

Facilitation Techniques for Difficult Dynamics

Dynamic	Intervention
<p>One person speaks too long and isn't allowing space for others to participate.</p>	<p>Be comfortable interrupting. As a facilitator you will have to do it well and often.</p> <p>"Thank you for sharing and I'm sorry to cut you off. I want to see if I understand what you're saying." Briefly paraphrase, then ask if others in the group have a similar or different experience.</p> <p>"Thank you for sharing and let's be sure we have the opportunity to hear other stories and experiences since we only have a short time together. Would anyone like to go next?"</p>
<p>Debate language emerges; people are trying to convince others or defend themselves.</p>	<p>Interrupt if necessary. Remind the group that this is a dialogue, not a debate. Possible questions:</p> <p>"What makes you want to defend your experience? What does that feel like?"</p> <p>"Are there values you hold that seem to be under attack in some way? Can you share a little about those values and how they came to mean so much to you?"</p> <p>"What would it be like if you didn't have to defend yourself or convince others that your values are important?"</p>
<p>Someone isn't participating. (Not likely to see this in the timed go around, but it can be common in the open dialogue portion.)</p>	<p>It's ok to invite a specific person to share: "Is there anything you want to share about your experiences related to this topic?"</p> <p>Refer to something they said earlier in the dialogue process and follow up with a probing question. "You said before that... Would you mind saying a little more about that?"</p> <p>Or, more generally you can say to the whole group, "Is there something you haven't said that you might wish you had tomorrow?"</p>
<p>Someone speaks out of turn during the timed go around saying something like "Can I just respond really quick?"</p>	<p>"That won't work well for our structure. Let's keep going around so it's fair to everyone. Please be sure to write down what you're thinking and you can share it during the open dialogue part."</p>

Facilitation Techniques for Difficult Dynamics - continued

Dynamic	Intervention
<p>Someone is being disrespectful and verbally aggressive to others.</p>	<p>Call attention to the agreements and the spirit of the dialogue space. "Without making someone else wrong, can you share what the heart of the matter is for you?"</p> <p>If the person is unable to calm down, call for a short break and talk to the person privately. You may need to ask them to leave. This is very rare, but it is something that could happen, so be prepared to intervene early so that the situation doesn't get even more out of hand.</p>
<p>A participant is visibly tearful and upset.</p>	<p>"What would be most helpful right now?"</p> <p>Or, choose to take a short break, allowing the person time to themselves. It can be helpful to have someone designated to check on people who may need to step away from the dialogue.</p> <p>(During the room set up, have tissues available at the tables.)</p>
<p>Half the group is actively speaking back and forth during the open dialogue portion while the rest aren't saying anything.</p>	<p>Interrupt to say, "I'm noticing that there's a really lively discussion going on here between you two and I'm wondering if the rest of the group is having a hard time getting a word in or is just choosing to listen right now."</p>
<p>No one talks during the open dialogue.</p>	<p>Have you paused long enough? Count to 10. Most likely someone will break the silence. Silence is also perfectly ok, especially if you sense that people are reflecting on what was just shared in the timed go around.</p> <p>If you can't take the silence any longer, ask "What's the silence about for you in this moment?" Or, "What was something you heard in that last round that is making you want to know more?"</p>