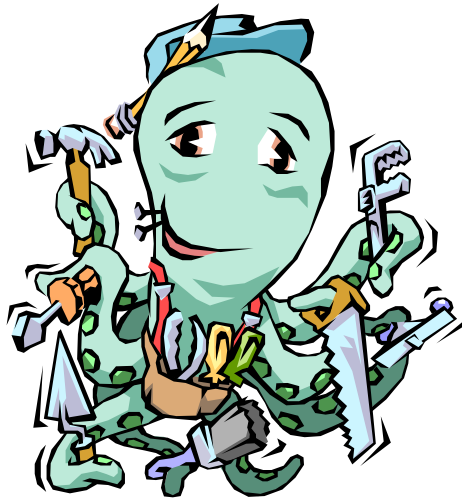


# ***Effective Meetings***

## ***Part 2***

### ***Facilitation Skills***



## ***Tool Kit***





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# Creating and Managing Participation

## Barriers to Participation

A first step in getting people to participate actively is to understand why they don't. Common barriers to participation include the following:

- Members may be confused about the topic being discussed.
- There may be a lack of commitment to the topic under discussion.
- They may feel unsure about the quality of their personal contribution.
- They may be insecure about speaking in front of others.
- They might be afraid of the reaction of their peers.
- Talkative members may “shut down” quieter people.
- Some may be reluctant to speak up in front of “superiors.”
- There may be a low level of trust and openness in the group.
- Members feel withdrawn due to a recent traumatic event.
- The organization may have a history of not listening to or supporting employee suggestions.

# Pre-Meeting Participation Assessment Checklist

When planning any meeting, it's helpful to assess how participative the members are likely to be. If possible, find out the following information before the meeting:

- \_\_\_ Whether or not the participants are used to meeting and discussing ideas.
- \_\_\_ How the members feel about speaking up in front of their leader and each other.
- \_\_\_ Whether relations between participants are good or strained.
- \_\_\_ Whether there has been a recent incident that might distract participants, e.g., a layoff, a personal tragedy, etc.
- \_\_\_ If members have group skills such as listening, clarifying, encouraging, etc.
- \_\_\_ How the group has managed past meetings.
- \_\_\_ Whether the leader or organization is likely to support the ideas of the group.

## Conditions for Full Participation

In general, people will participate fully if they:

- Feel relaxed with the other participants.
- Understand the topic under discussion.
- Have had some say in the planning process.
- Feel committed to the topic.
- Have the information and knowledge needed for a fruitful discussion.
- Feel “safe” in expressing their opinions.
- Trust and have confidence in the facilitator.
- Are comfortable and at ease in the meeting room.
- Feel that the organization will support their ideas.

# Managing Participation

Meetings are most effective when members are actively involved and participating in the process. Basic facilitation skills will serve to encourage member participation. Frequently, however, problem situations occur because of the level of participation of individuals.

Some differences in levels of participation are a natural reflection of variations in peoples' personalities and their preferred ways of interacting. A problem situation occurs when people participate too much or too little.

If an individual is too vocal, then other people may not be able to fully participate in the meeting. You may also run out of time to achieve the meeting purpose and desired outcomes.

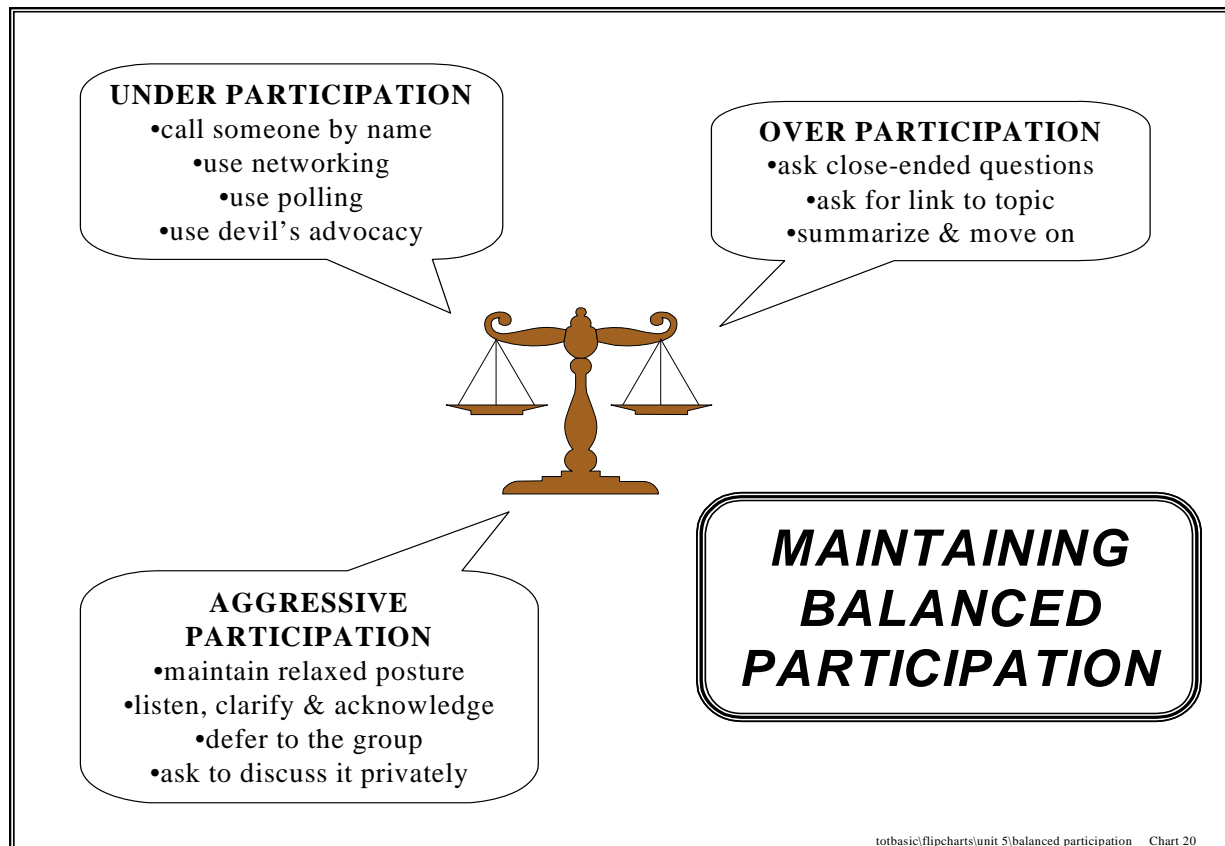
If individuals are too silent, their valuable input is lost from the group. Silent participants pose another problem for you, as you may have difficulty assessing whether they are engaged in the meeting.

Don't assume that too much or too little participation is a reflection of hostility toward you or the meeting. Overly vocal participants may simply be very enthusiastic and excited about the issues, and silent participants may just be nervous about expressing themselves in front of the group.

When participation levels become a problem, you must take action. By ensuring balanced participation, you enlist all of the group's resources in achieving the meeting's purpose and desired outcomes.



## Managing Participation (cont.)





## Does Not Talk?

It's hard to say who presents a tougher challenge to the facilitator: the participant who talks too much or the one who talks too little. It's easier to ignore the silent ones. Remember, however, that silence does not always mean understanding or agreement. It may mean that the uncommunicative participant is confused or plotting to sabotage.

Encouraging the silent types to talk will help ensure a much more inclusive solution and speed up the implementation. Also, it will set a model for equal participation from everyone.

Here are some suggestions for dealing with participants who don't participate:

- Reduce the anxiety level by using an alternative format. For example, break the large group into dyads for preliminary sharing of ideas. Then ask each pair to give a summary report of their discussion.
- Ask the participants to write their concerns, comments, suggestions, or whatever on index cards. Then ask the team to cluster these cards and organize them into themes.
- Direct questions to the silent participant. Ask questions related to the silent participant's areas of expertise and interest.
- Ask the silent participant to react to someone else's statement.
- Ask everyone to take turns to make a one-minute presentation.
- Reinforce comments from the silent participant, without being patronizing.
- Talk to silent participants before the meeting or during a break. Emphasize the importance of their contribution and collaboratively work out strategies to increase their level of participation.
- Before the meeting or during a break, assign the role of drawing out the reluctant participant to one or two group members.
- Call on the silent participant by name. Frequently use the name of this participant.

# Talks Too Much?

When someone dominates a discussion, the other participants hold back their ideas. Group members get bored. Instead of coming up with lots of different and potentially valuable ideas, the group ends up with just a few.

