



Showroom



Constructive approach



Training suggestions

Learning outcomes

At the end of this chapter, trainees...

- ... can discuss the basic philosophy of constructive journalism.
- ... can differentiate between a problem-centered and a constructive approach.
- ... can describe the ideas behind the three constructive journalism pillars.
- ... can describe the four elements of a solutions story.
- ... can critically discuss the goals of constructive journalism.



Training schedule

Think-pair-share / 20 min

Stories that moved you

Trainees remember stories they have read/watched/listened to and think of one that had a positive impact on them. Reflect on the impact of positive emotions on mental health.

Video presentation, guided discussion / 30 min

Feel the difference (fundamental)

Trainees are exposed to two stories about the same topic: one constructive and one not. They discuss what makes the difference and identify criteria for constructive reporting.

Presentation and discussion / 30 min

The three elements of constructive journalism (fundamental)

Trainees are introduced to the three elements of constructive journalism.

Group work, presentation and discussion / 1 hour

Make it constructive!

Trainees analyze a traditional, problem-centered story in the media and try to find ways to take a more constructive approach to the topic.

Video presentation and analysis/ 35 min

A closer look at solutions journalism, the 4 pillars (fundamental)

Trainees get a more in-depth look at the solutions pillar and are introduced to the four elements that are necessary to create a rigorous solutions piece.

Group work, presentation and discussion / 1 hour

Identify the four solutions pillars

Trainees are shown several more or less constructive solutions-focused stories. In groups they try to identify the solutions elements in each story and evaluate the quality.

Buzz Groups / 1 hour

Challenges in solutions reporting

Trainees in groups discuss challenges they face or expect to face in reporting solutions stories. Each group should brainstorm possible solutions to the identified challenges.



Requirements

Technology

Internet

Face-to-face: laptop, speakers, beamer, printer / video screen (trainer), laptop, smartphones (trainees)

Online: laptops and smartphones (trainer + trainees), headsets

Materials (face-to-face)

Board/whiteboard, flipchart stand and paper, cards (if available), markers.

Tools (online)

Video conference: Zoom (Back up: WhatsApp)

Visualization: Miroboard, JamBoard (Zoom offers digital whiteboards as well)

Quizzes: Slido, Mentimeter

Communication: WhatsApp, Email

Documentation, shared documents: Google Drive folder



Session Details

- **Stories that moved you**

Objectives

Reflect on what stories remain memorable and how they affect people's mental states. Consider how these kinds of stories can be a positive force in society.

Duration

Reflection and sharing with partner: 10 minutes

Sharing with group/discussion: 10 minutes

Preparation

Trainers should think of a story which moved or inspired them to use as an example.



20 min., Think-pair-share

Ask trainees: "Think about a news story you really loved, one that really inspired you or was very memorable. What was it about? Why did it move you?"

After the participants reflect for about 5 minutes, they should turn to a neighbor and take turns sharing their best news stories and the reasons they liked them. Then in the whole group, the presenter will ask volunteers to share their memorable news stories with the whole group.

After a few have been shared, the trainer will ask the group

--How do people feel now?

--Did thinking about, sharing and hearing these kinds of news stories change how you feel?"

If attendees feel more positive emotion after the think-pair-share activity, explain that experiencing positive emotion has benefits for physical and mental health as well as overall well-being. Ask how this relates to most of the stories which dominate the news media.

• Feel the difference (What makes a story constructive?)

Objectives

Trainees understand how differently a topic can be treated when approached constructively compared to a traditional piece. They identify criteria for constructive reporting.

Duration

Presentation of 2 stories: 5-10 minutes

Guided discussion: 20-25 minutes

Preparation

Search for 2 stories - a constructive one and a non-constructive one - on a related topic (video, print, audio - depending on your trainees' professional background)



30 min., Story presentation, discussion

In case you have journalists as trainees, you could for instance show them the two following stories both dealing with the challenges of reconstruction in Gaza:

- 1) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gb6QKYAtExg> (traditional)
- 2) <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZoxVCTxpqHE> (solutions-focused)

Show the two stories to the participants, then let them brainstorm and collect distinguishing criteria on a (digital) whiteboard or flipchart.

- Which story offers them more information, what kind of information?
- What are the characteristics of the people involved in the stories?
- What images or quotes stick in their mind from each story?
- How do they feel after having seen the stories?
- What about each of the stories did they like or dislike?

• What is constructive journalism / The three elements of constructive journalism

Objectives

Trainees are introduced to the general concept of constructive journalism, see examples, and then go through the three pillars of DW Akademie's constructive model.

Duration

Presentation and discussion: 35 minutes

Preparation

Trainers familiarize themselves with the presentation beforehand.



30 min., Input / discussion

What is constructive journalism? / The three elements of constructive journalism / Goals of constructive journalism

Presentation: PPT Constructive concept and foundations, slides 2-19

- **Make it constructive!**

Objectives

Analysis of a traditional, problem-centered story and brainstorming about how it could be re-reported and rewritten to create a more constructive piece. Participants compare examples of constructive and traditional stories.

Duration

Group work: 20 min.

Presentation/discussion: 25 min.

Preparation

Find and print or save on a computer several examples of traditional, problem-centered stories that you think could be done more constructively. One story per group.



