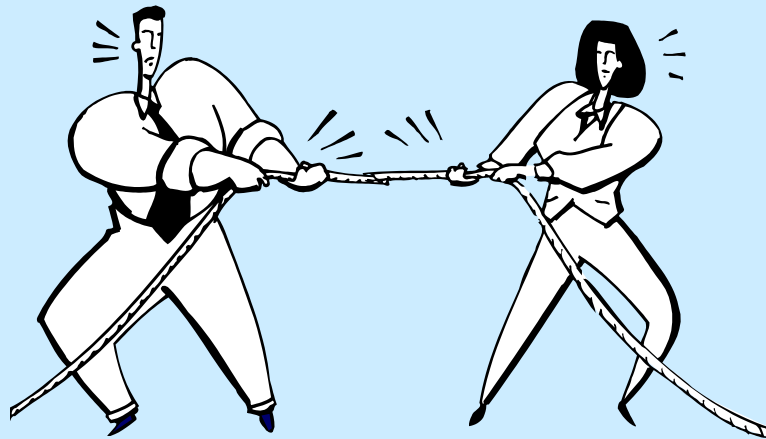


# Dealing with Challenging People

Co-workers, Supervisors, and Patients

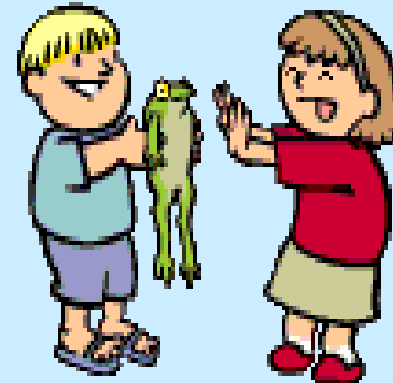


# Objectives

- To identify the characteristics of challenging people.
- To recognize what makes you challenging at times.
- To understand your response to challenging people.
- To learn tools for dealing with those challenging people more effectively.

What are the characteristics that  
make someone challenging for  
you?

What makes you  
challenging at times?



# Who's the challenging person now?



- Name a challenging person.
- Be specific about what makes that person challenging.
- Identify how you usually respond to that person.
- Consider why they might be behaving that way
- Determine what you would like to happen differently from them and from you.

# Goals of Dealing with Challenging People

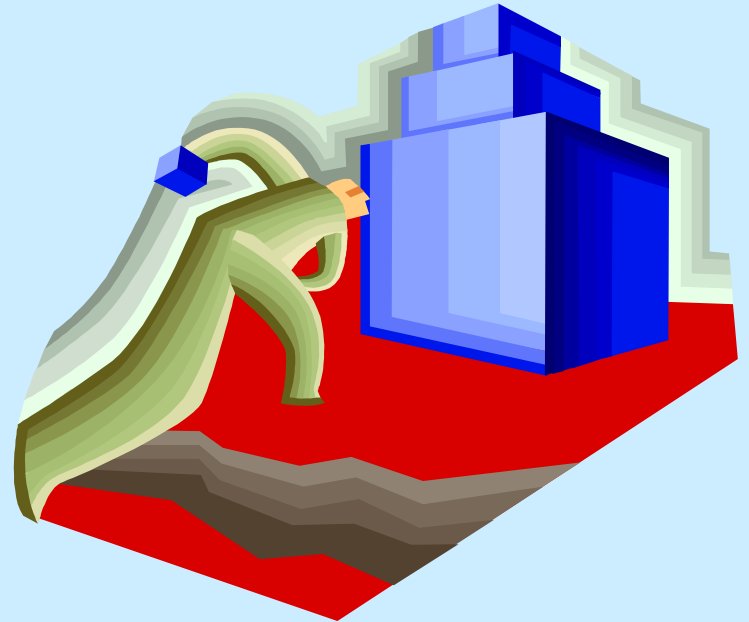
- To hear and be heard!
- Get the job done!
- Neutralize the situation, don't escalate it.
- Don't take it personally!



What gets in our way of  
communicating effectively?

