

Meeting Disruptions: Challenges and Opportunities



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IAP2 WEBINAR

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Disruption Defined



- Any attempt by a participant or audience members to redirect the format or content of a meeting as originally planned or intended

Timing Dictates Strategies



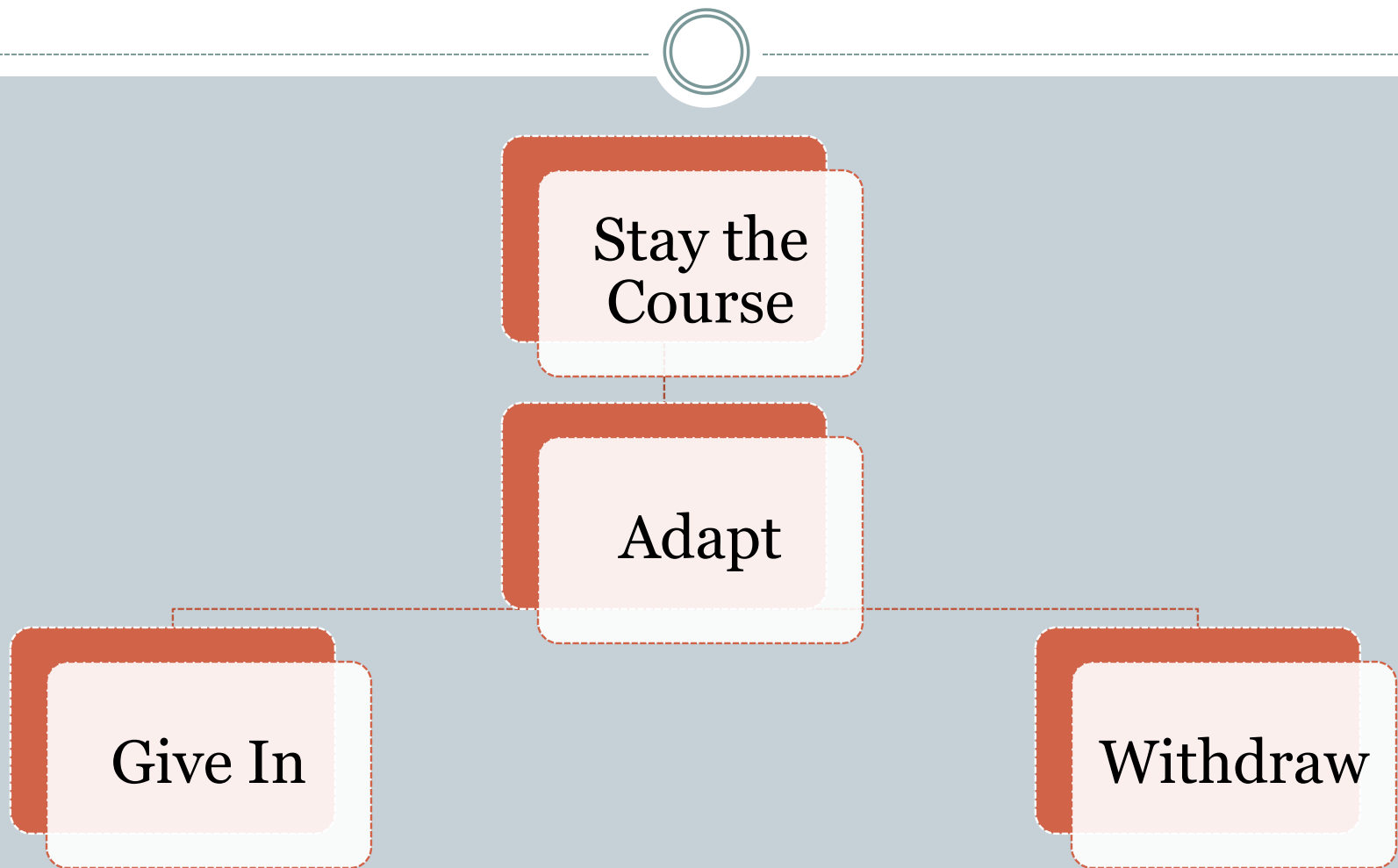
- **Strategies Before a Meeting Occurs:**
 - Anticipation
 - Education
 - Accommodation
 - Negotiation
 - Capitulation
 - Cancellation

Real-time Disruption Requires Rapid Assessment



- What is the motivation for the disruption?
- Is it spontaneous or orchestrated?
- Is the objective to redirect the format and/or content of the meeting or to prevent it?
- Is the disruption coming from people who are representative of the audience or a vocal minority?
- What were your objectives for the meeting?
- Do you have more to gain/lose by continuing the meeting or ending it?

Possible Outcomes of Disruption



Rationales for Staying the Course



- Regulatory/legal context
- Fairness to those who came for advertised purpose/agenda
- Lost opportunity to provide input
- Will of the majority
- Wrong people present to address other subjects
- Other options or means to meet disrupters' objectives are available

Rationales for Adapting



- To address relevant stakeholder concerns
- Be responsive to community preferences
- Demonstrate flexibility
- Accommodate multiple objectives
- Salvage what's possible

Rationales for Giving In



- You have no way of forcing people to participate in the meeting you intended
- To achieve your objectives, it's more effective to accede to their demands

Rationales for Withdrawing



- Nothing constructive will happen by continuing
- You have concerns about your personal safety
- Withdrawing appears to be a better option than losing control of the meeting

Critical Issue is Fairness



- Three stakeholder groups should be accounted for :
 - Those who are initiating the disruption
 - Other participants
 - The decision maker and/or convening entity
- What option is both viable and fairest overall to all three groups?
- The goal is to lead everyone to higher ground.