COLLABORATIVE LEADERSHIP:
A Guide for Facilitators in Behavioral Health
Applying Conflict Resolution Practices
to Behavioral Health Dialogues

The STAR Center collaborated with Dan Berstein, the founder of MH Mediate, to prepare this set of best practice tools to help facilitators engage in constructive dialogue about mental health and increase the level of collaboration in responding to mental health issues in communities.

Dan is a mediator who is open about his lived experience with bipolar disorder. He is a nationally-recognized expert in conflict resolution and mental health communication, with a particular specialty of adapting long-standing best practices from the world of conflict resolution to new contexts involving behavioral health stakeholders such as:

- **The National Dialogue on Mental Health**
  MH Mediate hosted New York City’s First National Dialogue on Mental Health Event, which was the first in the country to bring together diverse groups of mental health stakeholders. Dan also trained future dialogue organizers around the country to follow the same inclusive, accessible model.

- **Training Peer Specialists in Conflict Resolution Skills**
  Dan has been leading efforts to train peer specialists and other behavioral health stakeholders in conflict resolution skills to help address behavioral health conflicts. He has hosted workshops at many conferences including the International Association of Peer Supporters (iNAPS), the NYC Peer Specialist Conference, the New York State Behavioral Health Peer Conference, and many others. He is leading the CUNY Dispute Resolution Center in offering a 5-day mediation skills training for working peer specialists, funded by the AAA-ICDR Foundation.

- **Mediating Conflicts with Behavioral Health Stakeholders**
  Dan has pioneered efforts to mediate conflicts involving families and other behavioral health stakeholders, helping them develop communication agreements, sensitivity plans, living agreements.

- **Teaching Supportive Housing Tenants and Staff to Prevent Conflicts**
  MH Mediate has provided conflict resolution skill-building training and resources for staff and tenants in supported housing, including programs for the NYC Department of Health and Mental Hygiene, the Supportive Housing Network of New York, and housing sites from Community Access, CUCS, and Breaking Ground.

- **Helping Attorney Advocates Communicate Effectively with Clients with Behavioral Health Histories**
  MH Mediate has provided programs teaching attorneys how to apply conflict resolution skills to their work with clients with behavioral health histories.
Engaging Conflict
Facilitator Guidance Sheets

These nine guides teach long-standing conflict resolution and facilitation best practices, with a goal of adapting them to a variety of behavioral health dialogues. The skills they teach can also be applied across other professional and personal contexts.

**Set the Stage** *(for Constructive Conflict Conversations)*
Understand ways to set up the space, agenda, and opening statements to set expectations to collaborate toward the meeting's purpose. Communicate boundaries in an empowering manner.

**Welcome Diverse Participants** *(and Appeal to Them)*
Appreciate different types of diversity including ability level, culture, and preferences. Appeal to diverse groups in all facets of planning the facilitating including event planning, promotion, and the process itself.

**Be Accessible** *(to Diverse Abilities, Personalities, and Preferences)*
Apply key accessibility principles to foster an appealing, low effort, flexible and appropriate facilitation process.

**Be Impartial** *(and Demonstrate It to Participants)*
Design an impartial discussion process that minimizes bias and is fair to all. Demonstrate that fairness throughout your facilitation.

**Validate Diverse Points of View** *(and Integrate Them)*
Use tools to ensure that all participants are able to have their views appreciated and validated as they participate in the process.

**Validate Diverse Perspectives in Mental Health** *(Example Checklist)*
Conduct a self-inventory to assess if you can be equally validating to people who hold different beliefs, make different choices, use different language, and serve different roles in mental health.

**Expand Positional Conversations** *(to Discover Underlying Interests)*
Help participants expand their conversation beyond their initial positions, to explore their deeper concerns and needs.

**Develop Sustainable Agreements**
Support a discussion process that yields agreements which are specific, balanced, achievable, durable, and adaptable.

