



STANDING IN THE GAP

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Officers



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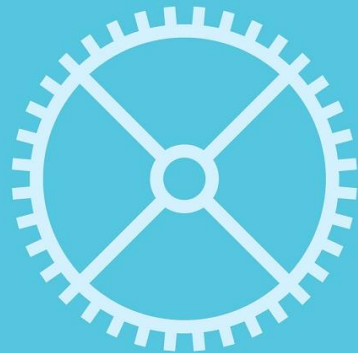
We need tools to help
us stand in the gap.



Denial



Attack



Four Kinds of Work Transactions



Managing
Self

Managing
Above

Managing
Across

Managing
Below



Difficult People

PEACEMAKING 101:
INTERPERSONAL APPROACHES
FOR ENDING DRAMA AND
CONFLICT

Goals for Today

1

What is a Difficult Person?

2

Discuss Types of Difficult People

3

Discuss Peaceful Ways of Handling Difficult People

What is a difficult person?

DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Are there difficult people?

No matter how hard we try, it seems that some people are philosophically opposed to anything having to do with us. Understandably, these are the people we usually label as “difficult.”

We would do well to remember this truism, “When others don’t like us, we think something must be wrong with them! However, when we don’t like others, we expect everyone to understand and accept our reasons.”

Before labeling someone as difficult, let’s remind ourselves that no law says that everyone must like or respect us. It’s nice if they do—but not required.

What a Difficult Person is Not

We should not say a person is difficult just because they:

1. Disagree with us about something,
2. Express an opinion that we dislike,
3. Question our ability to do something,
4. Don't enjoy working with us or would prefer to work with another,
5. Don't want to do the work we both must do,
6. Don't like your company or the group you belong



Questions our
thinking and
conclusions,

Nonverbally,
doesn't respond as
we expect,

Not affirming or
warm in their
demeanor,

Don't appreciate
the difficulty of
things we are
trying to do,

Don't trust us,

Don't believe
something we've
said, or

Don't like our style
of approaching
work, problems, or
people.

What a Difficult Person is Not

Whose Problem, theirs or ours?

As we encounter mistrust and disagreement from others, **it is tempting for us to take the things they say personally. But very often, it isn't the person or their traits that make them difficult; it's that we don't know how to manage them.**

Notice, we said, "difficult for us." Often, we have no idea how to handle situations where someone doesn't like or disagrees with us.

This can be especially hard for people-pleasers and those who want to be liked by everyone. The only way out of this situation is to focus on the problem instead of the emotions (theirs and ours).

Think about it...

When people realize their lack of skill or inability to resolve certain types of conflict, they often claim the difficulty is an irreconcilable no-win situation. The same is true for people who are difficult for us.

Whenever we decide that someone or something is unworkable, it implicitly gives us permission to stop working or trying. But imagine how different the world would be if we treated all problems in this way. We all enjoy living in a world where things that were once impossible are commonly accepted!

There Are Difficult People

A difficult person is anyone who intentionally or unintentionally works against relational approaches to problem solving and the resolution process.

- The two signatures of the relational approach are (1) cooperation rather than competition and (2) strategies that encourage the building of positive relationships. Embedded in the cooperative approach is a desire for balancing the needs of all and finding solutions perceived by all as win-win.

A Secondary Definition

One who uses dysfunctional means for escalating tensions and conflict in others.

Rather than investing the time to work cooperatively and relationally with others, a difficult person is willing to use the “difficult person” strategy as a shortcut for getting what they want.

This may include attack strategies—such as yelling or throwing a tantrum, avoidance strategies—such as refusing to deal, participate, or cooperate; or combinations of both.

It often works because when people are frightened by hostile actions, they often retreat or do their best to avoid them.

