

CHALLENGING GROUP BEHAVIOURS

CONFLICT

Sometimes, a pleasant discussion can lead to conflict through personal or negative comments, irritation, or by moving away from the main discussion point. To resolve conflict, the workshop or group leader must take control of the situation. The conflict can be discussed openly or in private depending on the situation, led by the leader. The leader can negotiate a resolution, and must spot conflict, such as changes in tone, body language, expressions, and reaction of participants before problem escalation.



NON-PARTICIPATION

Non-participation may be due to factors such as shyness, fears, anxiety or a lack of confidence. To reduce non-participation, the leader should be encouraging to all, thanking participants for answering questions, as well as keeping a positive atmosphere. Non-participation should not be highlighted in front of the group as this can cause embarrassment, but asking questions, taking the individual to the side, or a smile, can go a long way. If the participant is refusing to participate, you may ask to speak to them privately, or involve a third party where necessary.



SCAPEGOATING

When things go wrong in a group situation, blame may be directed at one or more individuals. They could be shunned by the group and become the object of resentment, irritation, and mockery from others. The group might need to be reorganised or the leader could have a private conversation with the participants. In the short term, this may change group dynamics to reduce the negative atmosphere. Over time, the group may return to its previous working dynamics.



LACK OF FOCUS

Participants presenting a lack of focus may result in poor group dynamics such as feelings of lack of mutual respect. However it must be remembered that lack of focus could be due to many reasons such as stress, fatigue, dehydration, certain medications, disorders, poor mental health, fight or flight response, or flashbacks (PTSD). The leader can use tools such as breaking up the lesson workshops, frequent breaks, creating a safe space outside the room, asking questions to keep participant attention, and engaging all senses.

