

DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Presented by
Cigna Employee Assistance Program



SEMINAR GOALS



- Learn how to differentiate between “difficult people” and “difficult situations”
- Understand why a person might be considered difficult
- Know how to take control of the one person you *can* control—*yourself*
- Discover techniques for dealing with difficult behaviors
- Know the benefits of your Employee Assistance Program (EAP)

DIFFERENT KINDS OF DIFFICULT



What are you really dealing with?

- A difficult person?
- A difficult behavior?
- A difficult situation?

IDENTIFYING A DIFFICULT PERSON



Yes or No?

- Do they *often* make it hard to do your job?
- Are they *often* unpleasant to interact with?
- Do you *often* feel conflicted when interacting with them?
- Do you have a negative reaction to them even in the absence of a difficult situation?

WHAT MAKES A PERSON DIFFICULT?

Someone whose approach is often:

- Hostile or aggressive
- Negative or pessimistic
- Withdrawn or passive
- Unmotivated or lacking initiative
- Overly agreeable but lacks follow-through
- Arrogant or condescending



REACTIONS TO DIFFICULT PEOPLE



- Anger
- Frustration
- Helplessness
- Anxiety

In a difficult relationship, you
always have control over
one thing...
yourself.

COULD YOU CHANGE YOUR THINKING?



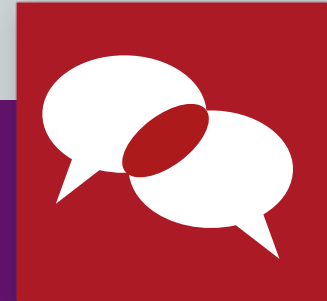
- Perception
- Expectations
- Internalizing
- Assumptions

COULD YOU CHANGE HOW YOU ACT?



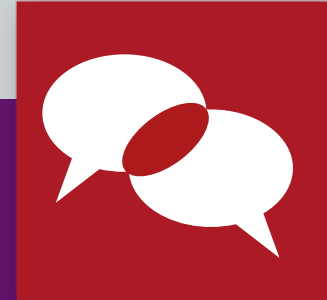
- Model the behavior you would like to see
- Be respectful and polite
- Seek to resolve conflict
- Know when to ask for help

COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES FOR DIFFICULT INTERACTIONS



- Listen first
- Ask open-ended questions
- Paraphrase their point of view and ask for clarification
- Use “I” statements

STRATEGIES FOR INTERACTING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE



- Give up the need to be right
- Look for common ground
- Find workable, realistic compromises
- Table the subject if necessary

RESPONDING TO DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS



Hostile or aggressive

- Be firm and stand-up for yourself
- Don't argue; listen for things you agree on

Withdrawn or passive

- Use open-ended questions
- Support taking lead in areas of expertise

Negative or pessimistic

- Involve them in problem solving
- Avoid defensiveness and arguing

RESPONDING TO DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS



Arrogant or condescending

- Come prepared, express your knowledge
- Acknowledge their ideas and move on

Unmotivated, won't take initiative

- Limit choices and discuss outcomes
- Recognize and applaud initiative

Overly agreeable, doesn't deliver

- Confirm understanding of expectations
- Follow-up in writing

IF THE DIFFICULT PERSON IS YOUR MANAGER



- Be professional
- Monitor what you say
- Try different tactics
- Find sources of support

DIFFICULT BEHAVIORS THAT CROSS THE LINE



- Threatening statements or demeanor
- Verbal abuse
- Inappropriate material and interaction
- Unwanted physical contact
- Preventing others from doing their job

HOW WILL YOU DEAL WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE?

Will you...

- Change your reactions to difficult people
- Respond differently in difficult situations
- Avoid getting emotionally caught up



You have the tools
to turn a difficult situation
into a workable solution.

Benefits of the EAP

- Face-to-face sessions
- Confidential
- Prepaid
- Unlimited telephonic consultation
- Available 24 hours a day, 7 days a week
- Household benefit
- Work/life support such as eldercare, childcare and pet care
- Financial services
- Legal services

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