

Dealing with Individual Disruptive Behaviors

Specific disruptive behaviors

1. Talkative member who monopolizes the meeting

- Stop the individual, politely thank them, and say *'there are others we'd like to hear from'* or *'thank you for the input but I'm concerned that John didn't have an opportunity to speak.'*
- Move away from the individual, stop giving them your attention and eye contact.
- Point out what is still left on the agenda and the remaining time.
- Set a limit on how long the person can talk. *"I know this is important to you, but if you could wrap up in the next minute, we need to move on."*
- Remind the individual of the ground rule pertaining to the need to give everyone an opportunity to talk.
- Set a time limit for the length of time people can talk at the beginning of the meeting, especially if the monopolizing behavior is known in advance.
- Shift to an activity that involves everyone, such as a brainstorming activity or have each person write down one reason they feel the way they do.

2. Side conversations

- Address a question to one of the conversationalists.
- Ask them to share their comments with the group.
- Move close to the people having the side conversation.
- Stop the conversation, be quiet and look at the people talking.
- Ask them to please join the group.
- Ask them to stop.



- Restate the topic or agenda item and ask for only one conversation at a time.
- Tell the individuals that the whispering or talking is distracting.

3. Negative or angry

- Acknowledge and note their 'point is taken'.
- Restate their point as close to what was said as possible.
- Point out the negative views or patterns.
- Ask what they would do differently, record those points and ask the group to respond.
- Ask if they feel positive or good about any aspect of the work.

4. Silent member

This is natural at first or for a new member, but if it is prolonged...

- Invite participation. *'Joel, I know you have had an experience similar to this. Can you share a bit about it?'*
- Talk privately and see if there is a problem.
- Acknowledge and validate their input when they do offer it.

5. Authoritarian advice-giver

- Use this person's assertions for a springboard. Site a book or article that may have influenced your thinking.
- Point out that everyone is entitled to their opinion
- Suggest that differing opinions offer richness to the discussion
- Note the ground rule about respecting and valuing everyone's opinion.

6. Personal Agendas

- Ask how what they are saying relates to the current topic or discussion.
- Acknowledge and record the point, thank them and move on.
- Ask what expectations there are for the group regarding the point,
- Define a time limit for the person.

7. Off subject discussions

- Ask how this relates to the current topic.
- Place the item in the 'parking lot' for the group to come back to.
- Stop them and tell them that it does not apply to the current discussion and may fit better some where else on the agenda.

8. Same point, over and over

