

Contact with an Angry Person



the goal

Everyone, at some point, will deal with a person who is obviously angry. The outcome of this dealing will largely depend on our ability to maintain perspective, control our emotions, and react to this person in an appropriate fashion. The students need to understand how to communicate with a person who is obviously angry and minimize the negative potential coming out of this meeting.

the objective



This exercise will help the students understand how to deal with a person who is angry and is being aggressive with their anger.

exercise

- 1 Ask the students to describe the physical appearance of a really angry person. What does their face look like? What is happening with their eyes? Forehead? Mouth? Hands? Posture? Help the students fully define the appearance of an angry and aggressive person.
- 2 After the students have fully described anger, model this description. Assume the posture and facial expressions described and state the following in an angry tone:

“You know what gets to me?!? The fact that we have to keep going over this stuff with you! When do you think you’re going to catch on to this so we can quit covering this same old tired ground???”
- 3 Maintain the posture and appearance long enough for the students to give some sort of response. Make note of the type of response given.
- 4 Laugh and tell the students that you were demonstrating the person just described. Ask how you did and then ask the students to give their best performance of the person described.

- 5 As the students demonstrate an angry person, look for any discrepancies between the traits described and what they are demonstrating.
- 6 Explain that we live in a crowded world and not everyone is going to get along. In fact, there will be people with whom the students will have direct confrontations and anger will be involved.
- 7 Ask the students to describe a situation that might cause a person to react angrily towards them. Help the students think of an example, such as opening a car door and banging it into the next car while the person is inside.
- 8 Help the students think of several examples of things that might legitimately provoke someone towards anger.
- 9 After the students have thought of several anger-provoking situations, put the students in the receiving role of each of these situations and ask for a full description how they would react. For example, if it was their brand new car and someone opened their car door and put a big dent and scratch in it, what would they do? Make a note of each response.
- 10 After the students have given their response to each scenario, pick the scenarios that would demonstrate confrontational type anger and reverse the student's role again. Use the student's response as the response of a person much larger and older and angrier than the student.
- 11 Ask how the students are now going to handle this situation when someone bigger, older, and madder is now coming towards them with the same reaction.
- 12 Tell the students to think quickly because angry people do not tend to wait around until you are fully prepared to deal with them.

13 After the students have shared how they would deal with this person, whether right or wrong, remind them that there will be situations someday when they will have to deal with someone who is angry, either legitimately or not.

14 Take the students back to the beginning of the scene that caused the anger. Walk through each participant's role and what brought about the anger, how the angry person reacted, and what the students are now going to do.

15 Tell the students to look closely at their reaction to the angry person. What is this response driven by? Is it a reaction to the angry person, or is it a thoughtful reaction.

16 Explain that the way of dealing with an angry person is to deal with the outcome the students would want to achieve. In order to do this, they must:

- **Think - Don't React:** A reaction will likely be an emotional response to an emotional response and very little good can come of this.
- **Listen – Don't Talk:** When a person is angry enough to be confrontational, you need to know why they are angry. The only way of finding out is to hear it from them.
- **Understand Your Role:** If you have done something to provoke this aggression, you need to know it. If you are innocent, you need to know it.
- **Take a Position:** If you are at fault, you need to know it and be prepared to address it. Nothing will calm an angry person faster than taking responsibility for your actions. If you are not at fault, then you need to be able to articulate your rebuttal.
- **Take Action:** If you are at fault, then you need to be personally accountable and take responsibility for your actions so that you're prepared to make it right. This may be a simple apology or it may involve a more direct action such as paying for something that is broken. Whatever the case, if you are at fault, be a strong enough person to admit fault and deal with it.

17 If you are not at fault, stand up for yourself in an articulate manner and hold firm to your conviction. However, arguing with an angry person is not the right approach. State your position, explain why you have taken your position, and if the person does not calm down, remove yourself from their presence.

