

Remember,
Aspirus Employee
Assistance Services
is confidential.



3000 Westhill Drive ~ Suite 305
Wausau, WI 54401

715.847.2772

aspirus.org/clinics/wwih/eap_overview.php

Dealing with Difficult People

Everyone is irritable or indecisive at times, but some people are so difficult they make other people's lives and work a strain. Dealing with difficult people is easier when you learn to recognize some common personality types. You can then develop coping skills for dealing with each type 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.
- Gripers 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 off things until someone else takes over, or until the decision is made because of delay.

how to cope

These behaviors are upsetting and annoying. They keep everyone but the difficult person off balance. This can be true even though they may not be trying to control others. Developing strategies to deal with difficult behaviors helps everyone get things done despite 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 gripers 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; be friendly. 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 the 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 is for the delay. 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.

help is available

Aspirus Employee Assistance Services has counselors available to help you and your family. You can call the confidential helpline 24 hours a day at:

**715.848.4357 ~ 800.236.4457
TDD# 715.845.4928**

aspirus.org/clinics/wwih/eap_overview.php