



DIVORCE
FINANCIAL PLANNER
Training Center

High Conflict Personalities: Identifying and Managing for Successful Outcomes

PRESENTED BY

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BASED ON THE WORK OF BILL EDDY AND THE HIGH CONFLICT
INSTITUTE

Objectives

Who are High Conflict Personalities?

Managing Your Own Response

Reducing Client Resistance

Structure the Process

Making Proposals

Dancing with Resistance

Educate About Options

Making Agreements

Who Are HCPs?

Preoccupation with blaming others

All or nothing thinking

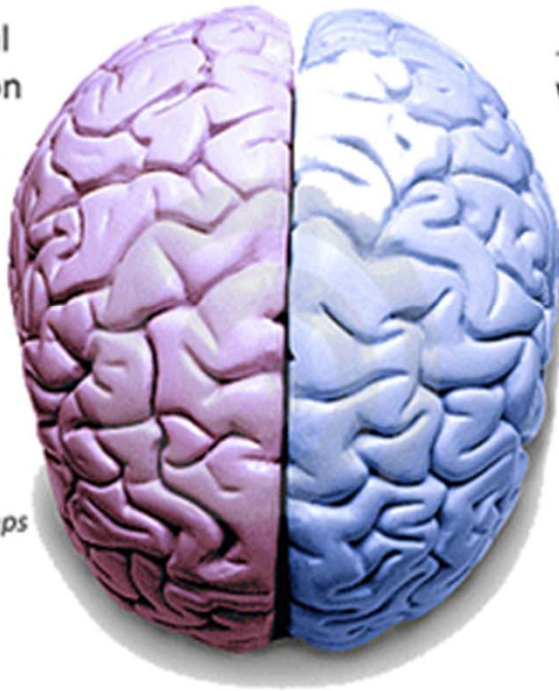
Unmanaged emotions

Extreme Behaviors

RIGHT SIDE

LEFT SIDE

- Nonverbal Information
 - Music
 - Images
- Drawing
- Construction
- Voice Tones
- Creative
- Intuitive
- Spatial Relationships
 - Faces Shapes Maps
- Concrete




- Spoken and Written Language
- Sequencing
- Word Analysis
- Filling Forms
- Numbers
- Letters
- Analytical
- Logical
- Abstract

Thinks in the Present

Thinks in the Past and Future

Corpus Callosum

2 Types of Conflict Resolution

- **PROBLEM-SOLVING BRAIN**
 - Slower; takes time to analyze problems
 - Flexible thinking (many solutions to every problem)
 - Managed emotions
 - Moderate behaviors (so can maintain relationship)
 - **DEFENSIVE BRAIN**
 - Fast; shuts down higher thinking & problem-solving to focus on quick action
 - All-or-nothing thinking (eliminate or escape the enemy)
 - Intense emotions drive fight or flight behavior
 - Extreme behaviors (to defend self from life or death dangers or *perceived* life or death dangers)
- 

Two Different Ways We Solve Conflicts¹

LOGICAL PROBLEM SOLVING	DEFENSIVE REACTING
Focuses on analyzing problems	Focuses on fighting, fleeing or freezing
Attacks the problem with curiosity	Attacks and blames the other person
Looks for a variety of good solutions	Sees only one desperate solution
Uses flexible thinking	Uses all-or-nothing thinking
Sees situation as an interesting problem	Sees situation as an extreme crisis
Feels need for a thorough analysis	Feels need for a fast action to survive
Sees problems as complex	Sees problems as simple: bad people
Sees self as open to improvement	Sees self as blameless
Balances problems in context of other issues	Deals with problems out of context
Sees compromise as a normal part of life	Sees compromise as life threatening
Views fear and anger as manageable emotions that should not interfere with making good decisions	Views fear and anger as overwhelming emotions that call for quick, defensive actions

MIRROR NEURONS

Recent discovery in brain research

Neurons in our brains automatically “mirror” activities we watch, to prepare to do the same

