



J•GROUPS

# Dealing With Difficult Personalities

*Tips on dealing with various personalities that may be part of your J-Group*

## Personality 1: Pessimist Paul

- **Disruption:** Believes everything will fail and there is no potential for positive outcome in most/all situations
- **Strategies:**
  - Avoid arguing with Paul.
  - Turn pessimistic points into a challenge.

## Personality 2: Sidebar Sally

- **Disruption:** Discusses things with those sitting near her, disregarding the group setting
- **Strategies:**
  - Establish eye contact with her during sidebars to encourage attention.
  - Sit closer to her.
  - Use verbal cues to acknowledge others are aware of the side conversation. Redirect using phrases like, “Is there something that you would like to discuss with the group?” or “Let’s keep the conversation to one speaker at a time.”

## Personality 3: Off-Topic Olivia

- **Disruption:** Leads the group off subject through questions/unrelated topics
- **Strategies:**
  - Create a list of topics your group can revisit later in the discussions.
  - Use verbal cues reflecting the group is off track.
  - Remind the group of the main topic.

## Personality 4: Rambling Ruth

- **Disruption:** Dominates discussions by talking too much, losing their point
- **Strategies:**
  - Politely interrupt and summarize what was said.
  - Invite the rest of the group to provide their insights.

## Personality 5: Agitator Andrew

- **Disruption:** Disagrees with the direction or agreements the group has made
- **Strategies:**
  - Remain calm.
  - Summarize/identify the views and emotions of Andrew.
  - Invite others to share their thoughts.

## Personality 6: Rude Ralph

- **Disruption:** Bullies group members through negative comments and/or personal attacks. For example, they could reply to another attendees perspective with, “That’s the dumbest thing I have ever heard.”
- **Strategies:**
  - Reword attacks so they are impersonal but capture the underlying concern.
  - Avoid making Ralph the enemy in the group, but take opportunities to emphasize the need for a safe, discussion setting.

- o Verbally stop the conversation before it starts (i.e. "Let's not go there.")