



## HOW TO DEAL WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE

ISPE November Meeting

Presented By:  
Bruce  
Amber  
Stefanie

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### Agenda

- Learning Styles: how we see the world differently
- Difficult conversations
- Influencing others



STRATEGY FOR DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE #38  
HAND THEM A DUCK. WALK AWAY DURING THEIR  
STUNNED, SILENT CONFUSION.



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### Roles of difficult people

- Your boss/superior
- Client/ internal customer
- Subordinates
- Peers



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Why did you choose to attend this event?

Describe a difficult person you have had to deal with (Currently or in the past)



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Difficult People...

They're everywhere!!



'How do you deal with them? (Without your Zombie Ray-gun)



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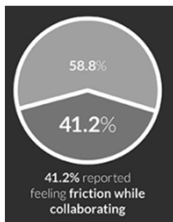
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Findings from A 2016 Organizational Dynamics Survey:



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Difficult People...

We're everywhere.



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What Makes it so Difficult?



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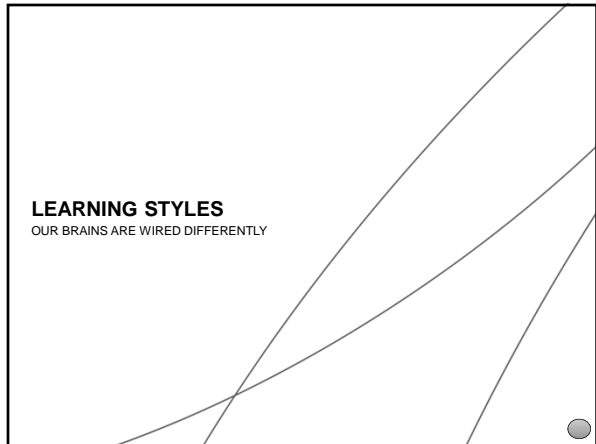
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**LEARNING STYLES**  
OUR BRAINS ARE WIRED DIFFERENTLY



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**Early Brain Development Influences  
How You Connect with Others**

- Which stimuli you select
- How you process information
- Your perceptions and assumptions



Working relationships can be made more effective by understanding and appreciating the different drivers of our impulses

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**Your natural energy impacts your areas of focus and work preferences**

**Explore:**

Wants to know: that it will be innovative  
Wants to feel: inspired  
Preferred part of work process: Generating ideas and seeing possibilities

**Excite:**

Wants to know: the impact on people  
Wants to feel: involved  
Preferred part of work process: Creating energy and excitement in people



**Examine:**

Wants to know: that it is fact based  
Wants to feel: safe  
Preferred part of work process: Developing structure and detailed plans

**Execute:**

Wants to know: about bottom-line results  
Wants to feel: situation is in control  
Preferred part of work process: Making the plan happen

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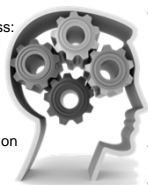
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## Slide 11

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**BS1**

Bruce Sohmer, 10/31/2017

**Your natural energy influences your view of success and your communication style**



**Explore evaluates success by:**  
How creative you were and how well you grasped big picture

**Communicate with this energy by:**

- Answering the question: "How?"
- Explaining the concepts; showing the Big Picture
- Giving them information that reflects the underlying process, so they can connect everything into a whole.
- Allowing them to generate a multitude of ideas.
- Use analogies and present content in multiple ways: they are associative learners

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**The Chaotic one...  
Give the appearance of being  
Unfocused or Disorganized**

- Get lost in the world of ideas - speak in uncertain terms
- They can be hard to nail down to commitments - keep changing things or revisiting decisions
- They lose track of / forget things
- They don't show up to meetings they accepted, don't pay attention to deadlines



- How to deal:**
- Learn how to speak their language.
  - Minimize impact on you by:
    - YOU writing and publishing meeting minutes
    - YOU keeping original documents
    - Making it a point to get signatures on decision documentation

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**Your natural energy influences your view of success and your communication style**



**Excite evaluates success by:**  
How energized you were and how you energized others

**Communicate with this energy by:**

- Answering the question: "Who?" (who is involved; who is impacted)
- TALKING to them about it – they learn through conversation
- Use personal stories, implications
- Allowing enough time (keeping on schedules can be a challenge)
- Visuals & colors help
- Inspire them with praise

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### The Rambler

A Creative persona



- Impulsive
- Never stop talking
- Easily distracted
- Has trouble staying focused on the topic at hand
- Can be over the top or inappropriately silly
- They can seem frivolous and overly-optimistic

**How to deal:**  
 Maintain control of the agenda & timetable  
 Be prepared to professionally interrupt  
 These types put real weight in written directives from upper management – so management.

