COURSE SYLLABUS

Positive Approaches to Difficult People Course (Self-Paced)

Do not let "difficult" people ruin another day! Learn approaches for maintaining your composure and clarifying underlying issues, as well as strategic questioning and listening techniques to discover what is behind someone with a difficult personality. Leave the course refreshed and prepared to minimize the negative impact of difficult people in your work environment.

> Group classes (Live Online) and onsite training are available for this course. For more information, email onsite@graduateschool.edu or visit: https://sdfm.graduateschool.edu/courses/positive-approaches-to-difficult-people-online



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Course Outline

Module 1: Difficult People

- Define what makes someone “difficult” in the workplace
- Identify personal behavior, communication, and listening styles
- Understand the CARE Profile and your assertiveness/focus quadrant
- Recognize patterns of difficult behavior and self-awareness

Module 2: Communication Barriers

- Explore 12 common communication barriers across three categories
- Learn how poor listening and ineffective communication trigger conflict
- Complete a Listening Inventory to assess personal listening habits
- Understand filters and biases that influence perception

Module 3: The Art of Criticism

- Redefine criticism as a tool for growth and development (TASK model)
- Practice the EPM (Empathize, Pinpoint, Move Forward) approach
- Apply the Four-A Formula for receiving criticism effectively

Module 4: Overcoming Conflict

- Evaluate common conflict behaviors through a self-assessment
- Address six key communication challenges that escalate conflict
- Practice non-threatening “I” statements to de-escalate tension

Module 5: Styles of Communicating

- Compare aggressive, passive, passive-aggressive, and assertive styles
- Apply the Six-Step Assertive Response model to real situations
- Use the “Questions Approach” to understand and clarify interpersonal needs

Module 6: Behavior Styles of Difficult People

- Learn the eight types of difficult people (e.g., Tank, Sniper, Complainer)
- Map these types onto four CARE quadrants (Commander, Analyzer, Relater, Entertainer)
- Identify goals, needs, strengths, and weaknesses for each quadrant

Module 7: Prescriptions for Handling Difficult People

- Determine the underlying needs and emotions driving difficult behavior
- Apply tailored strategies to address each difficult type effectively
- Learn to maintain control while building mutual respect

Module 8: Conclusion

- Create a personal action plan to apply course techniques
- Reflect on changes in self-awareness and communication style
- Commit to behavior shifts that reduce conflict long-term