

7

STYLES



How to deal with difficult people An exercise in handling difficult people styles.

We all face situations where we have to deal with people that are simply er... difficult! Here we stop beating around the bush, and help you to tackle the problem head on. We've characterised seven styles of difficult people for you to consider.

Rather like Snow White's seven dwarfs, our seven styles of difficult people may be small, but they can cause a lot of trouble. You can probably guess something of their character from their names. They are:

Slumper, Dumper, Grumper, Thumper, Trumper, Jumper & Bumper.

Here's what you can do...

Take each of the character types in turn and discuss how you best deal with that behaviour.

Give some thought to what underlying negative qualities may exist within the individual behaving in that way.

Capture your ideas for dealing with each type in the boxes provided, before comparing them with the (upside down) ideas on the last page.



	Type	Signs	How to Manage?
1	Slumper	Lacks enthusiasm, lazy, likes to just 'tick-over'	
2	Dumper	Offloads difficult tasks, focuses on what they enjoy, dumps on people	
3	Grumper	Moans a lot, negative thinker, impossible to please	
4	Thumper	Gets own way through aggression, bullies and intimidates, too authoritarian	

5

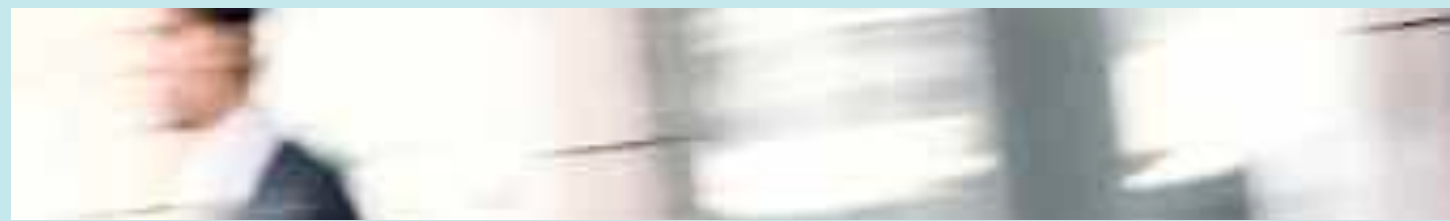
Type	Signs	How to Manage?
Trumper	Competitive, points scoring, always has the final say	

6

Jumper	Takes the limelight, social and career climber, self centred	
--------	--	--

7

Bumper	Likes to blame, finds fault in others, defends own position	
--------	---	--



Difficult people do exist at work. Difficult people come in every variety and no workplace is without them. How difficult a person is for you to deal with depends on your self-esteem, your self-confidence and your professional courage. Dealing with difficult people is easier when the person is just generally obnoxious or when the behavior affects more than one person. Dealing with difficult people is much tougher when they are attacking you or undermining your professional contribution.

You really are best to address it:

Trust us. Your situation won't get better; left unaddressed, it usually gets worse. Unaddressed, necessary conflict simmers just below – and often erupts counterproductively above – the surface at work.

Initially, people go into shock when they are treated unprofessionally, so if you take some time to understand exactly what is happening to you, you are not alone. Once you are fully aware of what is happening, deciding to live with the situation long term is not an option. You become so angry and feel so much pain that your efforts to address the situation become irrational. It's far better to address the difficult person while you can maintain some objectivity and emotional control.

All sorts of dysfunctional approaches to dealing with a difficult coworker have been tried. Putting an anonymous note in the person's mailbox is not an option. Placing a can of deodorant on a hygiene-challenged coworker's desk is not a productive option either. Confronting the bully publicly can often lead to disaster. Putting dead bugs in his desk drawer can leave your boss no option other than to fire you. So, look at more productive ways to address your difficult coworker.

- Explore what you are experiencing with a trusted friend or colleague.
- Approach the person with whom you are having the problem for a private discussion.
- Follow up after the initial discussion.
- Consider confronting your difficult coworker's behavior publicly.
- Involve others.
- Have a look at our 'I need to know how to handle grievances and gripes' pdf
- Have a look at our 'I need to know how to give feedback' pdf



DO NOT LOOK AT THIS IDEAS UNTIL YOU'VE COMPLETED THE PREVIOUS TWO SHEETS

How to Manage	Possible underlying negative qualities	Type	
Give feedback Find their motivation Set stimulating goals	Boredom Lazy	Slumper	1
Give feedback Make their responsibilities and boundaries clear Teach how to delegate	Doubt Selfish	Dumper	2
Give feedback Encourage and expect a balanced viewpoint Empathise...then move them on	Depression Doubt	Grumper	3
Give feedback Stand your ground assertively Don't argue back, ask questions	Angry Over control	Thumper	4
Give feedback Put important things in writing Anticipate objections and don't play their game	Inferiority Jealousy	Trumper	5
Give feedback Don't elevate them above the team Encourage teamwork	Selfish Pride	Jumper	6
Give feedback Build confidence Encourage constructive and objective analysis/review	Fear Anxious	Bumper	7