



Rural Facilitators Webinar Navigating Disruptive Situations

July 14th 2022

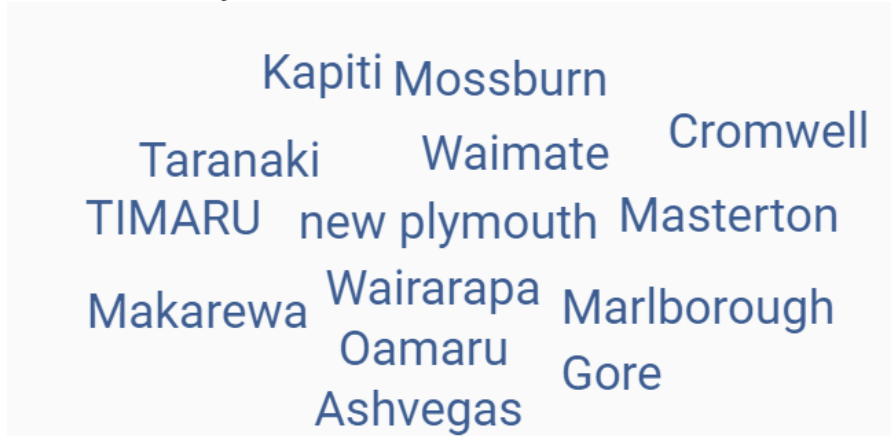
Facilitated by Olivia Weatherburn & Lab Wilson



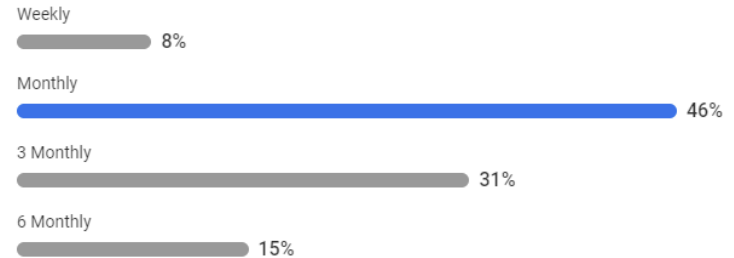
The knowledge is in the room



- Aim is to share rich experiences and knowledge to benefit each other
- Wide range of people from across the country



How often do you get to use your facilitation skills?



What are some of the disruptive situations you have encountered?

- Personal communication issues
- One person taking over the conversation in the audience
- Off track, People who hog the airtime
- When there are times for questions people go on off tangent with personal statements.
- When you say the event will kick back off in 3 mins and no one moves!
- Frustration with the changing rules and the speed of change feeling unappreciated despite all the hard work involved in farming
- People in crowd taking over the conversation, hard to facilitate
- Group think
- Attendees trying to show up experts. Attendees close minded.
- Bit of a given, but Covid
- Disgruntled or agitated farmers
- Farmers who have their own agendas

MENTAL MODELS

“Mental models are deeply ingrained beliefs, values, assumptions and generalizations, or even pictures or images, that influence how we understand the world and how we take action.”

- Peter Senge

Example, “The knowledge is in the room”



Mental Models



- We all have complete unique life experiences which creates different mental models
- Therefore we all have a completely different and unique set of mental models
- If we asked everyone present on this webinar to write an essay of what happened in the room today we would get 20 totally different perspectives
- When running workshops everyone will go away with a different message and way of understanding

Disruptive Situations



1. **Saboteurs:** private agenda, deliberate disruption
2. **Dominators:** wiser, louder, etc.
3. **Critics:** technical, data or you
4. **Disengaged:** not present, distracting to others
5. **Energy Vampires:** often negative, drag us all down

As facilitators, what is the key mental model we should approach these disruptive situations with?

What you came up with:

- Each situation is different
- Everyone deserves respect
- Respect others in the room and their opinions - Be open minded
- go curious not furious
- Keep positive
- Always show respect
- No question is a dumb question
- Everyone's feelings are valid to them
- Calm open mind
- Consider what opportunities are available in every situation before proceeding
- Remain calm, breathe & take time to answer the disruptor
- Try to turn things around so they are always positive and constructive
- Their frustration is not with me
- keep calm and carry on!
- Everyone has a right to be heard, even if we don't agree with them
- Change is a constant, and offers opportunities
- Keeping above the line - as ourselves and as a group

Saboteurs: private agenda, deliberate disruption



- Keep it positive, but keep things moving along - talk about it later
- “That's a really good point, come and see me after”
- Deflecting from situation. Not letting them take things out of control.
- Try to include them constructively - give them a job - play to their ego.
- Keeping above the line.
- Keeping calm - don't get flustered
- Curious not furious.

