

Dealing with Difficult Behavior

Participant Packet

Solutions to Everyday Problems

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Dealing with Difficult Behavior

OVERVIEW

Difficult behavior creates frustration, reduces team morale, interferes with job performance, and generally creates havoc and resentment in interpersonal relationships. This seminar will focus on defining difficult behavior, identifying unhealthy reactions, learning how to set limits, how to respond in productive ways when confronted with bad behavior, and how to change our own behavior to maximize the possibility of achieving harmonious relationships at work and at home.

Agenda Topics:

- Welcome & CONCERN:EAP Overview
- What is Difficult Behavior?
- Ineffective Responses to Difficult Behavior
- Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior
- Specific Difficult Behavior Patterns
- Confronting Patterns Successfully
- Achieving Harmonious Relationships
- Action Plan
- Role Play
- Wrap up & Evaluation

Seminar Length: Approximately 1 hour

Difficult Behavior

- Predictably abrasive, frustrating, annoying or generally difficult to deal with
- Behavior out of proportion to situation
- Robbers of time and energy
- A pattern of avoiding responsibility for difficult interactions
- Blaming others for relationship failures
- Chronically difficult as experienced by most people
- Others feel powerless, controlled or invalidated when faced with difficult behavior

Ineffective Responses to Difficult Behavior

Evil Incarnate

- Emotional tendency to strip the ‘Source of Pain’ (SOP) of all redeeming qualities
- Create a self-fulfilling prophesy, expect the worst
- Hold a grudge, get even, escalate difficulty, become a SOP

Search for Dirt

- Build consensus against the SOP
- Set out on a campaign to defame the individual
- Ask others to affirm our outrage

Evil Motive Monster

- Ascribe motives to the individual
- May create a ‘monster from the cloth of your insecurities’
- Become convinced the individual is scheming to get you
- Adopt a victim stance in the relationship

Healthy Responses to Difficult Behavior

Adopt a Problem Solving Mentality

- Focus on finding solutions to the problem rather than seeking confirmation of how difficult this person is
- Avoid trying to change your SOP, you cannot change others, only yourself
- Avoid triangles, seek productive support
- Recognize that avoidance may signal acceptance of bad behavior

Take Responsibility

- Recognize your own personal issues may be triggered
- Take responsibility for your ineffective responses
- Change the behavior that may be contributing to the difficulties with your SOP
- Set respectful limits on inappropriate behavior
- Avoid blaming, attack/counterattack, serves to perpetuate the problem
- Create and practice a game plan for approaching your SOP
- Use good timing in your approach to your SOP

Learn Effective Communication Skills

- Body language
 - Present yourself so that others will take you seriously
 - Make eye contact if culturally appropriate
 - Stand up straight
- Speak with congruence
 - Avoid mixed/double messages. Do not smile when you are expressing anger
 - Focus on “I” statements, avoid “you” statements
 - Say what you need, want, think and feel
- Listen
 - The way you listen affects how people speak to you
 - Focus on what others are saying before you explain your position
 - People would rather be heard and understood rather than agreed with

Specific Difficult Behavior Patterns

Hostile/Angry/Inflated Types

- Aggressive
 - Attacks, tries to control, attempts to overpower, ridicules
 - Sarcastic, rude, hostile, contemptuous
 - Angry, loses temper easily
 - Complains, naysayer, always negative
- The Expert/Prima Donna/Peacock
 - Knows it all, dismisses others' contributions
 - Will not contribute to drudge work, beneath him
 - Brags, struts, think they're the greatest

Passive/Sensitive/People Pleaser Types

- Overly sensitive/passive
 - Resents constructive criticism
 - Gets defensive
 - Overly cautious, time-consuming for team
 - May hoard information
 - Procrastinates/stalls
 - Uninvolved
- People Pleaser
 - Has difficulty saying no
 - Self esteem rests on being liked
 - Makes unrealistic promises he can't deliver on
 - Too much focus on personal issues and relationships, rather than on professional obligations

