

## Course title: EBMA - Dealing with Difficult People

### Objectives:

- What are difficult people difficult?
  - Excessive stress
  - Personality issues
  - Triggering events
  - Unresolved conflicts
  - Communication issues
- Types of difficult people:
  - The pessimist
    - Why do they act this way?
      - They may be motivated by anxiety, a desire for power, resentment on how treated in past
      - Not listened to or valued
    - Effect on you or the team?
      - Negatively can be contagious
    - What to do?
      - Acknowledge their complaints and reframe them
      - Use their outlook as a positive tool
      - Agree to team norms
  - The passive aggressor peer
    - Why do they act this way?
      - Not truly forthcoming about true feelings
      - Failure of rejection, desire to avoid conflict, feeling of powerlessness
    - What to do?
      - Avoid labeling them as passive aggressive
      - Focus on the underlying message, not their behavior
      - Create a safe environment for a honest conversation
  - The know-it-all
    - Why do they act this way?
      - Competency without competence
      - Compensate for feelings of insecurity
    - What to do?
      - Address interruptions
      - Ask for specific facts
      - Model humility
  - The slacker
    - Why do they act this way?
      - Intentional or unintentional
    - What to do?
      - Ask them if their behavior is intentional or unintentional
      - Document responsibilities of each team member
      - Hold everyone accountable to a standard
  - The complainer

- Why do they act this way?
    - Intentional or unintentional
  - What to do?
    - Redirect their perspective by acknowledge
    - Change the subject
    - Encourage to seek a solution
    - Complaining will not change anything
- The scene stealer
  - Why do they act this way?
    - Compensate for own insecurities
  - What to do?
    - Keep a record of your accomplishment and highlight with your manager
    - Toot your own horn!
- The office gossip
  - Why do they act this way?
    - Compensate for own insecurities
  - What to do?
    - Avoid engaging
    - Excuse yourself from negative conversations
  - Redirect to work conversations
- What to do in the moment
  - Listen
  - Stay calm
  - Don't judge
  - Reflect and respect dignity toward the other person
  - Look for the hidden need
  - Look for others around you who might be able to help
  - Don't demand compliance
  - Saying "I understand," usually makes things worse
  - Avoid smiling, as this may look like you are mocking the person
  - Don't act defensively
  - Don't return anger with anger
  - Don't argue or try to convince the other person of anything
  - Keep extra space between you and the other person
  - Saying "I'm sorry," or, "I'm going to try to fix this," can go a long way toward defusing many situations
  - Set limits and boundaries
  - Trust your instincts
  - One response does not fit all
  - Debrief
  - Discharge your own stress
  - Give yourself credit for getting through an uncomfortable situation

#### Activities:

- Think of a difficult person and write down three assumptions you have about a particular colleague.
- Active listening activity
  - Speaker talks and the listener listens without interrupting for 2 minutes, then both participants switch roles

- Compassion exercise:
  - Identify someone that is a trigger for you and causes stress in your life and reflect on the way that they impact your life.

#### **Key Takeaways:**

- 83% of people say they suffer from work-related stress.
- No matter the root cause for the behavior, experts say the key thing is not to take it personally.
- 1:3 Rule – pick your battles, choose to engage with the difficult person one out of three times.
- CALM model:
  - C - clarify the issues
  - A - address the problem
  - L - listen to the other side
  - M - manage your way to resolution
- When conflict arises ask yourself?
  - What am I upset about?
  - What emotions am I feeling?
  - Why am I feeling that way?
  - Have I contributed to the problem?
  - Am I just overacting? If so, why?
  - What are my desires for an outcome to this conflict?
  - What will successful resolution look like?
- **No workplace is without difficult co-workers!**