**Respond to Challenging Behaviors** *(while Staying Impartial)*
Be prepared for emergencies, disruptions, and disconnects. Respond to them in an impartial, consistent, and transparent manner.

This guide is part of the Working Across Divides facilitator guide series. Visit [www.consumerstar.org](http://www.consumerstar.org) for more guides.
**Set the Stage (for Constructive Conflict Conversations)**

Understand ways to set up the space, agenda, and opening statements to set expectations to collaborate toward the meeting's purpose. Communicate boundaries in an empowering manner.

Every aspect of planning your event can be informed by your overall goals of **empowering the participants**.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Size</th>
<th>Do you want to include a lot of people and breakout into briefer dialogues, or have in-depth dialogues with a smaller group?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Scheduling</td>
<td>What are comfortable times for the various types of people coming to your event?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Duration</td>
<td>How long does the conversation need to be and how can you use breaks to keep it comfortable?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Location</td>
<td>What are the pros and cons of the different places and rooms where you can hold this meeting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inviting Participants</td>
<td>What can you say in your event invitations to make people of all views feel welcome?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Registration Process</td>
<td>Can you share detailed agendas and accessibility info so people are prepared, not surprised?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Seating</td>
<td>What are the pros and cons of different seating configurations for your event?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The **agenda** is the backbone of the conversation. Here are some tips for creating a robust agenda:

- **Provide all stakeholders an opportunity to contribute ideas for the agenda when they register.** (ex. "If there is anything you would like to discuss at the meeting, fill out this form or e-mail this address to let us know")
- **Digest all of the agenda ideas into one to three major topics to serve as agenda items.**
- **If there are deliverables or specific goals from the dialogue, structure the agenda around them.** (ex. "Agenda item 1 is developing our calendar of events for the year, and agenda item 2 is writing a mission statement")

**In your opening statement, set expectations by:**

- **Communicating Your Role:**
  - Help everyone feel comfortable
  - Validate all perspectives (ex. "No one is right or wrong, there is a wide range of perspectives")
  - Help people focus on the agenda (ex. "If you had to summarize your view into a single bullet item to record, what would it be?")
  - Do not judge ideas and encourage others to follow your lead
  - Remind people of time constraints and process boundaries

- **Communicating Participant Guidelines:**
  - This is a supportive place but not a support group
  - Try to give everyone an equal chance to speak
  - No one should feel pressure that they have to speak
  - Speak from your own experience
  - Assume everyone has the best intentions

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Welcome Diverse Participants (and Appeal to Them)

Appreciate different types of diversity including ability level, culture, and preferences. Appeal to diverse groups in all facets of planning the facilitating including event planning, promotion, and the process itself.

People can be diverse in many different ways. As a facilitator, it is important to anticipate these differences and find ways to welcome participants from different backgrounds.

Different Types of Diversity

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>How can you invite people with a range of different values to your event?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Values can be defined as the priorities that motivate a person.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Beliefs</th>
<th>What are the beliefs relevant to your event? Is your event biased toward any particular beliefs?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People make different choices, and form different views, based on what they believe to be true.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Experiences</th>
<th>How do people coming from your event have similar experiences and how are they different?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People have different knowledge and views based on their personal lived experience.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Language</th>
<th>Could you make a glossary to help participants understand the terms being used at your event?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People speak different languages. They also may use different terms and acronyms based on their experiences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Role</th>
<th>Are the people coming to your event coming from different perspectives based on their roles?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sometimes people take on specific roles within a community, organization, or other context.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Culture</th>
<th>What types of culture are relevant to your event? How can you welcome their different groups?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>People form identities around any kind of shared community including ethnicity, religion, school, job, and others.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abilities</th>
<th>What can you do to make your event accessible to people with varying abilities?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Different people have different strengths, capabilities, and preferences.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can you think of other types of diversity? You can welcome diverse participants by:

