

# Dealing With Difficult Residents



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B'nai B'rith is the largest national Jewish sponsor of subsidized senior housing in the United States. We have 42 buildings located in 28 communities in 16 states. We also sponsor buildings in Israel, Canada, England, Australia and New Zealand.

# The Center for Senior Services Provides....

- \* Training for Management Professionals & Service Coordinators
- \* Training for Members of the Boards of Directors
- \* Supporting the Tenants/Residents Associations: Training for residents—The Resident Leadership Retreat
- \* Creating Programs for the B'nai B'rith Housing Communities
- \* Advocating for the Section 202 Program & Service Coordinator Grants with Congress
- \* Ongoing consulting to the B'nai B'rith network of buildings
- \* Provide training to other local and national professional organizations

# Dealing with Difficult Residents

- \* Problems/Solutions:

- \* One on one with an upset resident
- \* A holistic approach for the entire community

# Dealing with Difficult Residents

- \* How Are We Communicating?
- \* De-escalating a Tense Situation
- \* Solutions & Self-Awareness

# How Do We Communicate?



# Communication is a daily activity

How much of our time spent communicating is verbal?

25%

75% of our communication is non-verbal



- Words are 7% effective
- Tone of voice is 38% effective
- Non-verbal clues are 55% effective

Source: Toastmasters

# Dealing with an Upset Resident

- \* Staff/Resident interaction
- \* Resident/Resident interaction
- \* Possible Causes
- \* De-escalation techniques

# Causes of why the person is agitated, hostile and/or upset?

- \* Frustration or annoyance
- \* Disappointment
- \* Fear
- \* Stress
- \* Confusion and/or memory loss
- \* Change in physical ability
- \* Feeling powerless/Loss of control & choices
- \* Projection/expectations

# Keep in Mind

- \* Mountain vs. Molehill
- \* How are you reacting?
- \* Make sure you are not being condescending
- \* Consider other viewpoints—there is her side/his side/the truth is usually somewhere in between
- \* Stay positive
- \* Do not get defensive
- \* Try to respect the other person

# Something else to consider

Management = Authority

Don't take it personally, it is not you,  
it is what you represent

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glasbergen.com



**"Your office has a critical morale problem. My advice is to go from desk to desk licking people's faces."**

# De-escalating/taking control of the situation

- \* Take the person to a private area/office if in a group setting.
- \* Use a respectful tone & call the person by name.
- \* If someone is verbally abusive, tell her/him you will be able to help her/him better if she/he tries to calm down.
- \* If she/he raises her/his voice, lower yours.
- \* Do not be defensive, and suspend judgment.
- \* Try not to interrupt and apologize if you need to do so.
- \* Set limits, do not tolerate abusive language or actions.
- \* **Listen** and ask questions, clarify what the person is trying to express.
- \* Acknowledge the importance of her/his concern in working to resolve the problem.
- \* Try to redirect & reframe the discussion into problem solving rather than a blaming session.
- \* Continue to ask questions if needed.
- \* At the end of the meeting, summarize what was discussed and agree on the “next steps.”

Adapted from : Tips and Techniques for Supporting Residents with Mental Illness: A Guide for Staff in Housing with Older Adults developed by Jewish Family & Children’s Service/Jewish Community Housing for the Elderly

Delivering Difficult Conversations Successfully Every Time: Workplace Training Center

# Residents at Risk Staff Meetings

- \* Staff collaboration: Residents at Risk staff meetings
- \* Residents at Risk: residents whose behavior has been worrisome, problematic or have a lease violation
- \* Goal is to help the person be a successful resident
  - \* Hold meeting at least monthly
  - \* One staff member is the point person
  - \* Progress report on “Residents at Risk”—be mindful of confidentiality
  - \* A plan is made for future action—how can staff work as a team to support this resident?

