DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS THAT NEGATIVELY AFFECT THE WORKPLACE

INSTRUCTOR GUIDE

1-DAY COURSE

HRDQ®

DIRTY LITTLE SECRETS

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Instructional design and learning philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SME)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:

- Learning objectives — effective tools for managing, monitoring and evaluating training
- Meaningfulness — connects the topic to the students' past, present and future
- Appropriate organization of essential ideas — helps students focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- Modeling techniques — demonstrate to students how to act and solve problems
- Active application — the cornerstone to learning — helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- Consistency — creates consistent instructions and design to help students learn and retain new information
- Accelerated learning techniques — create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions and lectures within each course. This ensures that the learning will appeal to all learning styles and will be retained.

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Course objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

- Make it OK to talk about “unmentionable” people and situations at work
- Recognize “toxic” people and situations
- Deal with “toxic” people and situations appropriately
  - The angry person
  - The control freak
  - The harasser
  - The incompetent person
  - The indecisive person
  - The inflexible person
  - The messed-up person
  - The self-important person
  - The unethical person
  - The unprofessional person
  - The victim

Note: This program will consist of modules that the client has specifically chosen to meet its needs.

Each module follows a pattern: Introduce the dirty little secret, have participants create their own worst example of the type, and learn how to deal with the type effectively.

Yes, it's true. Some people can't be fixed with one day of training. They perform well enough to keep their jobs; however, they often make life miserable for those around them. What can you do? If you can't change them, you must change the way you deal with them or you'll drive yourself crazy.

These are dirty little secrets because there is shame connected to them. No one wants to admit they have a problem with any of these issues. The "closet" still exists for all of these problems. And no business wants to admit that they hired a collection of unstable, unethical jerks. We all want to believe that we are above this and act in the most professional manner possible. Of course, there will be a few jerks who think being a jerk is a sign of strong character, but for the most part, nobody wants to face these issues head-on. No one but the most seasoned psychologist feels adequately prepared to handle such emotionally-charged people/issues.

Why are these secrets?

Training doesn't always "fix" people.

Some of these traits are shameful.

No one wants to admit they have a problem or have hired a problem.

Why we need to talk about them

This is the real work world.

Knowing how to handle these situations will at least make you less miserable and perhaps increase your success in the workplace.

There is a giant gray area—one reason we don't want to talk about them is because we're not sure when these situations cross over from minor annoyance to true problem.

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Chapter One

THE ANGRY PERSON

The angry person

The angry person is usually one of the most easily recognized personalities. This person does not handle stress well and is often someone who has been put into a management position because they were good at their job. The pressures of the job can cause them a tremendous amount of stress.

The angry person is also one of the few personalities that upper management will recognize as a problem. Their behavior is so overt that it cannot be missed—except for the kind who handle their anger in a passive-aggressive manner.

The angry personality

Loses control; yelling and in-your-face behavior

Has recognized “trigger” events

Uses excessive gestures

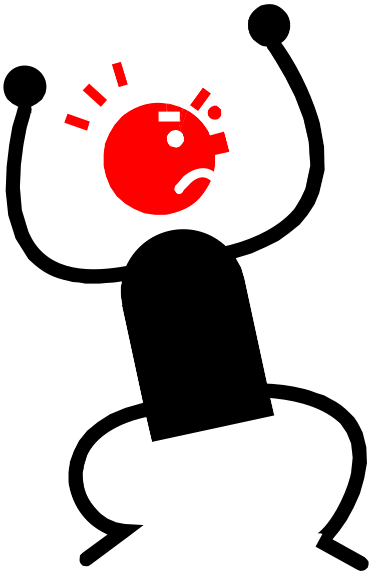
Slams and throws things

Curses and/or threatens

Blames others for his/her behavior

Physically touches or threatens others

May take a passive-aggressive approach; says one thing and does another, “forgets” promises or obligations, procrastinates or works inefficiently



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Create your worst angry person

“You have created a huge problem!”

“#@(#*&# #*#*&^()# @*@^^#!!!”

“If he hadn’t dropped the ball, this wouldn’t have happened!”

“I could kill him!”

“She’ll be sorry!”

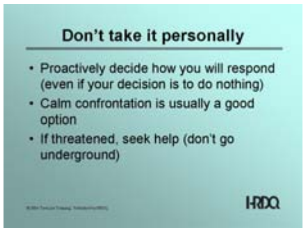
“The client called looking for the report? Oh, sorry. I guess I forgot to send them a copy.”

