Difficult Colleagues: Win/Win Outcomes

EDA 201-0414
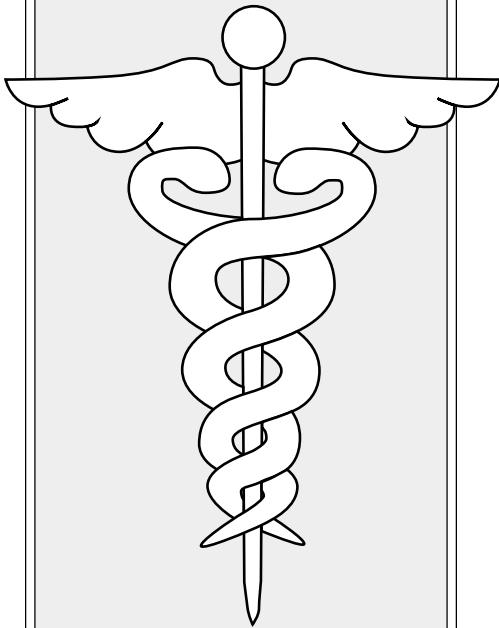
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INTRODUCTION

Few individuals come to work intending to be difficult. So where do all of these difficult people come from? This program's presenter helps you to understand some of these difficult situations and enables you to take actions to improve situations.

TARGET AUDIENCE

The target audience for this activity includes nurses, certified professionals in healthcare quality, and pharmacists.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

After completing this activity, the participant should be able to:

1. describe the seven types of employees in every organization.
2. describe strategies for interacting with the seven types of employees.
3. explain the issues that affect your ability to deal with difficult colleagues.
4. explain the methods by which an employee can influence a colleague.

CNE Credit: 1.0 Contact Hour—ANCC
CPHQ Credit: 1.0 CE Hour—HQCB
CPE Credit: 1.0 Contact Hour—ACPE

8/00, Rev. 5/02

Please be advised that PRIMEDIA Healthcare cannot award continuing education credit twice to participants who may have already completed this activity at an earlier date.

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Credit Information

This syllabus is designed to be used in conjunction with video program EDA 201-0414 by the Health & Sciences Television Network, a division of PRIMEDIA Healthcare. PRIMEDIA Healthcare is a division of PRIMEDIA Workplace Learning.

<u>Nurses</u>. This activity for 1.0 contact hour(s) is provided by PRIMEDIA Healthcare, which is accredited as a provider of continuing education in nursing by the American Nurses Credentialing Center's Commission on Accreditation.

This activity is also accredited for continuing nursing education in the following states which do not recognize ANCC credits: Alabama Board of Nursing (provider number ABNP0529), California Board of Registered Nursing (Provider approved by the California Board of Registered Nursing, Provider Number CEP10783, for 1.0 contact hours), Florida Board of Nursing (provider number FBN2552) and Kansas State Board of Nursing (provider number: LT0166-0750, independent study).

<u>**Certified Professionals in Healthcare Quality**</u>. This program has been approved for 1.0 continuing education hour(s) for CPHQ recertification by the Healthcare Quality Certification Board.

<u>Pharmacists</u>. PRIMEDIA Healthcare, a division of PRIMEDIA Workplace Learning, is approved by the American Council on Pharmaceutical Education as a provider of continuing pharmaceutical education.

CE Credit: 1.0 contact hour(s), or 0.10 CEU(s)
Universal Program Number: 775-999-00-031-H04

For questions or general information, please contact:

**Director of Education
PRIMEDIA Healthcare
4101 International Parkway
Carrollton, TX 75007
(800) 624-2272, ext. 5312**

Upon our receipt of the completed Answer Sheet/Evaluation Form, participants will receive a Statement of CE Credit within four weeks.

DIFFICULT COLLEAGUES: WIN/WIN OUTCOMES

Have you ever awakened in the morning and thought: I wonder what my co-worker Sue's mood will be today? I wonder if this is the day we'll really have it out? I wonder if the evening shift will leave me a mess in the morning? This program's presenter will help you deal with difficult situations in a way that will help you sleep at night.

PERSONALITY TYPES

Jo Ann Klein, in her article "Dealing with Difficult Co-Workers: When Personalities Conflict," discusses Robert Bramson's seven types of employee personalities that can be found in every organization. While these types are useful for thinking of the ways in which people behave, one person may have elements of several personality types; people are not always so easily and neatly categorized.

It is not necessary that you like all of your fellow employees to get along with them, but it helps to be able to understand how they think and their working style to be able to work with them. Exploring these personality types and suggestions for coping with them may help you recognize possible conflicts and enable you to identify solutions to problems.

