

Managing difficult people

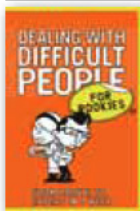
Dealing with difficult people: from rookie to expert in a week

Kay Frances

Marshall Cavendish, £9.99

ISBN 978-0462099781

Reviewed by Val W Allen



Aimed at the professional working within organisations, perhaps with some management responsibilities, this is a practical self-help book. It provides a focused description of the hazards of working life, outlining typically difficult workplace situations and people. It aims to help professionals improve relationships at work by providing strategies for dealing with some of those difficulties. Counsellors working in workplace or employee assistance programme (EAP) settings may find it useful to recommend to clients.

The book gives clear categories of the types of people who may be encountered, combined with some simple tactics for managing them. Broadly, this means using emotional intelligence to understand difficult colleagues, providing strategies to turn them into allies. It also includes techniques for communicating and negotiating, problem solving and managing confrontation. Although some therapists will find this manipulative, others will find the sketches of characters and situations helpful for clients

suffering work-based stress.

It uses simple, clear English in a format that is easy to dip into. It is well structured and organised, including tips and notes for coaches. Although some tips, such as 'Keep away from bad news and depressed people', can seem simplistic, they lead on to practical techniques for dealing with situations and people.

Not tackled specifically in the book are problems arising from difficult and/or bullying managers or superiors. Nor is there much recognition of the long-term difficulties that can arise from making use of grievance procedures, especially when the culprit is a senior colleague.

Val W Allen is a counsellor, psychotherapist and supervisor