Emotions are mirrored; smiles, sadness, anger

Empathy may be a mirroring activity

You can over-ride mirroring and act opposite (repond to anger with empathy; sadness with hope; upset emotions with problem-solving)

5 HCP Disorders

1. “I’m Very Superior” (Narcissistic) Personalities
 - Demanding and demeaning, self-absorbed
2. “Love you, Hate you” (Borderline) Personalities
 - Overly friendly, then angry, sudden mood swings
3. “You’ll Betray Me” (Paranoid) Personalities
 - Suspicious, expects conspiracies, counter-attacks first
4. “Con Artists” (Antisocial) Personalities
 - Breaks rules & laws, deceptive, enjoys hurting others
5. “Always Dramatic” (Histrionic) Personalities
 - Superficial, helpless, exaggerates, center of attention

Managing Yourself



Managing Yourself

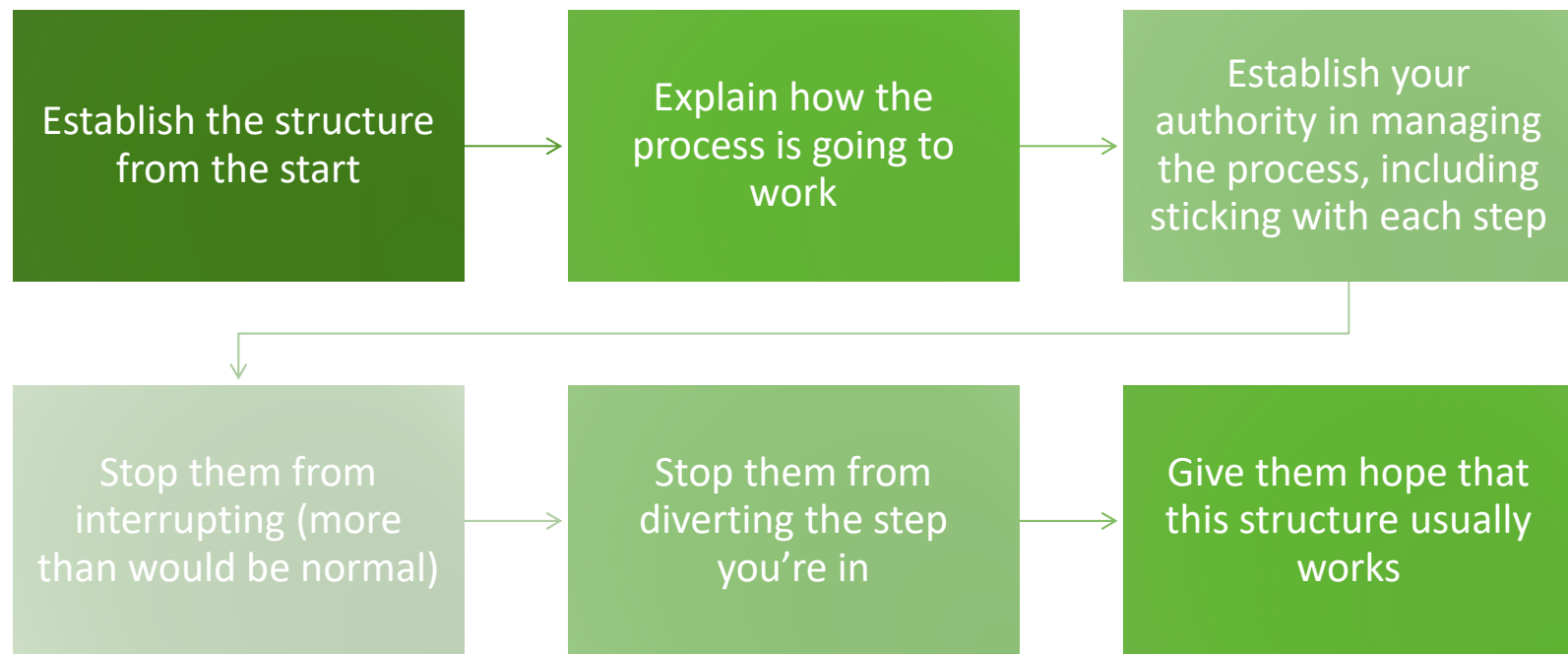
It's not about me. It's about their difficulty managing themselves.