- Planning an Inclusive Event
  - Develop an agenda that speaks to your audience’s diversity
  - Reach out for feedback from people from various backgrounds to help you in your planning
  - Be creative about encouraging multiple ways to participate in the event (ex. a variety of communication styles, the opportunity to engage in advance)
  - Train facilitators to be sensitive to the particular experiences of the groups attending your event

- Promoting to Diverse Audiences
  - Think creatively about how to reach people with views that differ from your own
  - Promote to the organizations, media channels, and other outlets that reach diverse communities

- Developing a Welcoming Process
  - Share information about your goal to include diverse backgrounds
  - Have participant guidelines that emphasize inclusivity and non-judgment

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**Be Accessible** *(to Diverse Abilities, Personalities, and Preferences)*

Apply key accessibility principles to foster an appealing, low effort, flexible and appropriate facilitation process.

A process is **accessible** if it is equally appealing to people with diverse abilities, cultures, and preferences. An accessible facilitation process means that people with different needs will have less of a need to ask for special treatment because it anticipates those needs.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make it Appealing</th>
<th>Quick-Tips</th>
<th>Reflection Prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1️⃣ Make the process usable for everyone, so that they all would want to participate.</td>
<td>✖ Avoid physical exercises, like a ball-throwing icebreaker, which can intimidate people who are not comfortable throwing or catching</td>
<td>✖ What about your process could make someone nervous? How could you adjust your process to make it inviting?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2️⃣ Focus on voluntary participation, rather than assuming everyone in a go-around will speak</td>
<td>✖ Be mindful that trauma experiences may make physical exercises or 1-on-1 exercises more difficult.</td>
<td>✖ What are some different ways people might want to participate?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make it Low Effort</th>
<th>Quick-Tips</th>
<th>Reflection Prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1️⃣ Make the process easy for everyone to engage.</td>
<td>✖ Create stress-free dynamics by giving people a way to come and go if they need to, sharing a reliable schedule, and including ways to respect sensitivities (ex. trigger warnings)</td>
<td>✖ What parts of this conversation could cause people stress? Can you reduce the stress by careful framing of the agenda, through breaks, or in other ways?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2️⃣ Ask people to share feedback to let you know if they are uncomfortable, so you can show your commitment to the process being low effort.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✖ When are good opportunities for you to ask for feedback?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3️⃣ Try to avoid physical exercises, like a ball-throwing icebreaker, which can intimidate people who are not comfortable throwing or catching</td>
<td></td>
<td>✖ Hint: Don’t single anybody out</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make it Flexible</th>
<th>Quick-Tips</th>
<th>Reflection Prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1️⃣ Make it possible for people to engage in multiple ways.</td>
<td>✖ Give people more than one way to access information and contribute (ex. written or spoken; submitting ideas in advance or during the process; remote access)</td>
<td>✖ Are there any ways you can provide more opportunities for people to contribute to the process?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2️⃣ Share guidelines that it is okay for people to misspeak or change their minds.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✖ What can you do to make people feel comfortable making mistakes during your process?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Make it Appropriate</th>
<th>Quick-Tips</th>
<th>Reflection Prompts</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1️⃣ Make sure the process has a comfortable, fitting structure and environment</td>
<td>✖ Ensure that the space, seating, refreshments, duration, and structure fits the needs of the event.</td>
<td>✖ How can you make the environment more comfortable for people with varying needs?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2️⃣ Share information in advance including accessibility guides and agendas.</td>
<td></td>
<td>✖ What information could help prepare people for your event?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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Be Impartial (and Demonstrate It to Participants)
Design an impartial discussion process that minimizes bias and is fair to all. Demonstrate that fairness throughout your facilitation.

Being impartial means being fair, free of bias, and/or reliant on objective criteria. When we can show participants in our process that we are doing our best to be fair, this helps them to trust us and the dialogue process.

Barriers to Impartiality

Unconscious Bias
Based on our experiences, we all have stereotypes we do not perceive or consciously think about. They can influence our understanding and actions.

