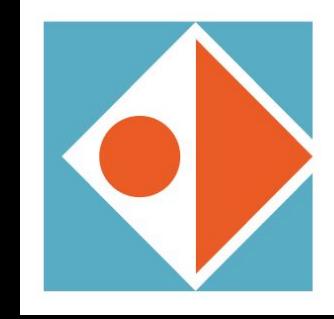


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# Effective Communication with Challenging Participants

# Who Dis?



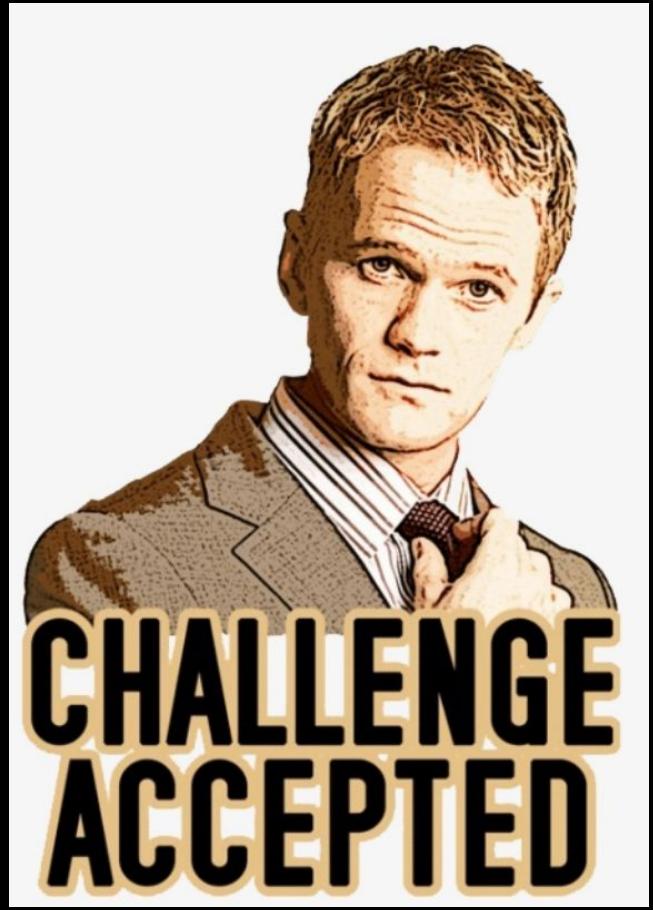
# The Shy Person (Amélie Poulain)



- **Diverse Processing:** Recognize that participants process information differently.
- **Support for Shy Participants:** Small group or paired work and individual reflection activities benefit shy or quiet participants.
- **Engagement Misconception:** Quietness does not equate to lack of engagement.
- **Variety of Engagement Methods:** Include diverse ways for participants to engage, reflect, and learn.



# The Challenger (Barney Stinson)



**Challenger Behaviour:** The Challenger may wish to challenge everything you say.

**Facilitator Role:** Reinforce that the facilitator's role is not to be the expert; the participants are the experts.

**Focus Shift:** This approach often shifts the Challenger to the "Know it All" role.

**Redirect Challenges:** When faced with tough questions or challenges, redirect them to the gr



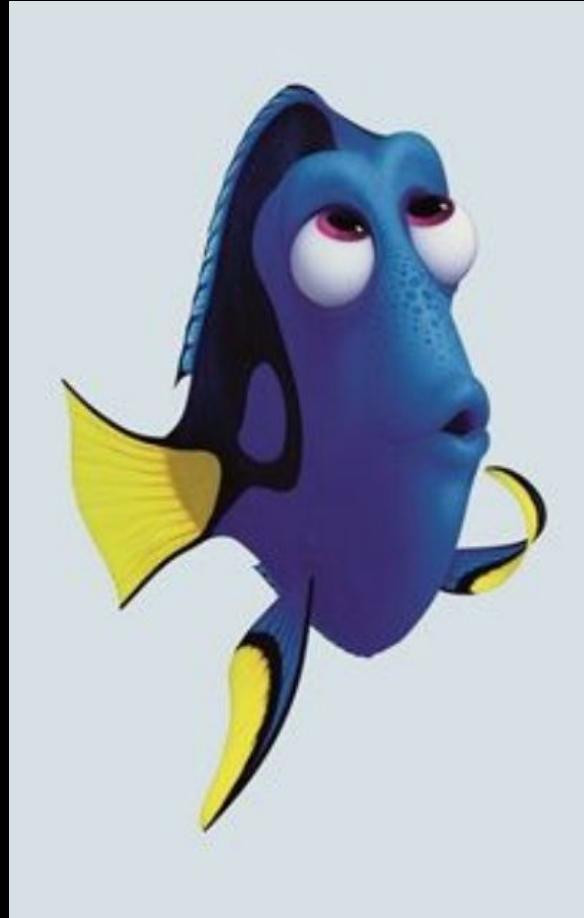
# The Dominator (Darth Vader)



