

Facilitation techniques used when certain common meeting problems occur.

## Interventions

Technique	What to say or do
Boomerang	“What do you think we should be doing?” [Returns their questions to them]
Maintain / regain focus	“Let's all stay focused on identifying problems. Are we all together?”  “Just a moment, one person at a time. John, you were first, then Linda.”
Say what's going on	“It's very quiet here. What does the silence mean?”
Avoid process battles	Cut off argument on the “right” way to proceed.  “Can we agree to cover both issues in the remaining time?... OK, which do you want to start with?”
Enforce process agreements	“We agreed to brainstorm. It sounds like you're starting to evaluate the ideas now. Would you hold onto that evaluation idea for now?”
Difficult people:  1. Accept 2. Legitimise 3. Deal with or defer	“You're not convinced we're getting anywhere? That's OK, you may be right. Would you be willing to hang on for 10 more minutes and see what happens?”  “Thanks for raising this issue that wasn't on the agenda. Do we need to address that now or should we put it on the clipboard for our next meeting?”
Don't be defensive	“I cut you off? I'm sorry. Please continue.”  “You think I'm pushing too hard. Thanks for telling me. How would you like to proceed?”
Use body language	“Don't point; reach out underhanded; keep palms open.” Change position to become the focus or block disputing people's view of each other.
Use humour	Be funny, but not offensive.
Protect others from personal attack	“Joe, you've interrupted Sue several times in the last few minutes. I'd like to hear what she has to say.”

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**Source:** Based on Donna Ching's Facilitation resources  
<http://www.aals.org/am2003/barkaifacilitate.doc>