HIV Prevention Ambassador Trainers’ Workshop | Managing Challenging Participants

**Instructions**

The *Managing Challenging Participants* resourceis assigned as homework on Day 2 of the training and should be completed prior to Day 3. Please follow the outlined instructions to complete the assignment:

1. Use the information below to Read through the chart.
2. Use the information provided in the chart to answer the following prompts:
   1. One of your training participants strikes up a conversation with the person sitting next to them while another participant is presenting to the group at large. What are some ways for effectively managing this participant?
   2. One of your training participants does not answer questions or engage. They are quiet, appear to be shy, and avoid eye contact. What are some ways for effectively managing this participant?
   3. One of your training participants likes to contribute, but their contributions frequently include misinformation. What are some ways for effectively managing this participant?
3. This assignment does not need to be turned in. It is designed for self-reflection.

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| Types of challenging participants | Ways to work effectively with this type of participant |
| Know-it-alls | * Acknowledge that they have a wealth of information. * Approach them during a break and ask for their assistance in answering a specific question. * At the same time, express that you want to encourage everyone to participate and enlist their help in doing so. |
| I’m only here because I have to be | * Acknowledge that you know that some of the participants are present because they have to be. * Ask for their assistance in making this a meaningful experience. * Ask specifically, “How can I make this workshop helpful to you?” |
| Talkers | * Do not belittle or act with sarcasm – you may need their help later. * Slow them down with some difficult question or task, such as being a group leader. * Interrupt tactfully with something like, “That’s an interesting point…now let’s see what the rest of the group thinks of it.” * In general, let the group take care of them as much as possible. * Avoid eye contact. * Give them a role. * State that one of your roles is to keep people on time. * Quick interruption – move nearby and put your hand on the talker’s shoulder. * Paraphrase what they say and move on. * Acknowledge that their stories are important, and you and others would love to hear them later or after the workshop. |
| Naysayers (persons with aggressively negative attitudes) | * Do not put them down or make them feel isolated. * Keep them involved, if possible. * Throw their views to the group with questions or examples. Try to get the group to bring them around. * Say that time is short, and you would be glad to discuss their issues with them individually. * Ask them to accept the views of the group or the trainer for the moment. |
| Inaccurate commentators | * Say, “Thank you for giving me a chance to clear up that point.” * Say, “I see your point, but can we look at it this way…” * Don’t ever put them down or make them feel stupid. Must be handled positively and delicately. * Ask if others have the same belief. * Acknowledge what they have offered as a common myth or commonly misunderstood concept. |
| Clashers | * Emphasize points of agreement, minimize points of disagreement. * Point out how the argument has been productive in illustrating certain points. * Draw attention to objectives and ground rules of the session, cut across the argument with a direct question about the topic. * Bring a less argumentative learner into the discussion. * Keep your cool. Ask that personalities be omitted or that arguments be productive and directed toward topic definition or resolution. * Stay neutral. * Stick to the topic. * Acknowledge emotionality of topic. |
| Side Conversationalists | * Do not embarrass them. * Call them by name; ask an easy question. * Call them by name, then restate the last opinion expressed or last remark made by group and ask their opinion of it. * If you are in the habit of moving around the room, saunter over and stand casually behind them. This should make their conversation obvious to them and the group. * Ask the group to add “no side conversations” to the list of ground rules. |
| Questioners | * Acknowledge that they seem to have a lot of questions about a particular topic. * If the questions seem like legitimate attempts to gain content information that other members of the group already know, tell them that you will be happy to work with them later to fill in the gaps, or put the question in the parking lot (flipchart with ideas to address when time permits). * Reframe or refocus by sending the questions back to the questioner. * Establish a buddy system (for example, ask for volunteers who would be willing to meet with them). |
| Ramblers | * When they stop for a breath, thank them, refocus attention by restating relevant points and move on. * Smile, tell them that their points are interesting, apply them to the discussion, if you can, and indicate in a friendly manner that the group is getting a bit off the subject. |
| Shy and timid | * Try to arouse their interest by asking them an easy, direct question. * Talk to them on a personal basis with the group looking on. * Ask questions of the person next to them, and then ask them to respond to that person’s answer. |
| Off-base commentators | * Say, “How would you relate this to the discussion at hand?” * Say, “It sounds like what you are saying is…” and then rephrase. Then clarify, “Is that a fair statement of your point?” * Set aside the comment or question for later discussion. * Reframe or refocus onto the topic. * Explain where the participants’ comments fit into the training program |
| Arguers | * Keep your own temper firmly in check. Do not let the group get excited either. * Honestly try to find merit in one of their points, or get the group to do it, and then move on to something else. Say, “That was a good point” or “We’ve heard from [person’s name]; who else has some ideas?” * If facts are misstated, ask the group for their thoughts; let them make the corrections. * As a last resort, talk with the person in private, find out what’s going on and ask for their cooperation. * Say, “Let’s talk during the break. How can we be on the same team?” * Give them a role. |
| Gripers | * Indicate that you’ll discuss the problem with them later in private. * Throw the issue back to the group. Have a member of the group answer them. * Indicate time pressures and emphasize the need to move on. |
| Emotional | * Offer support by saying, “It seems like you’re feeling very upset right now.” * Make sure they feel free to leave the room if they find it is necessary to take care of themselves. * Allow other participants to comfort them. * Encourage them to talk with you or others during breaks or at the end of the day. |

*Source: Effective Training in Reproductive Health: Course Design & Delivery - Reference Manual, Ipas 2003*