- **Verbally Dominant Participants:** Common in group settings.
- **Establish Rules:** Set rules at the beginning to manage speaking time.
- **Intervention:** Inform participants that you will jump in and ask questions to save time and distribute speaking opportunities evenly.
- **Bottom Lining:** Teach the skill of summarizing the main point
- **Laser Speak:** Encourage speaking directly to the heart of the issue
- **Reminders:** Continuously remind the group about these skills throughout the session.



# The Unfocussed (Dory)



- **Unfocused Participants:** May appear inattentive and "wandering off."
- **Clarity of Direction:** Let participants know where you are going; provide an overview of the process.
- **Engagement:** Ask participants what they want to explore and make them aware of what has already been discussed.
- **Focus Questions:** Help participants become more focused by asking:
  - "What are your key goals?"
  - "What do you need/want to do to get there?"
  - "What do you want to get out of the conversation?"
  - "What's really important?"
  - "Where do you need to move the needle in this conversation?"

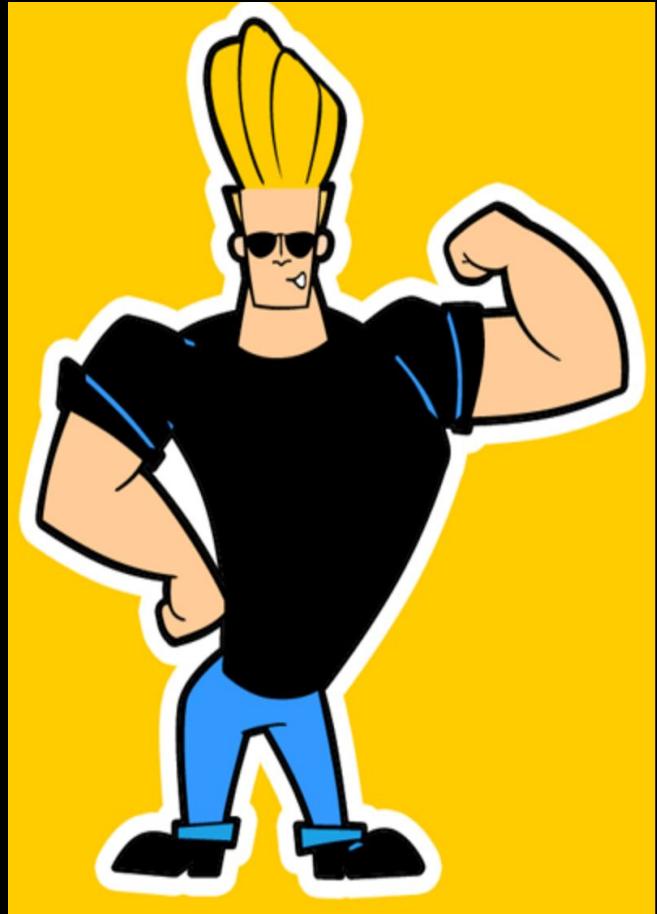


# The Overachiever(Sheldon Cooper)

- **Overachiever Challenge:** Endless achievements may cause concerns and feelings of inadequacy in other group members.
- **Pace Reinforcement:** Reinforce that everyone moves at their own pace within the group process.
- **Wins and Successes:** Emphasize that "Wins" and successes happen at different stages for each person.
- **Sharing Experiences:** Have the Overachiever share what they learned to spark and motivate others with new ideas and insights.
- **Focus on Learning:** Remind the Overachiever about the learning goal of the session, especially during activities.



