



Helping Difficult Clients

David Godfrey, JD

Troy A. Johnson, MSW

Sherry Huff-Culp, CSW

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Why Me?

- Why might they be difficult?
- We see people in crisis
 - Sick
 - Displaced
 - Loss
 - Grief
 - Pain
 - Hurt



Fear of authority

- Past experience with authority
- Doctors
- Lawyers
- Police
- Child and family services



Approach to the issue

- Concentrate on behaviors
- Strategies managing behaviors
- Diverse underlying causes
- Awareness of the underlying causes
- Not treat the causes

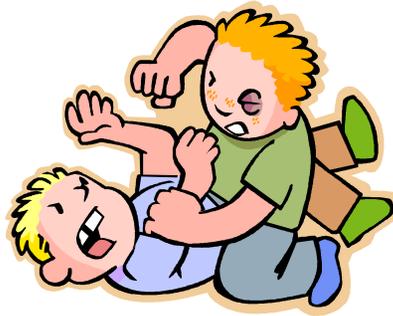


Types of Difficult Clients

- Assertive or aggressive callers



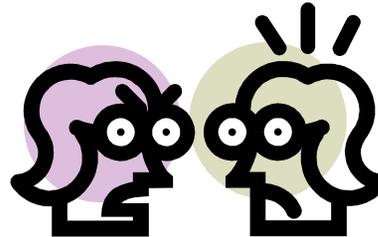
- Angry Callers



- Talkers



- Non-Talkers



Assertive or aggressive clients

Behaviors:

- Impatient
- Rushed
- Cold
- Loud
- Show authority
- Name droppers
- Demand action



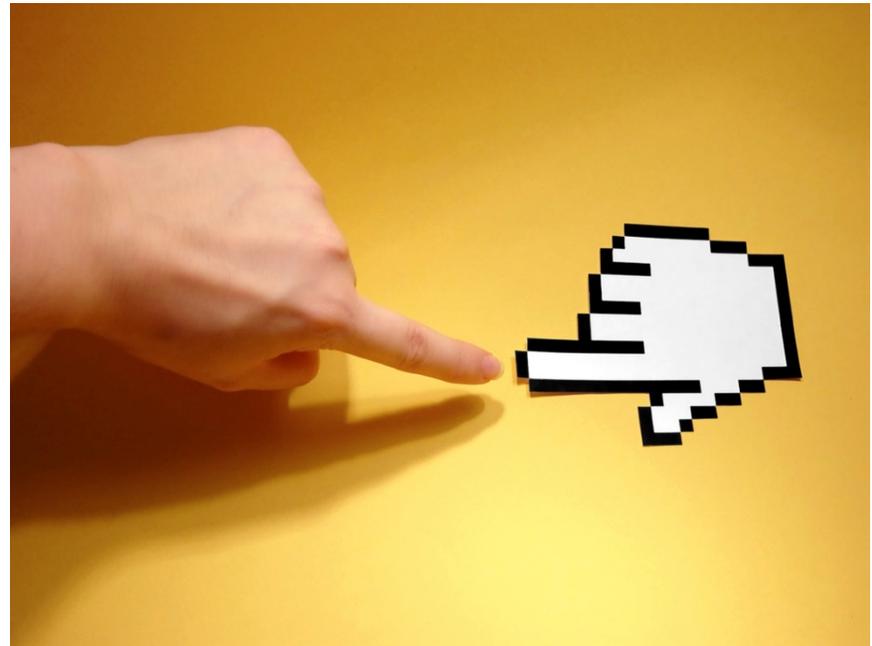
Strategies

- Raise your assertiveness level, but always keep it below theirs



Aggressive

- If your voice is soft, raise it slightly
- Be direct and to the point
- Stick to the business
- Cut the small talk
- Sit or stand tall



