

‘Dealing with Difficult Behaviors’ handouts

“Problem Behaviors & Solutions”

If someone is always **late**, you can: Ask them beforehand if there is something that is hindering them from arriving on time; Assign them a role in the beginning of the meeting so they will have to be on time; Discover if the meeting is of importance to them or not. Do not confront them at the time of their arrival but say to them that you would be happy to catch them up on what they missed later so the meeting can proceed.

If someone **leaves early**, you can: Ask the group if they need a break – is the meeting too long, off topic, boring? Find out at the beginning of the meeting if anyone needs to leave early and get a commitment from all participants on the end time. Do not call out the person as they leave, but check in with them later to bring them up to speed on what they missed.

If someone **continuously repeats a point or perspective**, you can: Acknowledge their input, record it (use appropriate flip charts for current discussion input or use a ‘parking lot’ flip chart for off-topic points) and confirm with them that you have captured it accurately. Ask the group if they wish to consider the point now or at a future date. Refer back to the meetings **ground rules** of ‘Say it once’.

If someone takes the stance of **“I’ll believe it when I see it”**, you can: Refer back to the meeting **ground rules** of the willingness to explore new ideas and refraining from negative comments. Record their comments so they can feel heard, but don’t allow the group to dwell on negativity.

If someone **appears bored or disgusted**, you can: Ask the person if they have a particular issue with the process or content of the meeting. Do they have something they would like to contribute? Refer back to the **ground rules** of active participation and listening.

If someone is a **side bar conversationalist**, you can: Walk up close to them, this often will stop them talking. Ask them directly if they have a point to contribute or if you may have mis-interpreted something. Refer back to the **ground rules** of no side bar conversations and active listening.

If someone is **dominating the conversation**, you can: Move closer to them and maintain eye contact – this will often calm them down. Record their input once, check for accuracy, and then refer back to the **ground rules** of ‘Say it once’ and allowing everyone to participate. Call for a break and mention to the dominator that they are potentially inhibiting others from participating.

If someone is **arguing or attacking**, you can: Refer back to the **ground rules** of focusing on issues not people, and refraining from negative comments. Record any valid/non-personal attacks they have and check for accuracy. Call for a break if needed.

If someone tries to **‘help’ another person with their thoughts**, you can: Ask the first participant for clarification on their idea and if the ‘helper’ accurately heard what they were trying to say.

If someone is **providing half-truths or rumors**, you can: Take a moment to ask for clarification from the group. Record comment in the ‘Parking lot’ for follow-up and get back to the group on what is discovered.

If someone is **a forceful expert**, you can: Acknowledge the person’s expertise and thank them for their input, but remind them that this is a group effort and input from everyone is being requested. Ask the ‘expert’ if they are willing to provide a list of resources or some other information that others can utilize to help inform the discussion.

If someone is **trying to run the meeting their own way**, you can: Ask the group if there is agreement on a change of process. If so, then adapt to the group’s desires. If not, record the suggestion for a potential later discussion.