



Conducting Effective Meetings

Tips for How to Deal with Disruptive Behavior in Meetings

Late Arriver/Early Leaver	<i>Action:</i> Arrives late to session, leaves early.
	<i>Tips:</i>
	- Remind the group of the ground rules. (Start/end on time)
	- Discuss the behavior privately during break to ensure that there is not an additional problem.

Discussion Dominator	<i>Action:</i> Dominates the discussion
	<i>Tips:</i>
	- At the start of the next process, announce, "Let's hear from some people who have been quiet."
	- At the break, solicit the person's assistance in getting other people to speak; let them know that from time to time you will purposely not call on them.
- Occasionally make it a point to acknowledge the person's desire to speak, but call on someone else.	

Storyteller	<i>Action:</i> Likes to tell long-winded stories
	<i>Tips:</i>
	- Remind the group of ground rules.
	- Stand next to the person if they get long-winded.
- Discuss the behavior privately during break to ensure that there is no additional problem.	

Whisperer	<i>Action:</i> Holds side conversations
	<i>Tips:</i>
	- Remind the group of ground rules. (Respect the speaker).
	- Stand next to the person if it occurs again.
	- Discuss privately during break to ensure there is not an additional problem.

Broken record	<i>Action:</i> Repeats the same point
	<i>Tips:</i>
	- Point to what was already said and ask a direct probe, "How is this different?"
	- Follow this by prompting the group for any other ideas.
	- Consider taking the point off the table: "I know this is an important issue. Let's take a second to discuss it now? But afterwards, let's avoid coming back to it so we can spend time on other issues that are also important. Can we agree on this?"

Drop-out	<i>Action:</i> Maintains silence, fails to participate. Folds his/her arms, faces door or window.
	<i>Tips:</i>
	- Remind the group of ground rules.
	- Employ a round-robin/brainstorming activity to get everyone involved.
	- Occasionally stand next to the person or direct questions at a variety of people, including him/her.
	- Discuss privately during break to ensure there is not an additional problem.

Workaholic	<i>Action:</i> Does other work during session.
	<i>Tips:</i>
	- Stand next to the person and make eye contact to let them know that you are aware of the behavior.
	- If the behavior persists, discuss it privately during break to ensure that there is not an additional problem.

Naysayer	<i>Action:</i> Demonstrates negative physical reactions. Voices audible sighs of displeasure.
	<i>Tips:</i>
	- Say with optimism, or jokingly, "It appears that we have some concerns about this alternative. Let's talk about it. What are the issues?"
	- Seek buy-in by asking, "How can this be made better?"
	- At the break, attempt to reach a solution in which the person will openly speak about concerns during the group session.
- Be sure to get all the issues out.	

Verbal Attacker	<i>Action:</i> Makes negative comments about a person. Issues verbal attack directed at a person.
	<i>Tips:</i>
	- Move between the people to cut - off the discussion.
	- Consider taking a break.
	- Meet with the attacker in conjunction with the project sponsor or project manager to determine the root cause of the behavior.
- Consider asking that the person be removed from the session.	

Door slammer	<i>Action:</i> Leaves the room in disgust.
	<i>Tips:</i>
	- Spend a few minutes with the group debriefing on the event before continuing with the session.
	- Take a break.
	- Get with the project sponsor or project manager to discuss the issue and select a replacement.

Physical Attacker	<i>Action:</i> Physically attacks someone
	<i>Tips:</i>
	- Stop the session immediately.
	- Let the group know they will be notified when the next session is scheduled.
	- Meet with the project sponsor and project manager to discuss appropriate actions.