Aggressive Clients

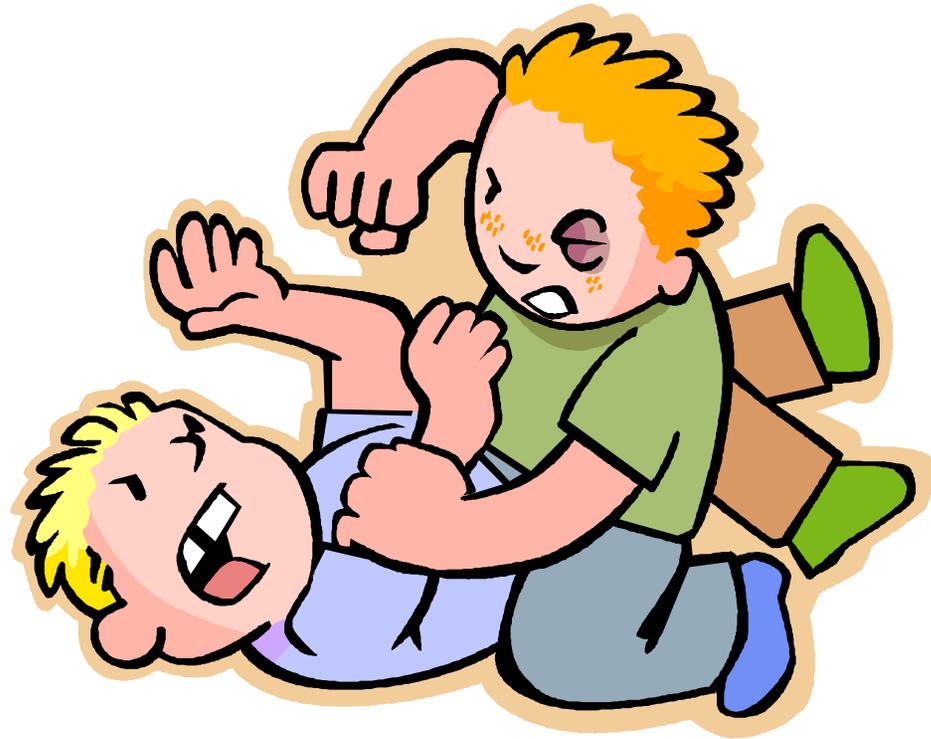
- Do not be offended by the lack of rapport
- Culture plays a role



Angry Clients

Behaviors:

- Mad
- Loud
- Screaming
- Cursing
- Insulting
- Distrustful
- Argumentative



Strategies

- Depersonalize the emotions
 - They are hurt
 - Not your fault
 - Power and Control issues
- Let the client vent
- Empathize without committing to agreement



- The louder they get

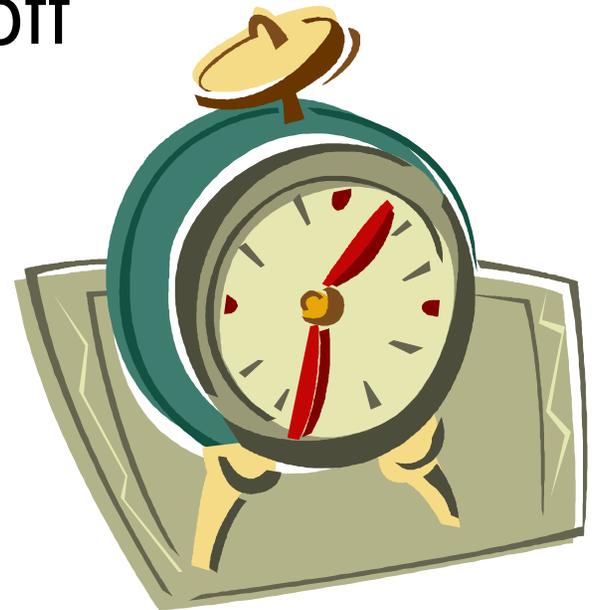
the softer you get



- Avoid becoming defensive
- Use positive phrases to correct information
- Use “I” phrasing instead of “you” phrasing
- Take responsibility for what you can do

Take a break

- Ask permission
- Minute or two
- Gather your thoughts
- Give them a chance to cool off
- Come back with a strategy



Ask for Help

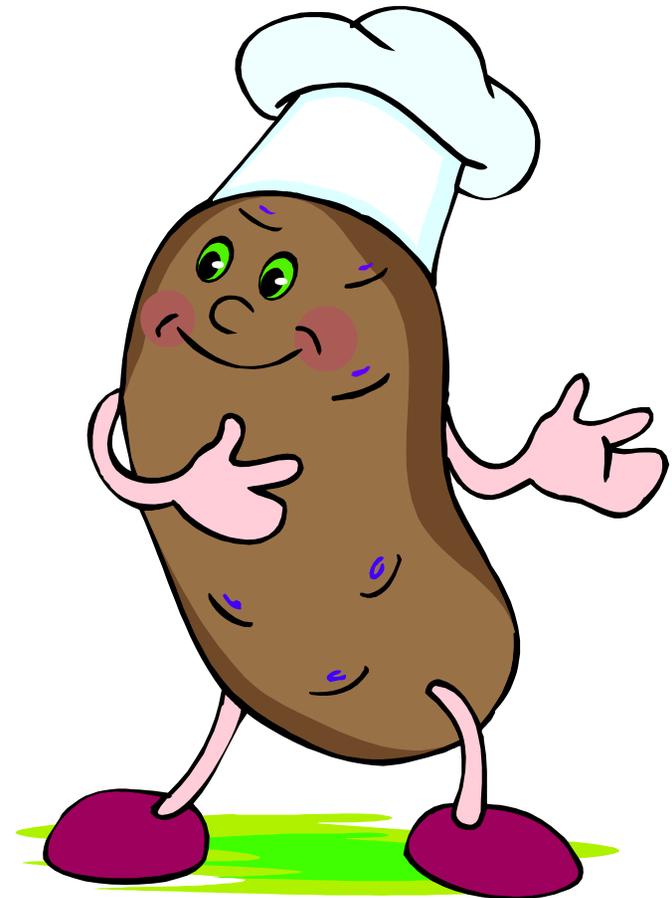
- Ask permission
- Ask a colleague
- I checked with _____ and _____



