Dealing with Difficult People and Situations

Objectives

At the completion of this module, participants will be able to:

- Identify ways to establish and to commit to individual purpose.

- Recognize problem behaviors or non-productive behaviors and actions of difficult people.

- Examine coping strategies for working with non-productive behaviors.
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Definitions

*Attitude*- the overall way you relate to the outside world or present yourself to others.

*Paradigm or mental model*- the way you think and consequently act about something.
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Personal Check-In: Reflections from the Past

- Briefly describe the situation.
- What action by another did you view as difficult or non-productive?
- What did you do?
- What could you have done which might have produced better results?
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Icebreaker: Types of Non-Productive Behaviors

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
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Your Attitude: It’s Up to You!

- Emphasize the positive.
- Look for the silver linings.
- Accept reality and move ahead!
- Seek the lesson, learning, or legacy.
- Recognize the long view.
- Focus on possibilities, not problems.
- Maintain a willingness to change.
- Remember, you always have a choice of ways to respond.
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Your Attitude: It’s Up to You!

- Offer an enthusiastic greeting.
- Be more positive with those you see every day.
- Smile when you talk on the telephone (a smile can be heard!).
- Laugh so others will laugh, too.
- Share uplifting personal stories.
- Set a positive example.
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Clarify Your Purpose and Your Goals

Take a few minutes to think about your whole life, the personal and professional life you enjoy.

1. Write down what is most important to you.

2. What do you want to be or do in your life?

3. What roles are most significant for you?

4. What is one goal you have for each role you have listed in question 3?
## Dealing with Difficult People and Situations

### Tips for Dealing with Non-Productive Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Productive Behavior</th>
<th>Manager Goal</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Arguing</td>
<td>Help to consider other ideas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Withdrawing</td>
<td>Persuade to become involved and to contribute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggression</td>
<td>Persuade to become involved and to contribute.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Complaining</td>
<td>Shift to problem solving.</td>
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Tips for Dealing with Non-Productive Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Non-Productive Behavior</th>
<th>Manager Goal</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Zapping</td>
<td>Focus on the possibilities.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Talking</td>
<td>Persuade to be quiet.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attention-Seeking</td>
<td>Shift focus to task at hand.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arrogance</td>
<td>Open mind to group task or to new information.</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
### Reality Practice: Responses to Non-Productive Behaviors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action</th>
<th>Non-Productive Behavior</th>
<th>Your Best Response</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example: Employee responds to you with anger and hostility about how you reorganized the work schedule after a new lunch period was added to the schedule.</td>
<td>Aggression and Arrogance</td>
<td>Refocus on group task and purpose. State, “Our job is to feed students. I want every student to have the opportunity to purchase a meal. The new schedule is one way we can serve all the students.”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>


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Checking Out: Analysis and Action

- Write the initials of a person whose behaviors you currently view as difficult.
- What action or behavior seems “difficult” to you?
- What attitude or action of yours is contributing negatively to the situation?
- What could you change about you?
- What strategies could you use to make the situation more agreeable to you and the other person?
- Check out your analysis with another participant. Share with the intent to identify the best options available to you.