Adapted from JCHE

# How do we create a welcoming community?





# Challenges

- \* Diversity of the Community
- \* Communication
- \* Lack of Empathy
- \* Difficult people
- \* Rude people
- \* Adult bullying/Gossip

# Solution For the Whole Community

## How Do We Work Together Program

- \* Diversity Training/Awareness
- \* Empathy
- \* Guidelines for Handling Difficult People/15 Tips
- \* The Four Agreements
- \* Ten Commandments of Human Relations
- \* Case Study/Have residents create scenarios
- \* 24 Hour Challenge



**KEEP  
CALM  
AND  
BE  
KIND**

# Who lives at the building?

Potential Demographics of Your Apartment Community include:

- \* Religion
- \* Gender
- \* Cultural
- \* Language
- \* Racial
- \* Mobility, hearing and visual challenges
- \* LGBT

# di·ver·si·ty

Merriam-Webster

## Definition of **DIVERSITY**

The condition of having or being composed of differing elements : [VARIETY](#); *especially* : the inclusion of different types of people (as people of different races or cultures) in a group or organization <programs intended to promote *diversity* in schools>

An instance of being composed of differing elements or qualities : an instance of being [diverse](#) <a *diversity* of opinion>

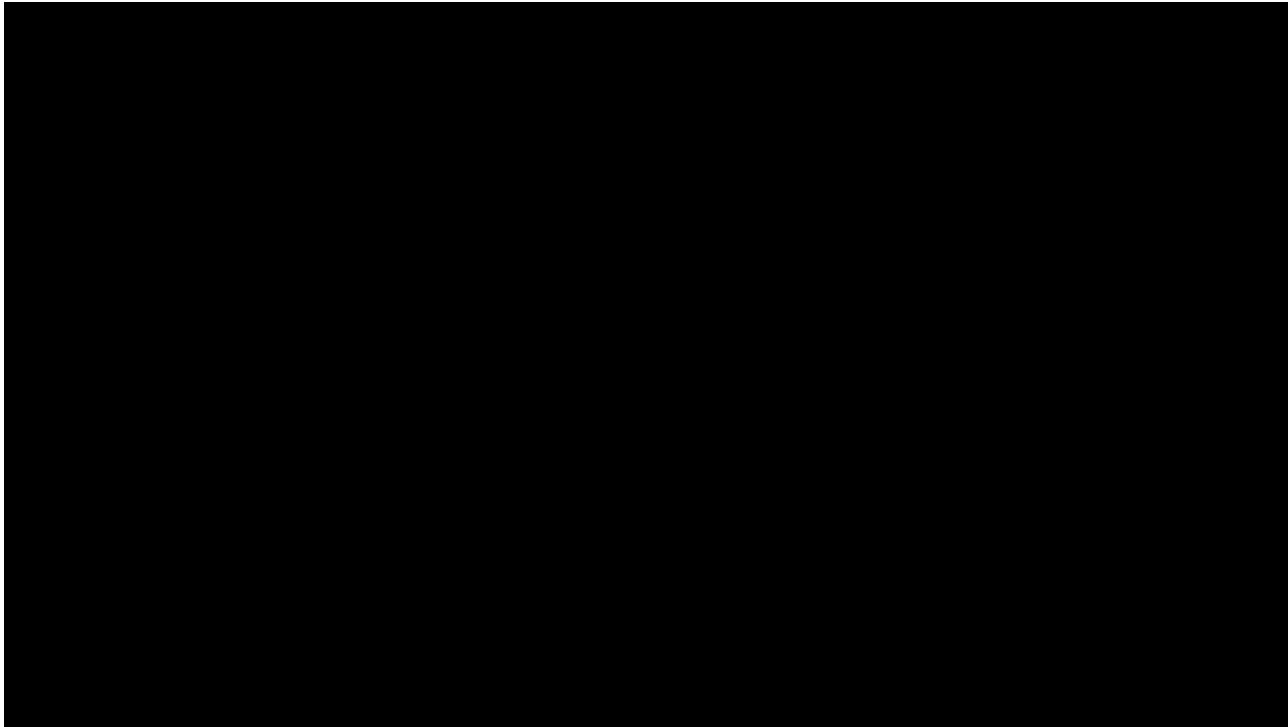
# Golden Rules for Cultural Diversity

- \* Treat everyone with respect
- \* Create a welcoming environment
- \* Create a team spirit where everyone feels included
- \* Value the differences and similarities between people
- \* Avoid using stereotypes
- \* Don't be afraid of change!

