

SOLVING PROBLEMS DURING MEETINGS

All officers may encounter one or more of the following problems while they are presiding over a meeting or giving a report. Review with them the various problems and possible solutions. It may be helpful after the review to create a role-play scenario in which your officers can practice solving problems in a mock meeting.

Problem: LOW LEVEL OF CONTRIBUTION

Possible Solutions:

- Ask questions to bring in participants who have said little
- Praise contributions when made by those who are reluctant to participate
- Make procedural suggestions to control contribution. (For example, have group members comment in turn or state “No one can offer a second idea until we hear from each person present.”)
- Assign reports to be prepared in advance
- Call on participants by name
- Assign a person to the role of recorder



Problem: EXCESSIVE CONTRIBUTIONS

Possible Solutions:

- Make procedural suggestions to control contributions and put the meeting on course (interrupt if necessary)
- Acknowledge contributions and ask for contributions of others
- Bring in participants who have said little
- At a break, talk with persons who are “over contributing” and ask them to help you to get others involved

Problem: ARGUING

Possible Solutions:

- Listen and respond with empathy to each person’s point of view (interrupt if necessary)
- Maintain or enhance self-esteem of each person
- Highlight meeting purpose
- Make procedural suggestions to put meeting back on course
- Summarize or check for understanding of progress made
- Invite contributions of other group members by asking direct questions

Problem: RAMBLING

Possible Solutions:

- Acknowledge the contribution and restate the main focus of meeting
- Make procedural suggestions to put meeting back on course
- Invite contributions of other group members by asking direct questions

Problem: LAUGHTER AND DIVERSION

Possible Solutions:

- Allow to continue briefly to see if behavior will stop
- Make procedural suggestions to put meeting back on course
- Summarize, if appropriate

Problem: LATE ARRIVALS

Possible Solutions:

- Start on time
- Praise people who arrive on time
- Summarize progress, if appropriate

Problem: ATTACKS ON YOU

Possible Solutions:

- Keep your cool
- Seek information to establish whether there is a problem
- Maintain the other person's self-esteem
- Make a procedural suggestion to settle the matter at some specific time later

Summarize discussion, as you understand it, just before the attack comm

