

Guide: Navigating Sensitive Conversations at WPO Meetings

Keep **WPO Mission** top of mind: Facilitating the greatness of women leaders through community, peer learning and knowledge sharing.

Here are some guidelines to consider when you are experiencing conflict or navigating sensitive conversations at WPO meetings. Our goal is to create a safe, respectful, and focused space for growth.

Core Principles

- **Respect first** → Every voice and experience matters.
- **Shared focus** → We are here for business growth and peer support.
- **No debates** → We don't debate or promote political positions.
- **Impact is valid** → We welcome sharing how world events affect you or your business.

Facilitating Tips:

☐ **Acknowledge without Amplifying:**

- **Example:** Member vents about tax policy; you respond by focusing on operational impact.
 - i. Validate emotion or perspective, then pivot to business impact.
- **Try saying:** *"I can see this is deeply affecting you - let's talk about how it's showing up in your business."*

☐ **Name the Dynamic, not the Debate:**

- **Example:** Multiple people speaking at once / volume increases; you pause and note intensity to help restore balance.
 - i. Address group energy or tension, vs who is "right."
- **Try saying:** *"This is feeling emotionally charged - let's pause and ground in our purpose."*

☐ **Anchor on Shared Focus:**

- **Example:** Two members debate energy policy; you anchor to how they're adapting their operations.
 - i. Redirect conversation back to WPO purpose, business growth and leadership.
- **Try saying:** *"This is clearly important. Let's explore how you're leading through it in your business."*

☐ **Calm is Contagious:**

- **Example:** A member is frustrated; your calm, steady tone de-escalates tension.
 - i. Chairs can be a barometer for the room and help set the emotional temperature.
- **Try saying:** *"Let's take a few deep breaths and slow down to make sure we're listening to each other."*