Personality types you may be working with include the:
- ❖ Sherman tank.
- ❖ clam.
- ❖ complainer.
- ❖ wet blanket.
- ❖ know-it-all.
- ❖ super-agreeable.
- ❖ indecisive.

SHERMAN TANK
The *Sherman tank* rolls over other workers and any objections they may have. He or she needs to show that he or she is always right and must always win. This employee makes up his or her mind early, before all the evidence is in, and may have a temper tantrum, ignoring the feelings and reactions of other workers.

To cope with this employee, be firm and persistent, ignoring the temptation to lose your temper or raise your voice. Demonstrate that his or her behavior carries a cost.

THE CLAM
The *clam* is quite different from the tank. This employee is quieter and more unresponsive; he or she withdraws rather than giving feedback. It is difficult to know how this employee is processing directives.

To deal with a clam, ask open-ended questions; follow up with silence. If the person does not respond, comment that he or she is not talking. Clam behavior is typical of workers who are shy, do not understand what to do, or who disagree and get a feeling of power by watching you work to get a response.

THE COMPLAINER
The *complainer* complains about everything from working conditions to the amount of work. He or she can help by pointing out problems that could be overlooked, though this co-worker probably never suggests a solution. This person is usually quite passive.

Do not ignore the complaints; this only causes them to increase. It is common for this employee to bring in a third party; meet with all involved parties simultaneously to resolve conflicts.

THE WET BLANKET
A *wet blanket* has a pessimistic attitude about any suggestion or idea. He or she does not believe that anything ever works out. This attitude has a negative effect on coworkers' morale.

It is not effective to try to talk a wet blanket out of his or her attitude toward life. Rather, ask this employee to explore his or her worst-case scenario and respond with realism.

THE KNOW-IT-ALL

The *know-it-all* is a valuable employee since he or she has considerable knowledge, but this employee is also one of the most difficult to get along with. The know-it-all is also good at problem-solving and is usually well-organized. He or she has a tendency to override others' opinions and can have a superior attitude. The real problem with this employee occurs when he or she is wrong, which Bramson estimates is about 20% of the time. The know-it-all feels personally insulted when he or she is overruled.

To deal with this colleague, make certain you do your homework and your work correctly. If you do not, he or she will label you incompetent. Do not challenge this employee; ask for explanations, ideas, and plans.

THE SUPER-AGREEABLE

The *super-agreeable* employee is hard-working, sociable, and people-oriented. Because he or she needs to be liked, this employee is willing to do anything you ask; however, he or she gives excuses for incomplete or unfinished work.

Make it easy for this employee to disagree with you. Analyze pending projects for problems and help to arrange priorities because this employee cannot say "no."

THE INDECISIVE

The *indecisive* employee does not want to disappoint others. He or she is overly concerned with others' personal feelings, yet has very high performance standards. This type of employee would be labeled passive-aggressive.

You can best work with the indecisive employee by being honest and advising him or her that your feelings will not be hurt by knowing what the employee is really thinking.

MANAGER POLL

In *Coaching for Improved Work Performance,* Ferdinand Fournies states that 4,000 managers were asked the question, "Why don't subordinates do what they are supposed to do?" The following were the top responses.

1. They do not know what they are supposed to do.

   Solution: Offer them cross-training. Offer suggestions or feedback.

2. They do not know how to do it.

   Solution: Teach them.

3. They do not know what they should.

   Solution: Give them feedback. Get their managers involved if you need to; suggest that a recognition system be created to reward the people who are performers.

4. There are obstacles beyond their control.

   Solution: Encourage them to focus on the things they can change and not to worry about the things which they cannot.

5. They do not think it will work.

   Solution: Show them it can.

6. They think their way is better.

   Solution: Listen and understand. Their way might be better.

7. They are not motivated; they have a poor attitude.

   Solution: Treat them with respect. Make emotional "bank account deposits" and build trust.

8. They are personally incapable of doing it (personal limits).

   Solution: Train them. Make checklists or wall charts.

9. There is not enough time for them to do it.

Solution: List wasteful activities during a staff meeting and agree to stop doing them.

10. They are working on wrong priority items.

Solution: Discuss your most important priorities during a staff meeting.

11. They think they are doing it (no feedback).

Solution: Give them feedback.

12. Ther is poor management.

Solution: Catch your boss doing things approximately right. Train your boss.

13. They have personal problems.

Solution: Be empathetic and understanding.

