Team Facilitation Strategies

From time to time, you may encounter situations within team meetings or discussions with colleagues that are toxic, conflictual, or espouse attitudes and perceptions toward the student that are not productive. Student problem behavior is often interpreted as being ‘personal’ and sometimes, staff may struggle with implementing an intervention that is focused on being positive with the student. These situations can be very difficult and uncomfortable. After all, these are your peers. What do you do? How do you respond? As a facilitator it is helpful to have planned ahead for how you will handle these situations.

**Socratic questioning** is a technique that helps your conversation partner to explore their point of view, think more deeply about the situation, consider other perspectives and reflect on the reasons why they may have arrived at the assumption or conclusion.

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| **Socratic Question Technique** | **Question Examples** | **Examples of**  **When to Use This Strategy** |
| **Questions to clarify information** | * “*Tell me more about*….” | General or broad sweeping statement (e.g., “*She routinely disrespects me*.”) |
| **Questions to probe viewpoints, assumptions or attitudes** | * “*Is there something about this situation that resonates with you in some way*?” * “*Why do you think that is*?” * “*Let’s try looking at from a different viewpoint*.” | Statements based on assumption or bias (e.g., “*This kid is just not motivated. She isn’t interest in school*.”) |
| **Questions that elicit reasons or evidence** | * “*Can you provide an example of when this happened*?” | Broad sweeping statements (e.g., “*The behavior happens all the time*.” or “*I’ve tried everything*.”) |
| **Questions that explore possibilities** | * “*What would you do if you had to guarantee the behavior did not occur*?” * “*What do you think would happen if we offered a choice instead of telling the Mike what do*?” * “*What is an interest or a preference Ellie has that we can build from*?” | Statements that imply nothing will change the situation or defers responsibility to another party or reason (e.g., “*It doesn’t matter what we do, nothing works with this kid*.”) |
| **Questions that self-check discussion against the behavior map and function of behavior** | * “*What feature in the behavior map will this* strategy address?” * “*How does this strategy match the function of behavior*? * “*How does this discussion/information help us to arrive at why the behavior is occurring*?” | Strategy suggestions that are in conflict with the data, process, or function of behavior  (“*This student just needs a small class*.”) |

**Discussion interrupters** are strategies you can use to interrupt and refocus the conversation. These strategies can also be used as an antecedent intervention to circumvent a potential problem or can be used in the moment in response to an unproductive conversation.

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| **Facilitation Strategy** | **Example in Practice** | **Examples of When You Might Use this Strategy** |
| **Time It** | * *“Let’s go around the table and everyone express 1 opinion about what is happening. We will each have 20 seconds to share our idea”* | * One person is doing all the talking * The discussion is going in circles * Team members are talking over each other or having side bar conversations |
| **Table It** | * *“This is an important discussion. But, we can’t act until we learn more. Let’s table this topic until we are able to get more information and then we can make an informed decision.”* | * The team is not able to come to consensus * More information is needed before a decision can be made * Team members are making assumptions without the data |
| **Take a Break** | * “*Our emotions are running high during this discussion, let’s take a 5-minute break so that we can stretch, take a breath and clear our thoughts*.” | * The conversation is emotionally charged or team members are frustrated |
| **Make a Pros & Cons List** | * “*What do we gain by using this strategy or implementing this decision? What problems, or consideration should we reflect on*?” | * Strategies are being offered that are not evidenced-based or the best option * There is push back about implementing a strategy * The team can’t decide on which strategy to implement |
| **Use the Data** | * “*Let me put the graph back up on the screen and we can see how the hypothesis compares to the data we have*.’ | * Team members are making assumptions in conflict with the data, or not taking the data into account * Team members are diverting responsibility (or blame) to circumstances outside of the school * Team members are suggesting strategies that don’t align with the function of behavior |
| **Take a Vote** | * “*We have two options and we can’t seem to come to consensus on which one. Let’s take a vote and move forward with the option that has the most support*.” | * Team is having difficulty coming to consensus or committing to an action item |

**Examples of Different Ways to Phrase Questions**

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| **Types** | **Example** |
| Open-Ended | * ‘Tell me about…’ |
| Clarify Details | * ‘What did you say and when ….’ |
| Solicit evidence or examples | * “Can you provide an example of when this happened?” * “Have you ever….when/where …..?” |
| Compare and Contrast | * ‘Are there times, activities, or routines, when [insert student’s name] is most likely to engage in [insert the behavior of concern]? * Are there times, activities, or routines, when [insert student’s name] is least likely to engage in [insert the behavior of concern]? |
| Impact and Outcome | * Are there routines you avoid doing because you are concerned about a behavior occurring? |
| Exploring Possibilities | * What hopes, dreams, or aspirations do you have for [insert student’s name]? * “What would happen if you….” * “If you had …..what…..?” |