



BUILDING POSITIVE RELATIONSHIPS AT WORK



## PRESENTER

### **Debra Barker**

Debra Barker is a premiere key note speaker who holds a bachelor's degree in psychology with a minor in crisis counseling and a master's degree in business administration with a minor in accounting.



She started her career as a life skills counselor and has maintained those licenses since the early 1990's. She is a solution focused financial counselor/coach as well as an adult educator. Additionally, Debra holds certifications as a personal fitness trainer and sports nutritionist and she works with clients on both emotional and physical fitness in all aspects of their professional and personal life goals.

Debra has been a keynote speaker for more than 20 years and has taught over 10,000 hours of solution focused developmental programs in psychology as well as finance.



## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Discuss different personality types in the workplace
- Understand how to build relationships by recognizing differences as strengths
- Identify your own attitudes and perceptions of those who are different from you
- Discuss how to approach workplace differences constructively
- Understand the benefits of a diverse work group



# DEFINING DIFFERENCES

Age

Gender

Race

Ethnicity

Culture

Disability



Education

Values

Business roles

Attitudes

Behaviors

Personality types



## 10 CHALLENGING PERSONALITY TYPES

1. The Staller
2. The Sniper
3. The Complainer/Whiner
4. The Tank/Bulldozer
5. The Volcano/Exploder
6. The Yes Man/Woman
7. The Competitor
8. The Pessimist
9. The Clam
10. The Know-It-All

Adapted from: Brinkman and Kirschner (2012) and Tucker-Ladd (n.d.)

# PERSONALITY: THE STALLER

## CHARACTERISTICS

- They can't make a decision
- They second guess
- They are afraid to be wrong or to be held accountable
- They put off people and things
- They wait...and...wait...



# PERSONALITY: THE STALLER

## HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

- Establish a 'comfort zone'
- Clarify options
- Assist in problem solving
- Highlight the benefits of deciding





# PERSONALITY: THE SNIPER

## CHARACTERISTICS

- They criticize with sarcasm and humor
- They might make a statement and then rescind it





## PERSONALITY: THE SNIPER

### HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

- Manage your emotions – keep your cool
- Address useful comments or concerns
- Ask them if they really mean what they are saying
- Bring their intentions to the forefront
- Be assertive – hold your ground



## PERSONALITY: THE COMPLAINER/WHINER



### CHARACTERISTICS

- They whine, “Nothing is right.”
- They may feel powerless
- They see things as too much or not enough

## PERSONALITY: THE COMPLAINER/WHINER

### HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

- Listen actively and paraphrase their statements
- Do not agree or disagree
- If you are the manager, ask for complaints in writing
- Set time limits for complaints and try to illicit positives



## PERSONALITY: THE TANK/BULLDOZER

### CHARACTERISTICS

- They can be abusive and intimidating
- Aggressive communication style
- They have a tendency to dominate a situation



# PERSONALITY: THE TANK/BULLDOZER

## HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

- Stand your ground and be assertive
- Avoid becoming defensive
- Stay calm



# PERSONALITY: THE VOLCANO/EXPLODER

## CHARACTERISTICS



- They can be composed one minute, and then angry the next
- They may become agitated under pressure

# PERSONALITY: THE VOLCANO/EXPLODER

## HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

- Keep your cool and stay objective
- Let them know that you understand their feelings but that their actions are inappropriate in the workplace
- Offer resources for assistance





# PERSONALITY: THE YES MAN/WOMAN



## CHARACTERISTICS

- They are super nice
- They always say “yes” and may bite off more than they can chew
- They want to be well-liked
- They need recognition
- Tendency to get burned out

# PERSONALITY: THE YES MAN/WOMAN

## HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

- Help them prioritize
- Help them problem solve
- Help them to not take on more than they can really handle
- Give them support to say “no” or manage responsibilities appropriately



# PERSONALITY: THE COMPETITOR

## CHARACTERISTICS



- They are overachievers
- They can stretch themselves to the breaking point
- They want to achieve greatness
- They will sometimes criticize others in the process of trying to get noticed

# PERSONALITY: THE COMPETITOR

## HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

- Recognize your own competitive qualities
- Don't allow yourself to be afraid, intimidated, or provoked
- Communicate a secure image



# PERSONALITY: THE PESSIMIST

## CHARACTERISTICS

- They expect the worst
- They engage others in negative thinking
- They look at the “cup as half empty”



## PERSONALITY: THE PESSIMIST

### HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

- Don't argue or get involved in the negative comments
- Utilize positive responses
- Acknowledge good intent and try to involve them in the solution



# PERSONALITY: THE CLAM

## CHARACTERISTICS



- They don't say much
- Difficult to get them to open up
- They don't display an obvious response
- They can be tough to read



# PERSONALITY: THE CLAM

## HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

- Ask open-ended questions
- Avoid small talk or excessive chatter – be comfortable with silence
- A friendly smile and nod while looking at them can sometimes illicit a response



# PERSONALITY: THE KNOW-IT-ALL

## CHARACTERISTICS



- They always have an answer
- They bombard you with facts
- They can be similar to a tank/bulldozer
- They may use a loud voice
- They may insult you if you disagree
- They may have an imposing physical presence

# PERSONALITY: THE KNOW-IT-ALL

## HOW TO BUILD A RELATIONSHIP

- Avoid questions
- Try not to argue, they might not hear what you are saying
- Expect to be interrupted
- Paraphrase back their main points; they may have knowledge that is helpful
- Be self-confident
- Express your opinions without confrontation





## REFLECTION QUESTION



*Which type of these challenging personalities do you find the most difficult to work with and why?*

# HOW DO YOU DEAL WITH DIFFERENT PERSONALITIES?

Remember the goal:

- Mutual respect
- Individual responsibility
- Communication
- Flexibility
- Teamwork





## POLL

How do you usually experience conflict at work?