Hand Off a Hot One

- Ask permission
- Brief your colleague
- Different eyes and ears

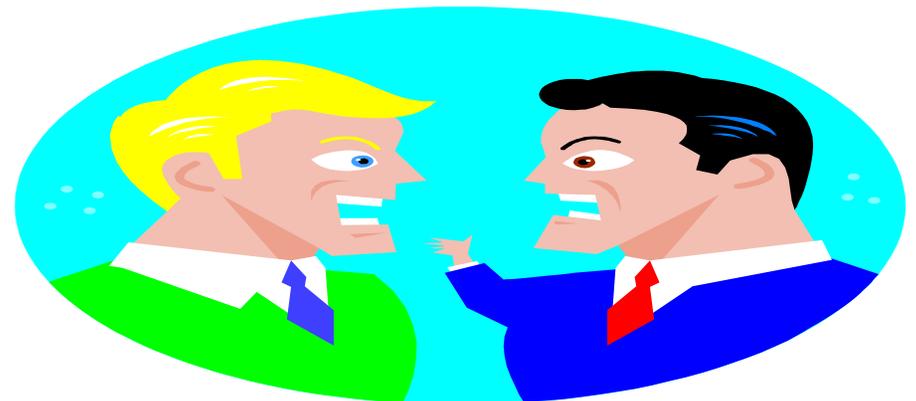
- Cooled off
- Cultural expectations
- Real authority



Talkers

Want to tell you

- Life story
 - Lots of things unrelated to the issue
 - Too much Information
 - Can't get away
- They need someone to talk to
 - May be lonely
 - May feel that no one believes them
 - Wear you down until you agree



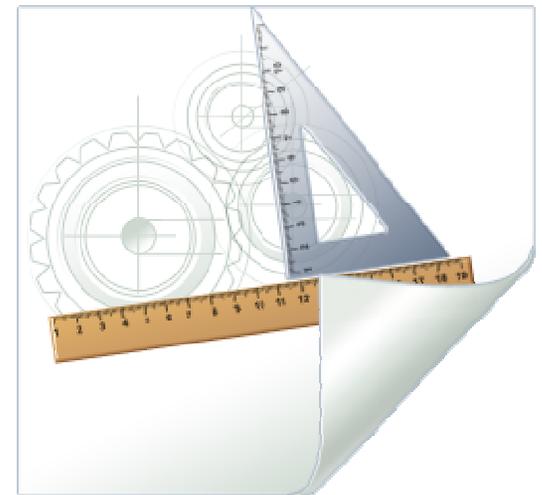
Varieties of Talkers

- Social Talkers
 - Just like to talk
 - Will respond to reason
- Talkers with a special needs
 - NEED TO TALK
 - Are very difficult to reason with
- Sort between the two
 - Allow extra time with special needs



High Volume Environment

- Try more than one technique to control the conversation
- If you can't control the conversation recognize that the client may have special needs
- Have a plan for special needs



Interrupt to focus

- I really need to ask . . .
- Let me interrupt you for just a moment . . .
- I think we need to focus on . . .
- Can we get back to . . .
- It would really help me to know more about . . .



Talkers

- Provide minimal responses
 - Feedback encourages talking
- Offer to meet them when you have more time to listen
- Try to connect them with others who can listen



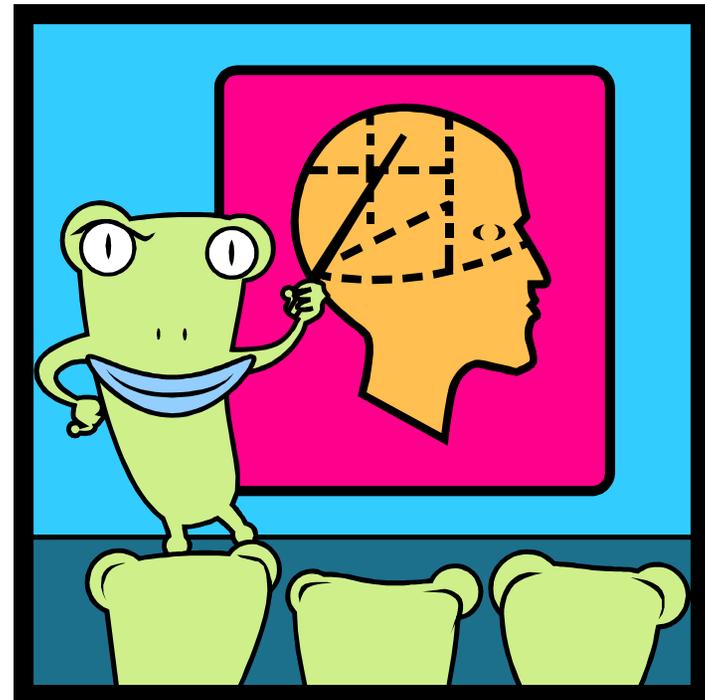
Control the conversation

- The person who ask questions
- Shorten pauses



Probing

- Follow up question based on previous answer
 - Shows that you are listening
 - Used to gather additional information
 - Focuses conversation
-
- Example:
 - My last vacation?



