



### EAP Notes

#### 10 Solutions to Dealing with Difficult Co-Workers

When at work, everyone likes the shortest straight line to getting something done. And when difficult co-workers get in the way, you want it straightened out. So, here are 10 solutions to dealing with those obstacles.

- 1. Remove the blame factor.** Use indirect language when addressing co-workers in order to focus on the project rather than the person. For example, say “Reports must be turned in by Friday”, rather than saying, “**You** need to get the report to me by Friday.”
- 2. Be brief** when discussing problems, keep it short and direct. It minimizes a stressful situation for both of you.
- 3. Handle a whiner with tact** by avoiding open-ended questions. Limit your greetings to “good morning” and “good evening.” The words “I’m sorry, I don’t have time to chat right now” are your friends.
- 4. Do your homework** before going to your boss with an issue or a problem. Make a list of the specifics you want to address, research the issue and get your facts straight. When you have everything ready, schedule a meeting, and remain cool and professional.
- 5. Keep people in the loop.** Don’t spring any surprises on your boss or co-workers -- like a new deadline or a developing problem. People don’t like that, and they can react defensively.
- 6. Deal with a screamer** by telling the screamer that the way he/she is speaking to you is making it difficult for you to understand what he/she wants and how to do your job professionally.
- 7. Stop gossip.** Respond to all gossip and other such subjects with “Oh, really?” and then change the subject or get back to work. Gossipers just want to stir up trouble and they need attention and fuel to keep the conversation going. If you don’t respond, they move on.
- 8. Be friendly without getting too close.** You don’t have to be bosom buddies with everyone at work. It is important to have a friendly relationship with your co-workers, but look for emotional fulfillment in your *real* life, away from work.
- 9. Dish out compliments.** Too often, we focus on what people are doing wrong. Try to catch them doing something right and comment on it.
- 10. Stay open-minded** when someone criticizes you. Regardless of how you feel about them, take the opportunity to be responsive and consider how you could improve. It’s actually an opportunity for growth!

*Learn more about your personal growth at both work and home by contacting your Best Care EAP. A professional counselor can provide an objective viewpoint to handling difficult people and situations. For a confidential appointment, please call 402-354-8000 or 800-666-8606.*

Adapted from: *20 Ways to Deal with Difficult Co-Workers* by Nancy Evans, <http://lifestlye.msn.com>

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