# Empathy

- \* Empathy is the experience of understanding another person's condition from their perspective. You place yourself in their shoes and feel what they are feeling. Empathy is known to increase prosocial (helping) behaviors. Psychology Today

# Cleveland Clinic Youtube Empathy video




# Difficult or Rude People

## Why are People so Rude?

- \* Some of these might include the fact that they only care about what they think or need or they believe their feelings are more important than the feelings of others.
- \* They might have little or no patience for other people and they do not appreciate the differences in others.
- \* Some people are rude simply because they are trying to shock those around them with their behavior.
- \* Perhaps they never learned any better.
- \* They do not even realize they are being rude or difficult.

By understanding the reasons behind the rudeness, you may find it easier to ignore the behavior and perhaps even feel a bit of compassion for the guilty party.





Note to self:

Just because it  
pops into my head  
does NOT mean it  
should come out of  
my mouth!

# How to Deal with Difficult or Rude People

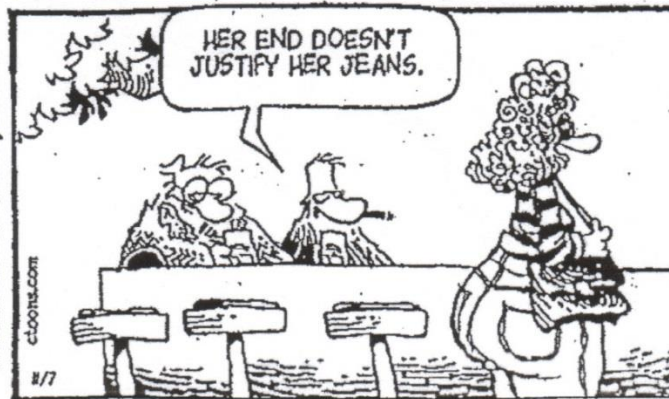
- \* The best method for dealing with difficult or rude people is to adjust your reaction to them.
- \* After all, you may not be able to change the behavior of others, but you do have control over how you react to that behavior.
- \* One way to avoid a negative reaction to a rude person is to consider why the person is acting the way he is in the first place.

## Handouts

- \* Guidelines for Handling Difficult People in Groups
- \* 15 Tips for Dealing with Difficult People

# Adult Bullying

**SHOE**  
By Jeff MacNelly



# Adult Bullying

- \* Types of Adult Bullying
- \* Possible causes
- \* Why and How to intervene
  - \* One on One
  - \* As a Community
- \* Resources

I've learned that people will forget  
what you said, people will forget what  
you did, but people will never forget  
how you made them feel.

Maya Angelou

# Types of Adult Bullying

- \* While elder-to-elder bullying comes in many varieties, it usually involves ostracism of some form
- \* Narcissistic
- \* Impulsive
- \* Secondary
- \* Physical—rare for the elderly, usually involves mental illness or dementia
- \* Verbal
- \* Differences between men and women

**Gossip** is idle talk or rumor, especially about the personal or private affairs of others. It forms one of the oldest and most common means of sharing (unproven) facts and views, but also has a reputation for the introduction of errors and other variations into the information transmitted. The term also carries implications that the news so transmitted (usually) has a personal or trivial nature, as opposed to normal conversation.

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia on the Internet



"What happens in swimwear, stays in swimwear."

