

Moderating Meetings for Assessing Psychosocial Risks in the Workplace



HOW CAN PARTICIPATION BE ENCOURAGED?

MARCH 2024

WHAT ARE THE POTENTIAL PITFALLS WHEN MODERATING MEETINGS?

What might occur during a group meeting that could compromise the diagnosis or the search for solutions? Being prepared for different scenarios as a moderator allows you to avoid being caught off-guard while conducting meetings. Here are a few examples of situations that may occur and some solutions or attitudes that can be adopted to address them:

Issue	Possible solutions or attitudes to adopt
 Discussion is slow to begin	Remind participants of the meeting's objectives and of why they have been invited to participate, explain what the results will be used for, ask if they have any concerns about the meeting or the process, and confirm that they are willing to take part.
 One person monopolizes the discussion	Intervene respectfully, remind participants of the basic rules of group communication, such as allowing everyone time to speak, speaking one at a time, listening to others when they speak and respecting the various opinions expressed.
 One or more persons remain silent or speak little	Scan the whole group with your eyes, respond to the intervention of a person who rarely speaks before moving on to the next speaker, adopt an open physical and verbal attitude, seize the opportunity to create an opening, etc.
 The tone toward the moderator gets heated	Remind participants of the basic rules of group communication, allow emotions to be expressed in a respectful manner, take the person(s) aside if necessary, take a break, etc.
 Participants raise their voices at each other	Remind participants of the basic rules of group communication, allow emotions to be expressed in a respectful manner, take matters in hand promptly and be firm with regard to unacceptable words or behaviour (e.g.: personal attacks), seek areas of consensus and win-win solutions, take the person(s) aside if necessary, take a break, but avoid postponing the discussion unless the climate is too tense, etc.
 A participant cries	Welcome and name the emotions being experienced, normalize them within the context of the situation, use the group to support the person, etc.
 The discussion shifts to another topic	Reiterate the objectives of the meeting, refocus discussion on the subject, re-establish order, allow for a break, etc.

WHAT NEEDS TO BE DECIDED BEFORE THE MEETING?

- Decide who will be the moderator and who will take notes during the meeting.
- Establish who will be responsible for keeping track of time, and decide on the duration of each part of the meeting so that all the planned elements can be covered without putting the group under pressure. It may be necessary to decide in advance which part of the meeting could be moved along more quickly.
- Familiarize yourself with the material provided for assessing psychosocial risks in the workplace.

START THE MEETING OFF WELL, ESTABLISH A CLEAR FRAMEWORK

- Take the time to welcome people, making eye contact and giving each person individual attention.
- Communicate the meeting's objectives and rules of conduct at the outset.
- Encourage participation by including it among the meeting's objectives.
- Explain what the next steps will be, what you will do with the results and to whom they will be communicated.

BUILD TRUST

- Reassure participants that everyone is free to express themselves, and that what is said will not be included verbatim in the report, nor will statements be linked to the persons who made them.
- Emphasize the importance of respect, attentiveness and confidentiality.
- Explain the role of the moderator(s) transparently.
- Be confident, emphasize the benefits of such meetings.
- Lighten the mood by adopting a calm tone and inserting a little humour when appropriate.
- Demonstrate an attitude of attentiveness and openness to the different ideas expressed. Be careful not to become defensive!
- Direct exchanges.
- Facilitate collective participation (make sure everyone is given the opportunity to speak).
- Draw the discussion back to the topics covered in the tool for assessing psychosocial risks in the workplace and manage time.
- Solicit dissenting opinions, where appropriate, and verify consensus.
- Take non-verbal messages into account.
- Seek confirmation of your understanding and interpretations.

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This information sheet draws on the book by Leclerc C., *Intervenir en groupe : savoirs et pouvoir d'agir*, 2015, CRIEVAT, 501.

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