Allow two minutes to complete the action worksheet, including a real opportunity and a review date. Use two minutes for optional partner feedback or two short main-room shares. An action can be to seek clarification or further practice.

5 Close and retain the action | 2 minutes

Invite two volunteers to state one action in a sentence. Remind everyone to keep their own worksheet and set their own review reminder. Record only agreed, non-sensitive group points. End at minute 15; park unresolved questions with an owner who agrees to follow up.

Reference tables

A worked debrief example

Fictional example after a paired practice on clarifying a work request. These are sample answers, not evidence of effectiveness.

Stage	Facilitator question	Sample learner note
Observation	Which question narrowed an unclear request?	I asked what the finished update should contain. My partner then named three required sections.
Explanation	What did that answer help you change?	I could outline the update instead of guessing its contents. I still did not know who would approve it.
Next use	What will you do differently in the first two minutes of that task?	At tomorrow's planning call I will check the output and approver before estimating the task. I will review on Friday whether I needed clarification later.

Choose a question for its purpose

Need	Start here	Then
Recall a specific action	Hands-on task or paired conversation	Ask for a visible example.
Compare different experiences	Group decision or stalled attempt	Keep competing explanations open.
Include more viewpoints	Quiet or uneven contributions	Allow private writing and passing.
Plan application	Before returning to work	Record an opportunity and a review date.

Debrief and next steps

Questions for reflection

- Which observation supports the action you chose?
- What is still uncertain enough to check before using this at work?
- What will you look for when you review your next attempt?

Adapt the session

- For 4–8 learners, stay in the main room and keep voluntary shares brief. For 9–16, use pairs in the explanation stage and limit plenary reports.

- For online delivery without breakout rooms, use private notes and invite two typed examples. Do not require cameras. Read questions aloud as well as displaying them.
- Offer the questions ahead of time and allow extra processing time. Extend the scheduled debrief explicitly if needed, or use fewer spoken reports.
- If the activity brings up conflict or distress, pause the discussion and follow your organisation's support process. This pack is for routine learning reflection, not clinical, trauma or incident debriefing.

After the session

Participants keep their worksheet and review it on their chosen date. Ask whether the opportunity happened, what they tried, what they observed and what they will change. Collect only voluntary, relevant feedback. A stated intention is not proof that learning transferred to work.

Questions people ask

How many debrief questions should I ask?

Choose up to three for this 15-minute plan. The 42 questions are a menu, not a questionnaire to complete. Leave time for examples and a next action.

How is a debrief different from a training evaluation form?

A debrief examines a particular learning activity and helps learners plan their next use. An evaluation form gathers feedback about the session. Use the separate training evaluation toolkit for that purpose.

Can I use these questions after an online training game?

Yes, when the game has a relevant learning objective. Ask about a specific action in the game, check how it relates to work and allow learners to disagree with the comparison. Do not assume a game result reveals someone's personality.

What is included in the printable and editable files?

The open PDF and editable Word file include all 42 questions on six cut-apart card sheets, an action worksheet, a worked example and a 15-minute plan. The Excel workbook contains the question bank, action notes and a timed plan. CSV contains the agenda, and the subscriber ZIP contains all four formats and usage terms.

Can participants keep their answers private?

Yes. Offer private notes, a short voluntary share or passing without explanation. Ask permission before retaining any participant response. A blank response should not be scored as a lack of learning.

Use and sharing

Free to use and adapt in your own training sessions, including paid client work. Do not resell or redistribute the unmodified download as a standalone product. Share the resource page instead.