MOST IMPORTANT ISSUES

Following are the top issues that affect your ability to deal with difficult colleagues:

❖ Style of dealing with conflict. Some people avoid conflict. When we avoid conflict, we see this big elephant in the room, but we all step around it and do not talk about it. When you avoid conflict, it tends to get worse. On the other hand, others seem to enjoy "a good fight." Both extremes of dealing with conflict are to be avoided. Conflict styles include *competing* (I win, You lose), *compromising* (we meet in the middle), *avoiding* (You win, I lose), and *collaborating* (I win, You win). When we compete and win, we naively assume that the ill feelings in the other will not come back around to affect the working relationship. When we avoid conflict and swallow the ill feelings, we fail to understand that unexpressed feelings never die, they are just hidden away to reveal themselves later in uglier ways.

❖ Amount of courage and consideration. A theory exists that we are born with one of these two characteristics, but the second must be cultivated and developed. The person who has courage without consideration may be seen as a tyrant . . . or worse. The person who has consideration without courage may be a pushover.

❖ Lack of clarity around roles and responsibilities. You would be amazed how few "difficult people" we would have if we just had clear roles and responsibilities. We would have fewer balls dropped.

❖ Lack of clear direction. This is the number one reason why teams fail. If you do not know where you are going, any road will take you there.

❖ Ability to give feedback and frequency of feedback. In general, most employees and/or colleagues need more frequent feedback, both positive and negative. But, specifically, employees need to be told at least 10 times that they are doing something right for every one "needs improvement" suggestion.

❖ Expressed and wanted control. The FIRO-B is a diagnostic self-test. One of the factors it measures is expressed and wanted control. For example, if you have a high expressed control and very low wanted control, your personality may appear rebellious when others try to impose influence. On the other hand, the high expressed control may appear invasive to others when this person tries to be the "mother hen" and protect someone who does not want or need protection.

❖ Level of trust that has been established. Trust has been called an organization's immune system. Once trust is gone, all sorts of other illnesses begin to invade the body. Trust is built through making daily "emotional bank account deposits."

❖ Amount of communication and ability to communicate. For example, when giving feedback, it is best to use "I" language rather than "You" language. Here is an illustration: If you did not understand what I am saying, you could either say, "You're not being very clear," or "I didn't understand that last point." The first statement makes the speaker feel attacked and defensive. The second statement makes the other person want to clarify.

- ❖ Expectations. Disappointment is as much about expectations as anything. Setting realistic expectations can help prevent difficult people situations.

INFLUENCING PEERS

So how can a colleague influence his or her peers? Some of these suggestions may surprise you.
- ❖ Active listening. Ironically, the ticket to influence is understanding. Our mental models of influence tell us, "You pile up your data, I'll pile up mine, and the biggest pile wins." But the irony is that he who produces the most understanding usually wins. Listening is the tool for that.
- ❖ Solve the right problem. Many times we solve the wrong problem well. For every one person hacking at the root of a problem, there exist thousands hacking at the leaves. If you do not kill the root, the problem resurfaces and is more resilient than ever.
- ❖ Allow natural consequences. Sometimes, we can allow the "difficult person" to experience the natural law consequences of his or her behavior.

QUESTIONS TO ASK

When faced with a difficult co-worker, ask the following questions:
- ❖ How have I contributed to this problem?
- ❖ What is the difficult person's perspective?
- ❖ Are there risks and, if so, what might they be?
- ❖ Has any feedback been given in the past?

If colleagues are causing problems, they deserve to be told and to be given a chance to correct things. What is the development level of the difficult person? In other words, is he or she brand new to the task? If so, he or she may need more help from you to understand the job. If he or she is fully competent and committed to the task, the person can operate more autonomously. If the person is somewhere in the middle, you can work with him or her in solving problems. What is the recommended action?

SUMMARY

You can learn to deal with difficult colleagues and with conflict in teams by analyzing your colleagues' personality types and their working styles. Learn how to manage the issues that affect your ability to deal effectively with colleagues to best solve problems.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the most difficult co-worker situations that you face? What have you done to address these situations?

2. How should you handle a co-worker who has the Sherman tank personality?

3. How could you work more effectively with the difficult colleagues that you encounter?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Fournies, F.F. (1999). *Coaching for improved work performance*. (Rev.ed.) New York: McGraw-Hill.

