

Dealing With Difficult Members QUICK TIPS

THE SEVEN “C’s” OF DEALING WITH DIFFICULT MEMBERS

Compliment

- Difficult members need sincere praise, too.

Concern

- Genuine caring for the welfare of another will help build a strong relationship.

Congratulations

- Helping people who see themselves as losers to feel like winners can eliminate some problems.

Compromise

- Attempting to “give” a little may soften a hard person.

Choice

- Given a choice, a person may feel important and respond in a positive way.

Challenge

- Boredom may cause people to react in difficult ways.

Confidence

- Expressing confidence in someone is often all he or she needs to have confidence.

“Difficult people” are found in every organization. It is important that the leader learn to deal effectively with these individuals and ensure that their behaviors and attitudes do not adversely affect the group’s functioning. Here are six types of difficult behaviors that can be found in many group settings and some tips on how to deal with each.

TYPE, DESCRIPTION AND TIPS

Hostile Aggressives

Try hard to bully and overwhelm by * Stand up for your self or the group if they are out of order. bombarding others with cutting remarks * Give them time to wear out. * Look directly at them and wait. * Get into the conversation. * Get their attention. * Make sure they are seated, not standing over you.
* Don’t argue or try to cut them down.

Complainers

Gripe without ceasing, but never try to do * Listen attentively to them. anything about what they complain about * Acknowledge them by paraphrasing their concerns. * Don’t agree with or apologize for their allegations. * Put them in charge of “fixing” what they think is wrong. * Ask, “How do you want this situation to be remedied?”

Silent Unresponsives

Answer with grunts or one syllable * Don’t interrupt silence; give them time to open up. responses (when they answer at all) * Ask open-ended questions. * Listen attentively if they open up, but don’t gush. * If they will not open up, end the meeting and set up another appointments.

Super Agreeables

Very personable, funny members who * Let them know you value them as people. never act the way they say they will or how * Ask them to be honest with you. you thought they would * Carefully point out inconsistencies in their behavior (without judgement). * Listen to their humor, as there may be messages hidden in their comments.

Negativists

Never expect anything to work and never * Be alert to avoid being pulled into their despair. have anything positive or nice to say about * Don’t try to argue them out of their pessimism. anything or anyone * Listen to their messages--the root of the pessimism may be hidden there. * Play “devil’s advocate” by thinking about negatives and having solutions ready.

Know-It-All

Condescending, pompous people who * Know what you are talking about when you converse with them. claim to know all about everyone and * Listen attentively, then paraphrase the main points they make. everything * Question firmly about inaccurate facts or inconsistencies, but not in a group situation.

You may not be able to successfully deal with every difficult member in your group. Use these strategies, and any others you come up with, to practice dealing with difficult people--and keep your eye on the “big picture,” reaching toward your goals!