

# Dealing with Difficult People

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# Dealing with an angry individual

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# Issues

- Superior-subordinate relationship: inherent conflict
  - Parent-child relationship
- Sarcastic tone
- Didn't listen
- Missed opportunity to empathize
  - Reason driver was out
  - Clinton
- Driver's concerns
- How will driver interact with next cop he meets?

# 5 Universal Truths

All people want to be:

- Treated with dignity and respect.
- Asked rather than told to do something.
- Told why they're being asked to do something.
- Given options rather than threats.
- Given a second chance.

# Face-to-face interactions: Not so simple

- Words never tell the whole message
  - Filtered by fear, frustration, culture, etc.
- React to the meaning, not the words
  - Example: arrive on scene of a burglary
    - It's about time (the words)
    - I feel violated and helpless (the meaning)
- People do not say what they mean.
  - Words only constitute part of the message.
  - The rest comes from voice/other non-verbal indicators.

# Face-to-face interactions: Not so simple

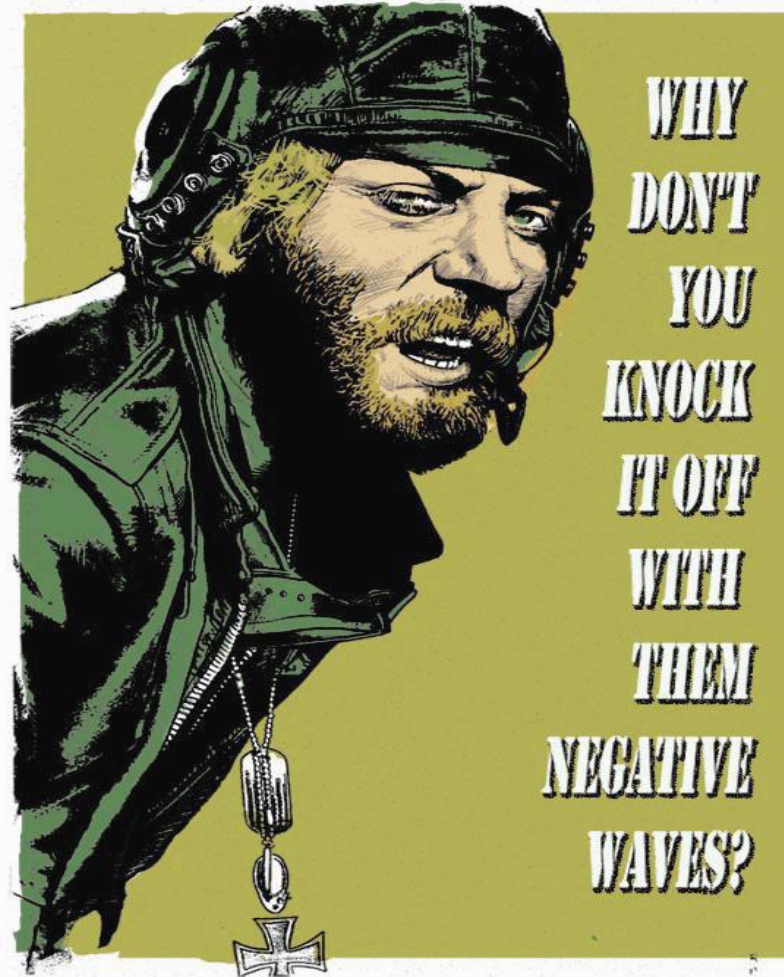
- Pay attention to non-verbal cues



A picture's worth a thousand words!



# What message are you sending?





# Inter-Cultural Differences

*“Other cultures are NOT failed attempts at being you. They are unique manifestations of the human spirit.”*  
(Wade Davis, Canadian anthropologist)

- **Personal space**

- Influenced by **gender**. Two women will stand closer together than a man and woman
- Influenced by **status**. Generally, a person of high status is granted more space. This is important to cultures with greater consciousness of status and social class, such as Asian cultures.
- Influenced by **friendship**. Friends stand closer together.
- **Available space**. Elevator vs. empty room. Standing at a urinal.
- Influenced by **experience**. People from NYC and India are accustomed to less personal space than someone from Mongolia or Montana.

- **Eye contact (Reflects honesty, respect, shame and interest, but the rules governing eye contact and what it means vary from culture to culture.)**

- For Latin Americans, it is respectful to avoid direct eye contact with authority figures.
- Muslims consider direct eye contact between members of the opposite sex bold and flirtatious.
- Arabs and Southern Europeans have more eye contact than Americans for the same gender (sizing up?); Brits make less eye contact than Americans.
- Asian: brief contact, then look away (especially with authority figures/superiors). Prolonged eye contact is offensive in Asia.

