

## **Dealing with Difficult People**

1. Do be sincere, non-threatening and empathic.
2. Do give honest, factual answers whenever necessary.
3. Do not belittle or make fun of any concerns, which the person raises.
4. Do not give the person advice as to handling his “problems,” since they may just be the tip of the iceberg of his emotional disturbance.
5. Do check out your feelings in response to the person’s statements to insure that your reply is professional, not personal.
6. Do attempt to be supportive in your comments and gestures, as the person may be feeling very alone.
7. Do not assume that difficult persons should “know better,” and are in need of a good lecturing to straighten them out.

If you can communicate the proper understanding to the individual through your listening and active communications, he/she will become less tense and more responsive to your directions and suggestions for treatment. If there is any “key” to working with difficult persons it is being able to listen to their complaints and their frequent tirades without becoming defensive and threatened. Allowing the person to get his/her message across to another person who then says, “I understand,” is the vehicle, which allows the difficult person to be helped.

# Difficult People

## You Can Deal With Them

Everyone is irritable or indecisive at times. But some people are so difficult that they make others lives and work a strain. Dealing with difficult people is easier when you learn to recognize some common personality types. Then you can develop coping skills for dealing with each without trying to change them!

## Difficult Personalities

There are seven behavior types with whom most people have difficulty.

*Bullies* are hostile and angry, throwing tantrums to get their way.

*Grippers* complain about things they don't like, but rarely try to change their situation.

*Silent types* don't say much: you can beg, yell, or talk to them, but they don't say more than "yes" or "no."

*Very nice people* seem to agree with you, but won't do what they say they will.

*Just say no* types respond to new ideas with "That won't work."

*I know better* types think they know everything. They're condescending and full of themselves.

*Stallers* put things off until someone else takes over, or until the decision is made because of the delay.

## How To Cope

These behaviors are annoying and upsetting. They keep everyone but the difficult person off balance. This can be true even though they may not be trying to control others. Coping balances the power between people. It helps everyone get things done without stalling at the roadblocks difficult people set up.

When someone practices difficult behaviors around you, try these techniques:

For *bullies*, stand up for yourself. Use phrases like "I believe" or "I feel." Don't try to fight them. Instead, make your point firmly.

Let *grippers* know you've heard their concern. Directly ask, "What is it you want?"

For *silent types*, ask questions that must be answered by more than "yes" or "no." If you get no response, let the silent type know your plans.

*Very nice people* have a strong need to be liked; show them that you do. Then dig to find out what's really happening.

Don't argue with *just say no* types. Instead, suggest what won't work before they do.

For *I know better* types, have all the facts before you meet. Raise possible problems, and be ready to follow through.

Listen to *stallers*; find out what the real reason for the delay is. Help them, and ask them for help.

## Worth The Effort

You can't always avoid difficult people. Learning to cope with them is worth the effort. You'll get more done and be less frustrated if you do.

Reference: [www.batna.com](http://www.batna.com)