



Managing Difficult Personalities

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Overview

- Knowing your style
- Recognising and appreciating different personality styles
- Understanding difficult behaviours
- How to deal with difficult behaviours
- Managing difficult interactions
- Strategies for resolving issues and conflict effectively



Managing Difficult Personalities



Knowing your Style

Assessing your style and **understanding** others:

- Understand our **own behaviour** and that of others
- Appreciate that while **people are different**, everyone has a value, strengths and special qualities
- Helps to **understand** how **others** perceive you
- Useful for **understanding** self, team dynamics and interpersonal relationships

Behavioural Style Grid

Less Expressive (Task Orientated)

10

9

8

7

6

5

4

3

2

1

0

ANALYSER

- indirect and detailed
- getting it right...the first time

Less direct

RELATOR

- indirect and considerate
- getting along...with everyone

•Steadier

•More detailed

DIRECTOR

- direct and to the point
- getting it done...fast

More direct

INFLUENCER

- direct and elaborate
- getting it noticed...with innovation

More Expressive (People Orientated)

PACE

•Faster

•Big picture

Behavioural Style Grid

Less Expressive (Task Orientated)

ANALYSER

- Serious
- Well-organized
- Systematic
- Logical
- Reserved
- Factual

DIRECTOR

- Decisive
- Independent
- Efficient
- Intense
- Deliberate
- Achieving

RELATOR

- Co-operative
- Friendly
- Supportive
- Patient
- Relaxed
- Helpful

INFLUENCER

- Outgoing
- Enthusiastic
- Persuasive
- Humorous
- Gregarious
- Lively

More Expressive (People Orientated)

Danger traits when overused

ANALYSER

- perfectionist - obsessive
- pessimistic - critical
- inflexible - stubborn
- tunnel-visioned
- change resistant
- ritualistic- reclusive

DIRECTOR

- aggressive - argumentative
- blunt - rude
- sarcastic - intimidating
- intolerant - judgmental
- domineering
- poor listener

RELATOR

- indecisive – self doubting
- non-assertive - withdrawn
- complainer
- hesitant
- insecure - dependent
- easily hurt
- over-zealous to please

INFLUENCER

- impulsive
- rebellious – hard to pin down
- lacks follow through
- disorganised - imprecise
- distracting - unfocused
- overly-dramatic
- not punctual

**Consider what other
factors make us
different?**



Generational Differences

Generation

“A cohort of people born within a span of time in which the trends, technologies and events have significantly shaped them”

McCrindle Research Study 2006



Generational Differences

Each generation has its own:

- Set of values
- Set of experiences and reference points
- View of authority, family, career and loyalty
- Expectations in relation to work life balance, training and development, work environment and managers