# Inter-Cultural Differences (cont.)

- Volume (Communicates shyness, uncertainty, anger, enthusiasm)
  - White Americans: loud voice suggests anger/hostility; non-white Americans, Latin Americans, and Africans: loud voice signifies an exciting conversation.
  - **Baseline volume in Asia and Western Europe is lower than for Americans, who are thought of as rude.**
  - Africa: soft voice may be a sign of witchcraft, plotting or malicious gossip.
- Touch
  - *Latin Americans and Middle Easterners touch more frequently than Americans*, who limit touching to handshakes and shoulder pats. ME and Latin men will walk arm in arm, or even hold hands, signifying only friendship.
  - **Japanese do not like to be touched in a casual relationship. (e.g., Reid interview technique)**
  - ME: do not touch someone of the opposite sex.
  - *Touching someone on the head is offensive to most Asians.*
  - *Touging someone with the left hand is offensive in the ME. (Left hand is reserved for personal hygiene activities).*
  - Men kissing on the cheek is ok in France and Russia.

# Inter-Cultural Differences (cont.)

- Other indicators
  - Smiles
    - Americans: indicates friendship and goodwill
    - N. Europeans: smile less frequently, making Americans seem childish and flippant. In Russia, it's considered impolite.
    - **Asians: smile to smooth over embarrassing/awkward situations**
  - Facial control
    - Americans: individualism results in least control over facial expressions
    - Russians: exhibit the most control, followed by Japanese and Koreans (who seem 'inscrutable' to us).
    - Scandinavians consider a smile/any facial expression to show emotions to show weakness.
  - **Head movements**
    - **America: nodding up and down means yes.**
    - **ME and Bulgaria: same gesture means no.**
  - Hand gestures
    - *American thumbs up/OK signs are vulgar* to Iranians and Latin Americans, respectively.
    - Shaking hands is not allowed for women in Saudi Arabia and some other Arab countries.
    - *Hands on hips: signifies hostility in Mexico.*
    - *Shaking fist at a sporting event (America) is vulgar in Lebanon.*

# Inter-Cultural Differences (cont.)

- *Feet on the desk*: highly offensive to Asians and ME.
- Interruptions: expected in Latin America.
- Indication of height: open hand in Colombia if referring to a person; otherwise, you're signifying an animal's height.
- **Time**
  - ❑ Americans: timeliness indicates respect.
  - ❑ *Latins/ME: respect means continuing a discussion to its natural conclusion, even if it makes you late for your next meeting.*
- Silence
  - ❑ Americans: uncomfortable
  - ❑ Other cultures: respect, seriousness, thoughtfulness, disdain
- Agreement
  - ❑ Americans: yes means yes
  - ❑ Asians: yes may mean maybe, or I'll consider it (because it's too embarrassing to say no).

# Face-to-face interactions

## Not so simple

- *Everyone* is under the influence!
- We cannot adjust people's attitudes.
  - It's arrogant, we don't have the right, and we will fail
    - Cool Hand Luke
    - One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest
- We can only adjust how we interact.
- $2=6$

$$2=6$$

- A face-to-face encounter involves multiple interactions:
- You
  - Real self
  - Self as seen by self
  - *Self as seen by others*
- Client
  - Real self
  - *Self as seen by self*
  - Self as seen by others

# Mental Health/Clinical Issues

(depression, psychoses, manic, panic)

- Are these students are in your classes?
  - Nearly 20% of US adults lives with mental illness (2016, Nat'l Inst. MH)
  - Fewer than half receive treatment
- Characterized as an “epidemic”
- National College Health Assessment results:
  - 21 million college students transitioning to adulthood undergo significant challenges to mental health and well-being.
    - New social structure; greater academic pressure; less familial support; campus activity obligations; struggle to balance academic, social, nutrition, exercise, etc. (IACLEA, Jan/Feb 2019)
  - *60% of student surveyed experienced overwhelming stress/anxiety.*
  - *40% were too depressed to function.*
    - Only 10-15% of these students seek mental health assistance.

# Mental Health Problems Increasing (2010-2015 Changes)

- Been hospitalized for MH concerns: + 46%
- Seriously considered suicide attempt: + 38%
  - within last month: + 15%
- Made a suicide attempt: + 20%
- Attended counseling for MH concerns: + 7%
- Taken medication for MH concerns: + 7%
- Anxiety Disorder: 3.2-fold increase in the probability of substance abuse disorder
  - Since 2008, ER visits and in-patient stays increased 260% and 325%, respectively
  - 3-fold rise in cost of treatment, to ~\$3 billion
  - Earn 11% less than those without anxiety disorders

*(source: Campus Law Enforcement Journal, IACLEA, Jan/Feb 2019, pp. 28-30) and National Center for Campus Safety, Weekly Snapshot May 29, 2019*



# Manifestations

(e.g., developmental issues, PTSD, TBI)

*Everyone is under the influence!*

- Sensory overload
- Challenged by abstract thoughts
- Most crave routine
- Frustration due to shame, confusion or hopelessness
- Preoccupation w/certain ideas
- Problems with reason and problem-solving
- Volume
- Memory problems
- Lack of empathy and shared perspectives
- Embarrassment
- Defensiveness (personal space)
- Pacifying behaviors (may appear disrespectful)
  - Rocking
  - Stringing
  - Pacing /inability to sit still

# How to Deal with These Students

Often, it's best to do so in private.