Here are some suggestions for dealing with participants who talk too much:

- Avoid discouraging the excessive talker. Instead, encourage the others to participate more.
- Go around the group, giving each participant a turn to talk.
- Divide the group into pairs for preliminary sharing of ideas. Then ask each pair to give a summary report of their discussion.
- Impose “air time” limits on participants. Give the participants an equal number of poker chips, each worth 30 seconds of talking time.
- Interrupt the talkative person with a question directed to someone else.
- Acknowledge the comment and involve others, e.g., “Al, that was an interesting insight. Barbara, what are your views on this issue?”
- Before the meeting or during a break, enlist the help of the excessive talker in encouraging the silent participants to open up.
- At the start of the meeting, establish equal participation by all members as a group agreement or ground rule.
- Encourage group members to help monitor participation and ensure balance.

# Facilitation skills

## Definition and Purpose

Meetings are most effective when members participate. When you use facilitation skills, you encourage involvement by showing interest in the members and making them feel free to comment and ask questions. Facilitation skills also help you to obtain feedback from the members about how the meeting is going. This enables you to respond to their needs most appropriately.

Facilitation skills help you bridge the gap between the meeting content and the participants.



## Types of Facilitation Skills

The four basic facilitation skills you will use in conducting your training are:

1. Attending
2. Observing
3. Listening
4. Questioning

Source: Adapted from *Train the Trainer*, Amherst, MA: HRD Press.

# Attending Skills

Attending means presenting yourself physically in a manner that shows you are paying attention to participants. When you use attending skills, you are building rapport with them. You are communicating that you value them as individuals and are interested in their needs as a group.

Attending helps you gather information from the participants. Your physical positioning enables you to observe their behaviors, which are important sources of information for you in assessing how the meeting is going. Attending also encourages participants to interact verbally with you.

There are four attending behaviors that show you are interested in group members.

1. Facing participants.
2. Maintaining appropriate eye contact.
3. Moving toward participants.
4. Avoiding distracting behaviors.

## Guidelines for Using Attending Skills

DO	DON'T
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Position your body so you face all the participants</li><li>• Continually scan the group with your eyes</li><li>• Walk toward participants</li><li>• Smile at individuals</li><li>• Nod affirmatively</li><li>• Circle the room during individual or small group activities to show interest</li><li>• Use natural facial expressions when talking with participants</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Talk to visual aids</li><li>• Avoid eye contact or scan the group too frequently or too rapidly</li><li>• Turn your back to part of the group</li><li>• Stare at individuals</li><li>• Distance yourself from the participants</li><li>• Stand in fixed positions</li><li>• Shuffle papers, look at your watch, etc. while participants are talking</li></ul>

# Observing Skills

Observing skills help you assess how the meeting is going. Based on your observations over time, you can make decisions to continue the meeting process as planned, or to modify it to respond to the group's needs.

There are three steps in using observing skills.

**Step 1:** Look at the person's face, body position, and body movements.

Is the person smiling? Frowning? Nodding? Yawning?  
Looking at you? Looking away?

Is the person leaning forward? Leaning back in a chair?  
Tapping a pencil? Shuffling his or her feet?

**Step 2:** Formulate an inference of the person's feelings based on what you have observed.

**Step 3:** Take appropriate action based on the inference made.

Below is a list of non-verbal behaviors and some inferences you might make about participants' feelings.

## Non-Verbal Behaviors & Possible Feelings

BEHAVIORS	<u>POSSIBLE</u> FEELINGS
Smiling Nodding affirmatively Leaning forward Eye contact	Enthusiasm/Understanding
Yawning Vacant stare Shuffling feet Leaning back in chair Looking at clock	Boredom
Frowning Pursing lips Vacant stare Avoiding eye contact	Confusion

## Observing Skills (cont.)

Although a single behavior can serve as an indicator of a feeling, your inferences will be based on the total data you collect from your continuing observations. Whether you decide to take action or not will depend on the situation as you view it. For example, how many members are experiencing the feeling, what is the depth and duration of the feeling, what affect is the feeling having on the group's participation, etc. If in your judgment the situation warrants action, consider the following possibilities.

### Responding to Participants' Behaviors

<b>If the inference you have drawn is:</b>	<b>And...</b>	<b>Then...</b>
Enthusiasm/ Understanding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Several participants display the behavior</li><li>• One participant displays the behavior</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Continue, and make a mental note that the meeting is going well.</li><li>• Continue, and make a mental note to check again later.</li></ul>
Boredom	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Several participants display the behavior</li><li>• One participant displays the behavior</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Take a break, speed up the meeting, or check your process to be sure the participants are involved in it.</li><li>• Continue, but make a mental note to reassess later.</li></ul>
Confusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Several participants display the behavior</li><li>• One participant displays the behavior</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ask participants about areas of concern or confusion, and ask them what could be done to help the situation.</li><li>• Ask the participant about areas of concern or confusion and address them. Or if time is limited, talk with the participant at next break.</li></ul>

# Listening Skills

Listening is obtaining verbal information and verifying that you understand it. Listening skills enable you to demonstrate your understanding of participants' perceptions. They also provide you with feedback about how the meeting is going. You can use this feedback as you consider how to proceed with the meeting.

Listening involves two key steps:

**1. Listening to the words being expressed.**

This involves maintaining concentration on what the participant is saying.

**2. Paraphrasing what was said to demonstrate understanding.**

This involves interacting with the participant to ensure accurate understanding of what he or she said.

**Step 1: Listening to the words being expressed.**

As you listen to the words being expressed, try to grasp both the content and the meaning of the words from the participant's perspective. While this may sound simple, you will find that both internal and external distractions create roadblocks to effective listening.

*Internal distractions* are the competing thoughts that develop in your head while the participant is talking. Sometimes they are related to what the participant is saying; sometimes they are mental excursions to unrelated topics. It is important to eliminate these internal distractions so you can focus on what the participant is saying.

*External distractions* are things that happen in the meeting that compete with your attention to the participant. They can be sights or sounds. Exclude them, or at the least, defer giving attention to them, until the participant has finished speaking.

Once you have focused on the participant's message, you can then go to the next step--demonstrating your understanding of what the participant said.

## **Listening Skills (cont.)**

### **Step 2: Paraphrasing what was said to demonstrate understanding.**

Paraphrasing to demonstrate understanding requires you to verbally interact with the participant. The interaction is either to:

- Get additional information to fill in your understanding gaps, or to
- Verify with the participant what you think was said.

Use a phrase such as, “You’re saying ...”, or “As I understand it...” before paraphrasing what the participant said. If you then paraphrase the information accurately, the participant can confirm that you understand. If you paraphrase inaccurately or miss important details, the participant can add the information needed for you to understand.



# Questioning Skills

Questions play a major role in facilitating meetings. Questions help get group members to participate and get involved in the meeting. They also tap participants' knowledge and experiences in achieving meeting outcomes.

Two skills associated with questions in meetings are:

1. Asking questions.
2. Responding to participants' questions.

## Asking Questions

Asking questions effectively in meetings is one of the most important skills you can develop. Asking questions effectively means selecting the right *type* of question, *phrasing* it so it encourages a response, and then *directing* it appropriately.

## **Types of Questions**

There are two basic types of questions from which to choose, *open* questions and *closed* questions.

### **Types of Questions**

<b>Type of Question</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Example</b>
Open	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires more than a “yes” or “no” answer.</li><li>• Stimulates thinking.</li><li>• Usually begins with “what,” “how,” “why,” “when”</li></ul>	“What ideas do you have for possible solutions to the problem?”
Closed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Requires a one-word answer.</li><li>• Closes off discussion.</li><li>• Usually begins with “is,” “can,” “how many,” “does”</li></ul>	“Does everyone support the change being proposed?”

# Questioning Skills (cont.)

## Phrasing Questions

Once you've decided on the type of question you will use, you need to determine how you will phrase it. Consider the following "Do's" and "Don'ts" for phrasing questions.

### Guidelines for Phrasing Questions

DO	DON'T
Ask clear, concise questions covering a single issue.	Ask rambling, ambiguous questions covering multiple issues.
Ask challenging questions which stimulate thinking.	Ask questions which are too easy and provide no opportunity for thinking.
Ask honest, relevant questions.	Ask "trick" questions.

## Directing Questions

The final consideration in asking effective questions is how to direct the question. There are two ways to direct questions:

1. To the group.
2. To a specific individual.

### Choosing How to Direct Questions

IF YOU WANT TO...	THEN...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stimulate thinking of all participants</li><li>• Allow participants to respond voluntarily</li><li>• Avoid putting an individual on the spot</li></ul>	Direct the question to the group. <b>Example:</b> "What experiences have you had in this kind of situation?"
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Stimulate <i>one</i> member to think and respond</li><li>• Tap the experience of an expert in the group</li></ul>	Direct the question to an individual. <b>Example:</b> "Mary, you have had a lot of experience with this type of situation. What do you recommend?"

