



Dealing With Difficult Behaviors

Difficult behavior impacts workplace relationships and productivity. Many of us are more likely to put up with difficult behavior than we are to try to change it. Since this is only a temporary solution try something different. If the behavior is bothering you, then you are the person who needs to do something about it.

Examples of Difficult Behaviors

- Interrupting
- Whining
- Disengaged
- Ignoring
- Lying

Facts

- Each person is responsible for his/her behavior
- One behavior impacts another behavior (ie, what you say and do impacts how another will respond to you)
- There is nothing that will fix everything

Focus

- Identify the *behavior* that is difficult (not the person who is doing the behavior)
- There are *always* things that are in your control regarding the situation so figure out what they are and stay focused on them (instead of focusing on what you don't have control of).

Self-Reflection Exercise

- Identify a difficult behavior (not the person, the behavior!)
- What do you *think* when faced with the behavior?
- How does the behavior make you *feel*?
- How do you *respond or react* when faced with this behavior?
- How does that *impact* the interaction?
- What is the cost of responding like this? (on yourself or others)

Strategies to Try:

- Control own reactions and emotions; Stay focused on the facts rather than your feelings about the facts
- Approach the person when the behavior is not happening
- Focus on the problem the behavior causes rather than on the person
- Provide three factual examples (not impressions/attitudes) of the difficult behavior (ie, what you saw or what you heard) and the impact of the behavior
- Ask them if they are aware of the behavior (rather than assuming that they are trying to be a problem!)
- Make suggestions for how to manage similar situations in the future or ask them how they want to be informed if they do the behavior in the future