The Life of a Commander’s Spouse........
What “life” really looks like.............
Dealing with Difficult People

1. Why Should We Care?
2. Why People Do What They Do
3. Assertive Communication Skills
4. Types of “Difficult” people
5. Tips on handling “Difficult” people
Why Should We Care?

• Challenge is to form coalitions of willing people (volunteers) eager to serve and able to do so effectively with others
• You just can’t ignore / avoid difficult people
• Your team will work best if the group has strong and productive relationships

“Dealing with people is probably the biggest problem you face…” (Dale Carnegie, author of *How to Win Friends and Influence People*)
Why Should We Care?

• Difficult people have “costs” -- they
  • Cause other people to leave the team
  • Undermine the leader’s authority / affect reputation
  • Weaken communication / Waste time
  • Cause dissention among team members
  • Diminish the team’s productivity
  • “Suck the life out of you” from the mudslide of problems
Why People Do What They Do

• Unclear boundaries
• Conflicting expectations
• Rewarded behavior is repeated behavior

• A word about psychopathology

What to do, what to do....
How to Handle Difficult People

General Strategies

- **Actively** listen to and observe others...communicate
- Don’t ignore a problem...confront them head on...they won’t just go away
- Understand what may be behind the problem behavior
- Avoid talking about others behind their backs and don’t “pile on” when others do
- Establish group norms for your team
- Be assertive (behaviors that take care of self but not at the expense of others)

What assertiveness can do for you...
Influence Icebreaker

- Lead / Wingman pair up
  - Lead: Tell your wingman about something you would never do or buy (30 sec)
  - Wingman: Convince lead to do or buy that very thing they said they would never do or buy (2 min)

- Communication styles and punctuation marks
  - The Period versus the Question mark

- Stopping and Continuing conversations
  - assumptions on Trust,

- ...Information...

- ...Power ...

- ...and Options...

TIPO assessment

TRUST
INFORMATION
POWER
OPTIONS

TIPO FRAMEWORK
Benefits of Assertiveness

- Reduces anxiety / stress caused by conflicts
- Allows effective expression of thoughts, feelings
- Confidence and control over life improved
- Others respect you, your ideas and opinions
- Relationships with others are greatly improved
- Able to say “no” when you mean “no” without guilt
- Motivates others toward assertive behavior
- Allows you to ask for help without fear and stress

How do you “assert”????…
Assertive Responding

- Change your Mindset: It isn’t a reflex, but a response
- Put the problem at the center of the table – takes the focus off of personalities and on to the behaviors – you can’t change beliefs / attitudes, but you can change behavior (especially if the changed behavior has a reward versus a punishment)
- Be Specific and Direct and have them “solve” the problem
- Respect Yourself and Others – blame isn’t the game, it’s all about discovering the way ahead
- Prepare and Practice (response versus reflex)
- One key: Questions over statements
  - This won’t work................
  - I don’t like........
  - It’s always been done this way.....
  - You aren’t fair.....
  - That’s a bad idea......

Let’s look at some “difficult types”
Blink: The Other Side of Thin Slicing....

Your brain is a great "survivor". OR you discard info that doesn't "match" your mental map. You force new info onto "confirmed mental maps".
Another Example?

Aoccdrnig to a rscheearch at an Elingsh unervtisy, it deosn't mttarer in waht oredr the ltteers in a wrod are, the olny iprmoetnt tihng is taht frist and lsat ltteer is at the rghit pclae. The rset can be a toatl mses and you can sitll raed it wouthit porbelm. Tihs is bcuseae we do not raed ervey lteter by it slef but the wrod as a wlohe.

Ceehiro

Might you / your cohorts have a hard time “seeing things” another way?
Types of Difficult People

- Task Master
- Bully
- Black Hole
- Busy Body
- Outlaw
- Liar
- Blamer-Complainer
- Know-it-All

A common theme is assertive responding…
Task Master

• Makes unreasonable demands on your time, resources, and attention…Task Masters may:
  • Be overloaded, or unaware of the impact of their demands
  • Simply be dumping on you to avoid the work
  • Be motivated by ambition (at your expense)
  • Simply be clueless
  • Consider it their right to pass on their work to others

What you can do…
Task Master: What You Can Do

• Approach the TM is a positive way
• Observe how TM manages his/her workload and use this observation to shape your perspective
• State clearly how the extra work is negatively impacting you and the team as appropriate
• Explain what you’re willing and able to do
• Develop a plan to deal with the overwhelming workload … distribute the work more evenly
• Decide what is most important…decide if there are tasks that don’t really need to be done
Bully

• Bullies pose a problem whether they’re subordinates, colleagues, or bosses

• A bully who works for you may steer clear of you, but will try to bully others on the team…ultimately you have to contend with the bully’s behavior.

