REPAIRING HARM IN MEETINGS

Repairing harm within groups and meetings is essential for safety, respect, and trust for both facilitators and participants. Facilitators play an important role in addressing conflicts, restoring relationships, and promoting accountability to create supportive environments where everyone can feel heard and their voices and experiences are respected.

WHAT THIS IS ABOUT

A Brief Introduction

Repairing harm is a proactive and restorative part of meeting dynamics. This concepts is meant to cultivate safety, respect, and trust. This involves acknowledging the impact of conflicts on well-being, taking responsibility for actions or inactions, and collaboratively developing a plan for repair and opportunities for growth.

THINGS TO SAY

Example Facilitator Script

"I'd like to share our meeting agreements to re-center our interactions going forward. It's also important to acknowledge this experience may have impacted some of us. Our goal is to maintain a space where everyone feels respected. If anyone needs support or wants to discuss this further, please feel free to reach out to me (or co-facilitator) privately.

THINGS TO DO

Tips for Managing Group Dynamics

1. Establish Ground Rules

Share clear ground rules for respectful communication and behavior for meetings. Emphasize the importance of active listening, mutual respect, and helpful feedback during meetings.

2. Acknowledge and Validate Feelings

Facilitators acknowledge any harm that has occurred and validate the feelings of participants. This can be done by expressing empathy, actively listening to any concerns, and affirming the importance of their experiences. (Important: In larger groups or particularly activating events, it may be necessary to offer ways for participants to connect privately after meetings or directly with co-facilitators during the event)

3. Offer Support and Resources

Many individuals have experienced trauma and may require additional support. Proactively gather resources and create processes to address challenges as they arise. These can include confirmed/available support group, crisis services, and other local connections.

4. Focus on Repair vs. Blame/Shame

Move conversations towards repair versus blame/shame. Emphasize collaborative problem-solving and mending relationships and healing within the group/meeting.

5. Follow-Up and Feedback:

Follow up with participants after the meeting that ensure resolution has occurred or any needs for further response and ongoing support. Facilitators can benefit from debriefing, and by gathering feedback to learn from the event and update or improve policies and procedures.

KEY CONCEPTS

- Responsive Feedback
- Transparent Communication
- Ground Rule Establishment
- Supportive Environment
- Empathy and Understanding
- Policy and Practice Considerations

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Promoting Prevention.
Committed to Wellness.

References

Aquino, K., Tripp, T. M., & Bies, R. J. (2001). How employees respond to personal offense: The effects of blame attribution, victim status, and offender status on revenge and reconciliation in the workplace. Journal of Applied Psychology, 86(1), 52-59. https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.86.1.52

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