WEB SITE

Klein, J.A. (2000). "Dealing with Difficult Co-workers: When Personalities Conflict." [Online]. Available: www.nursingnetwork.com/diffwork.htm

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POST TEST

DIFFICULT COLLEAGUES: WIN/WIN OUTCOMES

1. A colleague who will never give you any problems is the Super-agreeable type.
   a. True
   b. False

2. Knowing which type a co-worker is can help you anticipate his or her reactions and manage problems.
   a. True
   b. False

3. To deal with the clam personality type, it is recommended that you use open-ended questions.
   a. True
   b. False

4. When you are dealing with a know-it-all, it is important that you:
   a. do your work correctly.
   b. let the employee go his or her own way.
   c. always tell him or her exactly what to do.
   d. ignore his or her suggestions.

5. _____ has been called the organization's immune system.
   a. Communication
   b. Leadership
   c. Trust
   d. Organizational structure

6. If your employees think their method of working is better than yours:
   a. prove to them yours is better.
   b. listen and consider their method.
   c. do not set a bad precedent by listening to them—you are the boss.
   d. let them do as they want.

7. A colleague always fits neatly into one of the seven personality types.
   a. True
   b. False

8. If you have low expressed control and low wanted control on the FIRO-B test, you may seem rebellious when others impose influence.
   a. True
   b. False

9. The number one reason teams fail is:
   a. conflict.
   b. lack of clear direction.
   c. too many cooks.
   d. personal problems.

10. When faced with difficult colleagues, you should ask yourself:
    a. How have I contributed to the problem?
    b. Has any feedback been given in the past?
    c. Will this person retaliate against me?
    d. a and b

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ANSWER KEY

DIFFICULT COLLEAGUES:
WIN/WIN OUTCOMES

1. b
2. a
3. a
4. a
5. c
6. b
7. b
8. b
8. b
10. d

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Instructions for CE Credit

To obtain CE credit:

1. Watch the satellite broadcast or videotape.
2. Read the accompanying syllabus.
3. Participate in answering the discussion questions.
4. Take the post test.
5. Complete the answer sheet and evaluation form.
6. Submit forms to site coordinator for processing.

Directions to Site Coordinator:

Before the activity offering date, you will receive a master syllabus containing supplemental reading materials, discussion questions, a post test, an answer sheet and evaluation form, and an answer key.

1. Photocopy the number of syllabi (excluding the answer key) that will be needed for the participants.

2. After viewing the video presentation, have the participants read the syllabus. Then lead a discussion using the discussion questions provided with the syllabus.

3. Following the discussion, have the participants record all information requested in the top part of the answer sheet and evaluation form.

4. Have the participants complete the post test and record their answers on the answer sheet and evaluation form in the spaces provided.

5. Grade the post test for a 70% pass rate.

6. Using the answer key sheet, discuss the answers with the participants.

7. Confirm the identity of the participant.

8. Validate successful completion of the activity by checking the "yes" or "no" pass indicator, and sign your name on the line provided.

9. Mail completed forms to:

   Interactive Education Services
   4101 International Parkway
   Carrollton, Texas 75007
   Fax (972) 309-4926

A CE certificate will be mailed within 4 weeks following receipt of the answer sheet and evaluation form.

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Answer Sheet and Evaluation Form

EDA 201-0414   Title: *Difficult Colleagues: Win/Win Outcomes*   Air Date(s): 8/00, 5/02

Name: (please print)_____   Date: _____

Employer: _____ Employer's Telephone: (____)_____

Employer's Address: _____

Social Security Number:*_____ Length of time to complete program: _____

Did you watch the program: ___ live or ___ on videotape; ___ alone or ___ in a group? (Check all that apply)

License Number	Discipline Code	Position Code	Participant's Signature
_____	____ ____	____ ____ ____	_____
Very important*	**See instructions on reverse.**		**To verify your attendance**

*Social Security and license numbers are for internal records and tracking purposes *only*.

Post Test Answers
Use this section to record post test answers, if a post test is provided.

1. ____	4. ____	7. ____	10. ____	13. ____	16. ____	19. ____	Pass: ___Y ___N (minimum of 70%)
2. ____	5. ____	8. ____	11. ____	14. ____	17. ____	20. ____	Validated by site
3. ____	6. ____	9. ____	12. ____	15. ____	18. ____		coordinator _____

