

Meeting Monsters

1. Overly Talkative or Rambler

What to do:

- a. Paraphrase, summarize or redirect
 1. "We heard a lot of good thoughts, such as....., but we getting away from our objective. "
 2. "Let me summarize what has been discussed so far and then we can move on."
- b. Use bridging: First summarize the previous discussion; explain what is going to happen next and how it relates to the meeting objectives.
 1. "We listed several possible causes of the problem. Now let's take a different look at the problem by listing who and what could be benefiting from it."
 2. "That's an interesting point. Now let's hear from Jane."

2. Highly Argumentative

What to do: Comment on how the team process is currently working and review the agreed upon norms and ground rules. If you can't resolve the problem gracefully in the group, wait until the meeting adjourns and discuss any issues with that person in private.

- a. "We agreed in our ground rules to hear everyone out. Since we are running low on time, should we add a limit to each person's allotted time to speak?"
- b. "It seems we reached a bit of a standstill in the meeting. Would like to talk about the situation and how to best resolve it now?"
- c. "I might be mistaken, but it seems as though there might be another issue which is of significant concern to you. Would like to address that first?"

3. Obstinate or Rigid

What to do: Solicit support from others in the group to help this person move forward and see other points of view. Review the ground rules and possibly develop an additional rule if necessary to address this particular concern. Review 'consensus' and what that means within the group.

- a. "I respect your point of view and understand your reasons for holding it are very important to you, but would it be possible to accept even portions of the group's viewpoint for now?"

4. Griper or Whiner

What to do: As a team, review the mission and goals that were developed and agreed upon by the team. Readdress ground rules, if needed and the desired outcomes of the meeting in order to redirect discussion. If you can't resolve the problem gracefully in the group, wait until the meeting adjourns and discuss any issues with that person in private.

5. Side Conversation or Off Topic

What to do: Review meeting norms, roles and responsibilities. Also review the meeting ground rules that were developed and agreed upon by the group. Clearly state the goals and objectives for the meeting and redirect topics toward achieving those goals.

- a. Move towards those engaged in the side conversation and wait until they have stopped.
- b. "Is there something you would like to share with the rest of the group?"
- c. Call one of them by name, restate the most recent opinion and ask for his/her opinion.
- d. "Something that was said may have triggered other thoughts, but right now we are discussing/considering _____."

6. Silent

What to do:

- a. Use "Round Robin" - Go around the table and have each team member contribute an idea or thought. Allow people to 'pass' if they don't have an idea, but continue around the group several times to ensure all ideas are shared. Try to ensure that when the person does talk, that they are not interrupted.
- b. Use open-ended questions that required multi-word responses. Positively respond to contributions made by team member.