## More Questions

If you want:	Consider using:
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ The entire group to think about an issue</li> <li>◆ To begin a group discussion</li> <li>◆ To invite any willing person to respond</li> </ul>	<p>An <b>overhead</b> question, one that is open to anyone to answer.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> What can be done about this problem?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To expand involvement in a discussion</li> <li>◆ To capitalize on group resources</li> <li>◆ The questioner to clarify own position on the matter</li> </ul>	<p>A <b>redirected</b> question back to the questioner or to the group.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> You're raising an important issue. What do the rest of you think about it?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◆ To introduce a specific point of view</li> <li>◆ To have the group explore another side of the issue</li> <li>◆ To stimulate creativity</li> </ul>	<p>A <b>hypothetical</b> question.</p> <p><u>Example:</u> What if the situation was reversed and you were the project leader?</p>

# Responding to Participants' Questions

The second skill associated with questions involves responding to questions from the group. Participants' questions provide an opportunity to clarify issues and information for the group as well as for the individual asking the question. The way in which you respond to questions also affects participants' comfort and willingness to ask other questions and participate in other ways in the meeting.

Three acceptable ways to respond to participants' questions are:

1. Provide the answer yourself.
2. Redirect the question back to the questioner.
3. Redirect the question to the group.

## Responding to Participants' Questions

Choose the Following Response	When...
Provide the answer yourself.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You feel you have a helpful answer.</li><li>• You feel a response from you will benefit the group process.</li></ul>
Redirect the question back to the questioner.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You want to encourage the questioner to think it through.</li><li>• You want to get the questioner's thinking.</li></ul>
Redirect the question to the group.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• You want to involve the group.</li><li>• When you want to get the group's thinking.</li><li>• You want time to consider your response.</li></ul>

# Pacing

“Pacing” refers to how fast or slow you move through the meeting agenda. It includes the following considerations:

- Speaking
- Repeating key points
- Using questions
- Pausing (for thinking time)
- Listening
- Sharing information

An effective facilitator learns how to sense when to continue a discussion and when to move on.

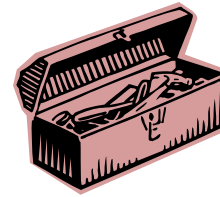
If in doubt, consider the following:

- **What are the needs of the total group in terms of moving forward**
  - Do the majority seem to be struggling?
  - Do the majority seem to be bored or irritated?
  - Is there a particular individual who just isn't getting it?
  - Ask the group what they need.
- **How much time is available and what's left on the agenda?**
  - Is it more important to complete the full agenda or continue the current discussion?
  - How flexible can you be and still accomplish your objectives?
  - Outline remaining items to be covered and let group members decide what's most important to them.

## Using Pauses

- When making a key point, state it then pause while maintaining eye contact. This gives participants time to reflect and mull over what was said and allows them to make their own connections.
- Silence is your friend! Though sometimes uncomfortable, silence (especially after asking a question) is often a sign of deep thought, not a lack of understanding or knowledge of the answer. Give adequate time for silent thought before restating the question or asking another one.

# Facilitator's Toolbox



## ***IF YOU NEED TO...***

Use an icebreaker to learn more about each other

Do quick and thorough brainstorming

Set mutually agreed-upon team expectations

Turn negatives into positives

Establish group behavior and norms

Structure a focused conversation

Organize group thinking no matter the group size

Identify driving forces and restraining forces

Do the first step in problem solving

Discover the root cause(s) of a problem

Weigh the pro's and con's of an issue

Help a group prioritize ideas, solutions, etc.

Select the best decision or solution

Gain a pulse of consensus among a group

Brainstorm and organize random information into a plan

## ***THEN TRY THIS TOOL***

Uncommon  
Commonalities

Mind Mapping

Moral Agreement

Double Reversal  
Ground Rules

Stop-Start-Continue

ORID Discussion  
Method

Open Space  
Technology

Force Field Analysis

Problem Focus  
Statement

Five Why's

PMI (Plus-Minus-  
Interesting)

Dot Voting

Decision Matrix

Five Finger Consensus

Affinity Clustering

# Uncommon Commonalities

## An Icebreaker and an Energizer

**What:** A great way to get people to become more familiar with each other, build some trust, and get ready to work together.

**When:** With large or small groups; highly interactive and energizing.

**Why:** Builds quick trust and camaraderie within groups.

### Process:

1. Groups should be sized between four and six people. More or less becomes either too hard or too easy. Make sure everyone has introduced themselves, i.e., agency, job etc.
2. Explain the goal of the activity: The members of each table group are to find some unusual or uncommon things they share in common. An example would be that you have all bungee jumped. It would not be “uncommon” for everyone to have been to Disneyland, to love chocolate, to go camping, or to have a high stress job. All the groups are competing to come up with the most unusual thing their members have in common. There may be prizes for the winning team.
3. Ask each group to select a note taker to record their work. Give them 10 minutes to do their best.
4. Have them prioritize and select their most unusual commonality. Have the table groups share with the whole group their entry in the most unusual commonality sweepstakes.
5. List each entry on a flip chart as it is reported out. Then have the whole group vote by raised hands on which one they think is the most unusual.
6. Option. Use the entries to create a team name for each table. For example: The Cactus-eaters, The Skydivers, etc.

# Mind mapping

## Quick and Thorough Brainstorming

**What:** A flexible and effective creativity and problem solving technique. Mind mapping is a whole-brain approach to outlining, note taking, and generating and organizing ideas.

**When:** For any process or topic requiring quick gathering of information and organization.

**Why:** To gather and sort information fast.

### Process:

- Write the central focus idea or image in the center of the page.
- Draw “spokes” from the center outward and write a main idea or major thought on each spoke. Use as many spokes as needed.
- Use key words, images or symbols to represent ideas. Be creative. Use colors. Go fast with high energy and write whatever comes to mind. Turn off your idea censor. All ideas are good and get captured.
- Use as few words as possible for each idea (one or two words is best).
- Draw branches off the main spokes to represent connected ideas.
- When all ideas are exhausted and on your mind map, move to organizing the spokes and branches in a linear, logical fashion.

### Mind mapping can be used for:

- Writing: Prevent writer’s block and get all of your ideas into play.
- Project Management and Strategic Planning: Lay out all of the pieces of the project or plan and then organize them.
- Brainstorming: Great for brainstorming individually or in small groups.
- Meetings: List and develop topics or activities for successful meetings.
- Time Management: Lay out your day, week, month or year.
- Note Taking: Organize your class or book notes in an easy-to-remember format.

Source: Adapted from work by Tony Buzan and Joyce Wycoff.



# Moral Agreement

## Establish Mutually Agreed-Upon Team Expectations

**What:** A technique to help establish mutually agreed-upon expectations for a work team.

**When:** To gain commitment from all team members to abide by and be held accountable for the established expectations.

**Why:** To improve team performance and behaviors.

### Process:

1. **Set up a meeting.** Set aside some uncluttered time to have an in-depth dialogue with your team members. Include this process at a group meeting with flipcharts available.
2. **List manager expectations.** Ask your team: “What should you expect of me as the manager of this team?” Write down **all** their ideas. Remember, this is a brainstorm and all ideas get acknowledged and written down. You’ll have the chance to clarify and respond to their ideas in a moment.
3. **Clarify.** Then clarify or respond to their expectations. You must feel comfortable and be willing to consider all the expectations they offered. If some of their ideas are too far “out there” for you, then explain why you can’t abide by them and change or remove them from the list.
4. **List team (employee) expectations.** Next, ask them: “Now that we have a list of expectations for me as the manager, what should I expect from you as team members?” Again, acknowledge and write down **all** their brainstorm ideas.

5. **Clarify.** Then clarify or respond to their expectations for themselves. If some expectations or behaviors that you feel strongly about are missing, add them to the list. Modify or delete those ideas that all members cannot agree on.
6. **Gain commitment.** Now give them the punch line: “Okay, I’ll make an agreement with you all today. I’m willing to work to meet all the expectations you’ve listed for me, and you can hold me accountable to them, **IF** you’ll commit to working to meet all the expectations you’ve listed for yourselves, and I can hold you accountable to them.” Ask if anyone is **NOT** willing to agree to these expectations and have them voice their concerns now. **LISTEN** and discuss until all are willing to agree to the expectations.
7. **Sign it.** You sign and date the list of manager expectations on the flipchart. Have all the team members sign the employee expectations list.
8. **Implement accountability.** You now have a “moral agreement” for the team. You can use it to begin to hold team members accountable for performance or behaviors that are outside the now-established expectations. **CAUTION:** Team members can also hold you accountable to follow-through on what you’ve agreed to. Role modeling the expected performance and behaviors on your part is critical to success.