Subjectivity
We are influenced by our own personal perspective and opinions, and more likely to favor people with views that match our own.

Self-Interest
Sometimes the outcome of a discussion can impact us, such as a financial benefit or other benefit – this includes any pressure to have a good dialogue event.

Familiarity
When we know people at our event, this may inadvertently lead us to favor or disfavor them based on our past relationship and impressions.

Can you think of other barriers to impartiality?

Steps for Remaining Impartial

- Remember we can never be perfectly impartial and are always trying to be better.
- Focus on following the values of your process, not achieving a specific outcome.
- Plan in advance rather than react in an ad hoc, improvised manner.
- Use consistent, behavior-based criteria rather than rely on your own subjective assessments.
- Reflect on your own biases before engaging in a facilitation.
- Have a review process (ideally a third-party who can provide an objective assessment).
- Remove yourself from the process when you know you are influenced by bias.

Demonstrate You Are Being Fair

Say It

- “I do not take sides”
- “It’s my responsibility to support everyone”
- “I don’t play favorites”
- “I’m doing the best I can to be fair”

Write It

Write your commitment to being fair, and explanations of how you will stay impartial, in your promotional materials, registration materials, handouts, resources and any policy documents.

Hear It

Ask for feedback:

- “I’m doing my best to show you what I’m doing is fair, but please let me know if you ever have questions about what I’m doing. I want you to see I’m trying my best and I want your feedback to improve.”
Validate Diverse Points of View (and Integrate Them)

Use tools to ensure that all participants are able to have their views appreciated and validated as they participate in the process.

When we validate someone’s perspective, we affirm their right to form their own beliefs and accept that they have shared their beliefs. We are agreeing that they are entitled to this belief, but not necessarily agreeing with the belief itself. We are supporting that they have a voice.

Why We Validate Diverse Perspectives

Validating perspectives is important because it
- Helps the person feel heard
- Reminds us there are no “right” answers (there are only choices)
- Gives us a chance to appreciate their perspective

How to Validate

Use Reflective Listening

Repeat what was said, in the person’s own words, without adding any extra framing, spin, advice, or input.

Quick-Tips for General Listening
- Minimize distractions
- Don’t interrupt
- Make eye contact
- Look like you’re listening
- Be aware of your biases, and try to manage them

Quick-Tips for Reflective Listening
- Repeat some or all of what the person just said, or paraphrase it
- Try to use their own words
- Say nothing extra from your own point of view
- Wait for their response
- Reflect the feelings, facts, or thoughts the person seemed to care about the most

Some Ways to Begin a Reflection
- “So you feel ___________”
- “It sounds like you ___________”
- “You’re saying ___________”

Don’t Negate; Elaborate

Never contradict someone’s point of view. Instead, find ways to help them appreciate other perspectives to expand their view.

You can validate someone’s perspective while sharing new information by explaining it as additional information rather than telling the person they are wrong. Take the “Yes, and…” approach.

An Example Elaboration
- “Yes, that is your position. And [other participant] adds a different perspective of [other view].”

Checklist for Validating Diverse Perspectives

Are you:
- Equally respectful to people who have different values from you
- Able to support someone who has chosen an alternative lifestyle just as much as you support someone who is following one similar to yours?
- Aware that people in different roles have different perspectives of a situation and able to validate all points of view?
- Able to not form a judgment when someone talks to you about their wants and needs?
- Open to hearing about positions that contradict your own?
Validate Diverse Perspectives in Mental Health

(Example Checklist)

Conduct a self-inventory to assess if you can be equally validating to people who hold different beliefs, make different choices, use different language, and serve different roles in mental health.

People have diverse perspectives about all sorts of topics. When it comes to mental health experiences, here are some ideas to think about to ensure you are validating all perspectives equally.