Exercise – Probing Questions

- Round 1
- Topic: Their education
- Round 2
- Topic: Their work



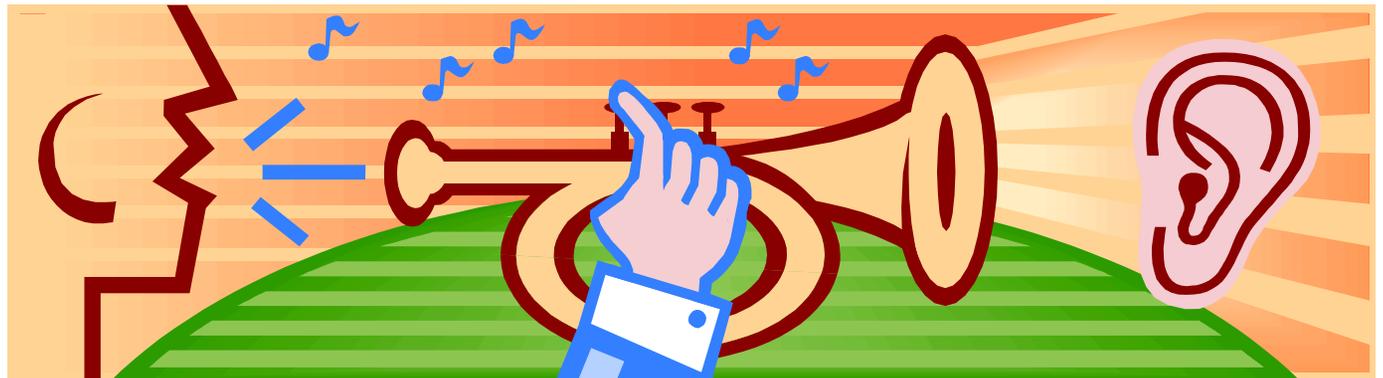
Practice Active Listening

- Acknowledge – eye contact – concentrate
- Rephrase key points
- Summarize and feed it back
- Non-threatening questions that reinforce understanding



Listening Tips

- Focus your attention
- Review mentally what you already know about the subject
- Avoid distractions
- Acknowledge your emotional state
- Set aside your prejudices and your opinions



Set Limits

- Establish ground rules
 - There are three issues here, let's start with
- Concentrate on one issue at a time
- Redirect the conversation back to that issue



Ending the Conversation

- I know you are busy, so I'll let you go now
- I need to get started on this right away, so I am going to run
- May I call you tomorrow after I have done some research?
- I have another call holding
- I hate to run, but my 3:30 appointment is waiting



