



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

Dealing with Difficult Behaviours at Work Course

*Centre for
Continuing Education*



Dealing with Difficult Behaviours at Work Course



Does your job involve dealing with difficult behaviour? Whether you're a frontline manager handling resistance to change, a people-facing professional dealing with upset customers, or a team member working with challenging colleagues, you need a toolkit for confident communication. In this course, you'll learn a formula for powerful responding.

Hear how to pinpoint the real cause of the behaviour - even when the other person is blaming you. Learn to use a Breakthrough Negotiation process to calm upset people, resolve conflicts or request behaviour change, without inflaming the situation. Master four assertive language patterns, so you can tackle a range of situations confidently and collaboratively. Then learn how to keep a discussion focused on the issue, so people don't take things personally.

If you want to build a reputation as a calm and capable communicator, this interactive course will give you the toolkit you need.



Course duration

1 session, 8 hours total



Time

9am - 5pm



Format

Face-to-face
or
Online in real-time



Dates

Browse available
[course dates](#)

Intended audience

Suitable for managers, team leaders, supervisors and people-facing professionals wishing to enhance their skills in dealing with challenging behaviour, emotional reactivity, values clashes or conflict in the workplace.

Prerequisites

None



Upon completion

Every participant receives a University of Sydney statement of completion.



Aims

This is an introductory course for professionals, managers and team leaders who need to handle challenging behaviours, deal with disagreements or navigate 'personality clashes' at work. The techniques covered in this course can be used when interacting with colleagues, direct reports and customers. They can also be used when managing up or navigating inter-team issues.



Outcomes

By the end of this course, you should be able to:

- identify factors impacting perceptions and actions at work, so you can address challenging behaviours without damaging workplace relationships
- use the Breakthrough Negotiation model to respond effectively
- regulate your emotions and stay calm during difficult interactions
- tackle problems from a task-focused perspective, rather than approaching them as relational conflicts
- use four assertive responding tools to calmly and respectfully drive challenging conversations towards constructive outcomes
- keep tough conversations on track by shifting the focus from relationships to issues, so conflict can be reduced.





Content

What sparks difficult behaviour?

- Do you want to keep difficult conversations on track? Then you need to identify and acknowledge the positive intention behind challenging behaviour. In this lesson, you'll explore the difference between psychological, social and physical triggers for disruptive or defensive actions so you can address the root cause rather than argue about behaviours. Then you'll discuss practical ways to separate the person from the problem and maintain professional boundaries in tough situations.

Creating breakthrough conversations

- Learn to use the Breakthrough Negotiation Model to quickly and confidently respond to difficult behaviours, even when they catch you off guard. This evidence-based framework helps you regain control of the conversation without aggression. You will master a step-by-step process to move from confrontation to cooperation in minutes.

Regulating your emotions

- Responding constructively to difficult behaviour requires high levels of emotional intelligence and mental control. In this module, you'll learn to use the Physiological Sigh technique to regulate your emotions so you can communicate confidently and constructively in high-pressure situations. You'll hear how to use reframing tools to reduce stress and increase your mental flexibility when dealing with verbal attacks, passive-aggressive comments or irrational behaviours.

Speaking calmly and assertively

- In this session, you'll learn how to use Assertive Responding tools to communicate fluently, flexibly and adeptly under pressure. First, you'll hear how to use diagnostic questions to pinpoint what's causing difficult behaviour. Next you'll learn how to empathise without colluding, using advanced-level reflective statements. You'll discuss collaborative ways to introduce your perspective into a conversation, using Bridging Statements. Then you'll practice using ACE statements to give feedback, set boundaries or request a shift in behaviour.

Staying issue focused

- You've probably been told to avoid taking things personally when dealing with difficult behaviour. But how, exactly, do you put that advice into action. In this module, you'll learn how to switch discussions from 'relational' to 'task' mode. This helps you keep the conversation on track without getting caught up in blame games.



“The course provided a lot of useful tools to deal with difficult behaviour at work. It also helped me to be aware of different difficulties and how to resolve them.”

Kevin Pham



“This course has been exceptionally helpful for me in developing my skills and confidence in managing complex interpersonal dynamics in a workplace context to facilitate positive outcomes and working relationships.”

Emma Hayes



Delivery style

This is an interactive course which covers the why, what and how of dealing with difficult behaviour. You'll learn through a variety of methods including:

- small group discussions
- role plays or simulations
- written exercises in which you will apply key concepts
- Q&A sessions with the facilitator.

You will get the most out of this course if you are willing to contribute to group discussions, confident communicating verbally in small groups, and comfortable participating in role-play style activities.

Materials

Course notes are shared electronically.



Organisational training and development

This course can be delivered as a private session for groups, and tailored to meet the needs of your business. Contact us to discuss our range of organisational training solutions.

[Learn more](#)



THE UNIVERSITY OF
SYDNEY

We recognise and pay respect to the Elders and communities – past, present, and emerging – of the lands that the University of Sydney's campuses stand on. For thousands of years they have shared and exchanged knowledges across innumerable generations for the benefit of all.

Empower ambition,
inspire leadership

For more information

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