Peaceful Pause

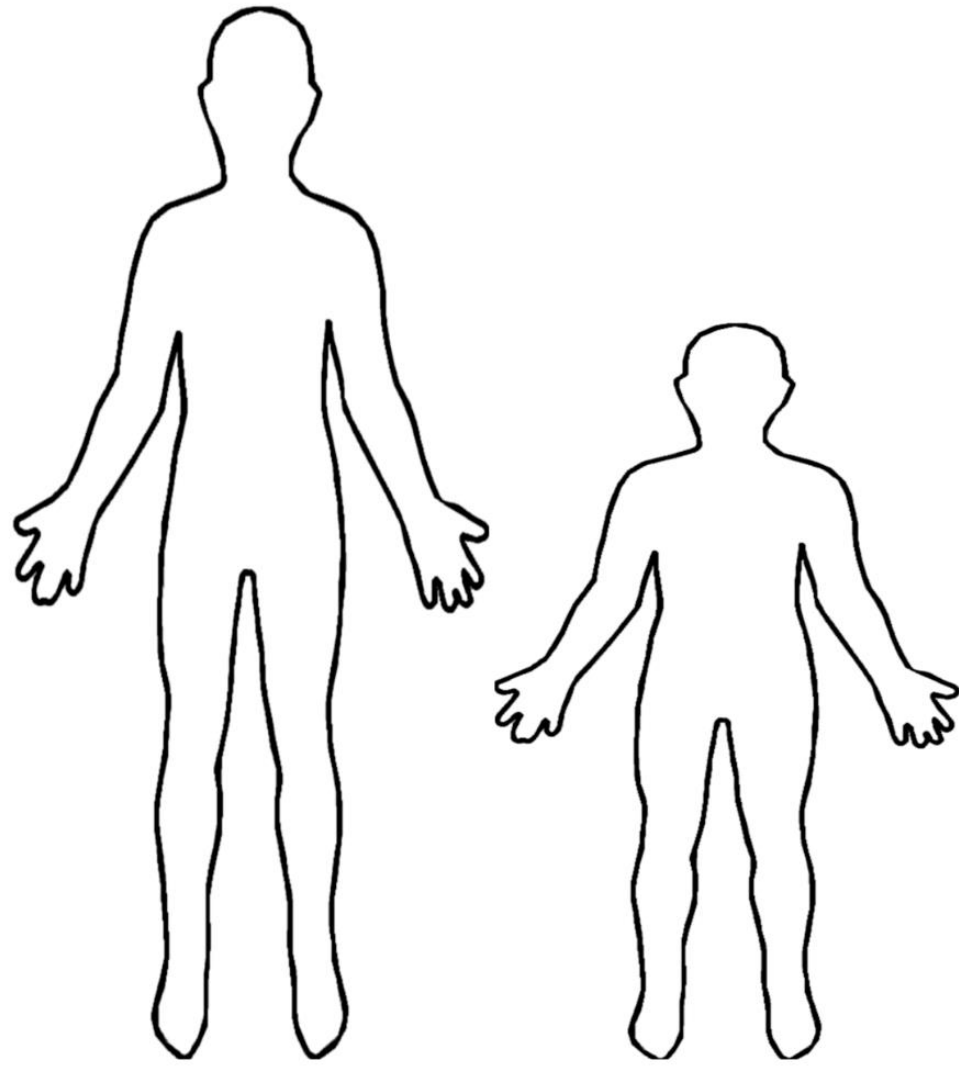
We discussed what a peaceful person is and isn't. How can understanding these differences make a difference in our relationships?