Non-talkers

- I have a problem
- Short answers
- No answers
- Only what is asked
- Fear

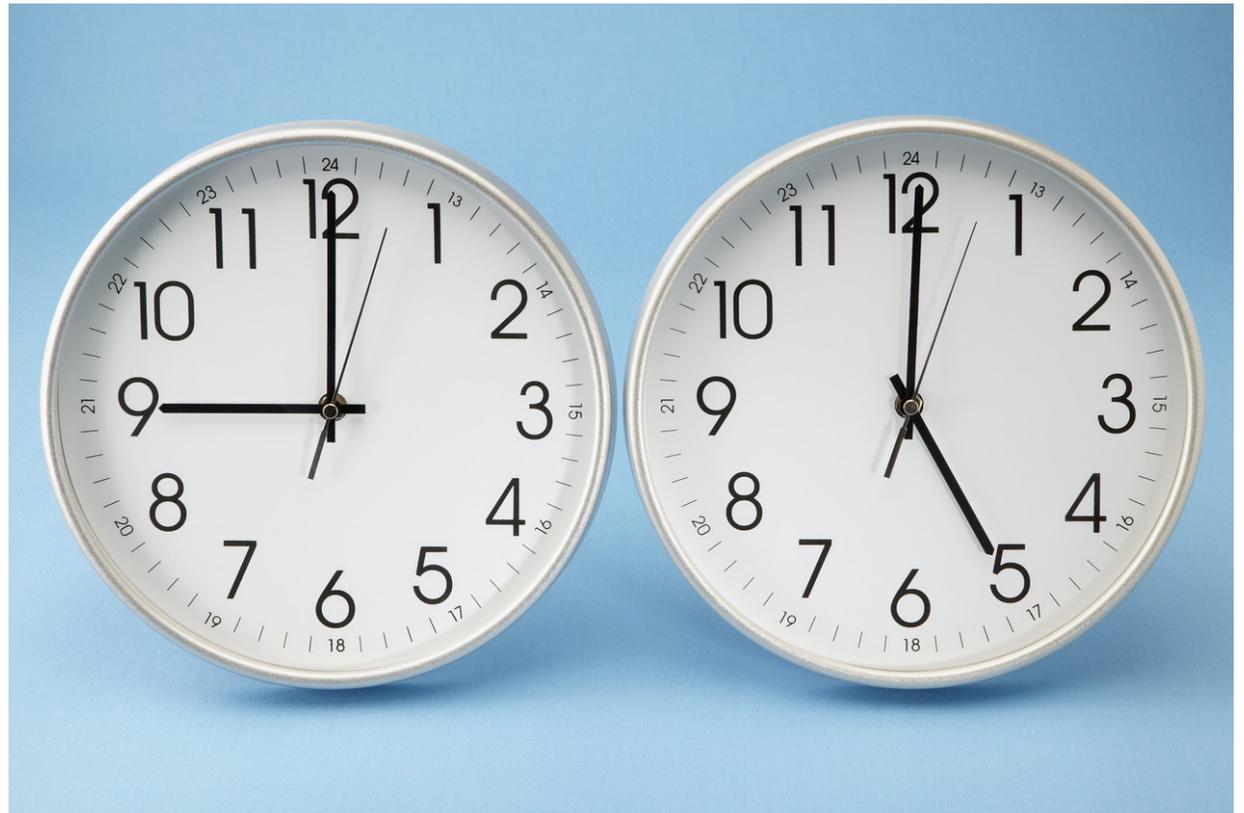


Surprises are for your birthday

- You need them to talk
- Set the scene for privacy
- Explain confidentiality
- Explain why it is important that you know
- Offer examples
- Offer to help them find answers



- Encourage – reinforce
- Get them talking about things they know
- Don't fear the silence - He who speaks first buys it





The Boy Who Cried Wolf

There once was a shepherd boy who was bored as he sat on the hillside watching the village sheep. To amuse himself he took a great breath and sang out, "Wolf! Wolf! The Wolf is chasing the sheep!"

The villagers came running up the hill to help the boy drive the wolf away. But when they arrived at the top of the hill, they found no wolf. The boy laughed at the sight of their angry faces.

"Don't cry 'wolf', shepherd boy," said the villagers, "when there's no wolf!" They went grumbling back down the hill.

Later, the boy sang out again, "Wolf! Wolf! The wolf is chasing the sheep!" To his naughty delight, he watched the villagers run up the hill to help him drive the wolf away.

When the villagers saw no wolf they sternly said, "Save your frightened song for when there is really something wrong! Don't cry 'wolf' when there is NO wolf!"

But the boy just grinned and watched them go grumbling down the hill once more.

Later, he saw a REAL wolf prowling about his flock. Alarmed, he leaped to his feet and sang out as loudly as he could, "Wolf! Wolf!"

But the villagers thought he was trying to fool them again, and so they didn't come.

At sunset, everyone wondered why the shepherd boy hadn't returned to the village with their sheep. They went up the hill to find the boy. They found him weeping.

"There really was a wolf here! The flock has scattered! I cried out, "Wolf!" Why didn't you come?"

An old man tried to comfort the boy as they walked back to the village.

"We'll help you look for the lost sheep in the morning," he said, putting his arm around the youth, "Nobody believes a liar...even when he is telling the truth!"

Frequent Flyer Club

Is the caller crying “wolf”?

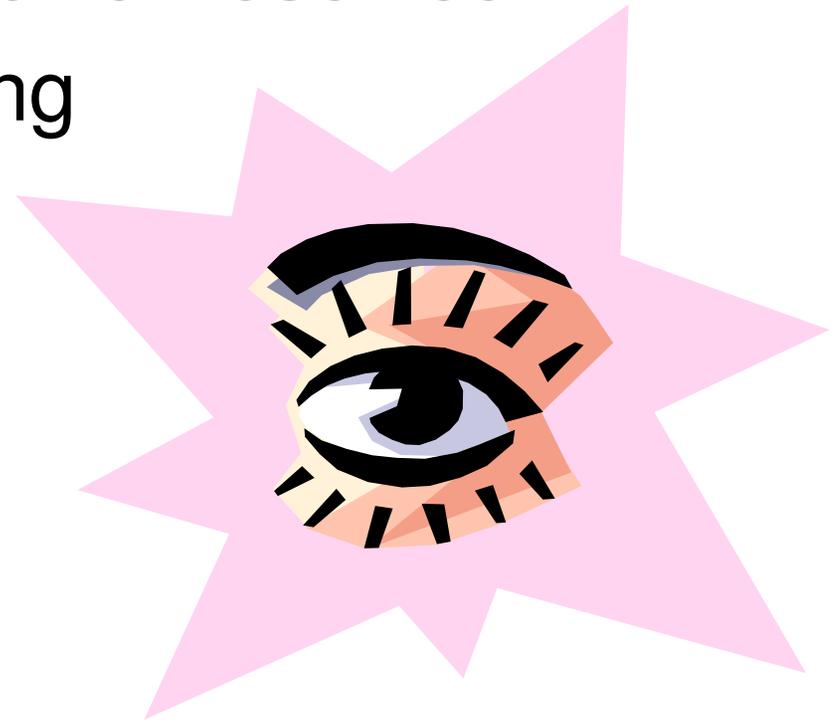
- Don't Make Assumptions
- Listen with an open mind
- Ask probing questions
- Identify/test clients ultimate goal
- Use inclusive rather than exclusive mind set (i.e., is there some way I can help this person?)



