

# Dealing with Challenging Interactions

## Resources and Tips for Tough Moments

Mayo Clinic

<http://www.mayoclinic.com/health/assertive/SR00042>

MindTools.com: Essential Skills for an Excellent Career

<http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/Assertiveness.htm>

The Nemours Center for Children's Health Media

[http://kidshealth.org/teen/school\\_jobs/bullying/assertive.html](http://kidshealth.org/teen/school_jobs/bullying/assertive.html)

### RESPONDING TO CHALLENGING BEHAVIORAL STYLES

#### Responding to Aggressive Behavior

- Slow down
- Listen actively
- Do nothing; leave the room if you feel threatened
- Speak in a neutral tone
- Don't argue or apologize

#### Responding to Passive Behavior

- Allow the silence to continue
- Encourage sharing of ideas without judgment; use brainstorming
- Invite engagement: don't assume the other doesn't have an opinion or idea
- Use open-ended questions

#### Responding to Passive-Aggressive Behavior

- Avoid joining the other in this stance
- Negotiate the underlying problem if possible
- Move into problem-solving mode
- Set specific goals to hold the other person accountable—then follow through

More information is available at:

**800.222.0364 / 888.262.7848 (TTY)**

**www.FOH4You.com**



## COPING TIPS FOR CHALLENGING INTERACTIONS

### Assess the other's behavior

- Is the other person responding assertively or otherwise?
- Is this a familiar pattern on the other's part?

### Assess my reaction

- What reaction am I having to this behavioral style?
- Is my own reaction a familiar pattern?
- Am I over-reacting?
- What resources do I have to respond assertively?

### Accept the situation

- Stop wishing the situation were different

### Get some distance emotionally and/or physically

- Slow down breathing
- Take a time out if possible
- Leave the room if safety is an issue

### Strategize an approach

- How can I use assertive behavior in this situation?
- Can the other's behavior be discussed directly?
- If so, find the optimum time and place for the conversation.
- If not, what other options are to deal with the other's style?
- Let your own well-being be a priority in choosing how to communicate in a difficult interaction.

### Implement the approach by responding assertively

- Say what needs to be said, not more and not less
- Speak with calmness, clarity and respect
- Stick to the immediate topic
- Approach the interaction with a "can-do" attitude
- Be open while still being clear about your boundaries
- If a limit needs to be set, do it calmly
- Lead by example

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