- A. Both parties getting defensive or “heated”
- B. One party demanding his/her way
- C. Both parties listening to the other and seeking a solution



## MANAGING A DIFFICULT INTERACTION

- Take some deep breaths
- Pay attention to the speed and loudness of your speech
- Gather your thoughts before responding
- Avoid “You” words or phrases and replace with “I” statements
- Keep your posture upright and relaxed
- Use a firm yet respectful tone of voice
- Declare your limits, intent and boundaries; be assertive

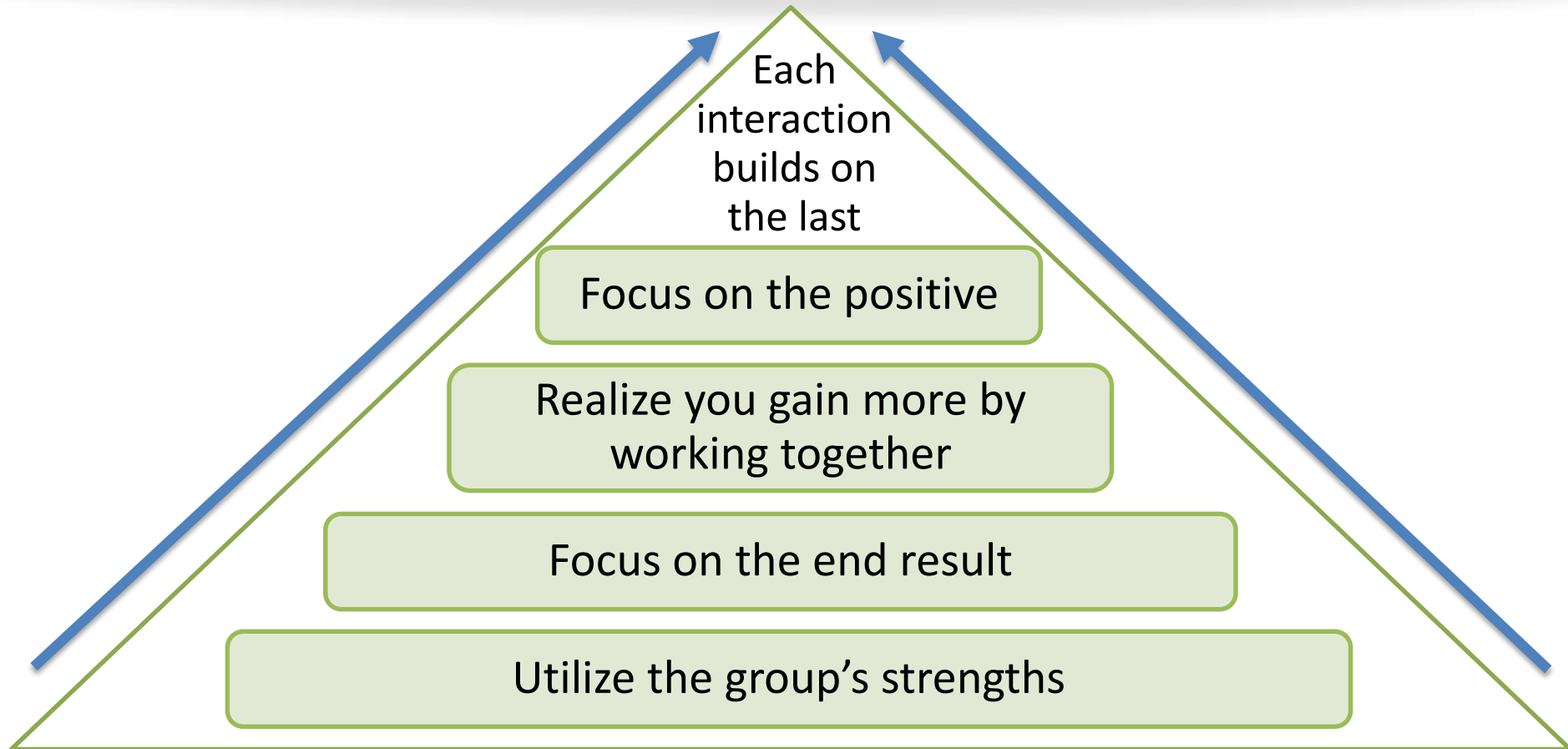


## EMBRACE A DIVERSE TEAM

- Evaluate your attitudes
- Be open to change
- Respect differences
- Integrate those differences
- Use differences and strengths to achieve a goal



## CREATING A POSITIVE TEAM





ALWAYS AVAILABLE.  
ALWAYS CONFIDENTIAL.

FOR ADDITIONAL ASSISTANCE  
CONTACT YOUR EMPLOYEE ASSISTANCE PROGRAM (EAP)



## WORKS CITED

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