***Being an Effective Discussant***

***Suggestions to Enhance Group Process***

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Below are some strategies that individual group members can use to build and sustain healthy discussion.

Identify Objectives Clearly for the Discussion

* Share information
* Enhance understanding
* Elicit feelings
* Brainstorm
* Solve a problem
* Make a decision
* Develop a plan
* Resolve a conflict

Prepare Carefully

* Read agenda or assignment -- do your homework
* Think about the task to be done
* Write notes with initial questions, key facts, ideas or opinions

Speak Thoughtfully

* Link contributions to the contributions of others -- make connections
* State one point at a time -- don't overload discussion with too many points
* Substantiate your claims -- state sources, give rationale, provide evidence
* Vary the kinds of discussion behaviors you choose -- contribute ideas, listen, challenge other views, cultivate solidarity, reconcile different perspectives, etc.
* Share "air time" equitably with other group members -- let others speak

Listen Actively

* Paraphrase what others have said to enhance understanding
* Ask questions
* Provide feedback
* Summarize main points
* Demonstrate listening nonverbally through body and facial language
* Take notes

Evaluate Purposefully

* Prepare a written assessment on the quality of the discussion
* Ask the group to discuss results and implications of assessment
* Adjust behavior in response to feedback

Follow Through Responsibly

* Outline tasks that need to be accomplished -- make sure everyone understands group expectations and assignments
* Honor your commitment to accomplish tasks assigned by the group