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Communicating with Every Type of Person!

Presented by: Meghan Altier

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Difficult Behaviors Agenda

- Difficult People vs. Difficult Behaviors
- Why are People Difficult?
- Eight Types of Difficult People in the Workplace
- Stop Lights are Great Metaphors:
  - Stop Light of Behaviors
  - Stop Light of Longevity of Working
- Correct way to handle an issue
- Correct way to handle a complaint
- Five Ways to Resolve Conflict

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Communicating with Difficult Individuals

- If only everyone could get along – or as a wise person once said – "This job would be perfect if it weren't for all the people."

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Difficult vs. Violent

- Please note that there is a difference between being difficult and being violent or threatening.
- Most organizations have a workplace violence policy – ask your human resources department for further direction on your agency's policy.
- In a life-threatening situation involving violence in process, immediately call 911 and report directly to police.

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Difficult Behaviors

- A difficult person is someone whose behavior causes difficult situations – for you and others. We have all been difficult people at some time or another. Dealing with difficult people simply means dealing with the difficult behavior. Often the only recourse is to manage your own behavior. When we encounter a difficult person our reaction can make the problem worse: sharp retort, anger, defensive.

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Difficult People are EVERYWHERE

- If you read the books and articles, you may believe that the workplace is made up of all difficult people. - ***

  Back stabbers, bullies, know-it-alls, complainers, stallers, procrastinators, unresponsive, exploders, hostile, yes-people, tyrants, bootlickers, saboteurs, wheeler-dealers, busybodies, antagonists, indecisive, spoilers, deadbeats, crybabies, space cadets, bullheaded, users, critics, ….

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- In reality only about 10 percent of the typical workforce falls into the category of "Difficult People." The effects they have on the organization vary greatly, but usually involve low morale, increased conflict, change in group attitude, intimidation, insults, team demoralization, decreased productivity, rising costs, increasing project risks, and/or taxes on resources.

Eight Types of Difficult People:

- Probably this is what we think of as a difficult person.

Eight Types of Difficult People: Mean and Angry

- Anger subordinates all other feelings, and it freezes situations. In any form, anger is meant to frighten and intimidate and the secret to dealing with it is not be afraid.

  Provide an escape hatch for angry people with phrases such as, “You’re right.” “I can’t blame you” and “I’d feel the same way.”

Eight Types of Difficult People:

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Eight Types of Difficult People: Over controlling

- An Over controlling person pushes you further and further into the corner. Triple checks – can't think for themselves.
- Make sure they do not dominate your life.

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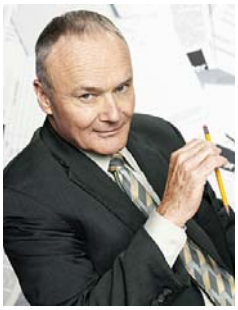
Eight Types of Difficult People:



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Eight Types of Difficult People: Suspicious

- Ever watchful, suspicious people believe that others are ready to attack or hurt them.
- Suspicion spawns suspicion and they wonder what others know that they don't. Never pass suspicion down. Stop the process.

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Eight Types of Difficult People:

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Eight Types of Difficult People: Pessimistic

- Pessimist is a person who expects the worst
- Demand your time, drains your energy and clouds your critical judgment. Pessimist speak our own fears. Pessimism is contagious.
- Have pessimist work with highly energetic people, be watchdog, or assign solo tasks.

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Eight Types of Difficult People: Cynical

- Cynic questions everything – if you question everything, what's left to believe? Cynics are distrustful and will challenge your belief in what you hold most.
- Cynic will say and expect nothing good- which can be contagious.
- Don't let cynics contaminate and demoralize you.

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Eight Types of Difficult People: Shy and Quiet

- Can be viewed by coworkers as loners, sneaky, snobby, antisocial. Most likely shy and quiet do not know their effect on the office atmosphere.
- Talk to the shy and quiet. Don't push but make it easy for them to respond –
- Find a common thread.

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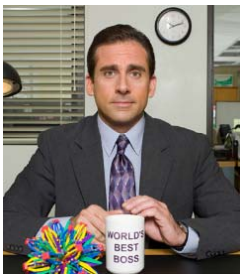
Eight Types of Difficult People:



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Eight Types of Difficult People: Narcissistic

- Gift to the world – demand our attention and distract us from our own concerns.
- Give attention for the right reasons.

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Eight Types of Difficult People:

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Eight Types of Difficult People: Extremely Competitive

- Overachieving super competitor. They can stretch themselves to the breaking point, negatively affect the stability and efficiency of others at work.
- Look for hostility factor and defuse may not be aware of competitiveness. Show you can not be intimidated. ***

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Did You Know:

- The first traffic light in America was put up in August 1914. The light was placed at the intersection of Euclid and East 105 Streets in Cleveland. The light contained just two colors, red and green.
- Today we will discuss all three colors in two metaphors.