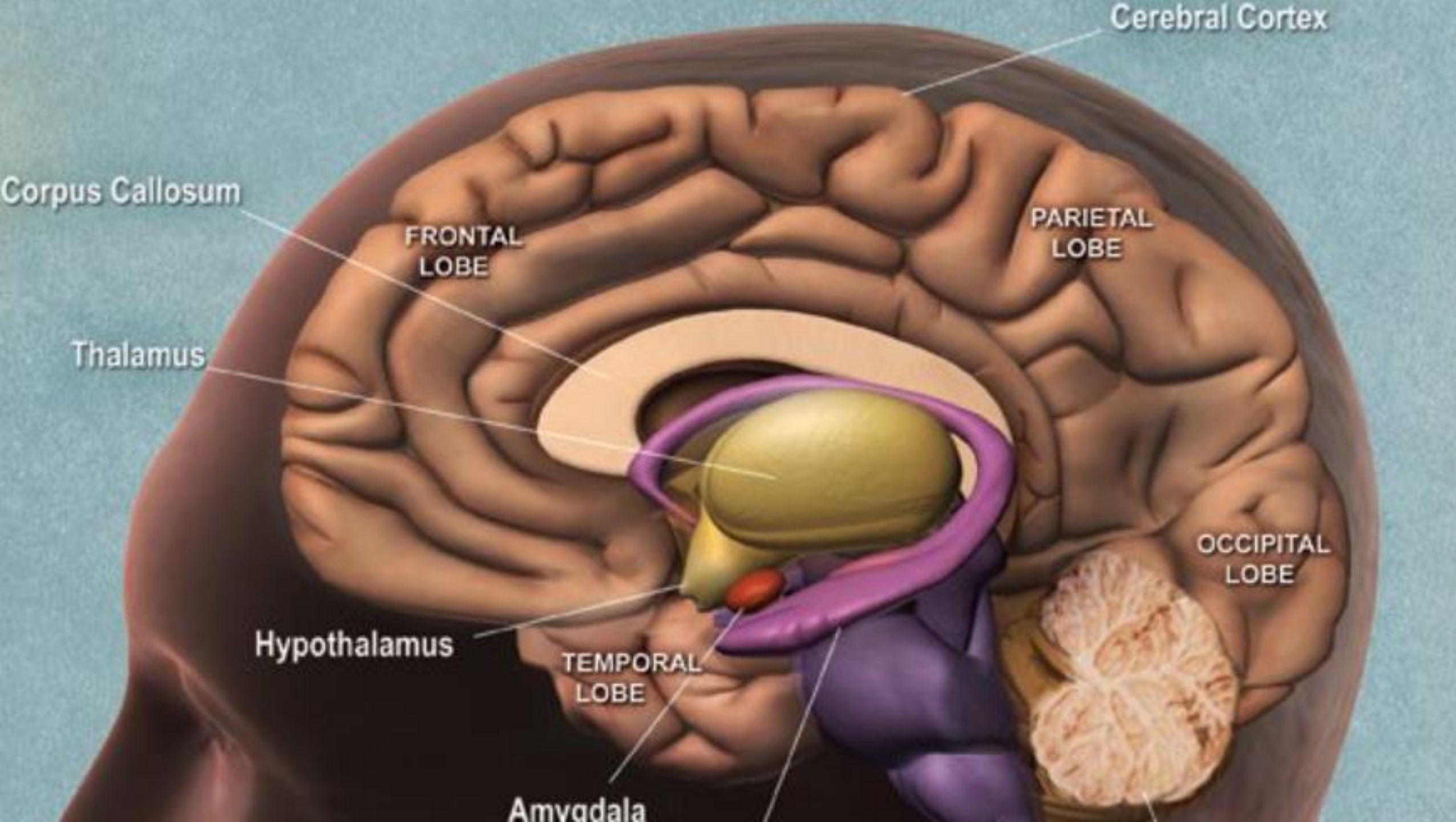
What quality or characteristic in another do you believe people find difficult to manage?

Types of Difficult People

DIFFICULT PEOPLE

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Expect Abusive Situations

All of us can be unkind and abusive—even though it may be mild abuse. It is part of the human condition. Even so, this does not mean that it is ever okay to be abusive.

Though we may be disappointed, we should not be overly surprised.

Angry people and those who feel powerless often say offensive things

Even though it may be shocking, peacemakers should not be surprised as they uncover abusive environments.

Types of Difficult People

1. Abusive People – Bullies, verbally aggressive
2. Negativistic People –AKA Passive—Aggressive People,
3. Narcissist
4. Others such as liars, perfectionists, pessimists, know-it-alls, and general attacking behaviors.



The Bully

Bullying is a form of aggressive behavior that may range from mild forms of persecution to full-on antisocial, narcissistic, and psychopathic behaviors.