Confronting Patterns Successfully

Hostile/Angry/Inflated Types

- Aggressive
 - Have self-control
 - Avoid power struggle
 - Set limits on bad behavior, know what's acceptable/not acceptable to you
 - Be assertive in body language; speech
 - Refocus on problem/solution if SOP attacks character, efforts
 - Set limits on how long you will listen to complaints
 - Validate importance of raising concerns, then refocus on finding solutions
 - Ask complainer to express objections openly, request cooperation
- Expert
 - Avoid direct challenge to other's expertise
 - Present own perspective in non-defensive, non-threatening manner
 - Make sure you are prepared, do your homework
 - Use their talents
 - Validate others' contribution, compliment publicly, correct privately
 - Rotate routine tasks

Passive/Sensitive/People Pleaser Types

- Overly Sensitive/Passive
 - Establish time line
 - Correct privately, write it down
 - Name what you see happening, ask for their perspective
 - Do not rescue staller/procrastinator from consequences
 - Invite feedback
 - Acknowledge contributions
- People Pleaser
 - Offer reality checks
 - Share your thoughts on expectations and realistic goals
 - Assure them they are valuable/important to the team
 - Use positive reinforcement and praise
 - Keep focus on performance and professional relationships rather than on personal interactions and disclosures

Achieving Harmonious Relationships

Avoid:

- Contempt
- Criticism
- Withdrawal
- Defensiveness

Replace:

- Contempt.....
 - With an environment of appreciation
 - Adopt a win-win perspective
 - Be on the look-out for things that are going well, rather than a preoccupation on finding things that are 'broken'
 - Appreciate the good efforts of everyone, yourself included
 - Recognize that people need to feel important, valuable
 - Adopt an inclusive, rather than an exclusive environment
- Criticism.....
 - With the ability to complain well
 - Describe specific troublesome behavior
 - Explain impact on you
 - Specify the requested behavior change
 - Specify consequences if behavior remains the same
 - Stay in the present, don't bring in past problems
- Withdrawal.....
 - With the ability to stay present and state what is true
 - Incorporate stress management techniques to reduce the anxiety of conflict
 - Learn conflict resolution skills
 - Practice or role play difficult interactions to avoid surprises
 - Recognize that differences do not translate into difficulties
 - Practice good boundaries with safe people to build confidence
- Defensiveness.....
 - With responsibility for your part
 - Learn the role you play in keeping the interaction negative
 - Recognize the grain of truth in someone's complaint
 - Avoid taking others' behaviors personally, no one can 'make' you feel a certain way
 - Try out new behaviors, surprise yourself and others!

Action Plan

Take a few minutes to fill out the Dealing with Difficult Behavior Action Plan

Describe how s/he acts (Hostile, Complainer, etc)	What steps/actions do you want to take?	When and how will you take action?

Getting Help

- You deserve to enjoy healthy and harmonious relationships
- You can get help and support
- Check with your Supervisor or HR
- Refer to your bibliography
- Call CONCERN

Bibliography

Bissell, Ben: Dealing With Difficult People, 1992, Shirah Publishing, Richmond, VA

Osborne, Christina: Dealing With Difficult People, 2002, DK Publishing, NY, NY

Carter, Jay: Nasty People, How to Stop Being Hurt by Them Without Becoming One of Them, 1989, McGraw-Hill, NY, NY

Pell, Arthur R: The Complete Idiot's Guide to Team Building, 1999, Alpha Books, Indianapolis, IN

Seminar Evaluation Form

CONCERN: Employee Assistance Program

Please fill out and return to presenter or HR Representative. Your feedback is very important to us. Thank you!

Seminar Title Dealing with Difficult Behavior

Date: _____

Company: _____

Presenter: _____

Regarding the Seminar	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1. How well were the seminar objectives met?					
2. Usefulness of seminar information?					
3. Length of seminar?					
4. Effectiveness of exercises?					
5. How would you rate this seminar overall?					

Regarding the Presenter	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Fair	Poor
1. Presentation skills?					
2. Ability to answer questions?					
3. Knowledge of subject?					
4. Use of time?					
5. Overall assessment of presenter?					

Additional Comments

1. What would you recommend to make this seminar more effective? _____

2. What part of the seminar did you find most helpful? _____

3. Additional comments/suggestions for speaker's improvement? _____

Thank you for your feedback.