



Challenges and Ideas

The challenges and ideas below will help staff and students gain facilitation and participation skills for group discussions. To use as an activity, cut the challenges and ideas into cards and mix them up. Give each person one card and ask them to find the matching challenge or idea.

<p>Challenge Participants do not contribute or are hesitant to contribute to the conversation.</p>	<p>Idea Don't put people on the spot or "force" participation. Suggest or provide opportunities for talking in pairs, threes, or small groups for periods of time.</p>
<p>Challenge One person dominates the conversation.</p>	<p>Idea Ask the rest of the group for ideas or comments. Acknowledge the person's contributions and invite others to respond.</p>
<p>Challenge A participant makes vague statements.</p>	<p>Idea Ask for clarification, examples, or illustrations of points. Encourage rephrasing and summarizing, asking "Is this an example of what you mean?" or similar questions.</p>
<p>Challenge Participants become tense or argumentative.</p>	<p>Idea Reframe the point the person is making to be sure they feel heard. If needed, acknowledge strong feelings, and revisit the group agreements about how to discuss through disagreement.</p>
<p>Challenge Everyone seems to have said all they have to say.</p>	<p>Idea Ask for group consensus. If none, summarize what has been said and encourage the group to narrow their choices.</p>
<p>Challenge The discussion goes off topic.</p>	<p>Idea Ask for summaries of what's been said so far and ask what more needs to be discussed.</p>
<p>Challenge Participants begin to goof around.</p>	<p>Idea Call for a stretch break; move on.</p>
<p>Challenge Some people are not participating.</p>	<p>Idea Break into small groups, pairs, etc. with clear discussion questions.</p>