While empathic people respect the individual feelings and needs of others, bullies do not. They have low abilities to empathize and are often disrespectful

Six Traits of a Bully

Hold	Hold negative views towards victims,
View	View victims as deserving of bullying,
View	View victims as attention-seekers who cause bullying,
Perceive	Perceive bullies as strong and skillful,
Respect	Respect bullies and the consequence of their actions,
Justify	Justify that bullying behavior is necessary to get things done,

Verbal Abusers

A primary form of bullying is verbal abuse—also known as verbal attacks. *We define this as any kind of verbal communication that attacks, belittles, or demeans people instead of addressing problems and fundamental issues.*

When our communication includes elements of judging, blaming, shaming, and evaluation we can fall into verbal abuse.

Evaluation Examples

1. Doug is a procrastinator. Christmas is ten days away and he hasn't gone shopping.
2. Old people are slow drivers.
3. He should have read the handbook to avoid being in this mess.
4. Lowry is a poor dancer.
5. She never gets her work done on time.
6. She is pretty.
7. He's always unavailable when there is work to be done.

Observe Without Evaluating

When we combine observation with evaluation, people are apt to hear criticism.” Marshall B. Rosenberg, Ph.D.

According to Dr. Marshall Rosenberg in *Nonviolent Communication: A Language of Life*, the first component of Nonviolent Communication requires that we learn how to observe behavior that affects our sense of well being without evaluating it at the same time.

Verbal Abuse

- **Withholding** – the failure to share meaningful thoughts and feelings.
- **Countering** – the tendency to be argumentative over most everything. No matter what is said, one offers a differing point of view.
- **Discounting** – telling a person that they are oversensitive or shouldn't feel the way that they do about something that has been said.
- **Blocking and Diverting** – controlling the conversation so that the other person does not get to say what's important to them. Telling a person that they are complaining too much.
- **Trivializing** – undermining the importance of what a person thinks, says, or does.
- **Ordering** – being demanding and telling people what to do.
- **Denial** – the tendency to rationalizing one's bad behavior when confronted by it,

Patricia Evans, *The Verbally Abusive Relationship*

Set Boundaries on Abusive Behaviors

- No yelling or abusive behavior—verbally or nonverbally,
- Show respect to everybody,
- Allowing each person to tell their side of things,
- Listen as carefully to what others are saying,
- No interrupting when others are speaking,
- Accurately rephrasing what others have said.

Peaceful Pause

If we are honest, all of us must admit that we have been verbally abusive to someone at one time or another. Now that you know what verbal abuse is, which forms are you most guilty of using?

Passive-Aggressive People



TODAY, THE TERM PROFESSIONALS MOST OFTEN USE IS NEGATIVISTIC.



PASSIVE-AGGRESSIVE BEHAVIOR IS SEEMINGLY INNOCUOUS, ACCIDENTAL, OR NEUTRAL BUT HAS AN UNCONSCIOUS AGGRESSIVE MOTIVE.



FOR EXAMPLE, A PERSON WHO CONSTANTLY KEEPS PEOPLE WAITING AND THEN ASKS, "WHAT'S YOUR PROBLEM?"

Five Elements of Passive—Aggression

Rigidity

Resentment


Resistance

Reactance


Reversed
Reinforcement

Rigidity, Resentment, and Resistance

Rigidity--inflexible, stubborn, and has a sense that “nobody tells me what to do.”



Resentment--They also resent authority structures, rules, policies, and the like. Rather than discuss regulations and policies, to see if there is any room for improvement, they become angry at the thought they are being forced to comply with something they don't like.



Resistance—They feel incapable of expressing their dissatisfaction with people, places, or things, and resort to resistance strategies. This may include resisting helpful advice, inactivity, procrastination, gossip, or other forms of noncompliance.

Reactance, Reversed Reinforcement



Reactance When noncompliance doesn't work as expected, passive-aggressive individuals display reactivity by displaying a hostile attitude or oppositional manner. They may "forget" to do something, protest, procrastinate, do part of what is expected, back out at the last minute, or do the job poorly.



