**Facilitator Case Studies/*Sticky Situations***

1. Your support group begins at 7:30 p.m. Mary arrives late (7:50 p.m.). This is the fourth meeting in a row that that she has arrived late. Does this behavior need to be addressed? When (i.e. week #1, week #2, week #3, week #4, not at all)? If it needs to be addressed, how does the facilitator address the issue tactfully?
2. Edward attends your support group regularly. Every time he comes to group, he talks about how awful things are. When other members share experiences and ideas that have helped them, Edward “shoots down” everyone’s ideas. After this has occurred for months, other group members share that they are becoming frustrated. How do you handle this situation?
3. Ian and Francesca are chatting near the back of the room and disrupting the support group flow. These participants have been challenging to work with for a while. How do you deal with this challenge? Should other members of the group be involved in dealing with the issue?
4. Frank, a new group member, reluctantly decides to share a challenging situation. When he is speaking, he is only looking at you, the facilitator. He then asks you a question about how to deal with the dilemma. Again, he is only looking and you and asking you the question. What actions do you need to take?
5. Your support group attendees always split into multiple support groups due to the large attendance. As one of the group’s facilitators, you are always ready to serve in case you are needed. As the groups are splitting up, you can hear people saying that they only want to be in your group and they refer to it by your name: “\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_’s group.” Is this healthy? Do you need to take any action?
6. Dina brings up her frustrations with her current medications and treatment plan. Julie, a long-time member of the group, offers advice, suggesting a new treatment plan whenever this subject is raised. As the group’s facilitator, what actions do you need to take?
7. Gus is fairly new to the group but has been consistently attending for the past few weeks. He has a habit of continually interrupting and cuts others off in the group. He sometimes interrupts to respond to the situation about which the person is speaking. Other times, he changes the topic completely to something of greater importance to him.
8. During support group meetings, most of the regular attendees always sit together, socialize together, and interact mostly with each other. Most conversation centers around long-time group members and their particular challenges and situations. You notice that new people seem to feel excluded and ignored and often don’t return. You believe that the above behavior has something to do with it. What information do you need to gather before addressing this challenge?
9. Yolanda, a regular group member, is not at the meeting. Another member reports that Yolanda is in the hospital and goes on the describe in detail how Joan ended up there, how she’s feeling, etc. You know that Joan would not want the group discussing her personal situation without her being present. What do you do in the meeting? How might your group address this issue on an ongoing basis?
10. Tony has been a facilitator for the past few years. He’s usually warm and generous, but lately has less patience and is short with other participants. In fact, at the last meeting, he cut other participants off when they were speaking, and a few participants left because they didn’t feel safe. How do you, as a fellow facilitator, approach Tony?
11. Larry is newer to meetings. He’s intelligent, charming, has a great sense of humor, and flirts with the women in the group quite a bit. You notice that Sally, a long-time participant, and Larry leave together after every meeting for the next few weeks. After some time, Sally stops coming to meetings, but Larry still participates. In fact, a couple other women in the group have also stopped participating. How do you navigate this situation?
12. A group member gets upset during the meeting and says he is starting a new support group because this one is not doing things *right* and he feels this group is harming people. He starts recruiting people to come to his new group and leave yours. He also uses the group contact list to recruit participants for his new group. How do you lead your group through this challenge?
13. You are the facilitator of a well-established support group. Over the course of several months, you and your fellow volunteers notice an influx of men attending your group. The increased number of men creates an uncomfortable dynamic for the women in the group. The women stop coming to group as a result. How can you work toward creating a safe space for the women and possibly bring them back to support group?
14. In the spirit of inclusivity, your chapter leadership makes a deliberate decision to welcome participants who have multiple diagnoses. They can include mood disorders plus schizophrenia, and other mental health issues.  As the facilitator, you note that sometimes participants with multiple diagnoses present challenges that are unrelated to mood disorders, causing the group to go off track. What are some ideas of still being inclusive while creating a safe place for all to participate in support group meetings?
15. Mark is a regular group attendee who lives with bipolar disorder. He has recently had some setbacks in his personal life. Mark comes to support group one week demonstrating a manic affect where he becomes increasingly agitated. This week, Mark has escalated to a point where he jumps up and he starts yelling. What are the steps that you must take as a facilitator in order to de-escalate Mark and keep the group on course?
16. Isabella has been depressed since joining the group. She has been regularly attending for about a year and has gotten to know several other group participants in that time. She shows up to group displaying feelings that are particularly hopeless and expresses that she feels trapped and in unbearable pain. Out of nowhere, Isabella asks the group if they would come to her funeral. As her facilitator, do you think something is going on here? What are some action steps that you could take?