*Remember, when we validate we respect someone's voice – we don't have to agree with them*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Why People Form Different Views in Mental Health</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Role</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>There are many different roles in mental health. Someone can be a <em>peer, supporter, professional</em> or all of the above</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cultural Background</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mental health views can be influenced by a variety of cultures, including one's <em>family background, workplace culture, country, religion, or others</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Different Clinicians and Services</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People access different types of mental health <em>professionals, therapies, and services</em>, all of which help to shape their perspectives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Mental Health Communities</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>When people join communities such as advocacy organizations, <em>support groups</em>, and <em>other communities</em> they may adopt some of their views</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Beliefs</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People form different beliefs about the <em>causes, labels, and treatment</em> for times of instability</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lived Experience</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As they encounter the mental health system, individuals have personal lived experiences which may include <em>difficult times, coping experiences, support system relationships, side effects, trauma, and other impactful events</em></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Language</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>People choose to use a variety of different terminologies to <em>identify themselves, describe lived experience, and explain tough times</em></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Can you think of other reasons people form different views?

![Checklist for Validating Diverse Perspectives in Mental Health](image)

**Are you:**

- Equally respectful to people who call themselves patients, peers, consumers, survivors, or users of services? Or to people who do not feel their sensitivities are an illness?
- Able to support someone who has chosen an alternative way of addressing their mental health situation just as much as you support someone who is following the exact advice of a medical clinician?
- Aware that mental health professionals, family members, and people living with mental health histories may have different perspectives of a situation and able to validate them all?
- Able to not form a judgment when someone talks to you about their mental health situation?
- Able to not give your opinion when someone talks to you about their mental health situation?
- Accepting of a mental health situation without trying to fix it?
- Supportive to anyone who talks to you about mental health regardless of whether you agree with their perspective?
Expand Positional Conversations
(to Discover Underlying Interests)

Help participants expand their conversation beyond their initial positions, to explore their deeper concerns and needs.

When people share their views, they often share their *positions* (the specific things that they want) rather than their *interests* (the reasons they want them). In order to have productive conversations, it is important to shift the conversation to discuss someone’s underlying concerns and needs, rather than stay stuck in positions.

An iceberg is a helpful metaphor for positions and interests

*Positions* are the smaller piece of ice that is above the water line – they are superficial, we can see them, and they do not tell the full story.

*Interests or needs* are the large mass beneath the water’s surface. They contain more substance, and are more impactful and permanent.

Quick-Tips for Expanding the Conversation Past Positions

- Do **not** respond to a position with a counter-position
- Do **not** assess the feasibility of their position
- Your goal is to use open-ended questions to learn about why the person has formed their position
- When facilitating a group, stress that this portion of the dialogue is about understanding one another’s ideas in more depth rather than critiquing them
- Common interests include respect, safety, autonomy, stability, financial security, inclusion, support, trust, peace, and comfort

Questions to Ask to Uncover Interests

- “Why do you want __________?”
- “What would __________ do for you?”
- “What do you mean by __________?”
- “What are specific examples of __________?”

A Tool to Map Positions and Interests

Use the tool below to prepare for a dialogue. Think about the various views of the stakeholders before your event. Write down their positions and try to appreciate their underlying the interests. Note there are likely more than two viewpoints, and could be more than 3 interests per viewpoint.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>VIEWPOINT ONE</th>
<th>VIEWPOINT TWO</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Interest 1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest 2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest 3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Can you brainstorm a list of ideas that will help meet each stakeholder’s individual interests?
- Are there any overlapping interests, common to more than one viewpoint?
- Are there any ideas that can help satisfy multiple different interests?
Develop Sustainable Agreements

Support a discussion process that yields agreements which are specific, balanced, achievable, durable, and adaptable.

An agreement is **sustainable** if it can meet the needs of the people involved over time without causing strain and disagreements.

### How can we develop a sustainable agreement?

#### 1. Appreciate All Positions and Perspectives

Validate everyone’s positions and perspectives using reflective listening to encourage them to share.

