



Managing Conflict.

Difficult people do exist at work. Difficult people come in every variety and no workplace is without them. How difficult you find that person to deal with depends on your self-esteem, your self-confidence and your professional courage. Dealing with difficult people is easier when the person is just generally obnoxious or when the behaviour affects more than one person. Dealing with difficult people is much tougher when they are attacking you personally or undermining your professional contribution.

WHY DEAL WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE?

Unaddressed, your situation won't get any better and it usually gets worse. Unaddressed conflict at work simmers just below the surface, often erupts unexpectedly and affects work productivity. Initially, unprofessional behaviour will come as a shock. Once you are fully aware of what is happening, deciding to live with the situation long term is not an option.

Importantly, if you are embroiled in a constant conflict, you may not only be blamed for being "unable to handle the situation", you may be labelled as a "difficult" person, yourself.

DEFINITION OF A "DIFFICULT PERSON"

These are those people you can't stand, who don't do what you want them to do, or do what you don't want them to do.

Exercise: Difficult Personalities and Behavioural Patterns

The purpose of this exercise is to understand difficult personalities and behavioural patterns and develop effective coping strategies.

Refer to the article Dealing With Difficult and Upset People, then answer the questions below.

GET TO KNOW THE TYPES

When have you been successful in managing difficult personalities and behaviours?

What did you do that others found to be effective? What were the outcomes?

RECOGNISE THE PART YOU PLAY.

Describe one or more situations in which you were not effective in managing difficult personalities and behaviours.

What prevented me from managing difficult personalities and behaviours?

Knowing what I now know, what would I do differently in a similar situation?



FINAL IDEAS FOR DEALING WITH THE 10 MOST UNWANTED BEHAVIOURAL TYPES

Understand that everyone reacts differently to these types of behaviour: The person who is most irritating to you may be perfectly acceptable to someone else. We can all be difficult at times. The one thing that we have control over is ourselves. We can look at where we direct our energy and effort in order to exert positive energy. The stress response is a natural response to perceived threats in our environment. It is important to recognise that this response is natural, but that we have the power to choose our response and take a proactive approach to managing ourselves.

The key to changing our reactions to the behaviour of others is:

- 1. Awareness of our own behaviour
- 2. Accepting that we need to change our response

TAKING THAT ACTION. CHOOSE YOUR APPROACH.

Now that you know that you have both control and choice as to how you react, you can react in one of the following four ways. For each of these, record the advantages and disadvantages below.

1. Stay and do nothing

3. Change your attitude

2. Vote with your feet

4. Change your behaviour