Frequent Flyer

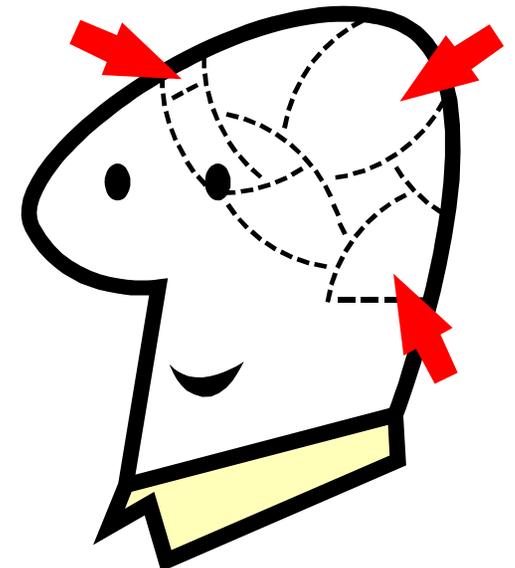
Look For

- New issue that you can help with
- Change in circumstances
- Is underlying problem still unresolved
- If irresolvable, counseling
- Social need to talk



Capacity Concerns

- Capacity is the ability to make and communicate informed decisions, taking into consideration the risks and benefits of the choice being made
- Capacity is presumed until proven otherwise

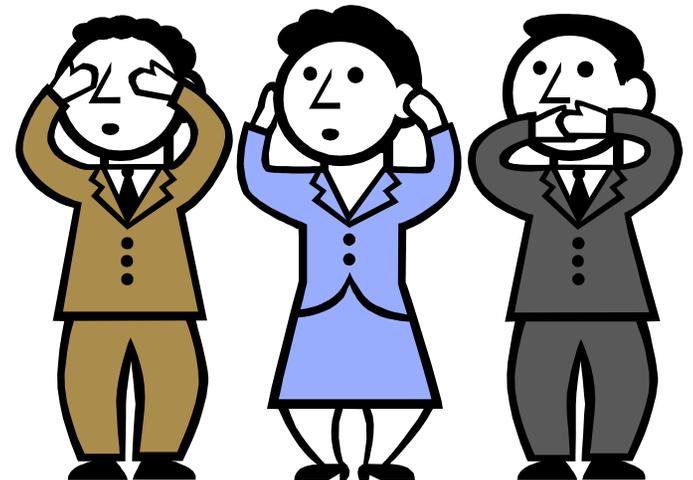


- Articulate reasoning for decisions
- Risks and benefits
- Stable of state of mind
- Appreciate consequences of decision
- Substantive fairness of decision
- Consistency with known long term commitments and values