• Bully looks, sounds fierce, but is often hurting and motivated by need for acceptance, respect

• Unfortunately the Bully tries to meet these goals by intimidating others and making others feel small

What you can do…
Bully: What You Can Do

• Bullies thrive on fear; if you’re intimidated, don’t show it...keep your cool...don’t take the bait. Questions over statements

• Try to understand what makes the Bully feel inadequate—work to manage those situations — help the Bully find more appropriate behaviors

• Avoid being sucked in by bad behaviors...set up the Bully to “win” by putting the Bully in situations where skills will be recognized and performance will be successful

• Engage positively by taking an interest in the Bully’s life/work and by asking specific questions
Busy Body

- The Busy Body doesn’t respect personal and professional boundaries
- The Busy Body moves from person to another carrying personal information about others
- The Busy Body tells the stories as a way to gain acceptance or to manipulate or gain influence
- Unfortunately, the Busy Body engages in these behaviors often at others’ expense

What you can do…
Busy Body: What You Can Do

• Re-direct the Busy Body to work-related conversations…guard against being pulled into inappropriate conversations about others
• Try to re-direct the Busy Body’s natural social skills to more helpful ways of interacting:
  • information gathering from other team members,
  • helping with a newsletter, etc.
• Delete inappropriate messages w/o responding
• Don’t let the Busy Body intimidate or make others feel invaded or uncomfortable
• Enforce boundaries
Black Hole

- Someone who takes everything you can give and then asks for more
- May have difficulty respecting others’ boundaries
- May have confusion in expectations
- May never finish a project

What you can do...
Black Hole: What You Can Do

- Take an active interest in BH’s tasks and projects…watch and guard against the natural tendency to want to avoid the Black Hole
- Encourage the BH to move on when a task is sufficiently accomplished
- Invite BH’s input on others’ work as a way of showing value in the BH’s opinion
- Give the BH positive feedback on increased independent decision making and work
- Don’t let a good call go unnoticed
- Set expectations / standards for completion of projects
Recluse

• The Recluse is isolated and does not communicate with others…withdrawn and non-participative
• May be shy, uncomfortable around others
• May prefer to work alone
• May not trust others (burned by a Busy Body before?)
• May not be very skilled in working with others

What you can do…
Recluse: What You Can Do

• Don’t force interaction…the recluse will not likely become a social butterfly
• Stay focused on tasks in your contacts…other kinds interactions may be viewed as intrusive
• Establish a routine or procedure for the Recluse to provide information to colleagues who need it
• Provide appropriate comm tools to the Recluse
• Do allow the Recluse to have solitary time in exchange for interacting with others
• Avoid intruding into life of Recluse—when not needed, or asking for something recluse is not comfortable with
Liar

- A person who deliberately misleads you. This person has an ethical problem.
- Lying viewed as easy to way to get what is wanted or to avoid responsibility for something.
- Believes lying makes the Liar smart or more clever than the person being lied to.
- Uses as a source of power through manipulation.
- Tricky to deal with—never know where you stand.
- May be trying to undercut authority, advance self at other’s expense, or get away with something.

What you can do…
Liar: What You Can Do

• Take defensive action...document your case
• Assess how bad the situation is...the scope of the lying
• Get “authority” (not legal, but others with supervisory skills) involved as soon as needed
• Don’t get trapped by the Liar – you are giving the Liar “ammunition to shoot you with”
Outlaw

- Doesn’t play by rules unless they’re his/her own
- Underlying behavior may be belief that everybody should be able to come and go as they like
- Outlaws often feel trapped, bound, constrained by structure/rules...go about business—ignore rules
- Outlaw can turn into negative role model...folk hero-like, a “Rebel without a Cause”
- Can distract others or even gain a following
- Extreme Outlaw is compelled to openly challenge your authority
- If unsuccessful, the Outlaw blames the rules

What you can do...
Outlaw:  What You Can Do

• Focus on creativity, not compliance
• Leverage Outlaw’s tendency to question; nurture it as curiosity among team. Loosen the reins a bit
• Set up a regular time for “challenging the rules”
• Credit the Outlaw when appropriate for rules that are changed or discarded
• Stress the “end results” all are working toward; encourage solution-focused thinking.
• Put the Outlaw in charge of linking procedures and processes to group success
• Reward successful or team endorsed suggestions
Know-it-All

- Someone who claims to know everything about everything
- Wants to be in control...pays little attention to what others say
- Condescending, irritating...freely gives opinions
- Defies authority and insults others, annoying them and alienating co-workers
- Because of alienation, contributions are not what they could be, especially given K-i-A’s intelligence
- Illusion of superior intelligence is often behind the behavior
- Need to be seen as smartest anchors self-esteem

What you can do...
Know-it-All: What You Can Do

- Encourage the Know-it-All to participate in helpful ways.
- Go to the K-i-A first, asking for help in figuring something out.
- When research needs to be done, ask the K-i-A to do it.
- Make practical assignments to the K-i-A as well as tasks involving complex challenges.
- Share your K-i-A’s talent across teams and projects.
Blamer-Complainer

- Someone who blames you and others for his/her mistakes
- Sometimes called whiners because of their tone of voice when blaming and complaining
- Adept at buck passing, finding fault in everyone and everything
- Negativity of the Blamer-Complainer drains energy from others
- Are often terrified of being held accountable when making an error

What you can do...
Blamer-Complainer: What You Can Do

- Accept blame when appropriate…crucial in demonstrating the need for shared responsibility
- Encourage constructive, action-oriented problem-solving in place of Blaming-Complaining
- Leverage Blamer-Complainer when critical eye is needed on a project that may not be going well
- Campaign against fault-finding…acknowledge that people can make mistakes but reinforce and reward problem solvers…make it public