

MANAGING TALENTED *BUT* CHALLENGING PEOPLE

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The structure

- **INTRODUCTION**
- **KEY TYPES**
- **THE THEORY**
- **PERSONALITY TYPE**
- **How to recognize them**
- **Case vignette**
- **Behavior management**
- **Why it works**

INTRODUCTION

KEY QUESTIONS BEFORE WORKING ON BEHAVIOR MANAGEMENT:

- Are these people damaging to the organization?
- Do they derail procedures with their behavior?
- Are they disruptive, difficult to deal with or distracting?

The four key types

- **THE NEGATIVE**
- **THE NARCISSIST**
- **THE BLAMER**
- **THE PASSIVE AGGRESSIVE**

THE THEORY

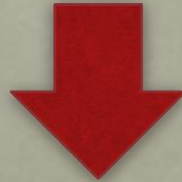
- Behavior management discussed here will be based on **COGNITIVE BEHAVIOR THERAPY** (*A. Beck. J. Beck & A. Ellis*)
- **THE A.B.C. OF C.B.T**
- **“A” Actual event**
- **“B” Belief**
- **“C” Consequence (usually in the form of behavior)**

It's the thought that counts

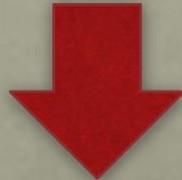
Situation: Who ? What? When? Where



Feeling: How did you feel? Emotions



Thought: What was going through your mind



Behavior: What did you do?

NEGATIVE PERSONALITY



HOW TO RECOGNIZE THEM

- **All or nothing thinking**
- **Overgeneralization**
- **Catastrophic interpretation**
- **Discounting the positives & dwell on the negatives**
- **Turning something positive into negative**

CASE VIGNETTE

- THE SITUATION

“you want to establish a new protocol in the lab. The supervisor who sets the tone for the lab is resistant to this change. They rebut your efforts and they maintain that it will not work. There is no evidence that it will not work and in fact there is evidence that it has worked in other establishments”

- KEY THEMES

- It will not work
- What’s the point in changing something that already works
- It will be a waste of our time/ we have to train staff
- It takes time to implement change.

BEHAVIORAL MANAGEMENT

- **What are the facts of the situation? What is happening?**
- **What are your thoughts/ beliefs about that?**
- **Given those beliefs/assumptions what are you afraid it might happen?**
- **Are the beliefs /assumptions based on facts/ are they rational?**
- **What is an alternative/more balanced thought?**

