Stress Management: Dealing with Difficult People

Dealing with difficult people" is one of the most queried topics in workplace wellness. There are 92 titles on Amazon.com that contain this phrase. Virtually all guidance focuses on changing yourself, not on changing others. Coping falls into three broad personal intervention categories: actions to take, attitude adjustments to make, and interactions that you can make with those who rub you the wrong way. These three prongs of coping include options ranging from accepting the quirkiness of a certain personality style to seeking psychotherapy to better understand your reaction to the behavior of another—behavior that to trusted peers may seem perfectly benign. To find the best intervention for any difficult behavior, first isolate the specific thing that prompts your unpleasant response—isoilate the annoyance. Make this, not the personality, the target of coping. You will get a more efficient result that is faster, permanent, and less emotionally stressful.

Personalized Medical Guidance® (PMG) Corner

Are you living with chronic back pain? You’re not alone. More than 85 percent of Americans will suffer from back or neck pain at some point in their lives and more than 26 million adults under the age of 65 live with frequent back pain. Many of those people are prescribed pain medication or undergo surgery in an effort to relieve their often-debilitating pain. But there are other options for you.

Want to know more? Check out the Doctor’s Tips Article “Conquering back pain without surgery or medication” or click this link for the full online blog: Conquering Back Pain

Unlimited access to your own Health Advisor for education and guidance regarding your health care issues.

To access PMG services, call 1-800-227-6007 or register online at the PMG center
Real Power in a Smile

If you are on the front line of customer service, you've heard it a thousand times—“Smile!” What you may not know is the effect of smiling. Smiling is not just about looking inviting to customers. It is also a tool to help influence their attitude to produce a state of agreeability. Customer service is about pleasing the customers, of course, but engaging them in an atmosphere of positivity reduces your stress, minimizes risk of conflict, improves the bottom line, transforms your attitude, and allows you to go home at the end of the day more satisfied with your job. That's a lot of power from a smile.

Tips for Better Performance Reviews

Your performance review is your time to shine. To increase the odds of a positive review with fewer unpleasant surprises, meet with your supervisor to discuss specific goals you would like to accomplish over the next year. Write them down. Find time every three months to meet with your boss for 15 minutes to discuss performance, the goals you’re working toward, and three key performance measures—quality of work, quantity of work, and initiative. Ask for feedback, and note concerns. At each meeting, discuss progress, especially any concerns discussed at the last meeting.

Valentine’s Day Tip: Improving Couple Communication

Complaints about a partner being “too controlling” are common in couples counseling. Whether you are too controlling or too passive, each of these behaviors is usually learned in our family of origin. Try this exercise for improving communication to see whether it does inspire better communication, improved assertiveness, less passivity, and more excitement in your relationship.

1. Observe your communication for a week, and notice when you are passive and nonassertive or overly controlling and uncompromising.
2. Challenge yourself to step back when you feel a need to control, or if you notice your reluctance to be assertive or remain passive, act to communicate your needs earlier. Keep a personal diary of observations and insights.
3. Stop blaming. When you blame, you become the victim. If you are the victim, then your partner must do all the changing. This is a recipe for no change at all.
4. Identify “triggers.” These are things partners do that trigger an unpleasant emotional response. If you do any, try eliminating them.
5. At the end of the week, share your notes and triggers, and discuss observations and your reactions to controlling or passive behavior over the past week.
6. Be sure to discuss insights and new awareness, what’s working better, changes each of you would like from the other, and how to keep progress moving in the right direction.
7. Decide upon a special reward for participating in this communication challenge.

Information in IMPACT on Wellness is for general information purposes only and is not intended to replace the counsel or advice of a qualified health professional.

You can contact IMPACT Solutions for professional counseling and guidance 24 hours a day at 1-800-227-6007.

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Did you know...that Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) affects half a million people every winter? (Mental Health America)

The “winter-time blues,” or Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) is a real issue. Symptoms of depression, loss of motivation, and fatigue have, in many instances, been attributed to prolonged exposure to cold weather and low sunlight.

Let IMPACT shed some light on this topic. To help you manage the symptoms of Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) consider the following suggestions:

• Remaining active and focused
• Maintain social connections
• Plan a getaway to a sunny location
• Identifying potential treatments, including light therapy, physical therapy, and cognitive behavioral counseling
Creativity is not just for the artist. Using the left side of your brain can actually make you happier, less anxious, and more resilient. Working your brain in different ways can disrupt thought patterns and help it to grow and develop new paths to stress relief. Your Employee Support Program can help you find outlets for your creative streak. That stroke of paint may help you spark your creative side and put your mind in a different frame.

ONLINE SEMINAR

Creativity 101
“Creativity is putting your imagination to work, and it’s produced the most extraordinary results in human culture”—Ken Robinson. Learn how to tap into your creativity and ways to apply it in both your personal life and your work environment.

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Available anytime, any day, your Employee Support Program is a free, confidential program to help you balance your work, family, and personal life.
Conquering back pain without surgery or medication

Are you living with chronic back pain? You’re not alone. More than 85 percent of Americans will suffer from back or neck pain at some point in their lives and more than 26 million adults under the age of 65 live with frequent back pain. Many of those people are prescribed pain medication or undergo surgery in an effort to relieve their often-debilitating pain.

But Mark D. Brown, MD, PhD, University of Miami Leonard M. Miller School of Medicine Professor and Chairman Emeritus, Department of Orthopedics, Director of the Center for Orthopedic Research and Education, advocates a non-surgical, non-pharmacological approach to back pain treatment.

PC: Could you describe your approach to chronic back pain?

MB: First, I diagnose the underlying cause of the pain—degenerated or herniated disc, spinal stenosis, spondylolisthesis, or another condition. The majority of people with chronic back pain conditions, however, also have lifestyle issues that are affecting their health and contributing to their pain, including obesity, smoking, and lack of exercise. Some of them are also suffering from depression, which compounds their painful condition. If a patient is depressed, in addition to treating their back pain, I also encourage them to get treatment for their depression....

PC: What do you do for patients who are not in the highest fitness category?

MB: The majority of people with back pain fall into the not-so-fit category. Many have been over treated with too many adjustments, too much medication, too much physical therapy, or even worse, one or more surgeries. For these people, though the mechanical cause of their pain can be fixed with surgery, surgery alone is not the best approach. They need what I call “prehabilitation”. I put them on a diet plan to lose weight, recommend a smoking cessation program, help them wean off any pain medications they are using, and put them on a controlled exercise program. I’ve had many patients who come in with spinal stenosis so severe they can hardly walk. I tell them that their problem can be fixed with surgery, but they are not in good enough shape to undergo surgery safely. I start them on a prehabilitation program, and after losing weight, getting active, quitting smoking, and getting any other chronic health conditions under control, 50 percent of them feel better and feel they do not need surgery because their pain has diminished or disappeared.

Want to read the rest of the interview? Check it out at MyImpactSolution.com, user name OhioUniversity. Log onto the PMG Center to reach the blog site at PinnacleCare.com