# Double Reversal Ground Rules

## Turning Negatives into Positives

This is a facilitation technique which starts in reverse. You will be using it to generate a sound list of ground rules to guide your team, but it could be used in many other ways.

You start by asking the group to brainstorm a list of ideas that are opposite to what you are really trying to do. For example, you could ask your group members to brainstorm a list of ways they could behave that would make team meetings a disaster.

The question to ask is this: What ordinary things could we do or how could we behave in a way that would make our meetings fail? Make sure they give you realistic stuff. This will surprise the group, and they may have a little fun with it. Expect answers like this: have side conversations, not listen, not participate etc. Write the ideas on a flip chart as they are offered, and it's okay to make this fun. After they offer seven or eight ideas, you can stop. Have them take a good look at the list, and ask these questions: If we acted like this, would our meetings flounder and fail? Is this the kind of stuff that would mess up our meetings and make them fail? The answer should be a resounding yes.

Now we're going to go through each of the ideas the group generated and reverse them into a positive behavior to create our ground rules. It is important that ground rules be written in a positive way whenever possible. For example:

- "Don't participate" becomes "Participate with enthusiasm."
- "Don't listen" becomes "Give others your full attention."

As a group leader you may want to suggest additional ground rules on issues such as cell phones and beepers, side conversations, starting on time, participation, ending on time, and so on. Offering these suggestions falls under the title of "facilitator's prerogative".

After you finish reversing polarities on the original list, ask the group these questions: If we followed this set of ground rules, would we stand a much greater chance of having successful meetings? Would our meeting environment be more productive? They should answer yes.

Now ask for their commitment to follow all of the ground rules. You will see general consensus, heads nodding, etc. This is not enough. Now pose a commitment question in reverse: Is there anyone who cannot commit to following the ground rules? (This is another reversal technique.) It is not very likely that anyone will raise an objection. This commitment process is important. That's why the group leader needs to be explicit about it.

Now summarize the group decision: "Okay, we have developed a focused set of ground rules to guide our meeting behavior, and everyone has committed to following them. Furthermore, we are all deputized to diplomatically help each other follow them."

How does this process get you a better set of ground rules that are focused on real issues that may come up? They are focused on the most likely problems that may cause failure. Most of the time when we brainstorm ground rules we get the same ideas, they are rarely relevant to the problems the group may face, and they end up being ignored.

Post the ground rules during meetings, and review at the end of meetings. This regular review provides an ongoing way to address problem behaviors and turn them around, as well as reinforce desired behaviors. Taking the last five minutes of every meeting to review the ground rules will increase the likelihood that team members follow them, which will in turn dramatically improve the effectiveness of team meetings.

# Stop-Start-Continue

## Establishing Group Behavior and Norms

**What:** This tool is useful for helping individuals give and receive feedback related to team effectiveness.

**When:** Beneficial in dealing with conflict, interpersonal issues, and performance problems. This can be used for a team or between two individuals.

**Why:** To guide the team in new directions for acceptable behavior and norms.

### Process:

1. Review guidelines for giving and receiving feedback. Being able to give and receive helpful feedback is an important part of this tool.

### Feedback Guidelines

#### GIVING FEEDBACK

1. Be specific: Describe what you saw and how you were impacted as a group member.
2. Be constructive: Suggest ways to improve or other ideas to consider.
3. Be sensitive: Focus your discussion on helping the receiver, and be attentive to his or her needs.

#### RECEIVING FEEDBACK

1. Listen openly: Don't discount or block the information as you receive it.
2. Check for understanding: Ask for clarification if you're not sure what people mean.
3. Analyze the information: Take time to decide for yourself what you want to change or not change based on the discussion.

2. Complete the stop-start-continue sheets. Each individual should complete a stop-start-continue sheet for the team answering the following three questions:
  - (1) What does this team currently do that I would like to see stopped?
  - (2) What would I like this team to start doing in the future?
  - (3) What is this team currently doing that I would like to see continued?
3. Share the stop-start-continue sheets. This can be done by having people first work in pairs, then in small groups, and then as a whole group. Capture the best ideas from the small groups on a flipchart.

Example:

Stop	Start	Continue
Checking up on each other so much	Feeling comfortable sharing problems and issues you're facing--let's start sharing more with each other	Being supportive of each other and helping bring issues before the group
Interrupting each other during discussions	Trying to delegate more responsibilities	Honest, caring feedback
		Providing challenging work assignments

# ORID Discussion Method

## A Structure for Focused Conversations

### THE **OBJECTIVE** LEVEL IN A NUTSHELL

Focus of the questions:	Data, the “facts” about the topic, external reality.
What it does for the group:	Ensures that everyone deals with the same body of data and all the aspects.
Questions are in relation to:	The senses: what is seen, heard, and touched, etc.
Key questions:	What objects do you see? What words or phrases stand out? What happened?
Traps and pitfalls:	Asking closed questions, questions not specific enough, no clear focus, ignoring objective questions because “they are too trivial.”
If this level is omitted:	There will be no shared image of what the group is discussing. The various comments will seem unrelated.

### THE **REFLECTIVE** LEVEL IN A NUTSHELL

Focus of the questions:	Internal relationship to the data.
What it does for the group:	Reveals its initial responses.
Questions are in relation to:	Feelings, moods, emotional tones, memories, or associations.
Key questions:	What does it remind you of? How does it make you feel? Where were you surprised? Where delighted? Where did you struggle?
Traps and pitfalls:	Limiting the discussion to an either - or survey of likes and dislikes.
If this level is omitted:	The world of intuition, memory, emotion, and imagination is ignored.

## THE **INTERPRETIVE** LEVEL IN A NUTSHELL

Focus of the questions:	The meaning or value of the topic.
What it does for the group:	Draws out the significance of the data for the group.
Questions are in relation to:	Layers of meaning, purpose, significance, implications, “story,” and values, and consideration of alternatives and options.
Key questions:	What is happening here? What is this all about? What does all this mean for us? How will this affect our work? What are we learning from this? What is the insight?
Traps and pitfalls:	Abusing the data by inserting precooked meaning, intellectualizing, abstracting, judging responses as right or wrong.
If this level is omitted:	Group gets no chance to make sense out of the first two levels. No higher-order thinking goes into decision making.

## THE **DECISIONAL** LEVEL IN A NUTSHELL

Focus of the questions:	Resolution, implications, new directions.
What it does for the group:	Makes the conversation relevant for the future.
Questions are in relation to:	Consensus, implementation, action.
Key questions:	What is our response? What decision is called for? What are the next steps?
Traps and pitfalls:	Forcing a decision when group is not ready, or avoiding pushing group for a decision.
If this level is omitted:	The responses from the first three levels are not applied or tested in real life.



# Open Space Technology

## A Participatory and Free-Spirited Technique

“Open Space” is a simple and elegant method of organizing group thinking. To the stakeholders it offers the opportunity to work on the issues that they care about instead of being forced to work on issues decided by someone else, which is usually the case at planning events. It can be used with small or very large groups.

**What:** A technique used to organize group thinking and focus it on action. It has very simple rules and does not require elaborate facilitation.

**When:** When you want to do a less structured planning process with people who are comfortable working in that kind of environment.

**Why:** People work best and hardest when they can work on the subjects they care about and have passion for. At most planning events, you frequently end up assigned to work on issues that would not be your first choice, if you were allowed to have one.

### **Process: Open Space is based on four principles and one law.**

**1<sup>st</sup> Principle: Whoever comes are the right people.** Open space works with those who are interested and ready to commit themselves. Only those that are present can contribute. Attendance is open as much as possible.

**2<sup>nd</sup> Principle: Whatever happens is the only thing that could have.** This principle gives the base for sustainable involvement of stakeholders. Those issues for which people have a passion and in which they would engage themselves are discussed, nothing more, nothing less. In Open Space, everything that happens has meaning.

**3<sup>rd</sup> Principle: Whenever it starts is the right time.**

**4<sup>th</sup> Principle: When it's over, it's over. (When it's not over, it's not over)**

These principles describe an obvious and well-known fact: It is not possible to force processes. If people are committed to making a change, they will take the process in their hands. Although time and space are predefined in an Open Space event, clocks play a minor role in setting the pace.

### **The Law of Two Feet**

The only law that guides Open Space is this: Whenever people feel they are not contributing or learning, they are encouraged to move to another place of interest. Thus, the “Law of Two Feet” creates a process of cross fertilization between different focus groups.

