



Whether you come into contact with customers on the front line or you're working closely with co-workers, you've likely come across someone who is "high conflict:" they escalate conflict rather than reducing or resolving it. High Conflict people are likely to blame others in all instances, see situations in black and white, react emotionally without focusing on the future, and escalate situations quickly. But you can learn how to handle these behaviors and influence HCPs (High Conflict people) for the better.

This month, we're sharing one of our go-to resources for handling High Conflict personalities: William Eddy's CARS Method. Our counselors often recommend this method to their clients, and we often suggest it in EAP presentations and trainings. Next time you are dealing with a high conflict personality, see if this method can work for you.

Are you having a hard time dealing with a high conflict person in your workplace?

You can call and set up an appointment to discuss any problematic work situation in a 100% confidential setting. A counselor will walk through the history of the conflict, help increase your understanding of the conflict, your role and its' impact upon you, and work to develop possible strategies or solutions to help you address the conflict. Whether you are a supervisor or coworker, consulting with an EAP Counselor can be the first step in improving your work relationships.

CARS Method

CONNECT with empathy, attention, and respect.

When someone responds to you in a negative way, your first instinct might be to defend yourself or return their aggressive behavior. Don't follow that instinct! Instead:

Empathize with them. Sometimes, just saying "I can see that you are upset" or "I know this is important to you" can be validating (and de-escalate the situation).

Give them your attention. A simple "I'm listening" or "Tell me more" can suffice.

Show them respect. HCPs often react negatively because they feel disrespected. If you can change that by saying something like "I respect the work you do," you can change the tenor of the conversation.

ANALYZE alternatives or choices.

What are some options to resolve the problem? Brainstorm some pros and cons, focusing on the future rather than on past problems. Don't hesitate to ask the person what they see as a resolution for the future: "What do you see as a solution?"

RESPOND to misinformation.

If the HCP is giving misinformation or has lost perspective, don't get defensive or angry. Use a **BIFF response**: be **Brief, Informative, Friendly, and Firm**.

SET LIMITS on inappropriate behavior.

If the HCP continues with negative behavior, what power do you have to set limits on how they engage with you? Are there resources that you can utilize within the workplace, such as your supervisor or human resources department? Can you limit the amount of time that you speak with them or give them a limit to meeting time? Emphasize to them that this isn't personal; you want to work with them in the most productive way professional to move forward.