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Stop Light of Longevity

- Green: Never See You Again
- Yellow: Short Term – Or Little Interaction
- Red: Long Term – Or A Lot of Interaction

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Stop Light of Longevity

- Green: Never See You Again
  - You can take a lot of abuse if you know that you will never have to work with that person again.
- Yellow: Short Term – Or Some Interaction
  - Look at the behavior and the relationship to decide if intervention is needed.
- Red: Long Term – Or A Lot of Interaction
  - This is where intervention is needed – when you need to try and resolve issues.

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Stop Light of Behaviors

- Green: Annoying Behaviors
- Yellow: Distracting Behaviors
- Red: Damaging Behaviors

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Stop Light of Behaviors

Green: Annoying Behaviors

- Behaviors that bother us, but have no real effect on the company as a whole – Peachy.
- Nine times out of ten – let them go. Do not decrease the goals and productivity of the office. Confrontation could do more harm than good.

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Stop Light of Behaviors

Yellow: Distracting Behaviors

- Behaviors that can harm the morale or impede productivity of the office.
- Judgment call that could be decided by the relationship or if the behavior gets worse.

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Stop Light of Behaviors

Red: Damaging Behaviors

- Behaviors that harm the office and productivity.
- Intervention is Needed!

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Intervention – How to step in – When you need to step in

- Don't allow problem to fester
- If you have an HR Department – go to them
- Be Clear – Don't make it personal
- Talk about it – and listen (Really Listen)

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Intervention – How to step in – When you need to step in

- Write it Down – with Measurable Goals
- Assign a Mentor
- Consider Additional Training
- Provide Feedback
- Be Prepared – Ask for Advice – Avoid Stress Situations

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How to Handle a Complaint (How to handle it when someone is yelling at you)

- Remain calm – Most important and hardest to accomplish
- Take notes while the person is talking
- Watch your body language
- Respond by paraphrasing person's problem.

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How to Handle a Complaint (How to handle it when someone is yelling at you)

- Ask Questions – "Am I getting this correct?" – "What can I do to help you?"
- Don't Pass the Buck!
- Say comforting phrases. "I'm sorry" OR "I am sorry that happened to you."
- CPK Story

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Avoid Issues BEFORE SHOWDOWN

- Set boundaries- Don't get pulled into the drama or negative talk
- Redirect the conversation (as tactfully as possible)
- Take the High Road. It might not be your fault but in the end it might not matter
- Ask for advice or help

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Showdown – Go in with a plan

- Do you always think of the perfect comeback in a difficult situation – a day or two after the encounter?
- Stress and emotional overload make it difficult to react ideally
- Prepare before the encounter
- Don't be afraid to bring a friend

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Why Are People Difficult

- It's Not You – It's Them – REALLY.
  - Might be having a bad day
  - Maybe last experience was very difficult
  - Something could be going on at home
  - Don't make snap judgments – CPK Story
- Defense mechanism
- Sometimes they are just being who they are – Different types of learners
- Communication is lost – ***

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Five Ways to Resolve Conflict

- Avoid it
- Accommodate it
- Compete to Win
- Compromise
- Collaborate and solve the problem together

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Avoid It? - Advantages

- Postpone a crisis or conflict that you can not deal with at that time
- Provides a "cooling-off" period
- May make sense if issue is trivial
- May make sense if no chance of "winning"

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Avoid It? – Disadvantages

- Does not resolve the issue
- Could leave anger, hurt feelings and resentment
- Looming issue could come back again.

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Accommodate It? – Advantages

- Maintain friendly relationship
- Makes sense if the issues are more important to the other party
- Acceptable if outmatched or losing
- Perception of concern or altruism
- No true loss to you

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Accommodate It? - Disadvantages

- Resentment, being used or cheated
- Sense of being owed something "giving in"
- May think you will give in on everything

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Compete to Win? - Advantages

- You might win
- Useful when quick action is vital
- Useful when unpopular action has to be taken

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Compete to Win? - Disadvantages

- Other side loses
- You might lose
- Need for revenge?

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Compromise? - Advantages

- Quick and easy solution
- Timely
- Minimum effort
- Partial satisfaction for both parties
- Useful for temporary solution

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Compromise? - Disadvantages

- Not necessarily the best or sustainable solution
- Partial satisfaction for both parties
- Could be temporary solution

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Collaborate and Solve Problem? - Advantages

- Getting the yes
- Win-win
- Considers mutual needs and interests
- Mutual cooperation
- Satisfaction for both parties
- Long lasting solution

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Collaborate and Solve Problem? - Disadvantages

- Difficult to bring about
- Time consuming
- Requires commitment
- Requires skill

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Why Bother Controlling Our Responses?

- Hurting ourselves
- It's not about you, it's about them
- Battle of the ego
- We all make mistakes
- Anger feeds anger. Negativity feeds negativity.
- Waste of energy
- Negativity spreads
- Freedom of speech

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Final Thought

- Famous study found that we form impressions of others and interpret ambiguous message in rough ratio of 7 percent from actual words, 38 percent from tone of voice, and 55 percent from nonverbal communication (body language, dress, grooming)

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