# Force Field Analysis

## Identifying Promoting and Restraining forces

**What:** A technique that helps identify and show the relationships between the significant forces that influence a problem or goal.

**When:** To identify improvement opportunities.

**Why:** To identify key factors (forces) that promote or hinder the solution to a problem or the achievement of a goal.

### Process:

1. **Define the objective.** Identify the problem or goal to be analyzed.
2. **List the forces.** List the factors that promote or hinder achievement of your goal. Use two lists, one for promoting forces and one for inhibiting forces.
3. **Prioritize.** Prioritize the forces on each list according to their relative impact on the problem or goal.
4. **Implement.** Minimize or weaken the inhibiting forces and maximize or strengthen the promoting ones.

### Example:

Goal: Quit Smoking	
PROMOTING FORCES	INHIBITING FORCES
Better health	Habitual behavior
Save money	Addiction
Food tastes better	Gain weight
Cleaner teeth	Don't like the dentist anyway

# Problem Focus Statement

## The First Step in Problem-Solving

*“A problem well stated is a problem half solved.”*  
--Charles F. Kettering

**What:** A technique to focus in on the problem to be solved.

**When:** To help get a clear picture of the current state, impact, and desired state.

**Why:** To clarify a problem before tackling it.

### Process:

1. Write out a “**Current State**” which answers the question: “*What’s the problem?*” This should be a statement of what it looks like now. It should include facts only. Avoid judgments and opinions, and avoid moving to solutions.
2. Write out an “**Impact Statement**” which answers the question: “*So what?*” This statement should describe the impacts the problem is creating. It includes identifying who is impacted and how.
3. Write out a “**Preferred State**” which answers the question: “*What does the desired state look like when this problem is fixed?*” The preferred state describes the “nirvana” solution to the problem.

# Five Why's

## Discovering the Root Cause

*"If you don't ask the right questions, you don't get the right answers. A question asked in the right way often points to its own answer. Asking questions is the ABC of diagnosis. Only inquiring minds solve problems."*  
--Edward Hodnett

**What:** A technique used to peel away layers of problem symptoms and discover the root cause of a problem. This is one of the simplest tools to use and it is easy to complete without statistical analysis.

**When:** To determine the relationship between different root causes of a problem.

**Why:** This is a favorite technique of a three year old child, i.e., repeating "why" over and over. The child may drive you CRAZY, but the technique helps him or her understand things.

### Process:

1. Write down the specific problem. Putting it in writing helps you formalize the problem and describe it completely. It also helps a team focus on the same problem.
2. Ask why the problem happens and write the answer below the problem.
3. If the answer you just provided doesn't identify the root cause of the problem that you wrote down in Step 1, ask why again and write that answer down.
4. Loop back to Step 3 until the team is in agreement that the problem's root cause has been identified. This may take fewer or more than five times of asking why.

# PMI (Plus-Minus-Interesting)

## Weighing Pro's and Con's

**What:** A perception scanning and mapping tool that allows you to take a broad look at a proposed course of action.

**When:** To get a full view of the benefits and consequences of a decision.

**Why:** Gives the full picture; leaves no gaps.

### Process:

1. Start by listing all of the PLUS (or positive) points you can think of.
2. Next list all the MINUS (or negative) points.
3. Finally, list all the INTERESTING points or thoughts that don't fit into either of the first two categories.
4. Now take a highlighter and mark the three to five points you feel are most important. Congratulations, you have now made a decision map.

### Sample Decision: Should all cars be painted yellow?

#### PLUS

- Easier to see on the roads and this will make people safer.
- No problem in deciding which color you want when you buy a car.
- No waiting to get the color you want.
- In collisions the paint rubbed off on your car is the same.

#### MINUS

- Difficult to recognize your car.
- The abundance of yellow might tire the eyes.
- Accident witnesses would have a harder time.
- Some paint companies might go out of business.
- Car sales would decline and people would lose jobs.

#### INTERESTING

- Interesting to see if different shades of yellow arise.
- Interesting to see if people appreciate the safety factor.
- Interesting to see whether attitudes towards cars change.
- Interesting to see if this were enforceable.
- Interesting to see who would support the suggestion.

Source: Adapted from Edward deBono's *Thinking Course*, 1994.

# Dot Voting

## Determining Group Priorities

**What:** A technique that allows a group to identify priority items from a list of items.

**When:** Useful when you wish to narrow a list to a few, high priority items.

**Why:** Colored dots give a quick and highly visual picture of where group and individual priorities lie.

### Process:

1. Before you vote, check with members to clarify items and combine those that are the same. Don't take too long for this process, however, and don't let the group over-combine items or dilute the meaning of items.
2. The more dots you give each person, the longer the sorting process. To do a one-time sort, give everyone three or four dots. You can refine the list by having everyone vote a second time with a different color dot on the priorities identified in the first sort.

# Decision Matrix

## Choosing the Best Decision

**What:** A technique for evaluating a list of ideas against a number of criteria by using a rating scale.

**When:** If a group is divided and needs factual information to reach agreement.

**Why:** To help a group weigh possible options against specific criteria, such as time and cost.

### Process:

1. Determine the criteria that options must meet. Time and cost are the most common ones, but different situations can have different criteria. Brainstorm a list of the key criteria for each situation, e.g., cost, time, ease of use, customer acceptability, accuracy, etc.
2. List the three to five most important criteria across the top of a chart. Assign a numerical rating scale to each guideline. Use the same scale (e.g. 1-10) for each guideline and ensure that all scales run the same way.

### Sample: How to get the word out on a new marketing plan?

OPTIONS	KEY CRITERIA			TOTAL
	Cost	Time to Implement	Customer Acceptability	
	1=high cost 5=low cost	1= long time required 5=short time required	1= low acceptability 5= high acceptability	
<b>Newsletter*</b>	4	5	4	13
<b>Memo</b>	5	5	1	11
<b>Poster</b>	3	3	2	8
<b>Radio Ad</b>	2	2	3	7
<b>Video</b>	1	1	4	6

\* Newsletter is best choice because it has the highest score.

Other options: Instead of ranking on a numerical scale, you could rank each option against the others. Or, if one criterion is more important than the others, it could be weighted, e.g., a factor of two for the cost item.

# Five Finger Consensus

## Collaborative Consensus Building

**What:** A technique that allows members of a group to quickly indicate how they feel about a proposal by holding up one to five fingers.

**When:** To see if your group has reached consensus.

**Why:** Allows a group to know the level of support from all members for a proposal.

### Process:

1. When it is time to see if a group is at consensus, ask for a finger count. All group members hold up the number of fingers that indicate their level of agreement or consensus. Here's what the different number of fingers mean:

**Five fingers:** I love the proposal and enthusiastically support it.

**Four fingers:** I like the proposal and support it.

**Three fingers:** I sufficiently favor the proposal and won't become an obstacle to carrying it out.

**Two fingers:** I really don't like it and likely can't support it.

**One finger:** I hate the proposal and won't support it.

2. The facilitator then looks around and checks each person's hand.
3. If everyone in the group shows five, four, or three fingers, you have consensus.
4. If any members show only one or two fingers, ask them what they would need to be a five, four or three.
5. All members of the group are responsible to hear what the one's and two's need, and to work to adjust the original proposal in an attempt to gain consensus.



# Affinity Clustering

## A Creativity Tool

This is a brainstorming tool which allows you think creatively and chaotically and then organize the information. It is great to use for project and strategic planning. It works well in groups and allows everyone a chance to actively participate.

**What:** A technique used to brainstorm all of the pieces of a project or a plan and then organize the information in a useful way.

**When:** At the beginning of projects and plans. This technique gets projects and plans off to a robust start.

**Why:** It really gets everyone's thinking up on the wall and then gives you a way to organize that thinking. You can use this with small groups or large groups (several hundred people!). One of its best features is that no matter the size of the group, everyone can participate and make a meaningful contribution.

### Process:

1. Secure an adequately sized room with an accessible large blank wall.
2. Supplies: You will need a generous supply of "half-sheets." These are colored pieces of 8½" by 11" paper cut in half. The color of the paper can be used to liven-up and organize the process. You will also need "repositionable" tape (the blue tape used for masking in painting) and a supply of marker pens.
3. Introduce the activity as a method to brainstorm and organize ideas for the project or plan that you are working on.
4. Hand out the "half-sheets" of paper and marker pens. Explain that each participant will be writing their ideas on the half-sheets, as follows.

