

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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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 concept 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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OVER SHARING PERSONAL OR ACTIVATING INFORMATION

Navigating the sharing of personal information in meetings can be a delicate balance between upholding confidentiality, authentic engagement, all while maintaining emotional safety. Considering the potential for oversharing with any emotionally sensitive topics that might arise, this is a proactive skill facilitators should practice.

WHAT THIS IS ABOUT

A Brief Introduction

Managing the sharing of personal information in meetings involves setting clear boundaries to safeguard confidentiality while promoting a supportive environment where participants feel comfortable sharing. It's important to remain mindful of the potential impact of emotionally sensitive topics and the risks of oversharing. It's about balance and inclusion.

THINGS TO SAY

Example Facilitator Script

"We value everyone's privacy and understand the importance of feeling safe and respected when sharing personal information. While we encourage open dialogue, we also recognize the need for confidentiality. Additionally, we encourage sharing on a 1-5 scale with 1 being minimal and 5 being maximum, we aim to keep anything that may feel activating for ourselves and others around a 1-2 whenever possible."

THINGS TO DO

Tips for Managing Group Dynamics

1. Establish Confidentiality Guidelines:

Clearly communicate expectations regarding confidentiality and the sharing of personal information, which can be included in group agreements. Emphasize the importance of respecting privacy and personal boundaries for the safety of all participants and facilitators as well.

2. Provide Structured Prompts & Agendas

Guide discussions with structured agendas and prompts to ensure that conversations remain focused and relevant, while also minimizing the risk of oversharing and emotionally sensitive topics. Although some meetings may require flexibility to allow for open discussion, providing participants with an agenda and facilitators with pre-arranged topic guidance can help maintain a safer environment for sharing.

3. Model Boundaries & Redirect When Off Topic

Lead by example, selectively sharing personal information contributing to the conversation while respecting personal boundaries and others' emotional well-being. Redirect Off-Topic by gently guide discussions back to the agenda, reminding participants of objectives and encouraging connections to broader themes

4. Offer Support

Be proactive in offering support and resources for those who are emotionally affected by the discussion, or when participants experience 'big emotions' during meetings. Provide opportunities for private conversations with facilitators or referrals to appropriate support services to ensure the well-being and comfort for all.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Confidentiality Guidelines
- Structured Engagement
- Boundary Setting
- Emotional Safety



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Reference

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INTERRUPTING HARMFUL AND OPPRESSIVE LANGUAGE

Addressing oppression and harmful language in meetings is necessary to create an inclusive and respectful environment. It's important to actively interrupt and address oppressive language to ensure everyone feels safe and valued.

WHAT THIS IS ABOUT

A Brief Introduction

Intervening in harmful language and oppressive behaviors in meetings is about creating and maintaining an environment where everyone feels safer, respected, and valued regardless of their background or identity. It involves recognizing the impact of oppressive language and taking proactive steps to address it for the creation of a more inclusive and equitable space for all.

THINGS TO SAY

Example Facilitator Script

First Degree: *"Can we pause for a moment? While I believe the intention may not be to cause harm, it's important to recognize that the language used can have a negative impact on some communities"*

Second Degree: *"I need to step in here. The language being used isn't okay, and it's not up for debate. Let's switch gears and focus on..."*

THINGS TO DO

Tips for Managing Group Dynamics

1. Listen Actively

Pay attention to language and behavior in meetings and be prepared to intervene if you hear harmful language or witness oppressive behavior.

2. Use Privilege for Good

If you hold privilege in certain areas, whether it be culturally, positionally, or expertise through lived experiences, use it to amplify the voices of marginalized individuals and challenge oppressive language or behavior. Make certain to speak from your own perspective.

3. Offer Alternatives

Provide alternative language or suggestions for more inclusive and respectful communication when addressing harmful language. This can be a learning opportunity for some and a way to uplift and uphold marginalized communities and voices.

4. Follow up and Offer Support

Target the behavior or words versus the individual. After addressing harmful language, follow up with individuals who may have been impacted and offer support, including checking in privately and providing resources as needed. Engage in educational conversations with individuals who use harmful language as much as possible, promoting awareness of respectful communication expectations, and offering support for their learning and growth to prevent future incidents of harm.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Proactive Intervention
- Recognition of Impact
- Equity and Respect
- Empowerment



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ELEVATING VOICES AND INCREASING REPRESENTATION

Cultivating inclusivity and diversity in meetings through proactive engagement with underrepresented communities and marginalized groups.

WHAT THIS IS ABOUT

A Brief Introduction

Elevating voices in meetings involves actively seeking input from underrepresented individuals, families, and marginalized groups to create an inclusive and equitable environment where all perspectives are authentically included at the table. It's about addressing power dynamics, promoting active listening, creating safer spaces, offering alternative communication methods, and celebrating diversity to ensure that everyone's voice is heard. Additionally, it is important for facilitators to have a continuing practice to move towards cultural humility and responsiveness.

