Dealing with Difficult People

Course Summary

Description

Almost every organization has people whose personality, behavior, attitude, work habits or other characteristics present an occasional or frequent challenge for those around them. Dealing effectively with difficult people is therefore an essential workplace skill.

This workshop will provide you with practical tools and skills to handle difficult people, help you to distinguish between various types of difficult behavior, and help you to choose responses that have a high probability of succeeding rather than escalating a difficult situation into unproductive conflict.

Objectives
By the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify a "difficult" person and have a strategy to try to uncover what is "behind" the difficult behavior,
- Manage personal anger and that of others using the principles of Emotional Intelligence,
- Know the difference between aggressive, assertive, and passive-aggressive behaviors,
- Deal with negative behavior,
- State the importance of communication when dealing with a difficult person
- Demonstrate active listening skills,
- Deal with conflict and negotiate win-win solutions.

Topics

- Introduction to the Course
- Identifying "Difficult People"
- Separate the Person from the Problem
- Managing Our Response to a Difficult Person
- Communication & Difficult People

- Conflict Resolution – seeking a win/win resolution
- When Nothing Else Works
- Practical Application
- Conclusion & Action Planning

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for this course.

Duration

One day

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Course Outline

I. Introduction to the Course
 A. Format: Interactive Discussion.
 B. Participants are introduced to the course, review the course outline, review the formal course objectives, and set their personal objectives for the course.

II. Identifying "Difficult People"
 A. Format: Interactive Group Discussion & Practical Application Exercises.
 B. Participants define the characteristics of a difficult person, and explore what is "behind" a difficult person's behavior. Included is a discussion about personality type and the difficult person, emotionality and the difficult person, and defining aggressive, passive aggressive and assertive behavior.

III. Separate the Person from the Problem
 A. Format: Lecture and Group Discussion.
 B. Participants explore the difference between the problem and the person, and explore strategies to depersonalize an interaction with a difficult person.

IV. Managing Our Response to a Difficult Person
 A. Format: Interactive Group Discussion & Practical Application Exercises.
 B. Participants explore how to effectively apply emotional intelligence and self-discipline to manage their personal response to a difficult person.

V. Communication & Difficult People
 A. Format: Interactive Group Discussion & Application Exercise.
 B. Participants explore different ways to communicate more effectively with a difficult person, with the focus on active listening, and keeping communication going until a resolution can be achieved.

VI. Conflict Resolution – seeking a win/win resolution
 A. Format: Application Exercise and Group Discussion
 B. Participants explore the skills essential to reframing a win/lose scenario into an interests-based (win/win) resolution by exploring how to move from a position to mutual interests.

VII. When Nothing Else Works
 A. Format: Application Exercise and Group Discussion
 B. Participants explore the limited range of options available in situations where, despite best efforts, attempts to work with a difficult individual fail.

VIII. Practical Application
 A. Format: Interactive Group Discussion, Role-Play and Case-Study.
 B. Participants explore various scenarios and identify opportunities to deal with various difficult individual scenarios.

IX. Conclusion & Action Planning
 A. Format: Group Discussion and Learning Review
 B. Participants review the topics covered in the day. Participants are also asked to state their key learnings from the course, and to reflect on and write down one new thing they intend to put into practice upon returning to their workplace. They are encouraged to share this "one thing" with an accountability partner in the class, and with their manager/supervisor.