The Rules for Writing on the half-sheets are this:

- 1) Write **BIG**
  - 2) Try to keep to three to five words
  - 3) Write legibly
  - 4) One idea per half-sheet
5. Give participants several minutes to individually brainstorm and write on the half-sheets the ideas that pop into their heads.
  6. After they have been able to come up with several ideas each, have them share their ideas in small groups. As they share, have them eliminate duplicate ideas and sort for the ideas that represent the group's best thinking.
  7. After about 10 minutes, we are ready to move to having the small groups share their best thinking with the whole group. Ask the groups to sort their pile of ideas for different aspects that you give them, for example, "Please pass forward the idea you think has the most promise." On the next round it could be their wildest idea. Each time they look at their ideas in a new way, and this keeps the process creative.
  8. After they sort out the idea that best represents what you asked for, have them hand the idea forward. Read the idea out loud to the group and then tape it up randomly on the wall. Eliminate duplicates with the group's permission.
  9. Get all of the best ideas up on the wall. There will be a huge conglomeration of ideas. Ask the small groups to donate one of their members to form an organizing team. Take the organizing team aside and explain the goal is to group all the ideas by similarity (**affinity**). They will usually group into somewhere between four and six groups of ideas. They will be able to do this in an amazingly short period of time (under 10 minutes). An additional thing you can do is ask another group to come up and sort the groups by priority, putting the highest priority items at the top and the lower ones at the bottom.
  10. At the end of the activity, you will have a large number of good ideas, grouped by affinity and sorted for priority. This is a great start for any plan or project and everybody contributed!

# Dealing with Difficult Behaviors and Situations

Every facilitator cringes at the thought of having to deal with a particularly difficult participant or group behavior. While leading a group, it is your responsibility to ensure the group process does not become inhibited. Choosing not to deal with problem situations is not an option. An effective facilitator learns how to prevent, discourage, and eliminate behaviors that hinder effective group functioning. The welfare of the group must be your top priority.

Some typical "difficult" behaviors that participants demonstrate in meetings include:

- Making negative or cynical comments
- Arriving late or returning late from breaks
- Leaving before the meeting is over
- Repeating a point of view or objection over and over
- Doing other work, e.g., texting, e-mailing, or meeting with another participant on another task during the session
- Demonstrating exaggerated, negative nonverbal signals
- Conducting conversations on the side
- Speaking excessively or speechmaking
- Sidetracking discussions or changing topics
- Verbally attacking or challenging the facilitator or other participants
- Acting as a self-appointed expert or "know it all"
- Intentionally misinterpreting the facilitator or other participants' views or positions
- Not participating
- Working hidden agendas

# The Leader's Role: Dealing with Group Problems

## General Strategies

- Use preventive strategies whenever possible. Examples:
  - Set ground rules in advance
  - Use round-robin discussion processes
  - Agree on a process to resolve conflicts or make decisions
- Consider every problem a group problem. What does the group do to allow or even encourage the behavior? What could the group do differently to change this? Is there a hidden benefit to the group in this behavior?
- Respond appropriately to the seriousness of the problem. Let small disruptions go, and keep a range of options available if the problem becomes more serious:
  1. **Do nothing.** Sometimes other group members may deal with it, and sometimes ignoring inappropriate behavior is the best response.
  2. **One-on-one conversation outside the group.** Ask the person about their concerns and give constructive feedback.
  3. **General group problem-solving.** Without singling out individuals, discuss process concerns. Talk about how the group can help to assure appropriate behavior.
  4. **Confront outside of group.** After other attempts have failed and the behavior continues to happen, give feedback about the behavior and its consequences. Explore options and ask the person to agree to make a change. Offer your assistance.
  5. **Group confrontation.** This is a high-risk strategy, useful only when everything else has failed. The purpose is to change the behavior, not punish the person. You must be well-prepared to keep the discussion on a positive footing. Make sure that people use constructive feedback guidelines, "I" statements, and behavior descriptions.

Do not expel a member from the group. The bad feelings from "kicking someone out" remain with the group and the individual for a long time. If an individual decides not to attend meetings, see if there is another way for the person to make contribution to the group task.

# Understanding and Dealing with Problem Behaviors

If ground rules are clear and followed, problem behavior should be minimized. But the group wants you take care of tough members. Don't let them down.

1. **Silent Members:** Could be an introvert. Did you give him or her enough information during the meeting to allow reflection? Be cautious, but try asking, "Joe, what are your thoughts on this question?"
2. **Challengers:** Consistently challenges the presenter's ideas and opinions. Acknowledge that the Challenger's ideas or opinion have merit and say, "I will need to think about the effect that has on my thinking," or ask the group what they think about the idea/opinion expressed.
3. **Out in Left Field:** May be confused or misinformed. Be patient. Ask open-ended questions, listen and rephrase. Compliment their asking questions. Get others to help you understand.
4. **Complainers:** Defer to the group. Ask, "How are other people feeling about this?"
5. **Dominators:** Talks often. Ask the rest of the group, "What does anyone else think about this point?" or "Who else has some ideas?" and then redirect your body language in another direction.
6. **Long-Winded Members:** Talks long. Wait a minute for a pause, however brief, and interrupt, saying, "Could you summarize your idea in a few words so I can write it down?" Celebrate diversity.
7. **Side Conversations.** Talks to someone else at length. If possible, you can move to where they are. Try, "What are your thoughts on the point just raised?" or "Are we missing out on something important?"
8. **Side-Trackers:** Brings up issues that appear not to relate. Try, "I'm not clear how that fits in with what we are discussing. Can you help me?" Get others to help you understand. The Side Tracker's issues can be placed in a "Parking Lot."

# One-on-One Behavioral Interventions

It is always preferable to take preventive action in groups to establish a positive working environment. Preventive steps include having the group establish ground rules and “round robin” idea-sharing processes which systematically include everyone.

However, at times it is necessary for a facilitator to intervene with a group member who continues to engage in disruptive behavior despite preventive efforts. When you must do so, here are some guidelines:

1. Seek a private location, not in front of the group.
2. Use constructive confrontation techniques.
  - **Ask permission to give feedback.** *“I’d like to share some perceptions about how you’re coming across in our team. Is that OK with you?”*
  - **Give the person the benefit of the doubt.** *“You are probably not aware of this...”*
  - **Describe the specifics of the behavior. Stay away from discussions of attitude or motives. These are always subjective.** *“I have noticed that you have criticized others’ ideas when we are brainstorming. For example...”*
  - **Describe the problem it creates for the group, again in behavior terms.** *“Criticizing ideas seems to put a barrier up to the groups’ creativity. Few ideas were shared after you criticized the first one.”*
  - **Request a concrete change.** *“I would like you to hold off on any criticisms of others’ ideas until we get to the evaluation stage.”*
  - **Ask for agreement.** *“Is this something that you are willing to do?”*

3. Follow up on the situation.

- **Reinforce any positive change.** *“At the last meeting, I noticed you really followed through on not criticizing others. That’s great – I think it really had a positive influence on the group.”*
- **If negative behavior persists: Confront again.** *“I’m concerned. We discussed this before and I thought we had an agreement.”*
- **Agree on further steps.** **If the person seems unaware of the behavior, perhaps there is a signal or cue you could agree on to alert them when the behavior is occurring.**

4. Consider third party assistance. Sometimes a group that is experiencing difficulties can benefit from a neutral observer or facilitator to provide feedback and suggest changes. When an individual continues to exhibit behaviors that impede progress or stir conflict, ask for help and advice from a manager or specialist in team and organization development.

## Probing Questions to Clarify Participants' (Invisible) Thinking:

What to do:	What to say:
Gently ask about others conclusions.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What leads you to conclude that?</li> <li>- What causes you to say that?</li> </ul>
Use non-aggressive language. Avoid provoking defensiveness.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What do you mean?</li> <li>- Can you help me understand your thinking here?</li> </ul>
Find out as much as you can about why others said what they said.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- What is your reason for thinking that?</li> </ul>
Ask for examples.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- How would your idea affect...</li> <li>- Can you give me a typical example?</li> </ul>
Test understanding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Am I correct that you're saying...</li> <li>- Can I check to make sure we're all understanding this the same way?</li> </ul>



# Intervention Strategies

## BEFORE THE MEETING

If you anticipate difficulties from a particular individual, your best defense is a good offense. Meet with the individual in advance and discuss the meeting. Be clear about your objectives for the meeting and ask about the participant's expectations. Your goals are (1) to build a relationship and try to establish common ground and (2) to "smoke out" any indication of problems on the horizon.

Strategies you can use with an individual before a meeting include the following:

- Request support and cooperation for the meeting.
- Try to find a way to address the individual's concerns and remove any legitimate reason for objection.
- Assign a role that will occupy the individual's attention and focus constructive behavior. For example, ask the person to be the note taker or timekeeper.