45 min., Group work / brainstorming

Divide trainees into groups. Give each group a print-out of a traditional, problem-centered story. If online, direct them to the website where the story is. Ask each group to read the story together and brainstorm ideas on how to approach it constructively. Ask them to consider the following:

- What different aspects would you focus on in a constructive approach? Can you bring in an approach in one of the pillars: solution, context and nuance, dialogue?
- Are there other positive angles such as stories of resilience, cooperation, solutions-oriented responses that could be highlighted for a future follow-up story?
- Who else should be interviewed for a constructive story?
- What additional information would you add?

Ask groups to pick a spokesperson to present in plenary. Discuss each group's findings and get feedback from the other trainees.



15 min., Input / discussion

Which of these stories is constructive? Why?

Presentation: PPT Constructive concept and foundations, slides 20-23

(If trainees need reinforcement on the CJ concepts, this presentation can be shown before the group work.)

- **A closer look at solutions journalism, the 4 pillars**

Objectives

Trainees understand more clearly the first pillar – solutions – and can list the elements necessary for the creation of a good solutions story.

Duration

Video: 10 minutes

Input: 20 minutes

Preparation

Find video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D9Jwi2i_K-M



10 min., Video presentation

Watch video “Solutions Journalism Whiteboard Video” from the Solutions Journalism Network. Afterwards ask trainees if they understood the content and what they thought about it in general. Ask them if they think the solutions approach is relevant for their regions and if they can think of any specific examples where it could be used.



25 min., Input / discussion

Four pillars of a solutions story

Presentation: PPT Constructive concept and foundations, slides 24-32

- **Identify the four solutions elements**

Objectives

Trainees get practice on identifying the 4 solutions elements (or lack thereof) in a story and reflect on what might be the challenges to include them. They can describe the constructive quality of reports.

Duration

Analysis of story examples: 30 minutes

Group work/brainstorming: 30 minutes

Preparation

Find 3-4 solution stories where, ideally, the four elements are presented quite differently or are missing in some cases.

Prepare task on (virtual) board

Materials

3-4 stories

- https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p09f3zpj?utm_source=Solutions+Story+Tracker (a good example for response and evidence)
- <https://www.thenationalnews.com/mena/egypt/reeling-it-in-egypt-s-fishermen-exchange-the-nile-s-plastic-waste-for-cash-1.1242297> (a good example for response and evidence)
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2bjXs3roASA> (a good example for insights. But it's 10 minutes. You may decide to cut it and just show some clips)
- https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06hbqjx?utm_source=Solutions+Story+Tracker (covers challenges but not limitations, so may be a good cue to start a discussion about the difference between limitations and challenges and how limitations could have been covered.) Tip: They should have asked the residents about the limitations.
- https://newsinfo.inquirer.net/1420463/community-pantry-not-charity-but-mutual-aid?utm_source=Solutions+Story+Tracker (--Community Pantry from the Philippines)
- <https://apolitical.co/solution-articles/en/ending-violence-in-pakistan-starts-in-the-playground> (Play to end violence from Pakistan)
- https://www.theguardian.com/world/2020/jan/08/on-the-frontline-of-the-climate-emergency-bangladesh-adapts?utm_source=Solutions+Story+Tracker (Adapting to climate change from Bangladesh)

You could include one poor-quality example:

- <https://www.myjoyonline.com/joynews-gets-result-80-year-old-leper-moves-into-new-home-after-bawumias-intervention/>
- <https://www.myjoyonline.com/joynews-gets-results-widow-and-sons-raise-%c2%a225k-after-report-highlights-their-plight/>



30 min., Video presentation /Analysis

Option 1: Divide trainees into 2 groups but without separating them physically or virtually (online: suggestion for group split up: Group A = first letter of fellow's name A-M, Group B: N-Z). Give one group the task to look at the elements "response" and "evidence", the other to look at "limitations" and "insight" in the presented stories. Show trainees 3-4 solutions stories. After each story presentation, invite members of the 2 groups to share their observations. Were they able to identify the four elements? Often, the problem also needs to be clearly identified. And how did the trainees evaluate the quality of these four elements, their potential weaknesses? Did they miss anything? After one or two story presentations you can switch roles so that in the end every trainee has reflected on all four solutions elements.

Ideally, the (video) examples shown will have used different ways of demonstrating the evidence, so fellows are exposed to the idea that evidence can be reflected via data, testimonies from the community that the response serves, visual demonstration (before and after pics/footage), etc.

Option 2: Divide trainees into groups and put them into breakout rooms or separate areas of the training room. Give each group a story and ask them to analyze and discuss their stories, looking for the four elements. A spokesperson for each group presents the group's findings and discusses the overall quality of the solutions story.



Homework option: This session could be given as homework if time is limited (individual work).

• Challenges in solutions reporting

Objectives

Trainees reflect on challenges they have faced or could face in reporting a solutions story.

Duration

Discussion in groups: 30 minutes

Discussion in plenary: 30 minutes



30 Min., Group work

Form two groups and ask group A to name five major challenges they have faced or expect to face when reporting on a response and the evidence of its impact in their own communities. Group B should brainstorm and come up with five major challenges when reporting on insights and limitations. Both groups are also asked to suggest a possible solution to each of the identified challenges.

Then the groups select a spokesperson who presents their challenges-solutions collection to the others, and they all discuss them together. During the discussion trainees are also encouraged to share tips and their own experiences of how to navigate such challenges like absence of data for example.

You could add the following aspect to the discussion: How can we be critical but at the same time constructive?