



Tips for Working with Difficult People

Most workplaces have at least one or more difficult people. It helps to know about difficult types and how to best work with them.

Aggressives are determined to have their way. They may attack verbally.

- Don't attack back.
- Listen without returning anger. Ask them to explain in a calm manner.

Experts are people who feel they know it all and don't want to hear other people's thoughts.

- Don't be intimidated or let them take over a meeting.
- Begin by listening to them, acknowledge what they've said and then offer your thoughts.

Victims complain frequently and feel that they are being treated unfairly.

- Don't try to protect them or offer sympathy too readily.
- Ask them for their ideas for improving the situation, focusing on their past successes and positive ideas for resolution.

Sarcastics often try to pass off negative personal or general comments as a joke, even though they often mean what they've said. They can be poor team players.

- Don't let them get away with this behavior. Let them know that sarcasm is unacceptable.
- Compliment them when they say something positive or contribute in a positive way.

Negatives have nothing good to say about the ideas of others.

- Invite them to offer alternatives and resolutions.
- Avoid joining their negative talk.

Agreeables will go along with anything to gain approval and acceptance.

- Make sure they follow through on what they agree to do.
- Support any of their efforts to legitimately disagree or offer a contrary opinion.

Passives are reluctant to offer their ideas and are difficult to engage.

- Ask open-ended questions that require them to participate.
- Be patient when waiting for an answer, acknowledge participation.