## DURING THE MEETING

During the meeting, there are basically two broad strategies you can use. One is to confront the individual directly. The other is to use the group to help maintain constructive behavior. Here is a potpourri list of facilitator tactics you can use during a meeting to handle disruptive individuals or difficult behaviors.

- **Start your meeting on time.** If you wait for latecomers, you reward late behavior and establish a norm that it is acceptable to be late.
- **Clarify the length of the meeting at the beginning.** Make sure that everyone knows what time the meeting will end, and then stick to that time. This makes it more difficult for individuals to leave early and allows you and the group to make adjustments up front if there is a legitimate reason to do so.
- **Make sure all views get heard.** If a participant won't let go of a viewpoint, hear the participant out. Record it on the flipchart to validate it, and ask directly if there is anything else the person needs in order to let go of it and move on. Record viewpoints without names so that you can depersonalize differences.

## Intervention Strategies (cont.)

- **Call on participants directly, or physically move close to them** if they are doing something else (text messaging, etc.). If this doesn't get them refocused on the meeting, speak to them during a break.
- **Touch base with people who are demonstrating dramatic nonverbal signals**, e.g., shaking their head negatively: "I see you're shaking your head. Do you have some disagreement you want to express?" The participant may not be aware of the behavior and may try to control the body language. If the participant's behavior continues and becomes disruptive, share your observations at the next break: "When you shake your head, I perceive it as disagreement or disapproval. I'm finding it distracting. Please tell me what's bothering you."
- **If a side conversation begins** or there are perpetual whisperers, move close to these individuals and they will usually stop. Ask people to maintain their focus on the group discussion at hand. If necessary, confront the group's or individual's tendency to start side conversations, and directly and constructively, share your frustration.
- **With overly verbal people**, your most subtle technique is to manage your proximity to them. While they are talking, move closer and maintain eye contact until you are standing right in front of them. Then, shift your focus and call on someone else. You may have to deal with verbose people outside the meeting. If nothing else works, you may have to confront them directly.
- **Call a halt to verbal intimidation.** Validate the participants' rights to disagree with you or with each other, but redirect them to negotiate constructively rather than using power or threats. If necessary, call a break and meet with the "intimidator." Ask for this person's support in putting the discussion on hold until it can be dealt with constructively.
- **Interview the "dominant" participant.** Try to discover needs or expectations that you may be missing. You may learn something that can add value to the meeting.

## Intervention Strategies (cont.)

- **Reverse viewpoints with the participant.** Or, ask other participants to represent both sides of the issue while you and the difficult participant listen.
- **Call on "non-participants" by name.** Ask for their views or opinions without embarrassing them. Offer positive reinforcement when they participate.
- **Use hand gestures to put "interrupters" or "intentional misinterpreters" on hold** while the speaker finishes a point. Ask them to let the speaker make the point. If necessary, paraphrase the statement so that it's presented as the speaker intended, rather than being misrepresented.
- **Don't get defensive when participants are critical of you.** Defensiveness will prevent you from hearing any constructive potential in their comments. You aren't perfect (and you don't have to be). Listen to criticism and suggestions. Model adaptability and flexibility if appropriate. Rephrase your understanding of the feedback or criticism, and ask for suggestions. Acknowledge the input and promise to respond once you have fully considered it.
- **Ask for help or suggestions from the group.** If you are unsure about what to do to make the meeting more effective, ask participants for their suggestions. You may ask the group to set ground rules for interactions to prevent polarization. This reinforces the idea that everyone, not just the facilitator, is responsible for the success of the meeting. You may also learn something that will help you in this situation, as well as strengthen your meeting skills.
- **Break into sub-groups.** Ask sub-groups to come to consensus on the issues at hand. Participants who have been too intimidated to speak may express their views more readily in smaller groups. Sub-grouping allows you the opportunity to pair people with similar (or different) points of view, and then to have them report to the whole group. This strategy also gives the difficult individual a smaller group or audience to influence.

- **Don't get sucked into "non-questions."** Turn rhetorical questions into statements. This encourages the speaker to "own" comments rather than allowing him or her to dominate the discussion by hiding behind false questions.
- **You may need to ask a disruptive participant to leave.** When a problem remains despite your best efforts, you must protect the meeting environment by asking the participant to leave. You may also need to let the participant know that you will have to tell the boss. This is uncomfortable, and it can be disruptive to the meeting, but it is sometimes necessary.

Keep in mind that your role as a facilitator gives you power in the meeting setting. With legitimate organizational objectives behind your effort, you should not automatically "cave in" to participants who are attempting to dominate or sabotage your meeting. Conversely, be aware that pointed confrontation on your part will make the group uncomfortable. It is not helpful to "win the battle and lose the war". You will want to ensure the group's continued willing participation during the rest of the meeting and in future meetings with you.

# Difficult Situations and Behaviors:

## Possible Causes and Strategies

Situation/ Behavior	Possible Causes	Strategies
Interrupting or talking over you or group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Need to be heard</li> <li>▪ Worried their opinion won't be heard or valued</li> <li>▪ Doesn't use listening skills well</li> <li>▪ Could have hearing problem</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ask the person who was interrupted to continue</li> <li>▪ Hold hand, palm out, in front of interrupter without looking at them</li> <li>▪ Directly ask interrupter to wait until first person is finished</li> <li>▪ Ask interrupter to paraphrase what other person was saying</li> </ul>
Won't participate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Negative attitude toward the meeting</li> <li>▪ Not feeling well</li> <li>▪ Personal issues</li> <li>▪ Fear of rejection</li> <li>▪ Poor past meeting experiences</li> <li>▪ Shy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Use techniques to build participation</li> <li>▪ Try to determine cause of non-participation</li> <li>▪ Acknowledge them and encourage them to share their valuable insight</li> </ul>
Domination (talks too much)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Likes to talk; highly extroverted</li> <li>▪ Hyperactive</li> <li>▪ Overly excited or enthusiastic</li> <li>▪ Is already an expert in the topic or has been involved in similar meetings before</li> <li>▪ Unmet needs to be heard</li> <li>▪ Personal issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Thank them for sharing and ask for others' views</li> <li>▪ Tell them you want to hear from the rest of the group</li> <li>▪ Ask them to please give others a turn</li> <li>▪ Call on specific individuals</li> <li>▪ Use a "talking stick" or poker chips:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Only person with talking stick can talk then must pass stick on</li> <li>▪ Give each person same amount of poker chips; when they share they must give up a chip; if no more chips, no more talk</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<b>Situation/ Behavior</b>	<b>Possible Causes</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
Arguing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resentment about the meeting</li> <li>▪ Outside work issues</li> <li>▪ Personal issues</li> <li>▪ Not feeling well</li> <li>▪ Unclear about the purpose and goals of the meeting</li> <li>▪ Not understanding or grasping the issues being discussed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Acknowledge their opinion and ask if others feel the same</li> <li>▪ Tell them you appreciate their point of view and ask to “agree to disagree”</li> <li>▪ Try to determine root cause (are there issues not related to the meeting this person is dealing with?)</li> <li>▪ Ask participant to explain argument from the opposite point of view</li> <li>▪ Take a break</li> </ul>
Negative/cynical comments or body language	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Resentment about the meeting</li> <li>▪ Outside work issues</li> <li>▪ Personal issues</li> <li>▪ Not feeling well</li> <li>▪ Unclear about purpose and goals of the meeting</li> <li>▪ Stress</li> <li>▪ Fear/anxiety</li> <li>▪ Not understanding or grasping the issues being discussed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ask if others agree or disagree, and why</li> <li>▪ Use humor, e.g. “wow, that sounds bleak”</li> <li>▪ Try to determine root cause</li> <li>▪ Ask participant directly to explain his or her negativity toward the meeting, topic, etc.</li> <li>▪ Take a break</li> </ul>
Side conversations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not engaged in the meeting</li> <li>▪ Outside issues</li> <li>▪ Social needs</li> <li>▪ Personal issues</li> <li>▪ Needing clarification about the meeting</li> <li>▪ Not understanding or grasping the issues being discussed</li> <li>▪ Fear of speaking up in a group or asking questions</li> <li>▪ Not able to hear discussion</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Pause and wait while looking at the participants</li> <li>▪ Ask one of the participants a question</li> <li>▪ Ask participants directly if the conversation is related to the topic, and if not, to please wait until a break</li> <li>▪ Break participants up into sub-groups, separating the talkers</li> </ul>