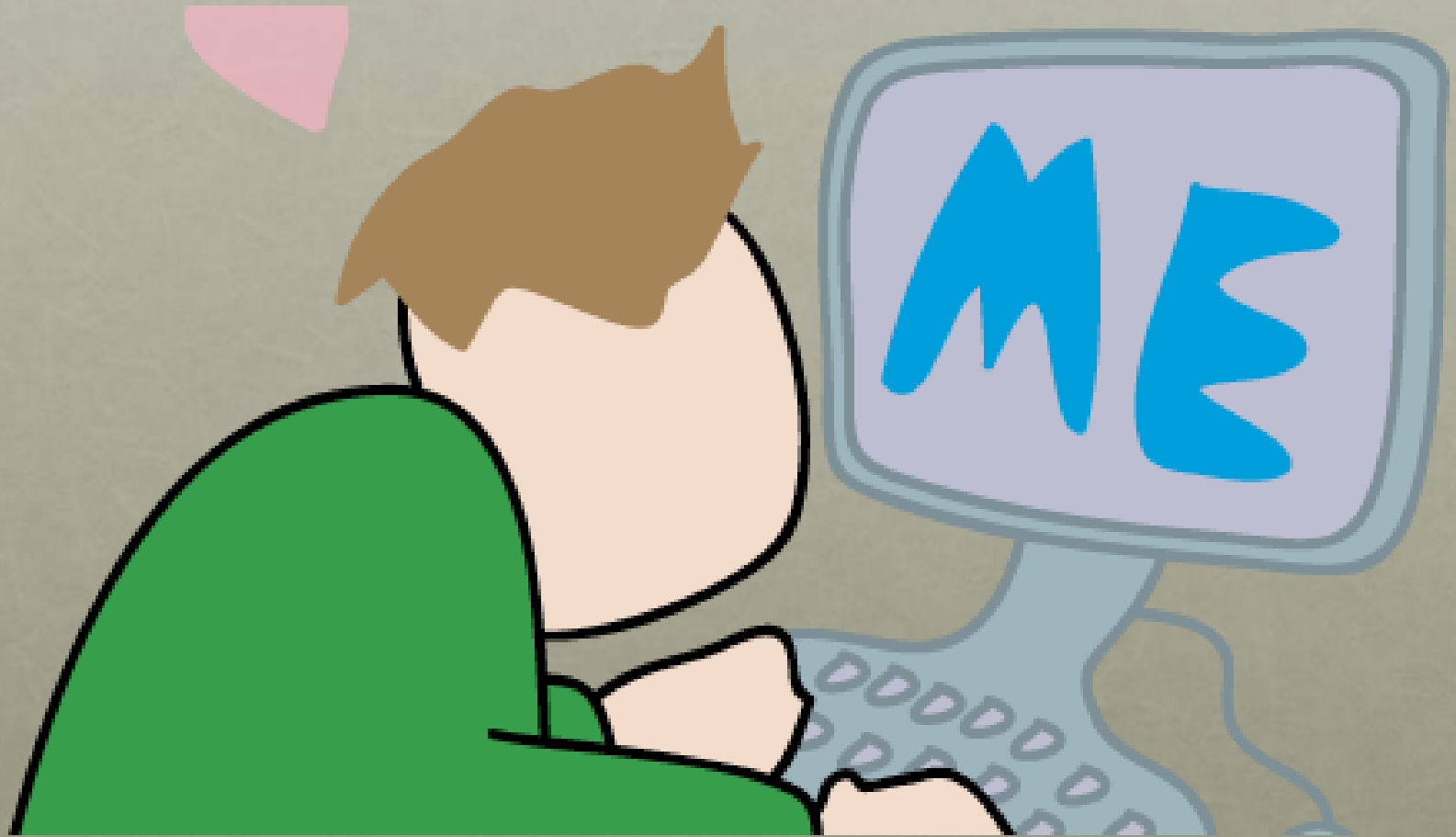
CASE VIGNETTE

- THE SITUATION
- *“you want to establish a new protocol in the lab. The supervisor who sets the tone for the lab is resistant to this change. They rebut your efforts and they maintain that it will not work. There is no evidence that it will not work and in fact there is evidence that it has worked in other establishments”*
- THE ALTERNATIVE THINKING
- Have I had any experience showing that these thoughts are not completely true all the time?
- When I am not feeling this way, do I think about this type of situation any differently? How?
- Are there any strengths and positives in the situation that I am ignoring?
- Am I jumping into conclusions that are not completely justified by the evidence?

WHY IT WORKS

- **BREAKS THE LINK BETWEEN FACT AND INTERPRETATION**
- **FOCUS ON EVIDENCE**
- **REPLACES THE NEGATIVE THOUGHT**
- **GIVES OWNERSHIP OF THE CONSEQUENCES OF THE NEGATIVE THINKING**

THE NARCISSIST



HOW TO RECOGNIZE THEM

- They could be selfish and inconsiderate
- They feel entitled
- They demand excessive attention
- They are self absorbed
- They pursue their success often at any cost
- They eventually cut off emotionally other people.
- They can be perfectionists

Case vignette

SITUATION

Two lab members of staff are supposed to share the work load. However, one of them never does the paper work. He thinks that paper work is “beneath them”. They leave it unfinished & expect the co-worker to finish it for them. The co-worker complains to you, and you know that he is not usually a complainer. The person who does not do the paper work is excellent technically and does not take criticism well. He feels that his lab skills give him a free pass.

