

Tips: Managing Group Behavior Patterns

Supportive Behaviors

Demonstrate as many of these supportive behaviors as you can. When you notice others demonstrating these behaviors, let them know that you appreciate it.

Information seeker	Asks other members to tell more of their story. "What else can you tell us about that?"
Opinion seeker	Takes an active interest in what others in the group think. "I'd really like to know what everyone thinks about this."
Gatekeeper	Provides openings for less participative members. Works to equalize participation in the group. "Who hasn't yet expressed an opinion?" "What else can anyone add to _____ idea?"
Initiator	Offers new ideas or ways of doing things, sets the pace in discussion. "Just to get us started thinking, how about ...?"
Elaborator	Wants more than just the facts in a story. Adds color to the discussion. "That reminds me of the time when we ..."
Tension reliever	Often uses gentle humor to relieve tense situations. Uses "identification" to keep the tense person from feeling alone. "I feel that way myself sometimes." "There I go again, you have to watch me every minute."
Reviewer, summarizer, clarity seeker	Tends to provide summary statements and clarity statements. "If I understand you correctly, you are saying ..."
Consensus seeker	Looks to see what the group is thinking and whether or not there is agreement on issues or decisions. "What I hear the group saying is ..."
Encourager	Finds ways to build up others in the group. "Thanks for that thought, I hadn't thought of it that way." "I'm glad you're here to ask those types of questions." "You do a nice job of helping us stay on track."
Standard bearer	Holds forth the values of the group and defends them. "Let's not forget why we are all here."

Destructive Behaviors

Avoid these behaviors. When you notice others using these behaviors, intercede (Do this as gently as possible in the meeting. Speak privately to give the person corrective feedback.)

Aggressor	Insults and criticizes others (may show jealousy). Try this question when you notice aggressive comments: “How is that comment helping our group?” [Ask the person to meet with you. At that meeting, discuss his/her behavior.]
Practical joker	Distracts people with jokes and comments, especially if discussion is personal or a topic that they don't like. Try this when jokes get distracting: “How is that comment helping our group?”
Rabbit chaser	Consistently focuses on stories or issues irrelevant to the topic at hand but exciting to them. Try this question to help the group get back on topic: “In what way is that related to our topic of discussion?” “Something I said must have led you off the subject.” (restate topic)
Special interest advocate	Tends to focus on personal pet peeve regardless of the topic or direction of discussion. Try this question to help the group get back on topic: “In what way is that related to our topic of discussion?”
Recognition seeker	Tends to focus on his/her own achievements. Try this to help refocus the conversation: “For now, let's focus on the topic at hand.”
Dominator	Monopolizes group interaction. Tries to control discussions (in an unhelpful way). Try this to help the group see that all views are important. “It's important to me to hear from each person in our group. We each have different perspectives that I don't want to miss.”
Negativist	Quick to point the “down side” of any issue, never satisfied with anything. Try this to help bring balance to the conversation: “As a group, let's make a list of the advantages and disadvantage for this idea.” “Let's decide on our best alternative, even if it's not perfect in all regards.”
Quibbler	Focuses on details that are not critical. Loses the forest for the sake of the trees. Try this to return focus to the main points: “At a high level, what are the key points we need to consider?”