

Role-Play: Sticky Unit Situations

STICKY SITUATIONS—Role-play with audience participation

Each of these “sticky situations” is a real event that can happen with any PTA. Using the leadership guidance and conflict resolution strategies you learned about today, please consider the following and how you would work to resolve it. Work within your groups to come up with 1) a description of the problem in full, 2) a workable plan and 3) how you would approach it to resolve it to the best of your abilities. NOTE: You may draw on your own experiences; just remember to keep names confidential if you share them with the rest of your group.

SITUATION ONE: You are presiding over your board meeting in October when suddenly it seems you lose control over what’s going on—how do you get control back?

Volunteer A: I just really hate these long meetings, they’re so boring, I need to get home so I can get some work done. I’m missing my kids. I had to leave them with a sitter tonight, and my husband’s on a road trip for work.

Volunteer B: Did anyone hear about Patsy? She’s going through a nasty divorce! I think it’s really too bad that this is happening so often in OUR community! I heard her kids are all upset, and I’m worried about them.

Volunteer C: What I really think this PTA needs is better meetings. These just go on and on and on, and we never get anything done. What a waste of time.

President: “...” ??

Fallout: Attendance for board meetings is declining. *How do you get your board members back to the meeting, and keep the meeting from running away from you again?*

SITUATION TWO: While giving her committee report, Volunteer A is being told by Volunteer B and C that the way she wants to conduct her program isn't good and won't work. Volunteer A is about to quit and leave the meeting and/or position altogether.

Volunteer A: I would like to do my program this way, based on the surveys from last year's program and the notes from the last program chair. I think this is the best way to meet the needs of the school and keep the program a success.

Volunteer B: It's been done that way before, and it doesn't work. You shouldn't do that. I can't believe you didn't know it's been done like that, and just didn't work.

Volunteer C: We just don't do that program like that at THIS school. No one will like it, and it won't be a success. You should just do it the way it was last year—everyone likes it better that way. You'll get more people to come. If you do it different, you will have poor attendance!

Volunteer A: I came here for support, but if that's the way you are going to be, perhaps I should let you do it instead.

President: "... " ??

Fallout: This chair called you after the meeting and is ready to quit her position. *How do you get the situation to be resolved to everyone's benefit?*

SITUATION THREE: Earlier this week after the last board meeting, Volunteer B sends you an email detailing why she thinks Volunteer C is a horrible chairperson and needs to be removed. Later on during the day, you get a voice message from Volunteer A stating the same thing, and then when you see Volunteer A at school while picking up your children, she restates her previous message. Volunteer D approaches you with Volunteer A and offers to take over C's board position and has lined up her friends to be on the committee:

Volunteer B: Dear President of PTA, Volunteer C is a real screw up; she's always late to meetings, never turns in her reports on time, picks her nose and is a general pain in the rear. Why do we have her on PTA? We need to remove her asap! You're the president—you should be taking care of things like this. I know everyone agrees with me. Call me so we can discuss this further! ~Volunteer B

Volunteer A: Hi, President of PTA, it's Volunteer A. Just letting you know that Volunteer C should probably be dropped from her position as chair. She really has an attitude problem, and when I talked to Volunteer B, she said she had the same issues with Volunteer A. I think you should handle this personally and quickly. Call me so we can discuss this further! Bye!

Volunteer D: I've already talked to X, Y and Z who have kids in my class, and they all agree that C is not good for PTA. I think we would do a better job. Everyone I've talked to says they'll help out.

President: "..."??

Fallout: Volunteer C is left without a viable committee, as the magic of campus gossip about PTA business has begun to do its work, and she's having trouble finding volunteers. *What solution and plan of action would you implement to resolve this before this gets out of hand any further?*