

Handling Difficult Situations

1. Recognize the situation as a signal to change strategies.
2. When you encounter a difficult situation, take a deep breath and...

Listen...

- ❖ Step back; listen carefully and with interest to the participant. Begin gathering facts. Seek to understand the participant's perspective.

Let them know you have heard them...

- ❖ Acknowledge concerns. Don't dance around the "elephant in the room".

"Let me make sure I understand you..."

"It seems that you don't want to be here..."

- ❖ If possible, offer one or more options that may help in the situation.

Show Empathy...

- ❖ Put yourself in the participant's shoes.
- ❖ Nurture your compassion; try to connect with them as a fellow human being.
- ❖ Communicate acceptance of their feelings (not agreement).

"It sounds like that was really frustrating."

- ❖ Convey sincere understanding.

"I can only imagine what that was like for you."

"It must be really hard to come in here and feel like no one really understands what your life is like."

Avoid...

- ❖ Arguing, confronting, persuading, or judging
- ❖ Threatening, shouting, or using harsh language
- ❖ Telling the client what to do and how to do it