

How to Deal with Drama at Work

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Time for a Change



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Every workplace has its fair share of drama, and that's not always a bad thing. Changes--like new employees, new clients, or growth in general--shake up our world, keep us on our toes, and allow us to grow through the temporary chaos.

However, we can all probably think of a few teammates who bring the not-so-good drama to work. I'm talking about the kind of drama that drains us and distracts us from our jobs at hand. Do any of these drama personalities sound familiar to you, or maybe even sound like you? If so, here are some helpful tips for dealing with people who bring drama to your office.



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Over-Achieving Olivia



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Activity:

- Always positioning
- Controlling, perfectionist
- Does not place trust in teammates' work/does not delegate
- Likes recognition, can be a brownnoser

Tips for working with Olivia:

- Explain that if someone can do the work 80 percent as well, give them that opportunity and coach them to get to 100 percent.
- Make sure you are creating a culture where performance--not sucking up--is rewarded. Don't acknowledge brownnosing.
- Ask Olivia which team members she will include in her projects.
- Reward Olivia when she includes others. Minimize recognizing her individual work and escalate her ability to bring a team together.

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Negative Nathan



2
connections

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Activity:

- Always the victim
- Complains frequently
- Doesn't like change, resists solutions
- Uses excuses/blames others

Tips for working with Nathan:

- Address immediately. Negativity can spread quickly.
- Talk to him about the impact his negative attitude has on his colleagues.
- Coach him to focus on solutions. No more pointing out problems unless he has a recommendation for resolving them.
- Ask him to give two positive comments before he brings the problem.
- Ask him to smile when he talks, and smile when you ask him this.
- Tell him to stop listening to country music (ha ha).

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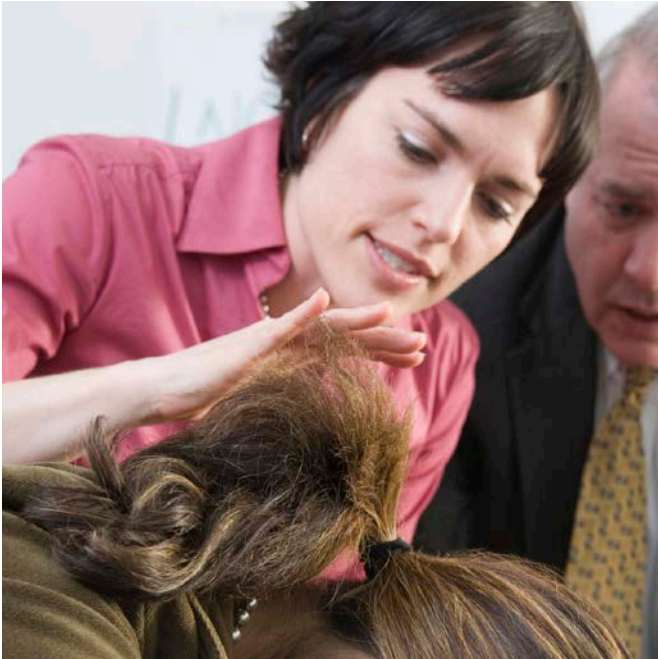


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Sympathetic Suzanne



500+
connections

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Activity:

- Always bringing up/pointing out others' problems
- Takes ownership of others' problems
- Everything is a big deal

Tips for working with Suzanne:

- Help her see the distracting effect her drama has on her teammates.
- Ask for her help in creating a “drama free” workplace.
- Discuss what she should “own” and what she needs to allow others to “own.”
- Talk about “masking” personal feelings. We don't need to show every emotion, especially when it negatively impacts others.
- Keep her focused on her production and activities.
- When she brings up drama, have her share the company strategy that drama will support.

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Disappointing Dave



250+
connections

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Activity:

- Does not pull his weight, forcing others to pick up the slack
- He is very likeable and social, but also causes resentment
- Has repeated performance issues

Tips for working with Dave:

- Have a critical conversation. Give specific examples of how his poor performance puts a strain on the rest of the team.
- Develop a plan for improvement. Get Dave's agreement.
- Make sure Dave is in the correct role for his personality.
- Have a 5-minute chat with him in the morning to ask about his plan for the day.
- Have a 5-minute afternoon check in to see if he has accomplished his tasks. (Note: these are not sit down meetings. They are quick, to-the-point hallway discussions or discussions in his office so you can leave and not linger.)
- Point out and encourage when you notice improvements.

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Linda Sasser is the CEO of Impacting Leaders, a firm focused on helping companies with their leadership development and organizational effectiveness needs. Linda has over 25 years' experience in developing businesses, leading teams, and directing sales programs. Connect with Linda and Impacting Leaders on their website at www.impactingleaders.com, on Linda's leadership blog at www.leadershipwithsass.com, on Facebook at facebook.com/ILHappyHour or on Twitter at twitter.com/impactingleadr.



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