

## EFFECTIVE DISCUSSION SKILLS

1. **Ask for clarification**  
If uncertain about important aspects of the current discussion or the logic of someone's argument, **ask**.
2. **Act as gatekeeper**  
Help to ensure equal participation among group members. Draw out those who are less aggressive; divert undue attention away from those who tend to dominate.
3. **Listen**  
Actively
4. **Summarize**  
Periodic summaries of the discussion (especially group decisions and agreed-upon tasks) help to ensure mutual understanding and solidify agreement.
5. **Contain digression**  
Help keep the conversation efficient and on track.
6. **Manage time**  
It is up to the group to decide how it spends its time. If portions of the agenda take longer than anticipated, actively decide together how the rest of the group's meeting time will be allotted.
7. **End the discussion**  
When appropriate, help the group move toward a conclusion and make a decision.
8. **Test for consensus**  
Summarize the group's consensus; state the decision that appears to have been made, and check whether or not the team agrees with the summary.
9. **Constantly evaluate the meeting process**  
Is the current discussion useful, or could it be improved?