# Why does a person become a bully?

The person may be suffering from:

- \* Low self-confidence and/or self-esteem
- \* Feelings of insecurity
- \* Bitterness, anger
- \* Envy
- \* Inadequacy
- \* May have a wide range of prejudices as a vehicle for dumping anger onto others
- \* May have been bullied in the past
- \* Most likely has been a bully during their lifetime



# How does a person become a victim of a bully?

- \* Bullies are opportunistic and tend to prey on people they perceive as a threat or that they dislike because of differences.
- \* They often choose targets who excel and are capable, dedicated, popular, intelligent and attractive but whose interpersonal style tends to be non-confrontational.
- \* A bully's goal is to gain control by making others feel angry or afraid through the use of verbal abuse such as name-calling, sarcasm and teasing; threatening; mocking; insulting; ignoring or discrediting the person by spreading rumors.

# Why should staff intervene?

Bullying can lead the victim to suffer from:

- \* Social isolation
- \* Sleep disorders
- \* Poor self esteem
- \* Hypertension
- \* Eating disorders
- \* Nervous conditions
- \* Depression
- \* Suicidal thoughts
- \* Suicide—seniors are more likely to be successful than younger people

# How can we intervene in our communities?

## One on one solutions

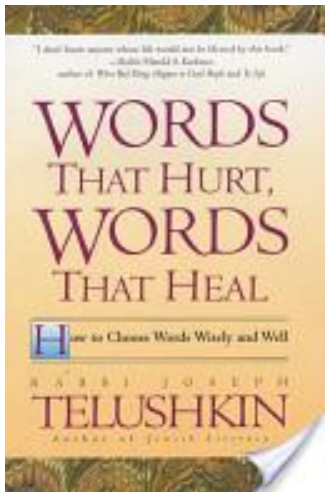
- \* Mediate a solution
- \* One on one with the resident(s)—determine if they are really a bully
  - \* Is this out of character or a pattern? See if you can get the resident to talk to you about what is going on with their life
  - \* The Four Agreements
  - \* More successful with the inadvertent bully
- \* One on one with the victim or victims
  - \* How to control their response
  - \* It really is the other person and not you

**Never, never be afraid to do what's right,  
especially if the well-being of a person or  
animal is at stake. Society's punishments are  
small compared to the wounds we inflict on our  
soul when we look the other way.**

*Martin Luther King, Jr.*



# Words that Hurt, Words that Heal by Rabbi Joseph Telushkin



- \* “If you can’t say something nice, don’t say anything at all.”
- \* The 24 Hour Challenge—to go 24 hours without saying an unkind word to or about anyone

# Case Study Mr. D

Mr. D has lived in the building for one year. He is legally blind.

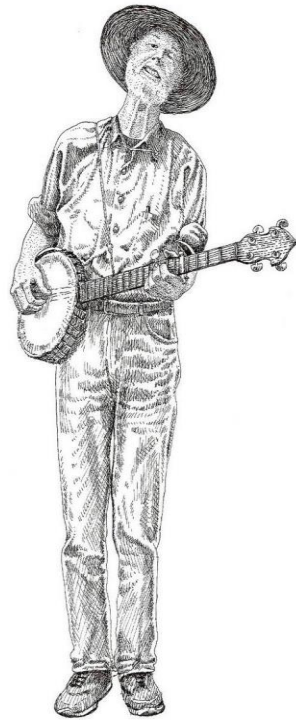
Mr. D likes to advocate for the residents, particularly those that have a disability, whether they ask him to or not.

He confronts staff in the lobby or hallway about other residents' maintenance issues, or that there is a crack in the sidewalk, etc. If he wants something done, it needs to be immediate, and it is very difficult to end a conversation with him.

# Case Study Ms. C

Ms. C has recently moved into the building. She is active in the Residents Association. Ms. C is frequently at odds with the manager over various issues, and always questions the house rules and procedures. She is very vocal about her displeasure of how things are run in the building.

# Always End on a Positive Note



Well I've got a hammer  
and I've got a bell  
and I've got a song to sing  
all over this land  
It's the hammer of justice  
It's the bell of freedom  
It's the song about love between  
my brothers and my sisters  
all over this land

Pete Seeger



# The End