Four types of anger

1. Lightning: Strikes quickly, then is over
2. Tornado: Thrives on chaos, whips itself and everything around it into a frenzy
3. Flood: Builds up slowly; as it surges, it carries with it items built up over longs periods of time
4. Volcano: Slow to erupt and cool down, the aftermath is harder than the incident itself

Activity: Divide participants into small groups. Have each group pick a statement and use that as a basis for creating their worst angry person (or they can create their own statement). The outcome should be a vivid portrayal of their “worst person.” They can write a short story, make a drawing, act out a scene, sing a song, play a game, compare to an animal, etc. Encourage them to use their imagination, while limiting the length of their presentations.

In the debrief, have participants discuss why their angry person makes them miserable. Possible answers include having to tip toe around someone to avoid triggering an explosion, having to endure embarrassment or the humiliation of being yelled at by someone in public, fear of bodily harm, etc.



Don't take it personally

- Proactively decide how you will respond (even if your decision is to do nothing)
- Calm confrontation is usually a good option
- If threatened, seek help (don't go underground)

Repeat "It's not about me" until you internalize and believe it no matter what the circumstance—when people make sarcastic remarks, brag about themselves, nag you, don't return phone calls, don't show appreciation, take advantage of you, etc.

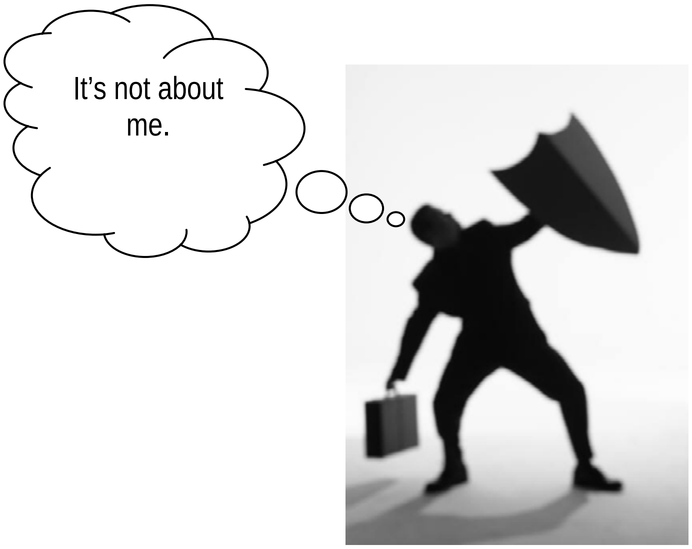
A big benefit of proactively deciding how you will respond is that it reinforces your feeling of being in control (and we all like to feel in control of ourselves, don't we?)—even if your decision is to do nothing.

An angry person may threaten you if you say you are going to report him/her; however, that is precisely what you must do. If the angry person knows you are afraid, he/she will never try to control his/her temper (tips for how to do that on the next page).

Dealing with an angry person

Repeat: "It's not about me."

Use it in any situation you encounter where people are behaving in an inconsiderate, critical, or demeaning manner. Consider it a force field that protects you from other people's anger.


It's not about me.

Benefits:

Automatically shifts your perspective

Diverts attention away from your hurt feelings

Allows you to remain calm and think objectively

Gives you a space of time to decide how you will respond

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Use better communication

Avoid destructive behaviors

- Being sarcastic
- Questioning integrity
- Dismissing people
- Acting incredulous
- Asking why

Practice constructive behaviors

- Using empathy
- Being curious and open
- Using restatement to keep conversation focused
- Discussing issues sitting down
- Listening until you experience the other side of the issue
- Using neutral language
- Taking a proactive approach

Drain the emotion

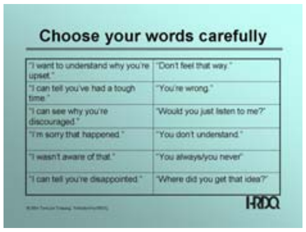
Avoid these behaviors	Practice these behaviors
Interrupting or arguing	Giving them plenty of time
Telling them to calm down	Listening attentively
Giving advice	Using short responses
Faking understanding	Using an even-tempered tone of voice
Belittling, condescending to, or minimizing	Breaking the tension
Jumping to conclusions	Remaining calm

When the angry person has an outburst or does something passive-aggressive, don't act accusatory or dredge up old hurts. That kind of conflict will trigger the cycle you're trying to break: He'll deny everything and claim you've misunderstood him. It's OK to express your anger—in fact, it's important to do so. No one enjoys a conflict, but to silently accept a person's anger will only reinforce the behavior while raising your stress level. You need to confront the person immediately and explain that you're very confused by the behavior. Don't let him/her off the hook because he/she won't change on his/her own.