# The Center of Attention (Johnny Bravo)



- **Attention-Seeking Participants:** Common in group settings.
- **Assign Roles:** Invite them to participate in roles such as timekeeper, flip charter, or note-taker.
- **Engagement:** Give them something to do to prevent them from taking over.
- **Spotlight Roles:** Some roles will "give them the spotlight" and fulfil their need to be seen.



# The Joker



- **Humour in Facilitation:** Provides lightness and a rich perspective.
- **Infusing Humour:** Explore where the group can infuse humour around the issues being explored.
- **Lightening Up:** Identify what needs lightening up in the discussion.
- **Extreme Humour:** Be aware of the impact when the joker takes humour to the extreme.
- **Self-Awareness:** Ask the joker to consider the impact they are having on the group.



# The Devil's Advocate



- **Devil's Advocate Role:** Brings diverse perspectives to the discussion.
- **Reminder of Perspectives:** Highlights the existence of many different perspectives in groups and teams.
- **Flip-Side Exploration:** Encourages exploring the flip-side and important issues pointed out by the Devil's Advocate.
- **Relativity Reminder:** Remind the participant that while everything may be relative, some routes may not lead to productive group discussions.
- **Managing Disruptions:** If statements become disruptive or personal, redirect them to the group.



# The Argumentative One (Spock)



- **Argumentative Participants:** Some participants may argue for the sake of arguing.
- **Key Questions:** Ask questions like "What's at stake?" and "What's the request behind your complaint?" to understand their perspective.
- **Group Involvement:** Defer the issue to the group to gauge their opinions.
- **Further Discussion:** If many agree, it may merit further discussion; if not, the group can move on.



# The Know it All (Hermione Granger)



- **Facilitation Belief:** Participants are considered knowledgeable.
- **Exploratory Questions:** Engage the "know it all" with questions like:  
"What are you so passionate about proving?"  
"What makes your perspective unique?"  
"What do you have to offer?"  
"How can you share your expertise in a more positive fashion?"



# The Verbose One (C3PO)



- **Verbose Participants:** Very talkative participants may often self-identify.
- **Group Communication:** Inform the group that everyone will have the opportunity to speak.
- **Bottom-Lining:** Introduce the skill of summarizing the main point.
- **Laser Speak:** Encourage speaking directly to the heart of the issue.
- **Head-Lining:** Teach participants to get to the core or "essence" of the story
- **Intruding:** Share the skill of "intruding" or "jumping in" to manage conversations effectively.



# The Sidebar Talking Gang (Saved by the Bell)



- **Sidebar Conversations:** More frequent in workshops or larger groups.
- **Open Invitation:** Invite the sidebar participants to share with the group.
- **Eye Contact:** Make eye contact to encourage them to join the wider group discussion.
- **Physical Presence:** Move near the conversation to show genuine curiosity.
- **Invitation to Share:** Invite the sidebar pair to share their discussion with the rest of the group.



# Some other useful Techniques

## Agree/Disagree/Deflect Technique

When you disagree with a participant's remarks or arguments but don't wish to embarrass them:

- Find something in their contribution with which you agree. Then
- Gently disagree with the key issue and, lastly
- Deflect to the group for comments

## Always open the training in a way that sets out mutual expectations

Creating and agreeing on ground rules and shared expectations is essential. This then gives you and others the framework to hold each other accountable

## Receipt Technique

- Simply give a receipt for every contribution made by any participant!
- Say thank you and mention the participant's name.
- Rephrase the participant's words to fit your learning point, e.g.: 'Okay, so you are saying that.....good!'
- Simply repeat the last phrase and ask for other comments.

## Know who the participants are

## Design the training so it respects and engages everyone

If there's an elephant in your training room, then know how you want to tackle it

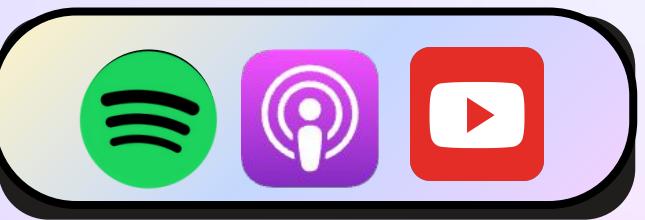
Anticipate tough questions, difficult learning points and likely areas of resistance



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