

Helpful strategies for dealing with difficult people
(Dr. Jim Guinee, Counseling Center)

A. It isn't always about YOU

The problem with personalizing

B. Don't judge people's outsides with your insides

The fundamental attribution error

C. Self-talk is Good Medicine

Examples: "My therapist says this is not about me, this is about you."
"You're going to wear yourself out being that nasty."
"Thank you for sharing your anger, I'm not allowed to accept gifts."

D. The Principle of Least Intervention

The smallest amount as early as possible

E. Don't assume the level of concern until you control the degree of knowledge

NOT KNOWING and/or NOT CARING

F. The importance of owning your problems

-The goal is to solve the problem, not placing blame or winning an argument
-By decreasing the other person's defensiveness they are more likely to hear you out

FORMULA: "I have a problem. When you _____ (specific behavior), then _____ (specific consequences) happens, and I feel ____."

EXAMPLE: "I have a problem. When you ask me to do something at the last minute (behavior), I have a hard time putting other work aside (consequences). I get frustrated when this happens (feelings). I don't like feeling that way about you."

G. Sense of Humor!

H. Spiritual Solutions

I. Don't forget the Counseling Center

Opportunity to problem solve with guaranteed confidentiality