Role Play: What if Scenarios

Purpose: This activity is intended to provide facilitators with an opportunity to practice specific strategies for managing participants that may be domineering, silent, distracting, unnecessarily inquisitive or a bit too focused on process.

Duration: This activity requires 20-60 minutes.

Directions: Convene a group of facilitators. Review the examples and strategies provided below regarding different types of participants you may encounter. As a group, identify additional ways for dealing with each situation. Then select a situation to role play. Assign tasks and conduct the exercise for 3-5 minutes using the strategies identified below or discussed as a group. Answer the questions below and repeat the role play with different scenarios, including situations you may add to the list.

Questions: After each role play, discuss:

1. How did the facilitator try to address the situation?
2. What did you like about this approach?
3. Was there anything you didn’t like about this approach?
4. What are some additional strategies that can be used to manage the situation?

Example Participants and Strategies:

- **The dominator:** This person tried to monopolize the meeting.
  
  **Strategy:** Look for a place to interrupt him, quickly summarize his point of view and turn to the group and say, "Does anyone else have an opinion about this?"

- **The wallflower:** This person has good ideas but is too shy to share them in a group setting.
  
  **Strategy:** Set him/her up with a little encouragement. "Connie, I know you have a lot of experience in this area. Is there anything you can share that might be helpful?"

- **The distractors:** These individuals will often huddle together and start talking about something.
  
  **Strategy:** Call on someone who is sitting next to one of them. That may startle them enough to stop, without embarrassing them. Alternatively ask them to share their good idea with the group.

- **The pessimist:** These individuals may have legitimate points, but they love to express concerns.
  
  **Strategy:** Quickly legitimize their concerns and use the group to diffuse the concerns