**TIPS –Handling Group Issues**

Problem

1. How to Energize a Quiet Group
   1. Think- Pair-Share: give members time to jot down notes and them initiate a round-robin response in which each person in a small group makes a comment about the topic
   2. Divide into pairs, with partners reporting what their colleague thinks
   3. ‘Stand up and find a new partner’
2. Disruptive member
   1. Broken record
   2. Longwinded speakers
   3. Know it all’s
   4. Inappropriate humorists
   5. Late comers and early leavers
      1. Always start on time an engage the group right away.
      2. Start with paired work with each partner telling the other what they remember from the last session. The first partner listens for 60 seconds and the second paraphrase; reverse roles; then do a whole group debrief
      3. If not enough people to start; offer an interpretation such as some are stuck in traffic
      4. Acknowledge the late comer saying ‘Hi George, the group is working on …”
      5. Ask the group to solve the problem by listing strategies that they use of make sure they are on time and can stay until session so over
      6. Move essential information to the end of the meeting
      7. If just one person; have a private conversation
   6. Cell Phone and Texters
      1. Ask all to but on silent. If challenged because someone has to keep phone on because they have kids – then ask the group if that is OK. Involve the group in exception making.
      2. State what you feel ‘ when some people follow the rules and put their phones away and others do not, it feels as though we’re being rude to ignore agreements we made together. Then restate the agreement: ‘we committed to the agreement of being fully present, which means not cell phones or texting.
3. Disputes
   1. Stop the dispute early
   2. Verbalize the issue
   3. Acknowledge each position
   4. Identify the source of information
   5. Check perceptions
   6. Reframe the conflict as an asset
4. Dissenting Views
   1. Paraphrase partner
   2. Respect the emotion
   3. Redirect the attacks – ‘given these views, what are the sticking points?”
   4. Remind all what todays task is
   5. Reframe the opposition “each of you have a style that drives the way you think about issues.
   6. Create an assumption wall
   7. Brainstorm questions around the assumption wall
   8. Use metaphors
   9. Disperse to agree – have a representative of each viewpoint step out of the room with instructions come back to the group when the representatives have readied a solution
5. Personal attacks
   1. Step between opposing members
   2. Change the narrative
   3. Enlist the group in solving the problem
6. Subgroup manipulation
   1. Decision matrix to rank priorities

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Option | Importance to us | Our performance | Ranking |
| A- | High | Moderate | 4 |
| B- | Moderate | Moderate | 3 |
| C- | High | Low | 1 |
| D- | Moderate | Low | 2 |

* 1. Values Decision Matrix

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Options | Supports goals | Time to implement | Examples available | Innovative | Ranking |
| A- | High | Moderate | High | High | 1 |
| B- | Moderate | High | Moderate | Moderate | 2 |
| C- | Low | High | Low | High | 3 |

* 1. Pace, Lead and Poll – give a thumbs up if you are ready to move on, a thumb sideways if you need more discussion – then follow the group’s will
  2. One-Minute Advocacy
     1. Identify that the period of advocacy is now open
     2. Set ground rules: only one idea at a time 2. Keep the advocacy short 3. If you want to speak more than once there must be two others to speak before you do 4. Advocacy continues until as long as 2 people wish to speak. Intervene if it becomes a conversation between just two people
     3. At the end of the advocacy, signal the close by holding up your hands out as if holding an invisible beach ball.
     4. Move to consensus or vote

1. Sabotage – members agree publicly but then criticize privately
   1. Acknowledge that many thoughts are often unspoken; remind group that the sum of the group is better than any one of its parts
   2. Surface tensions by asking what another member might say about the issue
   3. Be generous and consider the cynics
   4. Ask members to pair up to explore what it would take for them to sabotage the agreement. Have pairs report out.
   5. Ask all to share what may be talked about in the parking lot
2. Irresolvable Conflict
   1. Use ‘both and and’ as they prevent polarities
3. Have any of these?
   1. Resisters
   2. Side talkers
   3. Monopolizes
   4. Rhetorician
   5. Overly articulate
   6. Misinformed
   7. Interrupters
   8. Subject changers … then consider purchasing

Garmston, R. & Zimmerman, (2013). D. *Lemons to lemonade: Resolving problems in meetings, workshops, and PLCs*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.

(This book has sections on how best to deal with group members who could be described as exhibit these behaviors).