

Self-Help Tools for Participators¹

1. **If you feel *cut off***, say so or override the interruption. (“I’d like to finish...”)
2. **If you feel *misunderstood***, clarify what you mean. (“Let me put this another way...”)
3. **If you feel *misheard***, ask the listener to repeat what she heard you say, then affirm or correct her statement.
4. **If you feel *hurt or disrespected***, say so. If possible, describe exactly what you heard or saw that evoked hurt feelings in you. (“When you said x, I felt y...” where “x” refers to specific language.) If it is hard to think of what to say, just say, “OUCH” to flag your reaction.
5. **If you feel *angry***, express the anger directly (e.g., “I felt angry when I heard you say x...”)
rather than expressing it or acting it out indirectly (e.g., by trashing another person’s statement or asking a sarcastic or rhetorical question.)
6. **If you feel *confused***, frame a question that seeks clarification or more information. You may prefer to paraphrase what you have heard. (“Are you saying that...?”)
7. **If you feel *uncomfortable*** with the process, state your discomfort and check in with the group to see how others are experiencing what is happening. (“I’m not comfortable with the tension I’m feeling in the room right now and I’m wondering how others are feeling.”) If others share your concerns and you have an idea about what would help, offer that idea. (“How about taking a one-minute Time Out to reflect on what we are trying to do together?”)
8. **If you feel the conversation is *going off track***, share your perception, and check in with others. (“I thought we were going to discuss x before moving to y, but it seems that we bypassed x and are focussing on y. Is that right?”) If so (“I’d like to get back to x and hear from more people about it.”)

¹These self-help tools were derived from discussions with participants about difficult moments and what they might do in the future in similar situations.