I don't have to defend myself. I'm doing fine as I am. They can't hear it now anyway.

I don't have to feel what they're feeling. I can have my own feelings.

I'm not responsible for their problems. I can be supportive without getting too involved.

2. Structure the Process



Explain Separate Roles

I'm responsible for the process.

You're responsible for :

- Deciding what you want to talk about
- Making Proposals
- Making Decisions

HCPs will pressure professionals to become responsible for solving their problems.

Keep responsibility for decision-making on the clients
Don't feel responsible for solving their problems.

You're not responsible for the outcome!

The STRUCTURE

Step 1: Structuring the Process

Step 2: Gathering Information for Making Proposals

Step 3: Making Proposals and Analyzing Them

Step 4: Making Agreements and Revising Them

HCP Skills as a Neutral

CONNECT

CONNECT with empathy, attention, and respect

STRUCTURE

STRUCTURE the dispute process from the start

EDUCATE

EDUCATE them about their choices and possible consequences of each choice.

CONNECT with E.A.R.


It's easy to feel a powerful urge to attack or criticize.

INSTEAD, consciously use your E.A.R.:

- ❖ EMPATHY
 - ❖ ATTENTION
 - ❖ RESPECT
- 

E.A.R. STATEMENT

EXAMPLE: “I can ***understand*** your frustration – this is a very important decision in your life. Don’t worry, I will pay full ***attention*** to your concerns about this issue and any proposals you want to make. I have a lot of ***respect*** for your commitment to solving this problem, and I look forward to solving it too.”



Educate About Options

Alternative to probing questions

Tell them what's possible

What others have done in a similar situation

Keep them thinking about making proposals

Agreements

- Whenever they have even the smallest agreement, write it down in detail.
- If they have been “thinking about it”, ask them if it is now a YES, NO, or need more time.
- If they appear to have an agreement, encourage them to think about it now and know they aren’t locked in until they sign the final documents.

Pre-mediation Session

- Teach concept of flexible thinking vs. “all-or-nothing” thinking
- Teach concept of managed emotions vs. unmanaged emotions
- Teach concept of moderate behaviors vs. extreme behaviors

Goal is to develop some self-reflection in the client



30-Second Shift

“So what would you propose?”

A solid green horizontal bar spans the width of the slide at the bottom.

Anatomy of a Proposal

Step 1 – Make a Proposal, say WHO would do WHAT, WHEN, and WHERE.



Step 2 – Ask Clarifying Questions, without criticism or judgement



Step 3 – Say Yes , No, or I'll think about it.

Other phrases:


What would you suggest?

What are some options you'd like me to consider?

Do you have any ideas that might solve this problem?

I'm interested in your thoughts on what we should do here?

Avoid “Why” Questions

- Turns into criticism of the proposal
 - Triggers defensiveness
 - Why did you say that really means “I think that’s a stupid idea and I want you to admit it.”
 - Instead, just make another proposal.
- 



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-Kerri H. President of Women's Divorce Alliance



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If they still don't agree:

Deconstruct

- Deconstruct the proposals - Reframe, restate what their primary goal seems to be

Suggest

- Suggest three alternatives – HCPs aren't used to considering alternatives

Take

- Take a break for a week, or two, or three, even a 20 minute break can help.

Suggest

- Suggest each party write down their "outer limits". Non-negotiable bottom lines to give to you confidentially

If they still don't agree:

Recognize

- Recognize that it usually takes HCPs two to three times longer to reach an agreement.


Tell

- Tell them to think of two proposals for any sticking points. This gets them off fixed positioning.