THINGS TO SAY

Example Facilitator Script

"This is a genuine invitation for the youth, families, and community members present here today. Let's take a moment to ensure that everyone has had the chance to share their perspective and the expertise of your lived experiences and backgrounds. Your voice matters, and we want to create a space where everyone can contribute in ways that are meaningful to you."

THINGS TO DO

Tips for Managing Group Dynamics

1. Reflective Techniques

Ensure everyone feels heard by using reflective techniques like paraphrasing. Nodding and maintaining eye contact can show our attentiveness and support for each other.

2. Implement Inclusive Meeting Formats

Make sure everyone's voice is included by using methods like round-robin discussions. Let's work together to build consensus and ensure diverse perspectives are valued.

3. Maintain a Supportive Environment

Facilitators work towards continually increasing their own welcoming and equity centered practices to help support the work. In meetings, focus on creating ground rules that prioritize empathy and mutual respect, and make use of active listening.

4. Amplify Underrepresented Voices:

Proactively reach out to underrepresented communities and provide support to increase ability for everyone to bring and share their unique perspectives. This includes use of alternative formats or language resources to accommodate all.

5. Targeted Recruitment Strategies

Make use of personalized invitations and community partnerships for diverse attendance. Review demographic data to inform outreach efforts. Continuously evaluate and adjust recruitment strategies for broader representation.



KEY CONCEPTS

- Proactive Intervention
- Recognition of Impact
- Equity and Respect
- Empowerment



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VOCABULARY AND DEFINITIONS

- 1. Active Listening:** Fully concentrating, understanding, responding, and remembering what is being said in a conversation, includes fully engaging with the speaker, maintaining eye contact, nodding, and summarizing their points and ensuring understanding.
- 2. Alternative Participation Methods:** Providing options for people to contribute in ways other than verbal communication, such as writing, emojis, chat, or one-on-one discussions.
- 3. Balanced Perspectives:** Ensuring that diverse viewpoints are represented and valued equally.
- 4. Boundary Setting:** Establishing clear limits and expectations to maintain a safe and respectful environment.
- 5. Celebrating Diversity:** Recognizing and appreciating the differences and unique qualities of people and groups within our communities.
- 6. Coordinated Care Organization (CCO):** An organized entity responsible for coordinating and integrating healthcare services within communities, with a focus on improving health outcomes, reducing disparities, and promoting wellness.
- 7. Confidentiality Guidelines:** Rules and expectations regarding privacy and confidentiality.
- 8. Culturally Just:** Fairness and equality across diverse backgrounds, addressing systemic injustices, promoting inclusivity. (**Also see Equity Centered)
- 9. Emotional Safety:** Creating an atmosphere where individuals feel secure and comfortable expressing their emotions without fear of judgment or harm.
- 10. Empathy and Understanding:** Showing compassion and empathy towards other people's experiences and perspectives.
- 11. Empowerment:** Providing people with the tools, resources, and support needed to have more control over their situations.
- 12. Equity Centered:** Ensuring fairness and impartiality in all interactions, with a focus on addressing systemic disparities and promoting equal opportunities for all. (**Also see Culturally Just)
- 13. Evidence-Based Recruitment Strategies:** Using methods and approaches supported by research and evidence to attract diverse participants to meetings.
- 14. Inclusive Participation:** Encouraging and facilitating the involvement of all individuals, regardless of background or identity.
- 15. Monopolizing Conversations:** A communication bottleneck when one individual dominates discussions, preventing others from participating fully.
- 16. Oversharing:** Sharing an excessive amount of personal information, often inappropriately.
- 17. Privilege:** Unearned advantages or benefits granted to individuals based on their identity or social status.
- 18. Proactive Intervention:** Taking preemptive actions to address issues or concerns before they escalate.
- 19. Recognition of Impact:** Acknowledging the consequences and effects of one's actions or behaviors on others.
- 20. Respectful Dialogue:** Engaging in conversations that are courteous, considerate, and mindful of others' feelings and perspectives.
- 21. Sharing the Floor:** Providing opportunities for everyone to speak and contribute to discussions.
- 22. System of Care (SOC):** A coordinated network of community-based services and supports designed to meet the diverse needs of children, youth, and families, emphasizing family-driven, youth-guided, and culturally and linguistically competent care.
- 23. Transparent Communication:** Open and honest exchange of information and ideas without hidden agendas.
- 24. Trauma-Informed:** Approaching interactions with an understanding of the impact of trauma on individuals' behaviors and responses. Includes understanding there are multiple pathways for healing.
- 25. Underrepresented Communities:** Groups or populations that are not adequately represented or included in decision-making processes or discussions.
- 26. Wellbeing and Support:** Providing resources and assistance to promote the physical, emotional, and mental health of individuals and communities.