

## Quick Tips

### THE SEVEN "C's" OF DEALING WITH DIFFICULT MEMBERS

#### Compliment

Difficult member need sincere praise, too.

#### Concern

Genuine caring for the welfare of another will help build a strong relationship.

#### Congratulations

Helping people who see themselves as losers to feel like winners can eliminate some problems

#### Compromise

Attempting to "give" a little may soften a hard person.

#### Choice

Given a choice, a person may feel important and respond in a positive way.

#### Challenge

Boredom may cause people to react in difficult ways.

#### Confidence

Expressing confidence in something is often all he or she needs to have confidence.

## Leader Hints:

are available on the following topics

- Agendas
- Advising Groups
- Budgeting
- Co-Sponsorship
- Community Service
- Conflict Resolution
- Constitution and Bylaws
- Delegation
- Difficult Members
- Elections
- Event and Program Planning
- Fundraising
- Goal Setting
- Group Performance Evaluation
- Icebreakers
- Individual Evaluation
- Meetings and Minutes
- Motivation
- Newsletters
- Officer Transition
- Parliamentary Procedure
- Publicizing Events
- Recruiting New Members
- Retreats
- Starting a New Organization
- Stress Management
- Team Building
- Time Management

*Leader Hints* is a publication of the University of New Mexico Student Activities Center. Copies are available at the Student Activities Center, SUB Room 1018. For more information, call 277-4706.

Some of the information in this brochure was compiled from leadership materials from the University of Texas at San Antonio and the University of Kansas.

# Leader Hints

Leadership Development Tips  
for Student Organizations

## Difficult Members



“Difficult people” are found in every organization. It is important that the leader learn to deal effectively with these individuals and ensure that their behaviors and attitudes do not adversely affect the group’s functioning.

Here are six types of difficult behaviors that can be found in many group settings and some tips on how to deal with each.

<u>Type</u>	<u>Description</u>	<u>Tips</u>
<b>HOSTILE AGGRESSIVES</b>	Try hard to bully and overwhelm by bombarding others with cutting remarks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Stand up for yourself and the group if they are out of order.</li> <li>• Give them time to wear out.</li> <li>• Look directly at them and wait</li> <li>• Get into the conversation</li> <li>• Get their attention.</li> <li>• Make sure they are seated, not standing over you.</li> <li>• Don’t argue or try to cut them down.</li> </ul>
<b>COMPLAINERS</b>	Gripe without ceasing, but never try to do anything about what they are complaining about	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Listen attentively to them.</li> <li>• Acknowledge them by paraphrasing their concerns</li> <li>• Don’t agree with or apologize for their allegations.</li> <li>• Put them in charge of “fixing” what they think is wrong.</li> <li>• Ask, “How do you want this situation to be remedied?”</li> </ul>
<b>SILENT UNRESPONSIVES</b>	Answer with grunts or one syllable responses (when they answer at all)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don’t interrupt silence; give them time to open up.</li> <li>• Ask open-ended questions.</li> <li>• Listen attentively if they open up, but don’t gush.</li> <li>• If they will not open up, end the meeting and set up another appointments.</li> </ul>
<b>SUPER AGREEABLES</b>	Very personable, funny members, who never act the way they say they will or how you thought they would	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Let them know you value them as people.</li> <li>• Ask them to be honest with you.</li> <li>• Carefully point out inconsistencies in their behavior (without judgment)</li> <li>• Listen to their humor, as there may be message hidden in their comments.</li> </ul>
<b>NEGATIVISTS</b>	Never expect anything to work and never have anything positive or nice to say about anything or anyone	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Be careful to avoid being pulled into their despair.</li> <li>• Don’t try to argue them out of their pessimism.</li> <li>• Listen to their messages— the root of the pessimism may be hidden there.</li> <li>• Play “devil’s advocate” by thinking about negatives and having solutions ready.</li> </ul>
<b>KNOW-IT-ALL</b>	Condescending, pompous people who claim to know all about everyone and everything.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Know what you are talking about when you converse with them.</li> <li>• Listen attentively, then paraphrase the main points they make.</li> <li>• Question firmly about inaccurate facts or inconsistencies, but not in the group situation.</li> </ul>



You may not be able to successfully deal with every difficult member in your group. Use these strategies, and any others you come up with to, practice dealing with difficult people — and keep your eye on the “big picture”, reaching toward your goals!