<b>Situation/ Behavior</b>	<b>Possible Causes</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
Arriving late to the meeting, or being late after breaks or lunch	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Busy/deadlines</li> <li>▪ Outside issues</li> <li>▪ Traffic/weather issues</li> <li>▪ Lack of time management skills</li> <li>▪ Not interested or engaged in the meeting</li> <li>▪ If held in building of work, getting tied up with work issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Begin on time without late participant</li> <li>▪ Greet participant and ask him or her to get caught up on a break or during lunch</li> <li>▪ Remind participants of starting times</li> <li>▪ Ask participant directly to please make an effort to be on time</li> <li>▪ Ask if there is something you can do to help him or her be on time</li> </ul>
Doing other work	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Busy/deadlines</li> <li>▪ Not interested or engaged in the meeting</li> <li>▪ Doesn't see the value of the meeting</li> <li>▪ Stress</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ask group to remove all items from table top</li> <li>▪ Provide a table in back of room for "baggage"</li> <li>▪ Ask the participant to assist you, e.g. pass out materials, write on flip chart, facilitate a discussion, etc.</li> <li>▪ Put participants into small groups</li> <li>▪ If participant continues, ask participant directly if he or she needs to be somewhere else</li> </ul>
Attacking or putting down you or group members	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Lack of self-esteem</li> <li>▪ Personal issues</li> <li>▪ Interpersonal conflicts</li> <li>▪ Lack of communication skills</li> <li>▪ Frustration with the meeting</li> <li>▪ Not understanding or grasping the issues being discussed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Tell the participant directly that the behavior is not appropriate</li> <li>▪ Ask the participant to identify at least three positive things about the topic or other person</li> <li>▪ Ask the participant to rephrase his or her point of view by focusing on the situation or behavior, not the person</li> <li>▪ Take a break</li> </ul>

<b>Situation/ Behavior</b>	<b>Possible Causes</b>	<b>Strategies</b>
Excessive storytelling	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Personal issues</li> <li>▪ Unmet social needs</li> <li>▪ Not clear on the purpose or goals of the meeting</li> <li>▪ Not interested or engaged in the meeting</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ask participant how the story relates to the discussion topic</li> <li>▪ Ask participant to summarize the story with two main points</li> <li>▪ Ask participant to stay focused on current discussion</li> </ul>
Bringing up unrelated topics	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Unclear about purpose or goals of the meeting</li> <li>▪ Outside issues</li> <li>▪ Not interested or engaged in the meeting</li> <li>▪ The persons needs don't match the meeting's purpose</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ask participant how it relates to current discussion</li> <li>▪ Review the point or goal of the current discussion</li> <li>▪ Ask group if there are things needing to be discussed or issues to be aired before moving forward</li> <li>▪ Ask group if there is a need to discuss the unrelated topic</li> </ul>
Sleeping or constant yawning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Not feeling well</li> <li>▪ Room too warm</li> <li>▪ Not interested or engaged in the meeting</li> <li>▪ Personal issues</li> <li>▪ Lack of energy</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Take a break</li> <li>▪ Do an energizer or ask group to take a walk</li> <li>▪ Do a temperature check</li> <li>▪ Move behind the participant and raise your voice</li> <li>▪ Ask participant a question</li> <li>▪ Use humor if appropriate</li> <li>▪ Provide refreshments</li> </ul>
Repeating a point of view or an opinion over and over	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Feeling unheard or misunderstood</li> <li>▪ Not understanding or grasping the issue being discussed</li> <li>▪ Personal issues</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Paraphrase the participant's view or opinion</li> <li>▪ Ask another participant to paraphrase the participant's view or opinion</li> <li>▪ Ask permission to move forward</li> <li>▪ Ask the participant to discuss the issue further during a break or after the meeting</li> <li>▪ Take a break and refocus on a new topic upon return</li> </ul>



Situation/ Behavior	Possible Causes	Strategies
Clicking or tapping pen or pencil, or drumming fingers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Kinesthetic participant</li> <li>▪ Hyperactive</li> <li>▪ Nervous or experiencing stress</li> <li>▪ Impatient, needing to move forward</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Provide quiet toys, markers &amp; scrap paper on tables</li> <li>▪ Provide non-clicking pens or pencils on the tables</li> <li>▪ Talk louder and ask if participants can hear you</li> </ul>

# Handling Unusually Disruptive Behavior

Disruptive behavior in meetings, particularly if it derails the meeting or makes people feel uncomfortable, must be addressed. It is wise to start with a low-key but firm reminder about the agreed-on ground rules and to escalate your responses if the situation continues. The following steps illustrate that escalation process:

1. If something is said that is disruptive, inflammatory, or inappropriate, ask the person to rephrase the comment without the invectives.
2. If repeated, tell the person the outburst or behavior is inappropriate and it must stop.
3. Call for a break and talk to the person privately. Ask the person to get it under control or he or she will be asked to leave the meeting.
4. If the person doesn't stop after the break, ask him or her to leave the meeting.
5. If the person won't leave and won't stop disrupting, adjourn the meeting. Plan to reschedule with or without the person, but only after the issue has been resolved.

Clearly there is also a disciplinary issue in this situation that would need to be addressed, but that is outside the scope of this course. Be aware of your body language when confronting disruptive behavior. Be direct and look the person in the eye. Also, move closer to the person to talk further, but not in a confrontational way. Make certain you are being clear in your expectations and that your voice is steady.

Source: *Planning and Leading Productive Meetings*, Jeffrey H. Davis, 2001.

# The Team Development Model

Bruce Jackman

<p><b>Stage One Issues: Testing/Forming/Orientation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Direction and clarification sought by team members.</li> <li>• Polite impersonal, watchful behavior</li> <li>• Team members evaluate the nature of their involvement.</li> <li>• Will I be accepted / capable? Will the leader value me?</li> <li>• <b>Focus is on relationship to team and leader: Who am I in this group?</b></li> </ul>	<p><b>Role of Leader/Participant</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Provide direction, structure, and expectations.</li> <li>• Provide safety and respect for all.</li> <li>• Chart mission, goals and contract.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage Two Issues: Controlling/Storming/Conflict</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Who controls the team? How much autonomy/influence will I have?</li> <li>• Testing of leadership: How is control exercised?</li> <li>• What happens to the “delinquents”?</li> <li>• <b>Focus is on interactions. How will we solve interpersonal problems on this team?</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen to and address challenges to leadership.</li> <li>• Protect minorities.</li> <li>• Gain agreement on dealing with conflict.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage Three Issues: Getting Organized/Norming</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Developing team skill and norms for meeting behavior: How honest will we be? How will we communicate?</li> <li>• Focus on establishing group procedures: How do we want to do things?</li> <li>• Leader gives more responsibility to group, but confronts issues when necessary.</li> <li>• <b>Agree on guidelines for giving and receiving feedback.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get input, participation, and ownership.</li> <li>• Give more control to the group.</li> <li>• Clarify and agree on norms.</li> <li>• Clarify roles, expectations and standards.</li> <li>• Surface and agree on communication honesty</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage Four Issues: Mature Closeness/Performing</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mature closeness; open discussion and respect for differences in background, style, and mode of operation.</li> <li>• Challenging one another leads to creative problem-solving.</li> <li>• Clear roles with each person’s contribution being seen as distinctive.</li> <li>• Joint setting of goals.</li> <li>• Mechanisms developed for ongoing self-assessment of group.</li> <li>• Resourceful and distinctive contribution to the organization.</li> <li>• <b>Focus on task completion.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Get out of the team’s way.</li> <li>• Resource provider / organization advocate.</li> <li>• Turn over leadership to members.</li> <li>• Reward new behaviors.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Stage Five Issues: Adjourment/Dissolution</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Leaving, endings.</li> <li>• Task completion.</li> <li>• <b>Focus on celebration.</b></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Thank team.</li> <li>• Provide recognition.</li> </ul>

## Exercise: Facilitation Challenges

At your tables, discuss the situations assigned to your group (using your experience and information on the previous pages). Decide the best course of action and prepare to report back to the large group.

1. You have good participation, except for one person. You notice he hasn't joined in the lively discussion.

Intervention:

2. Several people are talking at once during your meeting. It's getting confusing and a little chaotic.

Intervention:

3. One member is so negative during your meeting (both verbally and body language), that it's beginning to impact the "mood" of the meeting. You don't want to embarrass the person, but you have to do something.

Intervention:

4. One member gives a very complex answer to a question you ask. You're just not clear on what this person is talking about.

Intervention:

5. One member rambles on and on and never seems to get to the point. You don't want to abruptly cut the person off, but you're concerned about others' reaction to this person's comments.

Intervention:

6. You find that one member is dominating the discussion, and you want to ensure that everyone gets an opportunity to be heard.

Intervention:

7. It's clear to you that the members have something else on their minds besides the meeting at hand. Their undertone conversations and body language indicate they are upset about something. You need to address this before moving on.

Intervention:

8. During your meeting you (and others) are distracted by constant side conversations of between two members of the group.

Intervention: