

Personalities & Conflict

Strategies for Dealing with Conflict

Expect disagreements and conflict

as a normal part of group life.

Acknowledge the conflict as quickly as possible.

Keep talking to each other.

Talk to each other, not everybody else.

Deescalate emotional conflict and talk after group.

"If your fellow believer sins against you, go and tell him in private what he did wrong. If he listens to you, you have helped that person to be your brother or sister again. But if he refuses to listen, go to him again and take one or two other people with you.

Matthew 18:15

Involving Everyone In The Conversation

Non-talkers

Small group should be safe and predictable, especially for those who may be timid or just quiet. Many people want to know what to expect when they arrive. As the leader, you can provide this consistency, stick to it, and communicate it. Work to make your group a safe place, free of judgment.

Encourage all to participate, but don't make it mandatory.

Strategies for including non-talkers:

- Leaving space for silence. Some people need to process before responding
- Ask great follow-up questions - "Does anyone else want to add anything?" "Does anyone have a different perspective?"

Over-talkers, Tangents, and Rabbit Holes

Every group has one. If you don't know who it is, it might be you!

Strategies for redirecting talky people:

- Recruit them to help you lead to satisfy their need to talk - they could ask the questions.
- If they are willing, teach them the 80/ 20 principle for leaders. Listen 80% of the time, talk 20% of the time.
- Tangents - Some tangents and random stories might be worth it. It's up to you as the leader to decide. Otherwise you can say things like, "Let's take this offline or talk later."
- Again, become a master at great follow up questions to get others involved in the conversation (see resource on asking great follow-up questions).

Special Circumstances and Those Needing Extra Care

Sometimes, a member of your group will have a unique need (a conflict at home or at work, a death in the family, a wayward child) that they might want to talk about. Honor that and spend some time caring for them. On the other hand, if you have a member that has a need every single meeting, you may need to intervene. This situation calls for a 1-1 conversation with that member and a referral to our member care team. Talk to your coach about these unique situations.