- Establish expectations early
- Remain calm; be patient
- Allow to vent
- Don't invade personal space
  - Hands off
- Ask; don't demand, threaten or debate
  - Give options
- Ask:
  - What do you need?
  - What can I do to help?
  - What would help?
  - Do you understand what I am saying?
- Employ 3 E's:
  - Empathy
  - Explanation
  - Ego control
- Set time limits
- Outreach on their terms
- Engage/direct to services
- Summarize and paraphrase
- If issue can't be resolved, cancel class; offer to meet with student
- Document/report to appropriate officials

# What People Want

- Information
  - E.g., Why did you stop me?
- Empathy
  - Understand, even if we don't agree
  - *But first, we have to listen*
    - “Most people do not listen with the intent to understand; they listen with the intent to reply.” (Stephen R. Covey, Seven Habits of Highly Effective People)
- Respect
  - How we want to be treated under similar circumstances

**SOME TOOLS**

# The Art of Representation

- We are only representatives; it is not about us.
- Our personal feelings and beliefs are irrelevant obstacles to effective communications.
- Amateurs are ruled by adrenaline.
- Let others have the last word; you have the last act.
- Lose the ego!
  - The first zinger that comes to mind, though satisfying, is the greatest speech you will live to regret.
  - 90% of all complaints come from tone, not actual words.
    - *It's not what you said, it's \_\_\_\_\_!*
  - Be interested (or appear interested)

Truth is, you're annoying the crap out of me!  
(but I appear interested)



# Some more tools

- Understand your own triggers.
  - Examples:
    - I pay your salary; I was just....; I know your chief; I'm only getting a ticket because you have a quota; campus cops aren't real cops.....
  - Avoid the Niagara Falls moment
  - <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MYP1OBZfFK0>
- Deflective phrases
  - I understand you think this is unfair, but you still need to do x because .....(reason).
- Take the giant LEAPS
  - Listen
  - Empathize
  - Ask
  - Paraphrase
  - Summarize

# Tools (cont.)

- Paraphrasing is a key tool:
  - Sword of insertion: Hold on a minute. Let me make sure I understand what you are saying.
  - Actual paraphrase: You are saying you feel (emotion) because (reason).
- Appeal to one's sense of selfishness
  - i.e., what's in it for them.



# Things You Should *Never* Say

## (cont.)

- I'm not going to say this again!
- I'm doing this for your own good.
- You never..... or, You always.....
- You people.....
- Why don't you be reasonable?
- You want to go to jail?
- Have a good day (after giving a ticket)

# Things You Should *Never* Say

- Calm down.
- Come here (Are you calling a dog?)
- You wouldn't understand.
- Because those are the rules.
- It's none of your business.
- What do you want me to do about it?
- What's your problem?

# Things you *should* say

- Your safety is important to me.
- What can I do to help?
- Would you assist me by ....?
- Excuse me. May I have a word with you?
- That didn't come out right. Let me start again.
- I apologize (explain why you did what you did)
- Thank you for your cooperation (after a ticket)
- Sgt. Bagadonuts would like to speak with you (ethical intervention)

# Traffic stops

## Traditional (commanding)

- License and registration, please.
- I will tell you why I stopped you as soon as you produce your license and registration.
- Do you know why I stopped you?
  - Solicit an admission of guilt
- Stay in the car and I'll be with you in a minute.

## Verbal Judo (explanation)

- Good morning, I am Officer Bagadonuts of the XXX Police Department.
- The reason I stopped you is because you [offense].
- Is there a reason why you [missed that stop sign]?
- If not, I will need to see your license and registration. Where do you keep them?
- For your safety and mine, please stay in your car. I'll be with you in a moment after I evaluate your paperwork.

# 5-Step Interaction

## (a good report format)

- Ask (ethical appeal)
- Set context/explain why (reasonable appeal)
- Provide options (personal appeal)
  - Positive then negative options
- Confirm non-compliance (practical appeal)
- Act (if necessary)

# However: Danger Cues

- Red/flushed face
- Vocal extremes (very loud or soft)
- Heavy breathing
- Hands balled up as fists
- Standing in a bladed position
- Protruding veins
- Pointing at chest
- Clothes in disarray
- Thousand mile stare
- Unaware of surroundings
- Statements of sympathy or understanding for active shooter/violence
- Smell of alcohol or drugs
- Invades personal space

# Options

- Meet with angry individual
  - Wait 24 hours
  - Meet in a public space
  - If meet in office, don't allow to be boxed in
- Avoid threats, establish empathy, listen, explain, avoid ego, watch your non-verbal cues, allow to save face
- Cancel class and report to Care Team
- Call police (panic dialer) as last resort
  - NOT for classroom management issues, rudeness, etc.
  - Fear for your own safety or that of others
  - Crime: destruction of property
  - College operations are jeopardized
- Attend Self-Defense Considerations training

# Remember.....

- A verbal interaction is like a dance.
- Leadership is dependent on followership.
- Lose the ego.
- It's not about you. Know your weaknesses.
- Watch your voice (tone, pitch, pace and modulation). It's what generates complaints.
- Empathize.
- Explain.
- Don't be complacent, protect yourself
- Have fun; enjoy the challenge of difficult people.



Remember: our ultimate goal