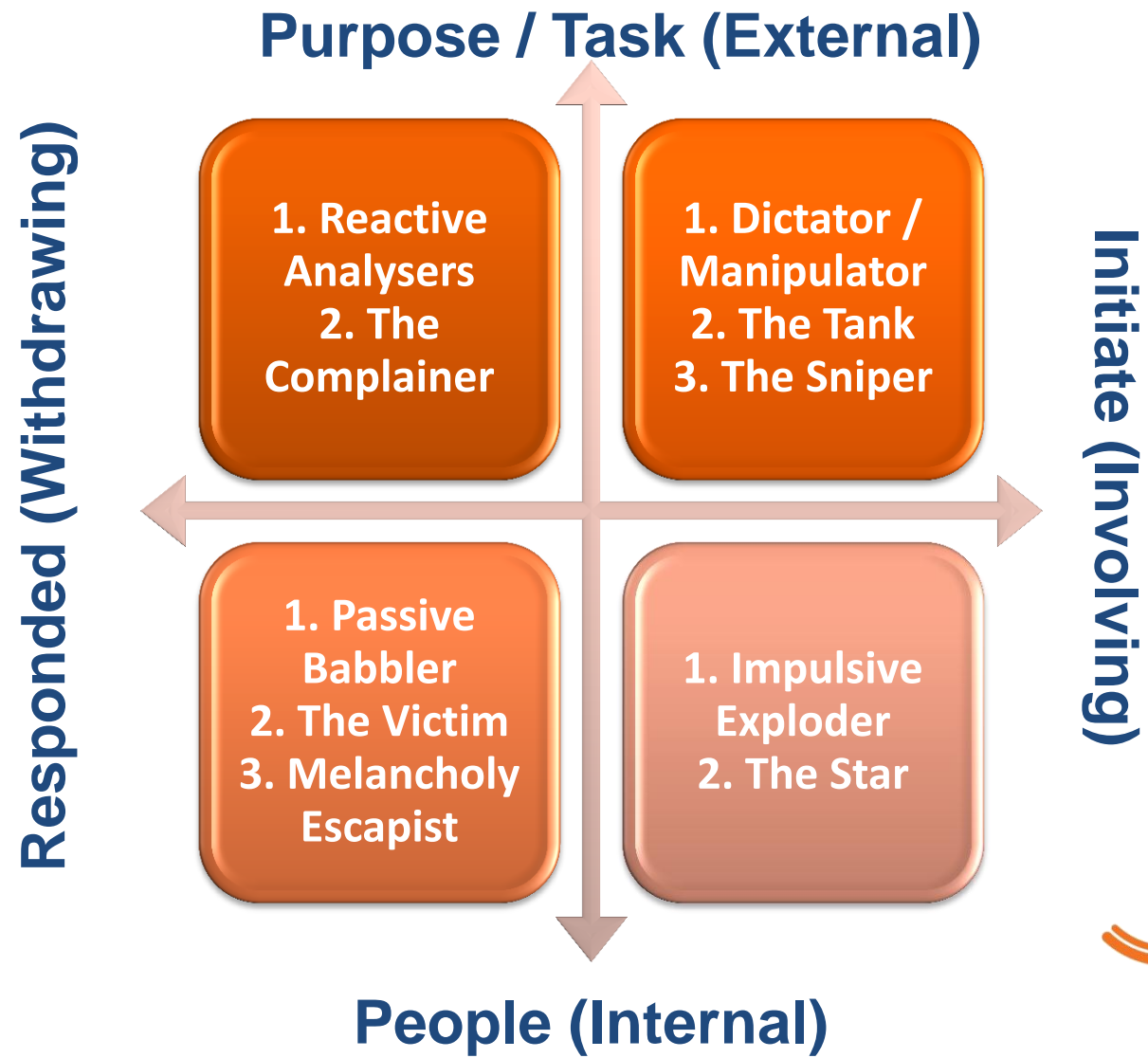
Understanding who are we dealing with?

Understand the person:

- What causes them stress
- How they operate under pressure
- Their background and needs
- Identifying changes in emotional and behavioural responses
- Key to “Win / Win” communications



Four Categories of Difficult People



Four choices when dealing with difficult behaviours



1. Say and do nothing
2. *Walk away*
3. Change your attitude about the difficult person
4. *Change your behaviour*

Confronting co-workers and others whose behaviour you cannot ignore

Describe the positive future



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graph TD; A[Describe the positive future] --> B[Describe the problem specifically]; B --> C[State why this behaviour is a problem]; C --> D[Offer a solution]; D --> E[End on a positive note];
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Describe the problem specifically

State why this behaviour is a problem

Offer a solution

End on a positive note

If the problem behaviour continues

- Repeat your request in a respectful way
- If it still continues describe the consequences
- If still no change follow through with consequences



Conflict

- Conflict is inevitable
- Conflict can be positive
- Conflict can be managed
- Conflict interactions can be improved
- Finally.....effective conflict management starts with knowing and managing yourself!



Four Basic Guiding Principles for Addressing Conflict

The four underlying values aim to honour the legitimate interests of all involved persons – these are:

- **Preserve Dignity and Respect**
- Listen with Empathy – Be Fully Present
- **Find Common Ground Without Forcing Change**
- Honour Diversity, Including Your Own Perspective





Conflict

You cannot control other people

You can only control yourself

But you can influence other people by changing your responses to them

Tips for connecting well with people

- Use their first name
- Extend common courtesies
- Comment on what you both have in common
- Ask about their work interests and passions
- Have empathy, warmth and genuineness
- Compliment them
- Use humour when appropriate
- Work with them on what they are wanting where possible

Tip: You catch more flies with honey than with vinegar



Upset and Angry People

How to make things even worse:

- Explode, accuse or criticise back
- Withdraw from them physically and emotionally
- Use disrespectful or uncaring tones/body language
- Use words like “that’s not our policy”, “yes, but...”
- Return same for same
- Stay in the firing line when your diffusing strategies are not working

