

MANAGING MONOPOLIZING CONVERSATIONS

Managing monopolizing conversations involves strategies and tools to prevent any one person from dominating discussions, to promote participation from quieter participants, and to help increase more diverse voice and perspectives.



WHAT THIS IS ABOUT

A Brief Introduction

In meetings and group discussions, it's not uncommon for some individuals to dominate the conversation, inadvertently drowning out the voices of others. Addressing monopolizing behavior is important to create an equitable and trauma-informed environment where everyone's input is valued. Here are a few tips to help manage monopolizing conversations.

THINGS TO SAY

Example Facilitator Script

"Thank you for sharing your thoughts, I also want to make sure everyone has a chance to share their perspective. Lets take a moment to hear from others as well. We have time for two additional ideas..."

THINGS TO DO

Tips for Managing Group Dynamics

1. Set Clear Expectations

Start by setting clear expectations at the beginning of the meeting. Collaborate as much as possible with participants to create rules and agreements in advance. Emphasize the importance of allowing everyone to contribute and encourage participants to be mindful of the time they spend speaking.

2. Diversity, Privilege & Power Dynamics

Be mindful of potential privilege and power dynamics that contribute to individuals dominating the conversation. This includes marginalized or dominant group dynamics, and ensure that everyone's input is valued equally.

3. Alternative Participation Methods

Some may feel more comfortable expressing themselves in writing, polls/surveys, or even one-on-one discussions if this option is available. Offer alternative participation methods so everyone has a chance to contribute in a way that feels as safe and comfortable as possible.

4. Use Active Listening

Model and encourage active listening by summarizing key points after each person contributes. This lets people to know their voice has been heard and can help decrease the desire to overshare or repeat. This also may draw out more conversation from quieter participants who may feel less confident in sharing.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Inclusive Participation
- Balanced Perspectives
- Respectful Dialogue
- Sharing the Floor
- Valuing Everyone's Voice



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References

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International Association of Facilitators, (2015). .Core Facilitator Competencies. <https://www.iaf-world.org/site/sites/default/files/publications/IAF%20Core%20Competencies.pdf>