KEY THEMES

- Inconsiderate
- Entitled
- Arrogant
- Create tension between co-workers
- Unable to see others' point of view
- Emotionally disconnected

Behavior management

- **DO NOT ADMINISTER A “LOUD WAKE UP CALL”**
- **The first rule is to avoid anything that might upset their sense of self**
- **Work with them through empathy and acknowledgement**
- **Acknowledge to their perfectionism**
- **Challenge them but compliment them simultaneously**

Case vignette

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- THE NEW APPROACH
- I am surprised about this. You have excellent skills and a brilliant track record. This is very sloppy of you and you leave yourself open to criticism
- It seems like a missed opportunity to demonstrate your....
- I am puzzled that you let such an administrative task to undermine all your good work
- You know your co-workers would focus on those little things that you do not do and miss all the excellent contributions.

Why it works

- **It keeps the conversation tactical**
- **It works with their ambition as it can be used to motivate them. How their behavior helps them or hinders them to realize their career goal**
- **Works with their ego**
- **Challenges them using their personality characteristics**

The blamers



How to recognize them

- They can be very charming but there is a ‘*dark side*’
- There is often inhibited anger
- Polarized thinking & labeling
- External attribution of mistakes
- They make you feel emotionally drained and exhausted

Case vignette

SITUATION

“A direct report makes an error. They blame you, the system, other colleagues, circumstances beyond their control for their mistake. They do not take responsibility. This has happened before and creates tension in the team”

• KEY THEMES

- Lack of awareness about the role they played
- Lack of accountability
- Anger
- Wants to be seen as a “victim” so you can fix the situation
- S/he wants to drag you into the drama (especially true if others are involved)

Behavior management

- The ‘broken record’ technique
- Stick to the facts (again and again)
- Be objective particularly if others are involved
- Active listening
- Focus on what THEY CAN control
- Stay emotionally calm
- DO NOT take sides

