

TIPS for CONFRONTING PUBLIC DISPLAYS OF INSENSITIVITY

- **Don't rely solely on vague and prickly non-verbals.** Your dirty looks frequently provoke either no reaction or defensiveness and annoyance. Your goal is to get the offenders to reflect on how their behavior is obnoxious—not how *you* are obnoxious.
- **Speak softly, be tentative.** Softer voices are less provocative, require the offenders to tune their attention to what you're saying, and salvage the other person's pride.
- **Be gracious and ask permission.** Start by apologizing for the inconvenience and then ask for their permission to listen to your request.
- **Share natural consequences.** Never make demands without explaining them. People feel more obligated to oblige when your request appears reasonable. "Would you kindly talk a bit more quietly on your cell phone? I'm trying to read and am having a hard time focusing."
- **Keep your smile but hold your ground.** Maintain eye contact, stay silent, and let them respond. Don't become aggressive.
- **Accept a "No" and move on with your life.** Unless the situation will continue for an extended period of time or your safety is at risk, you're better off just moving on.

ABOUT THE RESEARCH. The study collected responses via an online survey of 1,017 individuals in April of 2007. Margin of error is approximately 3%.

LEARN NEW SKILLS. To learn how Crucial Confrontations® Training can help you confront public displays of insensitivity, visit www.vitalSMARTSindia.com or call 1800-1021-345.

According to our survey of more than 1,000 people, **91 percent** of people regularly encounter public displays of insensitivity (PDIs) caused by a personal digital assistant (PDA).

For example, the diner at the table next to you is talking loudly on his cell phone, your boss is reading her e-mail during your presentation, the teenager sitting in front of you at the theater is sending text messages throughout the movie and distracting you with the screen's incessant glow—or how about this real-life scenario from a survey respondent: A guest at a funeral walks up to the open casket and begins snapping pictures with his cell phone. The list goes on.

So what do we do when confronted with such blatant PDIs? According to the survey, most of us do nothing. Results show that only one in ten people speak up to the offender, while 37 percent ignore the behavior, 26 percent give dirty looks or show disapproval in other nonverbal ways, and 14 percent just walk away.

People avoid confronting PDI offenders because they simply don't know how to speak up. They justify their silence, yet by saying nothing they are sending silent approval of insensitive and bad behavior. To maintain a civil and courteous society, we need the skills to confront PDIs in a way that addresses the bad behavior without sacrificing respect.

About VitalSmarts—An innovator in corporate training and organizational performance, VitalSmarts is home to multiple training offerings, including Crucial Conversations, Crucial Confrontations, Influencer, and Change Anything Training. Each course improves key organizational outcomes by focusing on high-leverage skills and strategies. The Company also has four *New York Times* bestselling books: *Change Anything*, *Crucial Conversations*, *Crucial Confrontations*, and *Influencer*. VitalSmarts has been ranked by Inc. magazine as one of the fastest-growing companies in America for six consecutive years and has trained more than 650,000 people worldwide. www.vitalSMARTSindia.com

KEY RESULTS

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