

- Acknowledge the validity and importance of the point and the strength of the persons advocacy and conviction.
- Let them know that they have made their point and have been heard. *'We have heard and understand the point you have made now we need to move on.'*
- Let the person know when the issue will be addressed.
- Ask them if they can *'let go of it'* for while.

Managing Conflict and Group Behavior

Managing conflict

Differences and conflict are inevitable and healthy for a group. A lack of any conflict may indicate apathy, lack of interest, boredom, people feeling unsafe to share, and low self-esteem of group members. Managing differences and conflict well as they occur will help avoid escalation, resentment, lack of cooperation, lack of energy, people avoiding one another, indirect attacks and subversion in the group. Conflict can be an opportunity for growth when members actively seek to work through their conflicts.

As differences surface:

- Acknowledge and clarify them.
- Give differences equal platforms
- Give members adequate time to express and hear differing points of view
- Allow the group to weigh points of view
- Allow the group to keep differences 'on the table' and out in the open
- Avoid accusing and blaming statements
- Use "I" messages—*"I get frustrated when. . ."*

Ending complaint sessions

The facilitator can model a positive reaction, but all group members need to take responsibility for how a meeting is going and should not rely solely on the designated leader to keep things on track. *(See Appendix E for Responsibilities of Group Participants)*

- Members may need to be reminded of this
- State a reaction to the way the meeting is going without blaming or criticizing.
 - *"I'm feeling that three or four of us are monopolizing the meeting with some pretty negative comments. Does anyone else feel the same way?"*