# Barriers to Communication

- Attitude/Emotions
- Language
- Prejudice/Bias
- Position/Role
- Time
- Environment





# Behavioral Barriers

- Ordering
- Ignoring
- Sarcasm
- Moralizing/judging
- Name calling
- False reassurance



# Communication Styles

Passive

Aggressive

Assertive

# Passive



**Goal:** To please, to be liked, to avoid conflict.

**Resulting Feelings:** Anxious, ignored, hurt, manipulated, disappointed in themselves, angry and resentful.

**Benefits:** To avoid unpleasant situations, short-term tensions and confrontations.

**Costs:** Get taken advantage of and don't get their needs met.

# Aggressive



**Goal:** To win, dominate, assert power, to control and sometimes to humiliate.

**Resulting Feelings:** Self-righteous, controlling, superior and sometimes embarrassed later.

**Benefits:** Release anger, have control and get their way.

**Costs:** Alienate others.

# Assertive



**Goal:** To give and receive respect while making known opinions, wants or feelings.

**Resulting Feelings:** Confidence and success. Feel good about themselves and are in control.

**Benefits:** Get needs met while maintaining positive relationships.

**Costs:** Sometimes, time.

# Active Listening

- **Body language** – eye contact, posture, head nod
- **Reflection** – “So what I heard you say was...”
- **Empathy** – “I can tell you are feeling...”
- **Clarification** – “Did you mean...when you said...” or “Help me understand better”

# Assertive Communication Skills

- **“I” statement:** “I think/feel/believe...”
- **Two-part message:** “I think/feel/believe when you...”
- **Empathic message:** “I understand you are feeling...and...”
- **Request statement:** “...and what I need from you is...”

# The Power of “AND”

“BUT” must go -- Kick it right out of your vocabulary.



“But” makes the statement:

Judgmental

Lip service for the first part of statement

Insincere

Patronizing



# All Together Now, 1...2...3...

1) I am sorry this is so upsetting to you

2) AND

3) Let's find a way to make it better.

1) I hear you both feel you were treated unfairly

2) AND

3) Let's agree that both of you stop arguing.

# And more about “AND”

1. String together as many “AND’s” as you need
2. *Pause* between “AND’s” so the person absorbs your empathy and connection
3. Empathy and understanding is sometimes all a person wants and all we have to give.
4. It’s stating I can understand this for YOU.

“I know this is difficult and you doubt it will get better and we just need to do one more test and we will be as gentle as possible.”

# And 1, 2, 3...

- 1) I know you expected the report on time
- 2) AND
- 3) We had an emergency.

- 1) I can see you are worried about your family
- 2) AND
- 3) We will have that information shortly

# Phrases to Avoid

- ✓ **Threatening:** “If” followed by “You”
- ✓ **Blaming/Shaming:** “Why” followed by “Can’t,” “Won’t” or “Don’t”
- ✓ **Labeling:** “Never,” “Ever,” and “Always”
- ✓ **Generalizing:** “You” followed by a negative noun, adjective, or phrase
- ✓ **Discounting:** Using the word “but”

# 3 Quick & Easy Rules

1. You can't apply the *Golden Rule* because challenging people won't necessarily treat you the way you would treat them.
2. Stop using the *Old American* method. Speaking louder will not get them to understand better.
3. Try something. *Anything*, noticeably different.

# Do's and Don'ts for Dealing with the Different Types of Challenging People

# Hostile Aggressive

- Bully and bombard to get their way
- Raised voice
- Intimidating body language
- Profanity



# Hostile Aggressive

## Do's

- Stay calm/take deep breaths
- Stop the interaction temporarily
- Communicate that you would like to hear what they have to say, but not like this
- Stand your ground

## Don'ts

- Counter attack
- Get defensive
- Shut down or withdraw
- Take it personally



# Indirect Hostile Aggressive

- Use sarcasm
- Put opponents down
- Back-stab



# Indirect Hostile Aggressive

## Do's

- Ask for clarification
  - Intent – “When you say that, what are you really trying to say?”
  - Relevancy – “What does that have to do with this?”
- Suggest that, in the future, if there is a problem, come talk one-on-one.

## Don'ts

- React
- Take it personally
- Lash out



# Expert/Know-It-All

- Their way is the only way
- Arrogant
- Inflexible



# Know-It-All

## Do's

- Be prepared
- Present new information with facts
- Use pronouns like “we” and “us”
- Be flexible
- Turn them into a mentor

## Don'ts

- Become a know-it-all yourself
- Get defensive



# Think They Know-It-All

- Insecure
- Stubborn
- Over-explain
- Defensive



# Think They Know-It-All

## Do's

- Recognize their insecurity
- Have compassion
- Give them a little attention
- Ask them to help you understand their position

