

Tips for Dealing with Difficult Behavior

If you are the target of, or witness behavior that is offensive, hostile, or interferes with your ability to learn or work, the following strategies may be helpful to you.



Resources

Student Conflict Resolution Center

www.sos.umn.edu
612.626.0689, 254 Appleby Hall
Contact: Jan Morse

Office for Conflict Resolution

www.ocr.umn.edu
612.624.1030, 662 Heller Hall
Contact: Tamar Gronvall

Boynton Mental Health

www.boynton.umn.edu
612.624.1444, 410 Church St SE
Contact: Matt Hanson

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Take a Stand Now

It is easier to address problematic behaviors at the beginning of a relationship, before patterns are well established.

Reframe

Do not blame yourself or take responsibility for the inappropriate behavior of others.

Set Limits

Set appropriate boundaries to minimize your exposure to inappropriate or abusive behavior.

Look for Small "Wins"

Clarify and focus on the things you can control.

Let Go of Expectations of Perfection

Both for yourself and others. Everyone makes mistakes and can have an "off day."

Build Pockets of Safety and Support

Complaining about others' behavior is rarely productive. Talk privately with those who can help you achieve your goals. Be open to receiving feedback about how you can improve your situation.

Remain Optimistic

Focus your efforts on setting and achieving realistic goals. Your internal beliefs and commitment to your goals are central to your success.



Focus on the "Big Picture"

Do not let a small setback derail you. Remember that your time as a graduate student is temporary and that your ultimate goal is finishing your degree.

Don't Go it Alone

Ask for and accept help if you need it.

Further information on this topic can be found on Stanford University Professor [Robert Sutton's blog](#), including information on his best-selling book, *The No Asshole Rule*.