

*Working with Diffiult  
People*



## Working With Difficult People

Difficult people can sabotage any conflict resolution session. But often trouble arises when we overreact to these people. Here are seven difficult types and some do's and don'ts for working with them. Add your own notes on what works with these people.



Aggressive types want to force their viewpoint on you. They may blow off steam and attack verbally. Don't attack back. Do ask them firmly to sit down and explain calmly what they have to say. Just listening without returning the anger seems to calm them.



Know-it-alls are "experts" who have no patience for other people's input. Don't be intimidated or let them take over a meeting. Do listen to them and try to benefit from their knowledge.



Victims often complain and feel they are being treated unfairly. Don't try to become their protector. Do ask them for suggestions to improve the situation. They need practice voicing positive ideas.



Sarcastic types use words as weapons, often destroying harmony in a group and causing resentment. They can be poor team players. Don't let them get away with this behavior. Let them know that sarcasm is unacceptable. Do compliment them when they say something positive or show team spirit.



Nay-sayers have nothing good to say about others' ideas. Don't try to reform them. Do invite them to suggest alternatives. Many times, they will back off if asked to say something constructive.



Yay-sayers will go along with anything just to gain approval. Discourage them from making more commitments than they can handle. Do make sure they follow through on what they agree to do.



Withdrawn types seem to have nothing to contribute and are Fight difficult to draw out. Don't nag them to open-up. Do ask open-ended questions that require them to produce more than a yes or no answer. Be patient about waiting for their answer.

## *Are You a Victim of Narcissistic Abuse?*

Narcissistic abuse is a pattern of emotionally, psychologically, and sometimes even physically harmful behavior exhibited by individuals with narcissistic personality traits or narcissistic personality disorder (NPD). It involves manipulation, exploitation, and a profound lack of empathy for the victim. Below are the signs of narcissistic abuse.

- 1. Narcissistic Personality Traits.** Narcissism is characterized by an excessive preoccupation with oneself, a grandiose sense of self-importance, a need for excessive attention and admiration, and a lack of empathy for others. People with narcissistic traits may display an inflated self-image and an intense desire for control and admiration from others.
- 2. Emotional Manipulation.** Various tactics are used to emotionally manipulate others, including gaslighting, withholding affection or approval, giving the silent treatment, and emotional blackmail.
- 3. Devaluation and Idealization.** Narcissists often engage in a cycle of idealization and devaluation. Initially, they may idealize their victim, showering them with affection and attention to gain their trust and loyalty. Over time, they devalue the person, criticizing, belittling, and undermining their self-esteem.
- 4. Exploitative Behavior.** Narcissistic abusers exploit others for their own gain, often without regard for the well-being of the victim. This may include using the victim's resources, financial manipulation, or emotional exploitation.
- 5. Blame-Shifting.** Narcissistic abusers rarely take responsibility for their actions or admit fault. Instead, they tend to shift blame and responsibility onto others.
- 6. Isolation.** Victims are isolated from friends and family to maintain control. Abusers do this by creating conflict with the victim's support system or by making the victim feel guilty for spending time with others.
- 7. Projection.** Narcissists often project their own negative qualities onto their victims. They accuse their victims of the very behaviors or traits they possess, deflecting attention away from their own shortcomings.
- 8. Manipulative Charm.** Narcissists can be charming and charismatic, especially in the early stages of a relationship.
- 9. Inconsistent Behavior.** Narcissistic abusers exhibit erratic and unpredictable behavior, switching between being loving and caring one moment and angry or hostile the next. This creates confusion and emotional turmoil for the victim.

Narcissistic abuse can have severe and long-lasting emotional and psychological effects on victims, including:

- anxiety
- depression
- low self-esteem
- sacrificing one's own needs
- complex post-traumatic stress disorder (C-PTSD)
- difficulty forming healthy relationships

Long-term abuse can change the victim's brain, resulting in cognitive decline and memory loss. These brain changes can increase the risk for chronic stress and self-sabotage.

Not everyone with narcissistic traits is an abuser, and not all relationships involving narcissistic people are abusive. But when narcissistic traits are combined with abusive behavior patterns, it can be highly damaging.

**Narcissistic Abuse Syndrome**, or narcissistic victim syndrome, is an unofficial diagnosis used to assess the severity of narcissistic abuse. Symptoms significantly impact a person's life, whether the abuse occurred in a romantic, familial, platonic, or professional relationship.

The symptoms of narcissistic abuse syndrome often mimic those of other mental health conditions. Survivors might display signs of trauma bonding or C-PTSD following continued exposure. Effects can be long-lasting if the victim cannot distance themselves from the narcissist.

Symptoms of narcissistic abuse syndrome may include the following:

- anger
- confusion
- loss of identity
- feeling isolated
- flashbacks
- intrusive thoughts
- feeling on edge or restless
- difficulty making decisions
- dissociation
- self-harm
- irritability
- hypervigilance
- insomnia or trouble sleeping
- self-doubt
- physical symptoms such as digestive problems, headaches, or aches and pains

Another common reaction is **self-gaslighting** or denying one's own reality. Self-gaslighting may include distrust of self by questioning if a situation was as "bad" as one remembers it being. Or a person may believe they are "exaggerating" or overreacting to their own experiences.