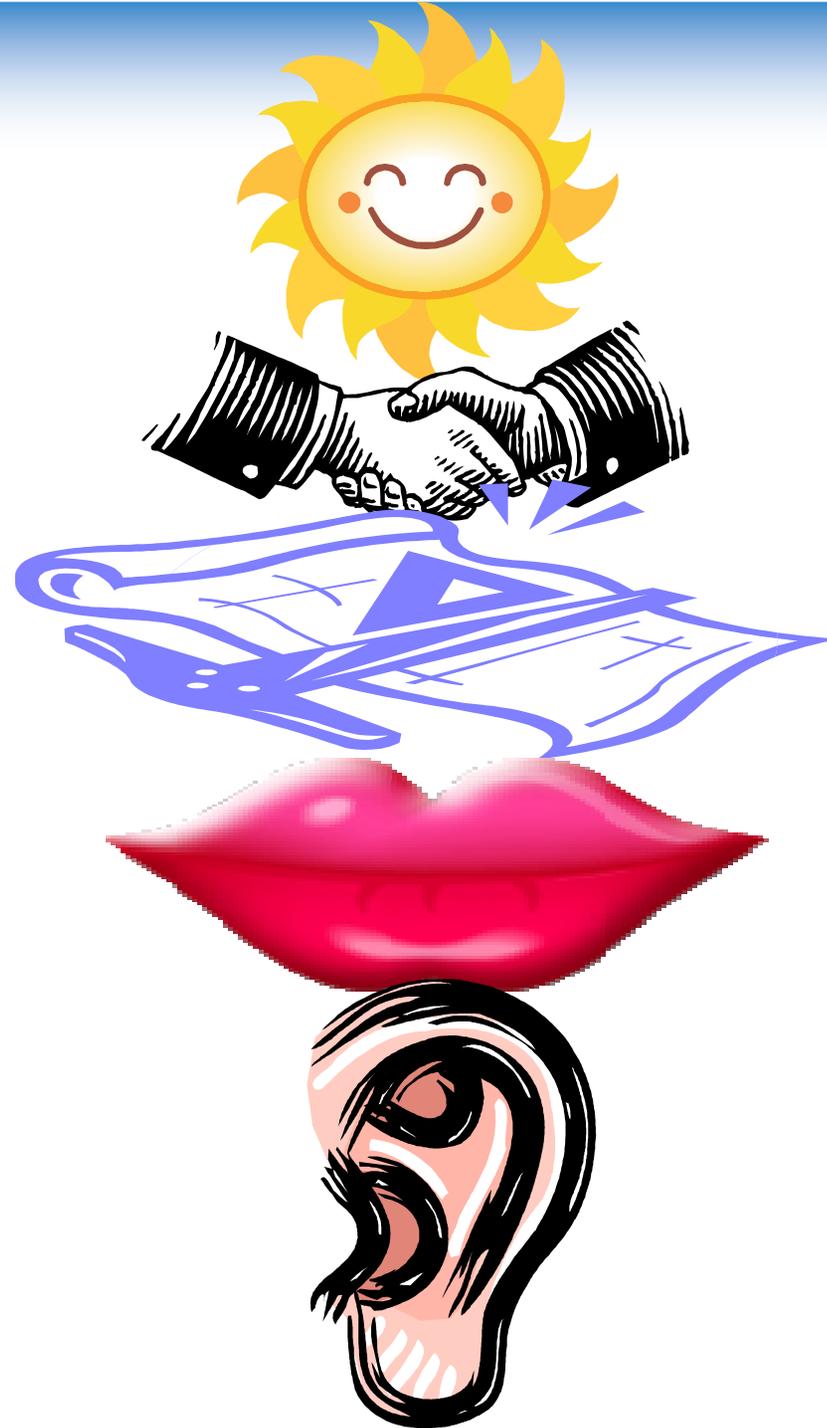


Look for

- Decisional ability
- Memory (short and long term)
- Communication
- Comprehension
- Mental flexibility
- Calculation
- Disorientation
- Emotional distress
- Emotional inappropriateness
- Delusions
- Hallucinations
- Poor grooming