- Be mindful of any potential *power imbalances*, which may lead to some participants being uncomfortable sharing their true positions. Use listening, validation, and impartiality-focused techniques to empower them.

#### 2. Uncover the Underlying Interests and Needs

Ask open-ended questions to uncover interests and needs.

- Remain nonjudgmental and encourage all participants to do the same.
- Be patient with people who may take time to share their interests and needs.
- Remember people may not fully appreciate their needs, and that they may change over time.

#### 3. Brainstorm New, Collaborative Options

Encourage participants to work together to come up with all kinds of ideas that can meet the various interests discussed.

- No idea is a bad idea – gather them all and stay nonjudgmental.
- Do not assess the ideas while you are brainstorming.
- Ask for ideas that meet interests individually as well as ones that meet everyone’s needs.

#### 4. Ensure Your Agreement Fits Quality Criteria

Discuss your options to reach an agreement. Check your agreement meets the following criteria:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Realistic</th>
<th>Is this something everyone can actually do? What might make it challenging to complete?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Specific</td>
<td>How exactly will this be done? When? Are any of the terms being discussed too vague?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balanced</td>
<td>What are the reasons that each person is agreeing to this? Are they balanced?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Durable</td>
<td>How could this agreement stop working? What can help overcome those challenges?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Updateable</td>
<td>Are there ways people can come together to check in on the success of the agreement, and make improvements?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Respond to Challenging Behaviors** *(while Staying Impartial)*

Be prepared for emergencies, disruptions, and disconnects. Respond to them in an impartial, consistent, and transparent manner.

There is no such thing as a “challenging person” or “difficult person.” *We all can have bad days,* and we all can exhibit challenging behaviors.

### Types of Challenging Behavior

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Emergencies</strong></td>
<td>Crises that may require immediate attention, and potentially support from professionals like medical doctors or police. (ex. a physical fight, a medical emergency, a fire)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disruptions</strong></td>
<td>Problems that impede the facilitation process, but do not rise to the level of an emergency. (ex. yelling, monopolization of time, rude language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Disconnects</strong></td>
<td>Behaviors that make it impossible for people to engage in dialogue together (ex. confusion, non-participation, language barrier)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Planning in advance for these behaviors can increase facilitator comfort, safety, transparency, and fairness. It is especially important to have a plan, rather than rely on gut feelings, because people have unconscious biases.

**What can you do to address challenging behaviors?**

#### Prevent Them

- **Are there ways that you can structure the process to make a challenging behavior less likely?**
  - **Best Practice:** Use up-front guidelines to set norms for appropriate conduct (these can be shared on sign-up, in the agenda, in opening statements, and when interventions take place)
  - **Caution:** Relying on your gut feeling instead of objective behavioral criteria may lead you to be biased in issuing of warnings or process adjustments – try to develop consistent practices

#### De-Escalate Them

- **What can be done to de-escalate a behavior?**
  - **Best Practice:** Reminders about conduct guidelines, meeting purpose, and referral resources are options to de-escalate. Always follow your personal practices, organizational practices, and general norms when deciding how to de-escalate
  - **Caution:** Be prepared for people to feel singled out and challenge your fairness when you de-escalate

#### Emergency Response

- **When might this behavior become an emergency, or be related to an emergency?**
  - **Best Practice:** Develop clear protocols for different emergencies – fire, acute incapacity, violence. Rely on behavioral criteria to prompt action, and do not hesitate to implement your plan
  - **Caution:** These practices should ideally be driven by your organization and emergency experts

#### No Response

- **When might the behavior warrant no response?**
  - **Best Practice:** Decide in advance when you will not respond, using behavioral criteria.
  - **Caution:** Overlooking behaviors with some parties is a common source of biased interventions
  - **Caution:** Not responding to a challenging behavior can set lax expectations and make it harder to prevent later on
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