Dominators: wiser, louder, etc.

- Asking what other group members think about the 'dominators' thoughts or statements are
- Direct question to someone else within the group to share the speaking spots
- If there is a mic present, hand it to someone else to take the focus away from that person
- Acknowledge that you have heard them
- Remain calm and be respectful - assertive voice
- Pick a positive out of something they have raised
- Have participants raise a hand to ask a question or speak
- House rules established at the start of the meeting (everyone's opinion matters and be respectful)
- Be aware of the meetings agenda - stop at certain times for questions and communicate such time restraints
- Touch point following the meeting to address any further questions or concerns
- Parking board to come back to at the end of the meeting

Critics: technical, data or you

- Keep Calm
- Ask the critic what makes them say that
- Ask another participant what they think of the critic's comments
- Ask the critic if they have any other data or research to support what they are saying
- Ask critic if they have an alternative solution or way of dealing with the issue
- Agree to disagree
- If they have a problem with facilitator, then ask them to put that aside and focus on the task at hand
- Bring the critic back to working constructively towards finding a solution

Disengaged: not present, distracting to others



- Ask them a direct question to put them on the spot to bring them back to the point.
- Ask them what they want to get out of it
- Using humor
- Doing something interactive for Farmers that are not use to sitting and listening
- Strategic use of grouping for activities
- Get the distractor aware of their impact on others

Energy Vampires: often negative, drag us all down

- To acknowledge the question, in a respectful way.
- Can be abrupt (depending on the situation) which can encourage the conversation to move on, and not dwell on the negative side. Take it off-line and discuss after the meeting
- Ask another person in the crowd (that you know) to share their experience
- Re-open question to move the conversation away from the individual - big picture, rather than specific

Similarities between all situations



- Mostly negative disruptors
- Acknowledge and talk about it later
- Keeping the structure - not allowing the influence of these people to change the structure of the meeting
- House rules can be a really good way to start, and something you can come back to throughout the meeting if not going to plan.
- Change your approach to help engage other people

As a facilitator what does this mean?



- There are many various techniques that can use but your attitude is the key impact
- Being respectful & acknowledging they have been heard to ensure they still are valued participants
- Real difference between disengaged & disruptive people and the tools needed to manage them. One you need to draw information out and the other is slow the persons conversation down
- If your confident as a facilitator you can redirect and take control of the room more easily. It's about supporting the group as a whole. (throw it back to the group)
- Good structure of the session but being flexible in order to maintain a good session

Tips from Lab

- It's not about YOU
- Self-talk - affirm positive mental models
- Enlist the group
 - Refer comments & questions
 - Develop shared ground-rules/norms
- Ask yourself, “what’s best for this group?”
- Design is your best tool
- Breathe!

What is one thing you going to do differently following today conversation?



- Work on keeping calm
- House rules / lay out of meeting
- Set ground rules
- Take care when preparing for the session, to envisage the issues and how to interact with these.
- remember its not about me
- House rules at the meeting
- Forward plan strategy for disruptors before meeting
- Try and cater for all personalities and be open minded
- Work on design of workshop
- House rules at the start of the meeting
- I like Lab's tip on designing your sessions as I'll think more about this
- Be more aware how to manage disruptive people.
- Do some quick rules at the start of a session to set the scene
- Consider mental model before a session

Log in to the Beef + Lamb New Zealand website and find it under the dashboard

This platform is for sharing practice, developing relationships, and helping facilitators with ongoing learning and development.

We invite you to take this opportunity to connect, learn and converse with other facilitators and extension agents

Connect with others in your area and widen your network. As most of us will have realised by now, learning about facilitation in formal workshops reading books or accessing online resources, only equips us to go out and learn by doing it. Since the RMPP facilitator workshops started back in 2017, many of you have been doing just that. Developing your practice.

Wherever we are in our development as a facilitator, we can always improve and look for innovation in the way we do things. Joining this community will give you access to the most valuable resource we have, the experience of our peers. It is about sharing our practice – the good, the bad and the ugly.

Something to share or a current challenge? Register to be part of the online facilitator forum on the page

Thank You & Contacts



For any questions or feedback around this webinar please contact

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