Case vignette

SITUATION

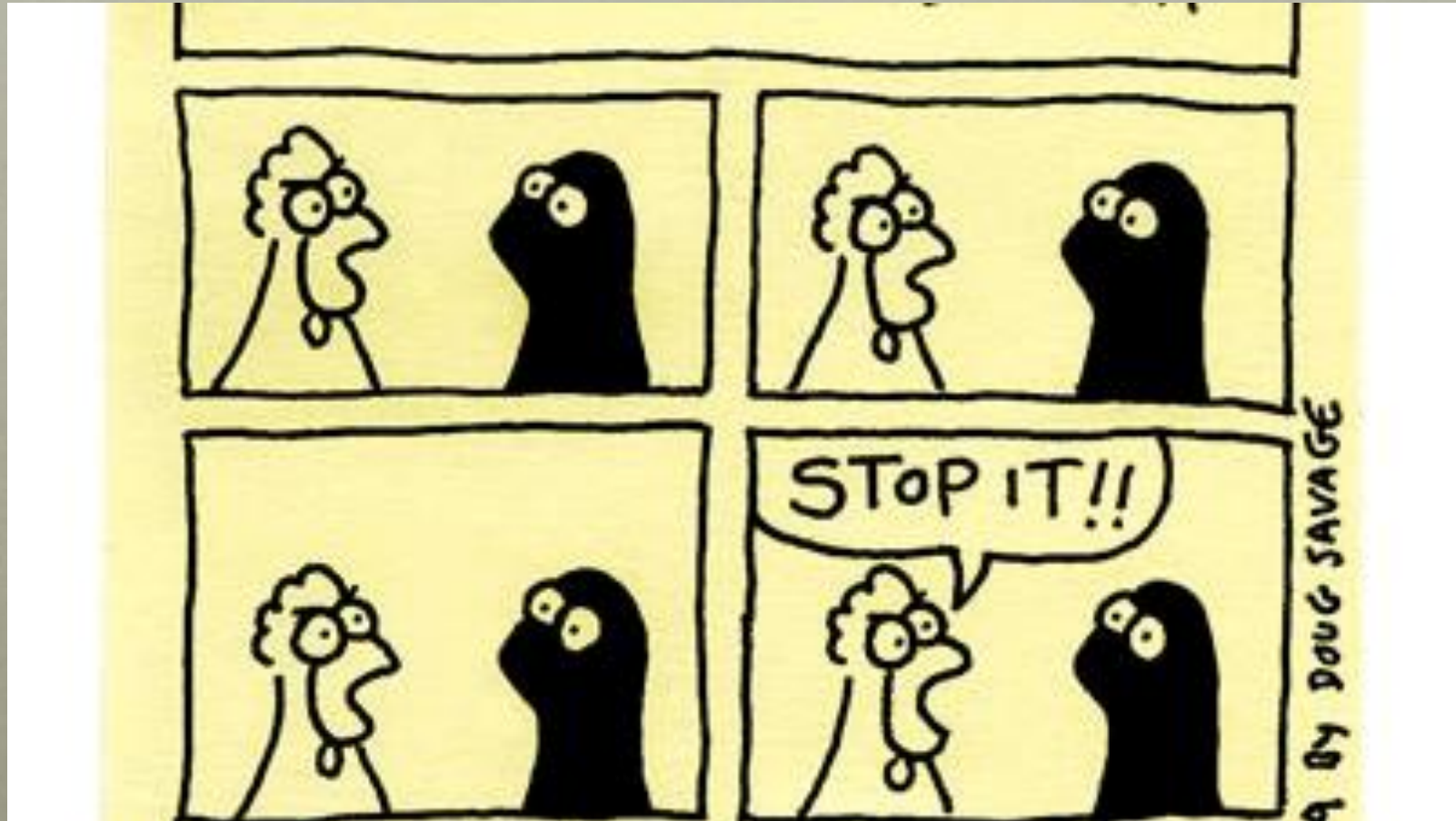
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- THE NEW APPROACH
- “ Tell me what happened...”
- Be neutral and objective particularly when others are involved
- “ I completely understand that there may be things beyond your control but let us focus on the things that were under your control...”
- Make notes of what s/he said went wrong
- “I need to know the facts...”

Why it works

- **You remain emotionally neutral and do not let the situation escalate on an emotional level**
- **Reinforce their own accountability**
- **You are not reinforcing their behavior**
- **You focus on objectivity & you keep them focused**

The passive aggressive



How to recognize them

- **A masked way for expressing anger**
- **They agree to requests but express their resentment covertly**
- **They miss deadlines, come late, procrastinate & often show inefficiency**
- **They are not emotionally honest**
- **They tend to communicate with texts, e-mails and notes but avoid face to face interaction**
- **They can produce high quality work if they don't feel pressured**

Case vignette

SITUATION

“ A direct report is emotionally withdrawn, appears introverted and sullen. S/he does not engages well with others and does not considered a team player. s/he sends “nasty” e-mails or leaves notes about work that needs to be done. However, s/he has excellent technical skills.”

• KEY THEMES

- Not emotionally honest
- Not engaging
- Stressful atmosphere for others

Behavior management

- **Stay calm in your communication with them**
- **Foster direct communication**
- **Be very clear about what the expectations are**
- **Allow emotional honesty by asking about their anger but do not mirror it**

Case vignette

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• NEW APPROACH

- “ it seems like you are upset about something...lets talk about it...”
- Ask about the true intent about the behavior highlighting inconsistencies between what they do and what they say
- Communicate your confusion about the mixed messages you are receiving
- Ask directly about how they think they can improve the situations they are in
- Practice better behavior

why it works

- **It fosters direct communication**
- **It provides clarity**
- **It diffuses situations particularly when other colleagues are involved**
- **It demonstrates/models assertive behavior**

references

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