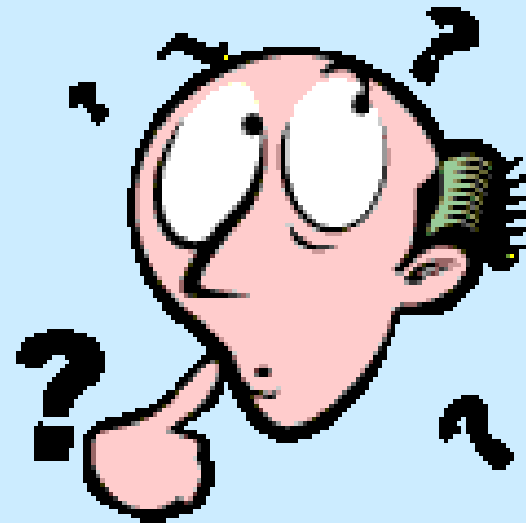
## Don'ts

- Be judgmental
- Be too blunt



# Indecisive

- Listen well
- Can't make decisions
- Don't complete tasks



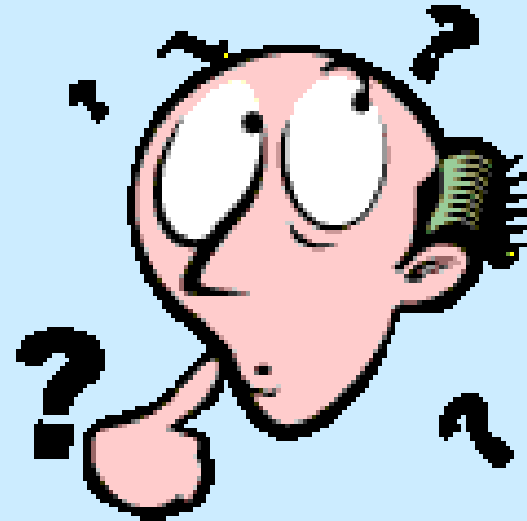
# Indecisive

## Do's

- Be specific and concrete about what you want
- Limit choices
- Be patient

## Don'ts

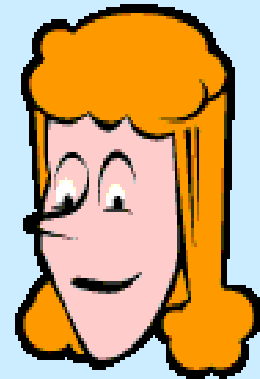
- Get angry
- Make the decision for them





# Super-Agreeable

- Want to be liked
- Agree regardless of their opinion
- Often don't complete tasks



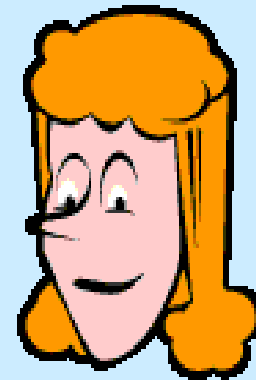
# Super-Agreeable

## Do's

- Let them know that disagreeing is okay
- Be specific about what you want from them
- Ask for negatives

## Don'ts

- Make them feel shame
- Avoid conflict because they are too nice



# Complainer/Negativist

- Whine
- Oppositional
- Resistant to change
- Feel powerless



# Complainer/Negativist

## Do's

- Listen and acknowledge what they say
- Consider their perspective
- Focus on problem-solving
- Separate from the negativity

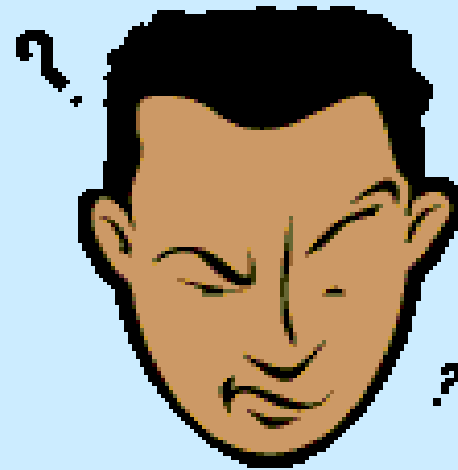
## Don'ts

- Argue
- Expect them to change
- Agree



# Silent/Unresponsive

- Say nothing
- Avoid conflict



# Silent/Unresponsive

## Do's

- Start the conversation
- Ask open-ended questions
- Slow down
- If no response, state your plan

## Don'ts

- Show frustration
- Lose your temper





**Now that you know what types  
of people push your buttons...**



**Let's try out your new skills...**



Remember, you can not control other people's behavior, you can only control how you choose to respond!



And maybe you can influence  
how they behave with you!