Strategy for Difficult Clients



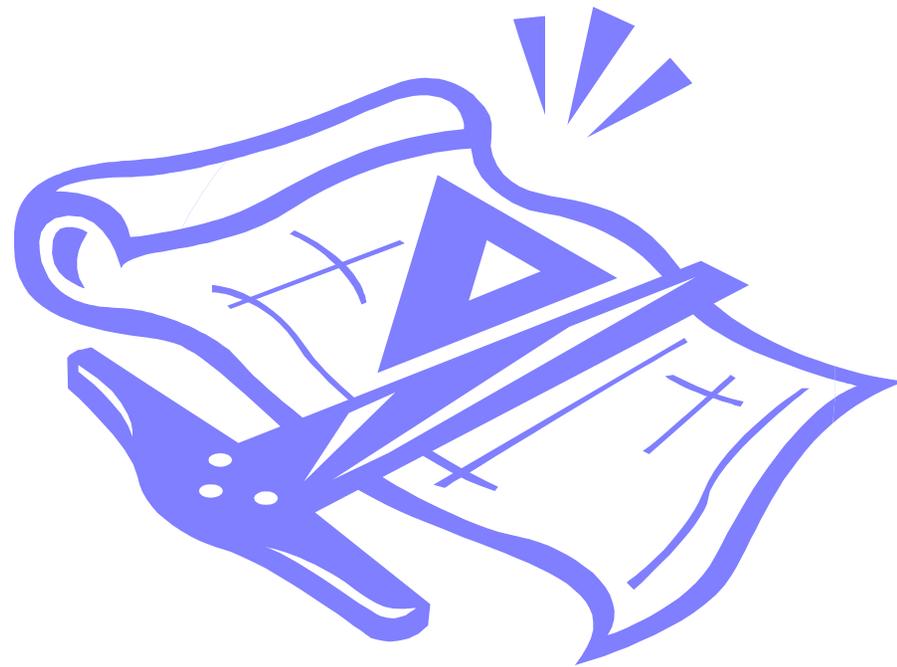
- Hear them out



- Summarize and feed it back



- Make a plan

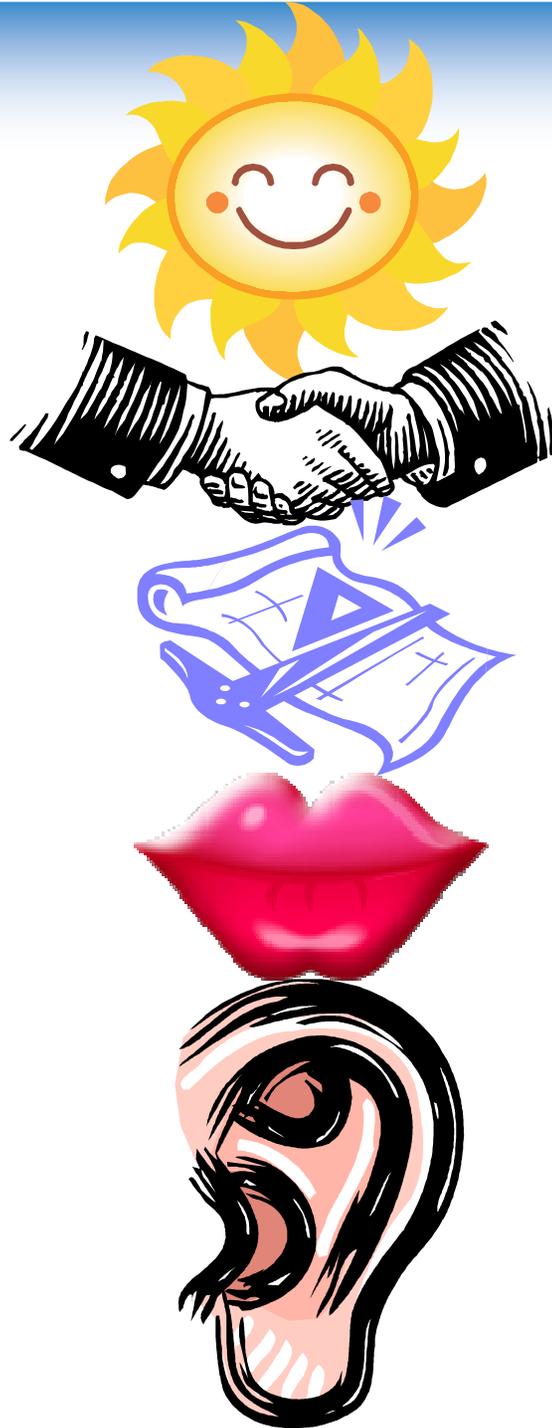


- Confirm agreement



- Under promise and over deliver





Self Check

- How am I reacting?
- What is happening in my life that impacts how I can deal with this person?
- If I were in their shoes – how would I feel?
- What is my stress level?





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Communication: Beyond Words

- Rapport versus Technique
- View the resident as a person & not an illness or a disability
- What the resident wants

Troy A. Johnson, MSW
Director of Programs and Services



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Beyond Words: Rapport vs. Technique

- Actions that foster rapport
 - Consistency
 - Respectful Approach
 - Humor
 - Finding something to identify with
 - Perception
 - *Neighbor vs. Resident*



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Beyond Words: Mental Illness

- Common mental illnesses in nursing homes
 - Schizophrenia
 - Delirium
 - Depression & Complicated Grief



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Beyond Words: Sensory Loss

- Common impairments
 - Sight
 - Hearing
 - Speech



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Beyond Words: Pain & Memory Loss

- Physical illness and memory loss can impact communication.
 - Pain Indicators
 - Memory Loss
 - Alzheimer's

Sherry Huff-Culp, CSW
Executive Director



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Beyond Words: Indicators of Pain

3% of long-stay residents have moderate to severe pain

19% of short-stay residents have moderate to severe pain

Medicare.Gov

- Vocal Expression
- Facial Expression
- Bracing
- Restlessness
- Rubbing

Feldt's Checklist of Nonverbal Pain Indicators



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Beyond Words: Signs of Memory Loss

1. Disrupts Daily Life
2. Planning & Problem Solving
3. Familiar Tasks
4. Time & Place
5. Visual & Spatial Understanding
6. Problems with Speech & Writing
7. Misplacing items & Retracing Steps
8. Decreased Judgment Skills
9. Withdrawal
10. Mood & Personality Changes



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Beyond Words: Stages of Alzheimer's

1. No Impairment
2. Very Mild Decline
3. Mild Decline
4. Moderate Decline
5. Moderately Severe Decline
6. Severe Decline
7. Very Severe Decline

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Thank You

Sherry Huff-Culp, CSW

– sherryculp@ombuddy.org

Troy A. Johnson, MSW

– TroyJohnson@ombuddy.org

David Godfrey, JD

– godfreyd@staff.abanet.org



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