Participant Evaluation
Please circle the response that matches your opinion about this program.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	
1. I was able to achieve each educational objective (see p. 2 of syllabus):					
Objective #1	4	3	2	1	N/A
Objective #2	4	3	2	1	N/A
Objective #3	4	3	2	1	N/A
Objective #4	4	3	2	1	N/A
Objective #5	4	3	2	1	N/A
Objective #6	4	3	2	1	N/A
2. The educational objectives were related to the overall purpose.	4	3	2	1	N/A
3. The Presenter (as sequenced in the syllabus) demonstrated expertise in the subject matter:					
Presenter # 1	4	3	2	1	N/A
Presenter # 2	4	3	2	1	N/A
Presenter # 3	4	3	2	1	N/A
Presenter # 4	4	3	2	1	N/A
Presenter # 5	4	3	2	1	N/A
4. The instructional process (teaching strategy) was of high quality.	4	3	2	1	N/A
5. The activity was fair, balanced, and free of commercial bias.	4	3	2	1	N/A
6. The physical facilities were appropriate.	4	3	2	1	N/A
7. The activity enhanced my professional effectiveness.	4	3	2	1	N/A
8. The topics were current and relevant to my practice.	4	3	2	1	N/A
9. The supplemental written materials were useful.	4	3	2	1	N/A
10. Overall, the activity was effective and met my expectations.	4	3	2	1	N/A

Comments/ Future Topics_____

_____

_____

Send completed forms to:
Interactive Education Services
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Carrollton, Texas 75007
Fax (972) 309-4926

Discipline Codes: Instructions

Some of our programs are accredited for more than one discipline. To ensure that we issue each participant a certificate by the appropriate accrediting body, we ask that you supply us with the following information:

1. The two-digit discipline code
2. Followed by the position code

Example: For a medical doctor use: __1__ __0__ __M__ __D__ ____

Discipline	Position Code	Position
10 Physician/ Doctor	DO	Doctor of Osteopathy
	FP	Family Physician
	MD	Medical Doctor
	MSP	Medical Staff Physician
	NP	Nurse Practitioner
	PS	Psychiatrist
	PST	Physician Assistant
30 Nursing	AND	Assistant Director of Nursing
	AHN	Assistant Head Nurse
	ANM	Assistant Nurse Manager
	ARN	Administrator/Registered Nurse
	CCN	Critical Care Nurse
	CM	Clinical Manager
	CN	Charge Nurse
	CNA	Certified Nurse Aide
	CS	Clinical Specialist
	DON	Director of Nursing
	EDU	Education
	EMS	Emergency Services
	HN	Head Nurse
	HSA	Health Support Aide
	IC	In-Service Coordinator
	IVN	IV Nurse
	LPN	Licensed Practical Nurse
	LVN	Licensed Vocational Nurse
	MCN	Maternal Child Nurse
	MSN	Medical Surgical Nurse
	NA	Nursing Assistant/Aide
	NMA	Nursing Management
	NT	Nurse Tech
	ORT	OR Technician
	PAR	Paramedic
	RA	Restorative Aide
	RN	Registered Nurse
	SN	Staff Nurse
	SNC	Senior Nurse Consultant
	SUP	Supervisor
	SUR	Surgical & Anesthesia Services
12 Hospital Administration	HA	Hospital Administrator
	AHA	Assistant Hospital Administrator
	AA	Administrative Assistant
13 Pharmacy	PA	Pharmacy Technician
	PH	Pharmacist
33 Psychology	PSY	Psychologist (non-MD)

Discipline	Position Code	Position
14 Dietitians/ Dietary	DA	Dietary Assistant/Aide
	DI	Dietitian
	DTS	Dietary Services
	FS	Food Service Preparer
	RD	Registered Dietitian
15 Dietary Managers	DOD	Director/Manager of Dietary
16 Counseling	MHC	Mental Health Counselor
	PSY	Psychologist (non-MD)
	SOC	Social Service
	SW	Social Worker
17 Medical Technology	EMT	Emergency Medical Technologist
	LAB	Pathology and Laboratory
	LT	Laboratory Technologist
	LTA	Laboratory Technician Assistant
18 Physical Therapy	PT	Physical Therapist
	PTA	Physical Therapy Assistant
19 Occupational Therapy	OT	Occupational Therapist
	OTA	Occupational Therapy Assistant
20 Respiratory Therapy	RT	Respiratory Therapist
21 Medical Records	ART	Accredited Records Tech.
	BIL	Billing/Finance
	MRC	Medical Records Clerk
	RRA	Registered Records Admin.
22 Radiology	RAD	Radiologist/Nuclear Med.
23 Medical Sonography	MS	Medical Sonographer
24 Athletic Training	AT	Athletic Trainer
25 Quality Assurance	QIN	Quality Assurance/ Infection Control
26 Activity Director	AAC	Assistant Activity Director
	AC	Activity Coordinator
	AD	Activity Director
35 Case Mgmt	CCM	Certified Case Manager
27 Other	OTH	_____