

Six Ways to Handle the Support Group

The variety of personality types that support group leaders face,
poses a challenge. *-Brian Taylor*

1. the Zealot

Expects everyone to believe the way they do. Attempts to force beliefs and ideas on others.

Solution: Set ground rules to accept diversity but openly discuss religious and cultural differences. Say, "Faith is a personal matter," or "I'm glad your faith has been helpful...has anyone felt differently?"

2. the Timid

Uncomfortable talking in a group setting; easily overwhelmed.

Solution: Make an extra effort to be welcoming. Introduce them on arrival. Ask non-threatening questions: "Share your first name and favorite hobby."

3. the Distracter

Relishes side conversations and tries to engage others in lengthy ones.

Solution: Mention that side conversations make it hard to hear others. Ask that one person at a time talks so everyone can benefit.

4. the catastrophizer

Talks about negative feelings, and believes situations will never improve.

Solution: Have group members practice reframing their feelings like "I'm never going to get through this."

5. the Talker/Monopolizer

Wants to tell his or her story in minute detail; anxious if silent.

Solution: Jump in when the talker takes a breath: "That's a wonderful point. Has anyone else felt that way?"

6. the Know-it-all

Generalizes own experience and disregards others' circumstances. Needs to be right and prove others wrong.

Solution: Thank them for sharing and ask how others handle a similar situation. Note that there is no right or wrong way to approach an issue.

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