

## How to deal with difficult behavior?

Prevention and intervention techniques can reduce difficult behaviors and help your work be more effective.

### 'Prevent' poor behavior:

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of intervention."

### Things to do before and during a meeting

- Have meeting ground rules: e.g., Show respect; Allow others to talk, Focus on the issues not the person, Stick to time, The facilitator can call for the discussion to move on.
- Indicate the desired outcomes, agenda, roles, and the decision making process. Provide clarification if necessary.
- Remind participants that this is a group effort and success depends on them.
- Involve all participants
- Request that people reserve judgment
- Make process suggestions and seek agreement



Deal with difficult behavior and enjoy a productive meeting.

### 'Intervene' to help people get back on track

- Boomerang – return the question to the individual and/or group – “What do you think about ...?”
- Regain focus – “Ok, we are working on (xyz) right now, let’s hold that thought until after the break.”
- Ask – “What is going on here? There is a lot of silence.” “What would the group like to do with this?”
- Enforce agreements – “We are coming to the end of our allotted time for this discussion. If there are other comments, I suggest we hold them until after lunch.”
- Accept/legitimize/deal with or defer – “Thank you for your input. You have a valid concern. However, it is outside of our agenda right now, can we record it for our next steps?”

### What is a **crucial conversation** and how does that affect behaviors?

- A **crucial conversation** occurs when there are opposing opinions on an issue, when there are strong emotions involved, and when the stakes are high for the individual or group.
- People react to crucial conversations by either retreating to silence (using sarcasm/avoiding the issue/withdrawing from the conversation) or by using verbal or physical aggression (speaking in absolutes/labeling people and ideas/belittling or bullying).
- Regain control by creating safety – find the mutual purpose; focus on respect for individuals and their ideas.