Reversed Reinforcement While many people feel gratified by accomplishing something positive, the passive-aggressive feels satisfied when the things others want don't work out. They find satisfaction when things fail. They say, "I knew that was a bad idea, or I knew that there was no way that idea could work."

Give Voice to the Passive Aggressive

In our discussion of the passive-aggressive, we noted that, for whatever reason, these people often would not state their objections or concerns to others.

Alluding to Bridging the Gap we discussed earlier; denial is their preferred method of handling conflict in public while attacking others behind the scenes.

Instead of trying to work things out with others, they resort to behind-the-scenes sabotage.

Narcissists

According to the Mayo Clinic, “narcissism is a personality disorder where people have an inflated sense of their own importance, a deep need for excessive attention and admiration, troubled relationships, and a lack of empathy for others. But behind this mask of extreme confidence lies a fragile self-esteem that's vulnerable to the slightest criticism (2019)

Mayo Clinic Symptoms of Narcissism

- Exaggerated self-importance, entitlement
- Require constant admiration
- Expect recognition as superior even without achievements
- Preoccupied with fantasies of success, power, brilliance
- Believe they are superior and can only associate with equally special people
- Envious of others, believe others envy them
- Expect special favors and unquestioning compliance with their expectations
- Take advantage of others for their wants
- Don't recognize needs and feelings of others
- Arrogant, haughty, conceited, boastful
- Insist on having the best of everything
- Monopolize conversations, belittle and look down on others as inferior
- Exaggerate achievements and talents

WIDEN THE PAUSE

Avoid: Stimulus → Response

Instead: Stimulus → Thoughtful Pause → Response

- SAY, "TELL ME MORE."
- ASK, "WHY DO YOU SAY THAT?"
- ASK, "DO YOU REALLY THINK THAT IS TRUE?"
- RESPOND, "HMMM..."
- RESPOND, "RESPECTFULLY, I DON'T SEE IT THAT WAY."

Peaceful Pause

Which of the types of difficult people do you find it most difficult to be a good person. The bully, verbal abuser, passive--aggressive, or the narcissist?

Additional Approaches

DIFFICULT PEOPLE

Reminder

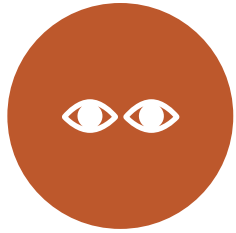
We do not support approaches that are based on attack (meeting force with force) or denial (ignoring or pretending there is no problem).

Instead, we recommend approaches that address issues and drama using cooperative means and the intention of building strong relationships.

We want to stress that in abusive situations, we are not advocating that people necessarily go back to dysfunctional relationships or hang-out with each other. Depending upon the situation, those things may never again be possible.

We do advocate that people find the best possible solution they can manage—given the problems they have experienced.

Never Escalate!



KEEP A STEADY
GAZE.



A FRIENDLY
DEMEANOR



DON'T RAISE YOUR
VOICE.



DON'T MATCH
ANGER WITH
ANGER.



DON'T CRITICIZE,
BLAME, OR SHAME.

Create Safe Environments

Make discussions and conflicts as safe an environment as possible.

Set boundaries on the use of abusive language and talk (it is not permitted). Should abusive language be used, delay the conversation to another time.

At no time are threats of physical harm or violence tolerated.

Give Voice to all sides in a conflict



Giving voice means that the peacemaker helps each person tell their story, effectively state their concerns, and uncover any hidden needs that may need addressing.



We encourage each person to tell their story and allow others the right to do the same. Though it may sound overly simple, people often need help in advocating their positions in an emotionally intelligent way.



Giving a voice does not mean that the peacemaker is taking sides. It only means that we help all people say what they believe needs to be said and encourage them to listen and understand what others are saying as well.



Mr. Microphone

Show Concern for both Abusers and Victims

We must remember that abuse takes a toll on the abuser as well as the victim.

We can let people know when we believe they vary from the norm and urge them to seek professional help if we think they need it. We can make recommendations for professionals and even offer to accompany them to their first appointments