

**Managing a Crowd When Training: Handling Difficult
Situations and People
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**Common Situations and Types of Communications Encountered
with Participants**

****At the beginning of an event have a standard statement
such as:**

Today we have a lot of material to cover and an obviously large informed crowd. Our values include being respectful of everyone's time and opinions. As such we ask that we are all mindful of using respectful communications in our speaking and listening. We will try to stay on topic and ask that you do the same when questioning or commenting. This is an educational group not therapy so very personal information is best shared with a therapist, peer supporter, or group etc. Having said that we welcome interaction including any questions today. We are constantly learning and updating our information and we look to your experiences to do that. Thank you!

1. Dominating

This person might interrupt often and have a lot to say. This is not always bad until it takes away from you being able to get through material or discourages others from contributing.

Possible ways of handling this: (keep it light when responding in these ways...smile often :)

I appreciate your contributions today. You obviously have done a lot of thinking about this subject. I am thinking though, that in the interest of time and having a lot of subject matter to cover that we'll need to ask everyone to keep their comments brief. By doing this we'll allow time for everyone to contribute to a certain degree.

Great comments. Let's get someone else's thoughts on the subject.

Can you hold that comment until this afternoon?

Hold it...you just interrupted...suzy, johnny, me, etc..I'd like to let her/him finish.....

2. OFF Topic

This person may ask questions or give comments that sound and appear to be way off topic.

Possible ways of handling this:

***First- Ask the person to clarify what they are commenting on.** If it is off topic say:

Let me understand, you are saying..??...and that doesn't appear to fit right now in the topic. Am I right?

I am not sure if I understand, but right now we are talking about specifically ..??... In the interest of time I am going to ask us all to stay on topic. Is it ok to put your thoughts in the parking lot and perhaps we'll get to it later?

Whoa - What you are commenting on will be addressed in this afternoon's segment. Wow - you're ahead of us :) smile.

3. Aggressive

This person may appear angry, loud voice, yelling, swearing or referring to "they" in derogatory or disrespectful terms. They may interrupt you and others to disagree often.

Possible ways of handling this:

****Right away, if the person is very aggressive one of the team should quietly walk over to them and ask them to go out to the hallway and talk.** If just slightly aggressive say:

Wow, I wonder if you understand how you are coming across right now? Seems as if you angry, is that with me, or in general? For the comfort of the group I'm going to have to remind you about respectful communication. Swearing and yelling is not cool.

Or straightforward

Whoa, tone it down. I'm uncomfortable with your aggression. Is there something you want to say, try again with more respectful language?

4. Too Much Information

This person may be telling the group a long story of their life and very intensely personal information that could be upsetting to others. You can do this person a favor actually by stopping them and containing it.

Possible ways of handling this:
Interrupt if need be and say:

It sounds as if you have had a lot of experiences and not all of them pleasant. I am sorry this happened to you. For the comfort of the group I am going to ask you not to share all this sensitive information. I am concerned that you have someone to talk to and I or perhaps someone else would be available for some peer support at lunch..or later, or email, or phone, etc.

or straightforward:

This is too much information for a group of this kind. Let's stick to learning as much as we can today and keep personal stories short and sweet folks :)

5. Silent or Reluctant Participants

After the group has become comfortable with each other and you notice someone not participating try the following:

Possible ways of handling this:

We really want to hear at least a little something from everyone today...I have noticed that Johnny and oh yeah, Suzy, have wheels turning. If I come back to you in a couple minutes can you feel comfortable sharing what's on your mind at this point in the training?

Or straightforward:

A few folks haven't commented...be ware :) I might randomly call on you to share a comment. Please, you're important.