- Leverage project sponsors
- Leverage corporate policy
- Leverage project/ department mission statement

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### Your natural energy influences your view of success and your communication style



**Examine type evaluates success by:**  
 The quality of your data and planning

**Communicate with this energy by:**

- Answering the question: "Why?"
- Prepare your data and be ready to defend your view: accepting that they will critically look for inconsistencies or errors
- Lay out your argument linearly.
- Demonstrate the following:
  - Logic
  - Cause and Effect
  - Hypothesis and Conclusion
  - Facts
- Expect the following attitudes and approach:
  - Serious and Focused
  - Punctual and Efficient
  - No tolerance for imprecise or loose language

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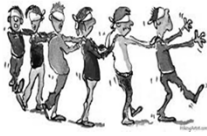
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### Seemingly Judgmental Misinformed/Insecure



- Don't have the latest information or direction from Management.
- Skilled but seem to lack confidence/ Cant make a decision
- Critical and judgmental
- Get lost in analysis-paralysis
- Pessimistic – see a million reasons why everything won't work
- Constantly want to revisit data

**How to deal:**  
 These people put real weight in written directives from upper management – so quote them.

- Leverage project sponsors
- Leverage corporate policy
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**Tackle your Zombie #1**

Which Learning Style(s) are you?

How do you prefer others communicate with you?

What do you think your Zombie's learning style is?

How can you communicate more effectively with them, given their learning style?



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**Other types – there are many**  
*(we may not have time to review)*

- Was promoted early/ out of necessity
- Or; Is new to the industry / field
- Or; Can not naturally multi task



**How to deal:**  
Unofficially take some of their tasks you can readily handle – in exchange for what you need  
Give them concise information and give them confidence in your own abilities through your actions  
Enlist help from their subordinates & superiors through discrete conversations expressing concern not criticism

- Argumentative
- Finds way to escape responsibility/ blame others
- Has their own secret agenda
- Derails things, Enjoys chaos, big ego



**How to deal:**  
Take the high road but don't appear naive.  
Remain objective and unemotional, even in the midst accusations.  
Document /publish even the most simple action items

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**CRUCIAL CONVERSATIONS**  
WHEN A DIFFICULT SITUATION ARISES




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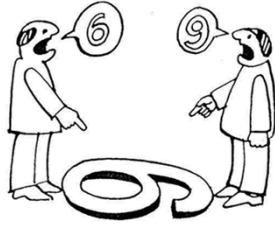
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**Conflict Happens...now what?**



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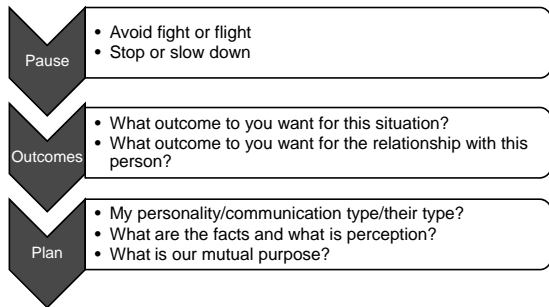
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**Conflict happens:  
What to do when a difficult situation arises**



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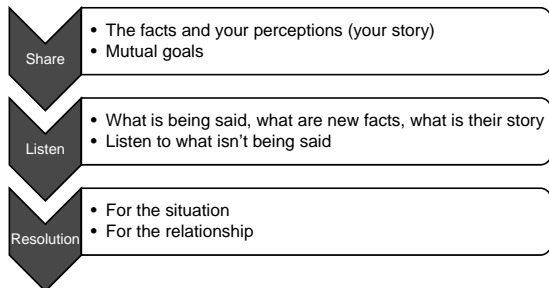
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**Conflict happens:  
What to do when a difficult situation arises**



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**How to successfully interact with such people?**  
*(Without your Zombie Ray-gun)*

**Depends on your goal!**

- Why do you need to interact?
- What do you want out of it or from them?
- What are the risks of engaging or not engaging them?
- Is it a hierarchical relationship?
  - Is it project related?
  - Is it for career growth?



**Stay focused on your goal...**



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**Tackle your Zombie #2**

**What outcomes do you want? For the situation? For the relationship?**

**What are the facts?**

**What are your perceptions?**

**What are your mutual goals / objectives?**



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**INFLUENCE**



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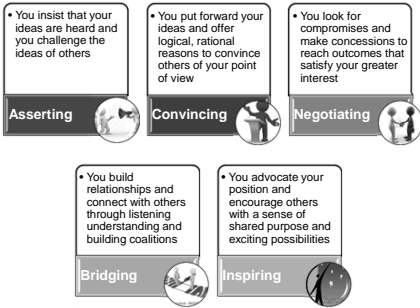
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## Influence Requires both Substance and Style

### 5 Categories of Influence:




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## Tackle your Zombie #3

What is your most comfortable influence style?

Which style could you use to influence your zombie more effectively?




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## INFLUENCE IS A PRO-ACTIVE BUSINESS

**Build Trust:** Co-workers are more open to influence when they trust you

**Network:** Develop relationships with those who can support you.

**Look for the Mutual Goal:** View the person you're dealing with as a peer and keep their goals in mind

**Consultation:** Advocate the outcome and invite ideas

**Find Support:** Amplify the argument; include various stakeholders

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## Summary

- Appreciate that others may be naturally focused on – and value - different attributes of “success” than you
- Learn to communicate with all learning styles – don't just use your own preference
- Planning and true listening make for a better conversation: separate facts from assumptions
- Always stay focused on the mutual goal
- Build trusting relationships in order to effectively influence



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## DEALING WITH DIFFICULT PEOPLE IN POSITIONS OF INFLUENCE

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