



# TECHNIQUES FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

## **HIDDEN AGENDA**

If someone can't resist using the workshop or meeting to discuss his/her personal agendas, acknowledge, record their comments on chart paper and refer to the published agenda and goals.

## **BROKEN RECORD**

Like the hidden agenda, this person brings up a personal topic over and over. Often it is an unsolvable problem or at least one, which cannot be dealt with by the people in the room. Acknowledge the comment, record on chart paper. If it is brought up again ask if there is something to add to the chart, then defer the discussion.

## **HOSTILITY OR PERSONAL ATTACK**

Establishing ground rules for participants at the beginning of a training or meeting is a way of being proactive with this type of participant. If somebody attacks you or another participant, refer to the ground rules or get the group to agree to rules about personal comments or personal attacks vs. difference of opinion.

## **KNOW-IT-ALL OR DOMINATOR**

Acknowledge his/her expertise. Thank them for their input and tell group you would like to hear comments from other participants. Chart their input or write their name on a chart for people to contact later if they choose to do so.

## **NON-PARTICIPATION**

Make eye contact with the individual. Ask them to assist with something. Divide your group into smaller groups. Talk to the person at break or lunch.

## **YES, BUT PERSON**

Acknowledge the concern/s. Refer the question back to your group for comments. Chart the concerns. Indicate you need to continue with the agenda.

## **SIDE CONVERSATIONS**

Pause. Indicate the conversations are distracting to you and/or other participants. Ask if they would like to make a comment to the group. Publish rules about side conversations and enforce them.

## **STOP ACTION TECHNIQUES**

- What word, emotion, and/or image best describes this situation?
- What's happening right now for people?
- Write two adjectives that describe how we are doing.
- We have lost much of our energy; what do we need to do now?
- Right now I ...
- On a scale of 1 to 10, how is it going in here right now?
- Do a whip. Go around the room "round robin" style and share responses.
- Take a 15-minute break. Re-focus the meeting.