Help

- Help them discuss who is going to make the decision. HCPs often threaten to walk out, go to court, hire attorneys, etc. Help them discuss options like :
 - a. Taking a break for few weeks
 - b. Discussing what it would cost to go to court
 - c. Hiring a private judge to give an opinion based on the law and possible outcomes and then negotiate from there,.
 - d. Bringing lawyers, friends, other experts to a session
 - e. Bringing written opinions of lawyers

Disputes over Basic Facts

- Accurate information is always an issue with HCPs and their knowingly false statements (due to cognitive distortions)
 - Let them know that you will never know the full story. It is possible the extreme statements are true and possibly not true. I won't know but decisions can still be made.
 - **“You might be right!”**
- 

Dance with Resistance (The 2-step)

1. Empathize with EAR and restate. NO MATTER HOW ABSURD!

2. Educate on Options

“You might not realize this but.....”

Educate about Consequences

HCPs do not connect realistic CONSEQUENCES to their own actions, especially fear-based actions.

Explore various outcomes

Explore consequences of no agreement


Build consequences into agreement if not upheld

Tell them it's their choice: **"It's up to you!"**

Summary of Skills for Clients

1. Asking questions
2. Making their Agenda
3. Making Proposals
4. Making Agreements

Skills for the Neutral

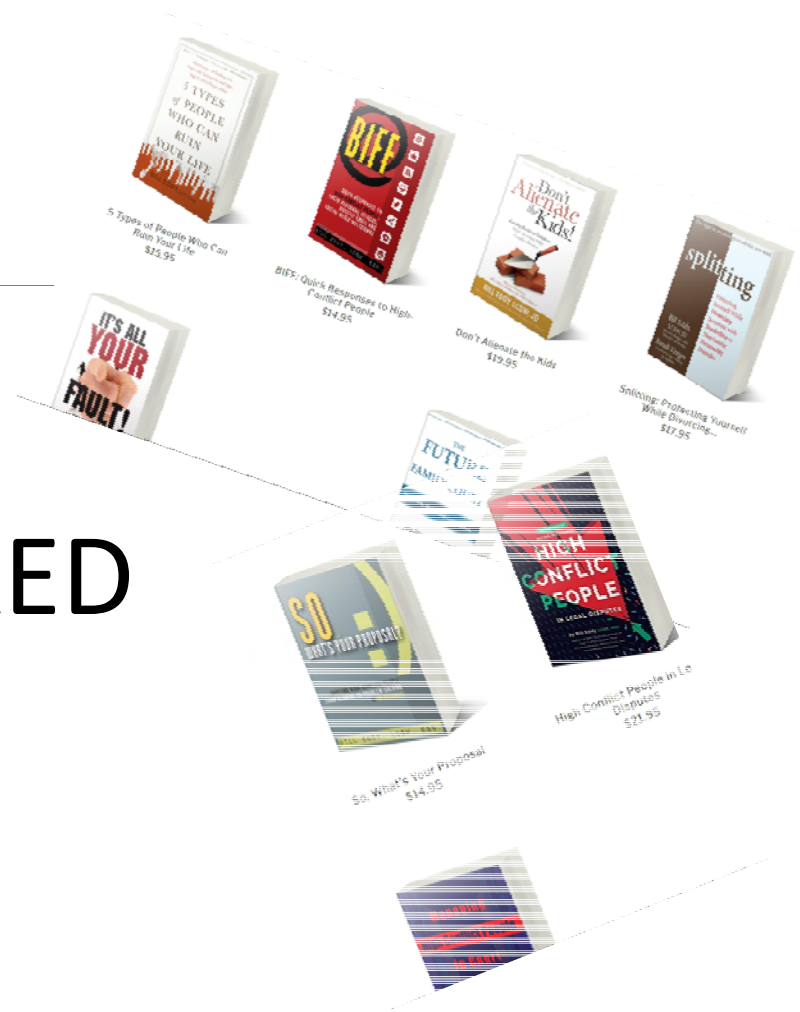
1. CONNECT with Empathy, Attention, and Respect
 2. STRUCTURE the process from the start. Teach them to focus on the future by making proposals.
 3. EDUCATE them about their choices and possible consequences of each choice
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Q&A – High Conflict Personalities



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