

Tips for Communicating with Chronically Disorganized Individuals

Living with or working with a chronically-disorganized person can be extremely challenging for someone who is not disorganized. Among the strategies used to help the person, effective communication is at the top!

Be aware of and acknowledge your own feelings and recognize that you will probably go through various stages of dealing with the other person's disorganization.

- Stage 1 – Offering encouragement
- Stage 2 – Being disappointed by failures and backsliding
- Stage 3 – Irritation with the rate of progress
- Stage 4 – Withdrawing to avoid expressing anger

If you get angry:

- *Tell the individual directly.*
- *Let the person know that he is more important to you than his disorganization.*
- *Know what your own bottom line is and be clear about it.*

Avoid what does not work

- Don't say: *Just do it!*
- Avoid being a nagger
- Don't act like a watchdog
- Resist criticizing
- Never ridicule
- Don't exaggerate consequences
- Eliminate phrases such as:
I told you so.

Practice what does work

- Listen from an accepting point of view
- Listen without judgment
- Give your full attention to the person when he is speaking
- Think highly of the person so that it will come through in your manner and tone of voice
- Focus your attention on her good qualities
- Draw out his best instead of finding fault with him
- Recognize and acknowledge incremental progress