Put yourself in the other person's place to understand the outburst.

Note: "I feel that you are a jerk" is not a feeling or a constructive statement. Constructive statements can also be used for positive feedback such as, "I feel great when you ask for my opinion."

Instead, try to create an atmosphere in which he/she will feel comfortable sharing negative feelings with you. Try saying, "I know you're angry. Please tell me about it." Over time, he/she will become more aware of his/her feelings and better able to express him/herself.



Choose your words carefully

"I want to understand why you're upset."	"Don't feel that way."
"I can tell you've had a tough time."	"You're wrong."
"I can see why you're discouraged."	"Would you just listen to me?"
"I'm sorry that happened."	"You don't understand."
"I wasn't aware of that."	"You always/you never"
"I can tell you're disappointed."	"Where did you get that idea?"

Truly listening to someone often takes the force out of a person's anger. Follow these steps to improve this critical skill.

Let the angry person talk; most will run out of gas eventually.

Ask open-ended questions and wait . . . and wait . . . and wait . . .

Cut the angry person off when they become verbally or physically abusive.

Become a better listener

Stay quiet.

Ask questions that get the angry person to talk about specific feelings, behaviors, and experiences.

> *"I realize you get mad when your coworker hogs the meeting, but I'm not sure why."*

Repeat several words the angry person says to maintain focus and attention.

> *"He was a complete jerk and totally undermined my presentation."*
>
> *"Undermined your presentation? What happened?"*

Avoid "why" questions

> Wrong way: *"Why didn't you tell me earlier?"*
>
> Right way: "*What stopped you from telling me earlier?" or "Was there a reason you didn't tell me earlier?"*

Practice: Change these "why" questions to "what" or "was there a reason" questions.

1. "Why did you take your break without telling your supervisor?"

   ____

2. "Why didn't you call the customer back?"

   ____

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Problem solving

Step 1: Find a good time and place to talk.

Set up a specific time and a place; avoid interruptions

Set ground rules, such as no put-downs

Step 2: Listen to each other.

Speaker shares his/her perspective, focusing on specific behaviors

Listener listens without interrupting; summarizes what he/she heard

Take turns talking and listening until both people agree they have heard each other

Step 3: Figure out together what each party needs.

Ask the other person what they need to have happen in order to feel that the problem is solved — if solutions are offered, find out why those solutions are appealing; summarize what you have heard — again, each party takes a turn — understanding needs is a critical part of reaching a satisfying and lasting solution

Each party suggests options

Probe to understand why they're appealing

Step 4: Agree on a solution.

Evaluate the list of options by asking questions:

- Would this really solve the problem?
- Is this solution realistic?
- Do we both feel good about this solution?
- Are there any ways to make it a better solution?

Once an outburst is over, problem solving is the way to resolve the issue once and for all. (Note: We realize that some people actually enjoy getting angry or it's so ingrained in their temperament that they will continue to blow up regardless of the positive steps you and others take.)

Often, we think the only way to solve problems is to split the difference. If it's not possible to do that, we get stuck. But if you and the other person build rapport by really listening to each other, you are both more likely to share underlying needs (which aren't always the stated needs). These needs are not necessarily in conflict. For example, the need to be respected is a popular one that comes up in conflict. You can discuss what respect looks like to each of you.

The steps on this page are simple to understand, yet often difficult to practice. Emphasize the importance of really focusing on step 3 and avoiding jumping into problem solving.

Step 1: Set up a time and a place to talk to the other person. If tensions are running high, you may need to agree not to use put-downs.

Step 2: Focus on describing specific things that have happened rather than labeling the person. For example, say, "I get mad when you cut me off," rather than, "You're pushy."

Step 3: Understanding needs is a critical part of reaching a satisfying and lasting solution.

Step 4: Agree on a solution. Choose the solution that best satisfied the needs of both parties. Agree on a time to check in and make certain that this solution is working well.