

How to Handle a Conversation Hog

Every now and then in our groups we encounter someone who we would consider a Conversation Hog.

A few characteristics of a Conversation Hog:

- Monopolizes conversations easily
- Always has a long answer to every question
- Gives advice to anyone who shares in the group
- Will always relate someone else's answer to what is going on in their lives

When you encounter a true conversation hog in your group, the group can easily become all about them. Many of these people are extroverts and are eager to jump in and share their thoughts, especially if someone else in the group doesn't begin to speak first. They want to be sure and keep the conversation moving rather than allowing the time for someone else to speak up.

Ways to help with a Conversation Hog:

- Talk to them before or after group and explain that you are very happy with their willingness to share and ask if they will help get others involved. Ask them to wait a couple of minutes before answering a question. Also, ask them to help you ask other members questions during group time explaining that this will help to make the quieter members feel more involved in the group.
- If they are telling a story and keep going, wait for them to pause and immediately re-direct the conversation. Most people who are socially aware will eventually pick up on these queues if you continue to re-direct them.
- During the first few weeks of your group, share with the entire group that we are here to love and support each other but not to "fix" one another. If a group member is going through a difficult time, let the group know that we have counselors that are trained to help in difficult situations. Reinforce this information when needed throughout the semester.
- Encourage them to share what has been going on in their lives during your social time before the discussion time begins. This will help them to get what they want to say out and will help the discussion time to stay more on track.
- Have the small group lead re-direct the conversation to other members.