People = Challenge

- People come with history and baggage
- We are often working with people in times of high stress
Continuum of Challenge

- Threatening & Dangerous
- Toxic
- Chronically Challenging
- Mildly Irritating

Where does conflict come from?

- Clashing values
- Unstable environment
- Fear
- Poor communication
- Cultural disconnects
- Unrelated emotional baggage
- Stress, fatigue, illness
The Conflict Continuum
from The Advantage by Patrick Lencioni

Ideal conflict point

CONSTRUCTIVE  DESTRUCTIVE

Artificial harmony  Mean-spirited personal attacks

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The best way to deal with challenging behavior is to interrupt the cycle before it fully develops...

Common Challenging Personalities

- The ‘Bully’
- The ‘Exploder’
- The ‘Complainer’
- The ‘Clam’
- The ‘Wet Blanket’
- The ‘Sage’
- The ‘Staller’
- The ‘Chatterbox’
Better outcomes…

- Be mindful of body language
- Anticipate (and prepare for) pushback
- Do NOT overpack the agenda
- Be explicit about the “rules” and begin the meeting by reviewing them
- Avoid the temptation to “mirror” bad behavior
- Before you react – stop, breath, weigh the consequences
- Expect the need to “explain and set the stage”
- Do what you can to level the playing field

Closing Summary

- All parties contribute to quality of an interaction
- Anticipate problems and have a plan
- Appropriate strategy is the one that works with the least intrusive method
- Understand the importance of the situation and the importance of the relationship
- Have a plan to cope with dangerous encounters and make sure everyone knows about it
QUESTIONS