

3 Types of Difficult People at Work and How to Deal with Them

Stress in the workplace does not only come from heavy workloads and deadlines but also from dealing with difficult people at work. Some are involved in hostile or aggressive behaviors, takes credit for your own work, and try to bring you down. These are some examples of difficult people at work -- the bullies, idea-stealer and saboteur. These kinds of difficult people make you feel uneasy moving around the office and affect your productivity. Here are some strategies on how to handle these kinds of difficult people at work.

1. Bullies

Bullies have a great sense of insecurity and to mask such they act in subtle to blatantly disrespectful manner to gain control of others. The subtle way can be through a joke or inappropriate remark. Then later, they can be bolder and say belittling words or accusations against you. They can be uncontrollable which make them fall into anger or physical aggression. They shout, throw away objects, bang the door and pound on the table to intimidate others.

How to Deal With:

It's best to handle issues immediately with the bully than having to confront a serious disrespect they do against you. You have to learn the art of being assertive and to establish boundaries. With an offensive remark or joke, you can immediately respond by saying, "What did you mean by _____?" Say this by looking at the bully straight into his eyes, stand still, be calm and show confidence to make the impression he can't just easily hit you off the wall.

2. Idea-Stealer

Idea-stealers claim someone's work as his own. They asked for your idea or opinion during a casual talk in a coffee shop and suddenly you hear them present that idea in a meeting. They involved you in a project and asked for your recommendations but they presented those recommendations as their ideas to your boss. They asked you to finish a report but removed your name as one of the contributors. Of course, you will definitely feel cheated and wasted some time on a project which you can be credited for.

How to Deal With:

Be proactive. Offer your ideas only during an official meeting. Document everything. You can also immediately produce a written report and submit it to your boss as evidence of your contribution to the project. Offer your ideas to the head or leader of the project who will acknowledge your contributions as significant rather than to a fellow co-worker, who just like you, is waiting for his crowning glory. Commit only to projects that clearly states who is responsible for a particular output.

3. Saboteur

Saboteurs negatively affect efficiency or productivity at the workplace. They make alliances with other co-workers who perceive you as a threat or competitor for a position or attention from your boss, jealous of your achievements, who just utterly dislike you for no deep reason. These difficult people at work displace the blame to you for their deliberate poor performance, spread rumors about you, alienate you from being involved in an important project or involve you in a project which you find impossible to accomplish.

How to Deal With:

Be on the lookout. Try first to figure things out on your own why you weren't given that particular project, promoted or received a raise in your salary. Try to get close to your enemies. Listen closely to their conversation when you feel that you are the topic. Keep a record of their attitude towards you or the deliberate mishaps they place upon you to fail at work. Keep documents and exchange of conversations. Once you have all these evidence, you can confront them in a firm yet calm and professional manner. Avoid personal attacks but strictly focus on the issues at hand. If the issues get out of hand, get the opinion of your trusted boss or a manager.

Know there is no perfect workplace. You might see a combination of a bully, idea-stealer, and saboteur in just one person. Remember that you cannot change their behavior but you can always change the way you respond to them. You have to try a combination of strategies on how to handle them to know which ones work. By doing so, you can escape the trap of being the victim of these kinds of difficult people at work.