Circle any of the symptoms on the previous page that you experience. In the space below, provide more details about the abusive relationship.

Narcissistic abuse is emotionally and psychologically damaging. This worksheet is designed to help you reflect on your experiences and assess whether you are the victim of narcissistic abuse.

### What to Do

Read each question carefully and mark the appropriate response for each question.

Have you ever felt consistently belittled or demeaned by someone close to you?  Yes  No

Do you often feel like you're walking on eggshells around this person, afraid of their reactions or anger?  Yes  No

Have you experienced manipulation, deceit, or dishonesty from this person?  Yes  No

Do they often dismiss your feelings, needs, or concerns?  Yes  No

Have they exhibited a lack of empathy for your emotional pain or struggles?  Yes  No

Is this person overly self-centered, often making conversations and interactions primarily about themselves?  Yes  No

Have they used gaslighting techniques to make you doubt your own perception of reality?  
 Yes  No

Have you felt isolated or cut off from friends and family because of this person?  Yes  No

Has your self-esteem and self-worth deteriorated because of your interactions with them?  
 Yes  No

Do you find it challenging to set boundaries with this person, or do they consistently violate the boundaries you set?  Yes  No

Have they engaged in acts of verbal, emotional, or psychological abuse toward you?  Yes  No

Are you often blamed for their actions or problems?  Yes  No

Scoring:

Count the number of "Yes" responses you marked: \_\_\_\_\_

0-2 Yes responses: It's less likely that you are a victim of narcissistic abuse.

3-6 Yes responses: There may be signs of narcissistic abuse in your relationship.

7-12 Yes responses: There is a higher likelihood that you are a victim of narcissistic abuse, and it is important to seek support and professional help.

This worksheet is not a diagnostic tool but a self-assessment to help you better understand your experiences. If you suspect you are a victim of narcissistic abuse, seek help from a therapist or counselor who specializes in trauma and abusive relationships to further explore your situation and develop strategies for healing and recovery.

# How To Handle Bullying In The Workplace

## Objective:

To learn ways to respond to and cope with bullying.

There's no surefire way to effectively handle a bully. If there was, bullying would not be such a widespread issue. Fortunately, there are ways to handle yourself when dealing with a bully.

The following steps can help when dealing with a bully.

1. Recognize that you are being bullied.

Once you realize you are the target of bullying, you can stop blaming yourself.

2. Change your response.

You can't change your bully, but you can change how you respond to his or her actions. Think about how you want to handle the situation.

3. Keep a journal.

Document any improper behavior. This will help if action by a manager or human resources becomes necessary. Be specific, including the date, time, and location of the incidents and if there were any witnesses.

4. Report incidents of bullying.

Remaining silent can give the bully more control over you. When you feel ready, tell your manager or supervisor what is going on in a calm, professional manner. Be prepared to provide detailed information, including your journal.

5. Seek help.

Find people who understand what you are going through, people who will provide support. You might also consider counseling to deal with any self-esteem or mood issues resulting from the bullying.

6. Remember you are not alone.

Don't let it define you as a victim.

## Adult Bullying

Bullying doesn't end just because you're out of the classroom. Digital, verbal, psychological, and physical harassment occurs among adults at the office, at home, and in public locations. Even for adults, bullying can still be a humiliating and demoralizing experience. Bear in mind that you are not responsible for the bully's behavior. Your only responsibility is to protect yourself from emotional, social, and physical harm. The best way to do this is not to try to change the bully but rather to change how you respond to the bully.

- Prepare for confrontation. When the bullying is occurring, you may forget what you wanted to say or say things you didn't intend. To prevent this, organize your thoughts ahead of time.
- Set up a meeting in a neutral location and bring a friend, family member or coworker as a witness. If a meeting is not possible, attempt to talk during your next encounter.
- When addressing a bully, look him or her in the eye and adopt an unaggressive posture. Also avoid showing negative emotions.
- Speak calmly and assertively, laying out your concerns. Avoid insults and accusations.
- Let the bully know there will be consequences if the situation doesn't change. This may be legal action or reporting the behavior to management.
- Walk away if no progress is made. Consider ways to avoid bullying if possible or to limit your interactions.

Do not engage in the following:

- Fighting/physical confrontation
- Returning the abuse
- Acting in frustration

### Directions:

Use the chart below to write out what you want to say the next time you face your bully. Remember to keep your comments constructive. Do not resort to argumentative or inflammatory statements. The goal is to be assertive and end the bullying, not to hash out the bully's issues or stir up further problems. Also note what you can do to build your confidence for the interaction. It might be something like talking with a friend or listening to a favorite song or meditating.

Situation	What You Want to Say	Confidence Builder	Outcome Anticipated