**DBSA Next Level Thinking (June 16, 2022)**

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

**1.** *Background:* Member #1 and Member #2 were dating and recently had a nasty break up. Member #1 is now openly involved with Member #3, and they walk into the meeting holding hands. Member #2 is in the meeting as well.

You’re facilitating Open Discussion, and someone has asked the group to talk about what has helped when a romantic relationship has affected their mental health.   
Member #1 raises their hand, and you call on them. Member #1 brings up very personal details about the breakup with Member #2 and continues to talk while Member #2 is devastated and begins to cry.

Many members are visibly upset by Member #1’s remarks and numerous hands go up to be called on.

**What should you say and/or do?**

**Best practice solution:**

Interrupt Member #1 to state:

* sharing very personal details about another member of the group is not being respectful, compassionate or kind of other members of the group, and
* remind them the topic requested was what has helped when a romantic relationship has affected their mental health.

**2.** One of the regular members arrives about 15 minutes before the meeting starts and frequently talks about police brutality and attending local protests. He also mentions he served time at Pelican Bay State Prison—you learn it is a supermax prison facility that houses violent criminals.

Once the meeting begins, he doesn’t talk about violent subjects in the meeting.

Some of the members who also arrive early have confided in you they are uncomfortable with the subject of violence being brought up by this member.

**What should you say and/or do, if anything?**

**Best practice solution:**

Some chapters have a guideline: “Avoid sharing details that may be triggering to others”. Would this guideline apply to the pre-meeting gathering? Yes.

Best Solution Practice: Talk this person 1:1 outside of the meeting and advise them talking about violent subjects before or directly after the meeting can be triggering to others and is not allowed before, during or after the meeting.

Note: advise your Board of this situation.

**3.** Member A, a fairly new member of your Chapter, has inappropriately offered advice in the last two meetings you’ve facilitated— “I don’t have any experience regarding this issue, but I think you should …”. During each meeting, you interrupted Member A and reminded them of the guidelines of speaking from our own experience and not offering advice.

You attend a support group of your Chapter as a participant and Member A is also a participant. Member A offers advice two times, but the facilitator in charge of the meeting takes no action.

**What should you say and/or do?**

**Best practice solution:**

Send a chat to the Facilitator during the meeting reminding them of the guideline of speaking from our own experience and not offering advice. If the Facilitator takes no action, invite the Facilitator and Member A into a breakout room after the meeting to remind Member A of the guideline and why we have the guideline.

**4**. Several members meet in the hospital cafeteria an hour before the support group starts to have a bite or a beverage and socialize. When you attend, you notice that the regular attendees always sit together and socialize and do not pay attention to new people.

You and other facilitators greet the new people when they arrive and ask them to join you at your table.

**How can we encourage members to be more welcoming to newcomers?**

**Best practice solution:**

Continue to model welcoming new members. Talk 1:1 with a few key members of the “clique” and perhaps say, “You could really be inspirational to the newcomers!”

**5**. You are facilitating a very large support group of about 20 people. You begin Check-In, acknowledge we have a large group and ask everyone to as brief as possible. A new member, Member A, accompanied by a friend, makes a comment after the first-person checks-in. A second person checks-in and Member A makes a comment. You interrupt Member A to advise them we don’t comment after each person’s check-in because of time. You continue with Check-in, and you observe Member A seems very agitated. When it comes time for Member A to Check-In, they look at you and vehemently say, “Why are you such a controlling b \_ \_ \_ \_? Why won’t you let people respond to one another?”

**What should you say or do?**

**Best practice solution:**

Explain in more detail the purpose of Check-In and the format of the meeting to the new member.

**6.** You’re facilitating an in-person meeting. Member A and Member B are having a side conversation during Check-In. You interrupt Check-In to remind Member A and B about the guideline of “One person speaks at a time until they are finished. We don’t interrupt or hold side conversations.”

**If Member A and Member B continue to have a side conversation, what would you do and/or say?**

**Best practice solution:**

Give an overhead reminder to the group, “Gentle reminder, we don’t interrupt or hold side conversations.” Or

Say, “I’m sure the group would love to hear what you have to say, Member A and B.”