

# Connect Group TOOLBOX

## **Common Problems Groups Face**

### 1. Loss of focus, drifting discussion

Politely intervene and point out the drifting tendency. Call the group back to the topic. Determine if the group wishes to change direction and pursue the new topic and/or schedule it for a future meeting.

### 2. Personal opinion projected as group opinions

Often a friendly reminder to speak only for oneself is sufficient

### 3. Failure to recognize a member's contribution

Call the group back to the unresolved question. Seek and answer or determine now and when an answer can be pursued (perhaps outside of the group). Affirm the questioner even though the question may not be appropriate.

### 4. Unbalanced participation patterns

Here are a few of many alternatives: divide the group into smaller groups to discuss the issue, and then have each subgroup report to the whole group. Conclude your question to the group by saying, "Let's hear from someone who hasn't commented yet." Name a person who hasn't spoken and ask them a question.

### 5. Hostility toward a person's idea

Interrupt tactfully. Affirm the right to disagree. Remind both individuals of the participation standards outlined in the group's covenant. Suggest whatever restitution is necessary to calm feelings.

### 6. Violent disagreement turns into a combative situation

Intervene, follow the 4-step strategy for problem solving. Remind the group of your participation covenant. If necessary, deal with the situation at another time outside of the group situation.

### 7. Member dominates group discussions

Talk with the person in private. Ask for his assistance in allowing others to participate. In extreme cases, while affirming the value of his participation, ask the person to consciously limit his verbal responses.

### 8. Members lack of group etiquette

Redirect the two members' attention to the group activity. Ask them to share their insight with the whole group. Set up physical conditions that prevent them from sitting together. Break into subgroups to separate them. Talk with each of them outside of the group meetings, if necessary.

### 9. Inappropriate timing and use of humor

Talk with the person in private. He may not realize the problem he's creating. You'll probably need to have more than one private discussion

*(Common Problems, continued)*

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*Common Problems Groups Face (continued)*

## 10. Poor attendance

Contact the person on the telephone. Determine the cause for being absent. If the reason is legitimate, express concern, ask if assistance is needed, and state your anticipation of the persons return. If the reason is questionable, remind the member of the group covenant, express a desire for active participation, and highlight the person's importance to the group.

## 11. Disagreement over activity

Look for a compromise solution. Compromise is legitimate when issues of choice are at stake, but not in matters of doctrine. If a compromise cannot be reached, postpone the decision and look for other alternatives.

## 12. Inappropriate expectations

Talk with the person outside of the group. Explore the possibility of securing professional counseling. Encourage the other group members to support this member outside the group meetings.

## 13. Conflict over personal behavior

Have the group gently confront the person with his behavior. Care must be exercised to avoid the appearance of attacking the member. Review the applicable items within the group covenant. Some type of interaction with the person outside the group meetings is likely.

## 14. Re-Motivators: What to do when interest wanes?

Possible causes of low interest:

- Merely a stage of the group's life: Delayed funeral
- Unclear purpose
- Revisit the Connect Group Covenant
- Too much focus on the curriculum instead of obedience.
- Poor or stagnant relationships
  - Open the group to new members
- The questions have become too "safe"
  - Too little, or wrong kind of, group building
- No sense of ownership on the part of the participants.
  - Personally delegate tasks or roles. People respond to appropriate challenges. They like to see that they can do something of value to others. The following simple outline will help you delegate responsibilities to others:
    - 1st time- I do it, you watch.
    - 2nd time- I do it, you help.
    - 3rd time- You do it, I help.
    - 4th time- You do it, I watch.
    - (Remember! Affirm! Affirm! Affirm!)