Diffusing the frustration or anger of others



Acknowledge their perspective and feelings



Apologise sincerely where you can

Screamers and other demanding people



Cool down



Change method
of communication



Check what is
behind this

What are your Bad Habits

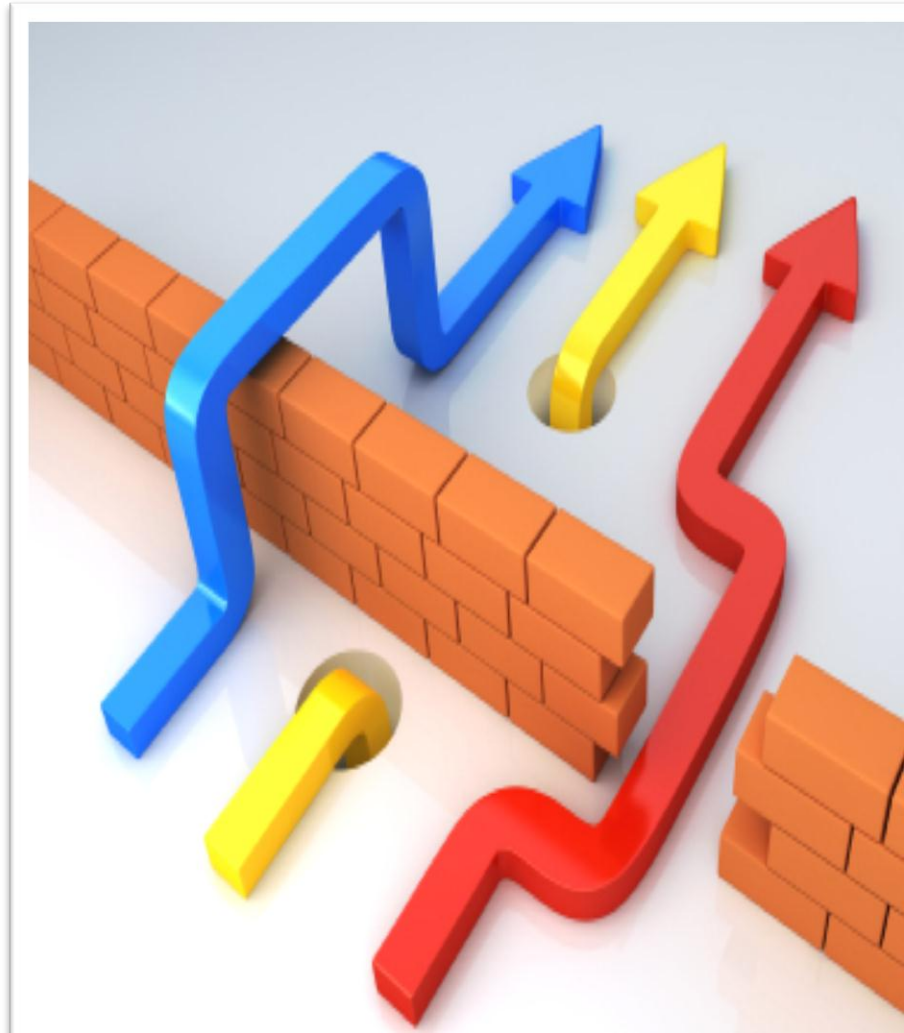
- Do I stop listening when I think I know the message the speaker is trying to convey?
- Do I find it difficult to listen to other's views if they are different to mine?
- Do I start thinking of what I am going to say while the other person is still talking?
- Do I daydream when I should be listening?
- Do I block the other person out if I don't like them?

What are your Bad Habits

- Do I sometimes respond to others in a sarcastic or overly blunt way?
- Can I receive criticism without becoming defensive?
- Do I interrupt?
- Am I aware of what body language I am demonstrating?
- Do I avoid eye contact?

Barriers to Effective Communication

- Emotions (anger and embarrassment)
- Interruptions (human and technological)
- Lack of concentration
- Cultural differences
- Failure to listen



Recovery

- Recognise that dealing with difficult people is a stressful experience and it may take a while to settle
- Let off steam to workmates, but don't 'dump' on them! Also be willing to listen to your workmates in return
- Avoid unhelpful coping mechanisms e.g. alcohol
- Distract self – admin task, filing
- Escape for a little while – go for a walk
- Relaxation
- Review / self evaluate own behaviour





Be thankful for all the difficult people in your life, and learn from them. They have shown you exactly who you do not want to be.

Key Messages

- Understand potential **triggers**
- Manage escalation **quickly**
- Look for **early warning** signs
- Appreciate and manage **individual differences**
- Don't take others reactions personally
- **Debrief** negative experiences appropriately
- **Re-interpret** stressful events





Remember

- Think **preventative** – not just **reactionary**
- You can **not always control** other peoples behaviour – but you can **control your own**

Questions

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