18 Explain that the best way of dealing with an angry person is from a position of honesty and responsibility. If you are wrong, then it is important to be conciliatory. If you are right, then it is important to be articulate and calm. The best way to calm down an angry person is to be calm yourself.

19 Ask the students to now look back at the scenarios listed and the angry response to each scenario. Work with them to apply the process above to deal with the situation. Talk about the consequences of the first way they wanted to deal with the problem compared to the consequences of this new approach. Which is better?

20 Finally, help the students identify people and places where they are most likely to deal with someone who might be confrontational and angry. Help develop a personal game plan for dealing with this potential confronter.

summary

Few people like confrontations, and no one likes to be on the receiving end of a person's anger. However, at some point in everyone's life there will be angry people. Whether the person is right or wrong, the students needs to know how to deal with this person and to make sure the outcome is good. They need to learn how to deal with an angry and confrontational person from a position of rationale rather than emotion, and from an outcome oriented stance rather than a reactionary one.

and hints

outcomes



As the students describe the physical characteristics of an angry person, write each one down. Ask the students to give as much detail as possible.

As the students identify possible scenarios in which people might react angrily towards them, encourage them to think of actual confrontations from an angry person.

Maintain an outcome focus when dealing with each step of the process about dealing with an angry person.

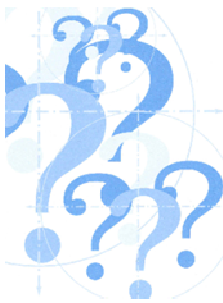
talking

points

- Share a time with the students when an angry person confronted you. What role did you play in the problem? How did you react? What was the outcome?
- Help personalize the lesson by identifying and dealing with a specific time the students had to deal with someone that was very angry towards them.
- Talk about the fact that we live in a crowded world and they will face a time when they were confronted by an angry person. Talk about the need to be prepared and the need to have the confidence to deal with the situation.



probing



questions

- Has anyone ever been really mad at you? What did you do? How did you know they were angry? What was your response? What was the outcome?
- What is your first reaction to someone when they yell at you? Does this reaction produce the best possible results for you? Why or why not?
- Why is it important not to react to an emotionally charged person with an emotionally charged response?

Skills Lesson Recap



the goal

Everyone at some point will deal with a person who is obviously angry. The outcome of this situation will largely depend on your ability to maintain perspective, control your emotions, and react to this person in an appropriate fashion. You need to understand how to communicate with a person who is obviously angry and minimize the negative potential coming out of this meeting.

exercise key points

- In this exercise you gave a detailed description of how someone appears when they are extremely angry. You were also involved in a role-play situation with the instructor involving the characteristics of an angry person.
- You identified a number of anger provoking situations you might experience in every day life. Using those same examples the instructor led you through a role-playing exercise in order for you to see how you might react if you were the one who was upset.
- You learned 5 key points that must be practiced when dealing with an angry person in order for you to have a chance at reaching your desired outcome.
- You learned that no matter who was at fault for causing a negative outcome you must deal with the other person in a calm and mature manner.

consequence of not

By not utilizing the skills you learned from this exercise you might miss the opportunity to diffuse a hostile situation involving an angry person and run the risk of upsetting yourself and the other person in the process.

using this skill



benefits

of using this skill

By using the skills taught within this exercise you are now able to develop a plan to help you manage difficult situations involving an angry person so that you may consistently achieve the best possible outcomes given the circumstances.

Contact with an Angry Person

In detail, describe the physical appearance of someone who is really angry.

Describe 3 situations where you might do something that makes someone else angry:

ANGER-PROVOKING SITUATIONS:	YOUR REACTION, IF PROVOKED	REACTION TO ANGRY PERSON
1.		
2.		
3.		

What are the five steps you should take when confronted with an angry person?

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____ 4. _____ 5. _____

How do honesty and responsibility help you deal with an angry person?

Student: _____ Facilitator: _____ Date: _____