

Responsible Helper

Point of the Assignment: To see the difference between helping someone who truly needs help, and getting involved in messy situations that will only cause you problems.

Responsible Helping	Vs.	Drama Triangle (See last page)
<p>Definition: 1) <i>Engaging in a socially-responsible process of giving your time, money, and/or energy to help someone who is truly in need of your help; and 2) Only doing things for which you are truly qualified and capable of doing.</i></p>		<p>Definition: 1) <i>Getting involved in activities and problems of others where doing so can lead to adverse consequences, or where doing so leads to an unhealthy and inappropriate relationship of dependency and attachment between the “Victim” and the “Rescuer”.</i> 2) <i>“Victims” have a pattern of needing to be rescued and “Rescuers” have a pattern of finding “Victims” to rescue. When the relationship ends in mess, they will each go on to find new “victims” and “rescuers” until they get tired of the consequences. Then they become the “Persecutor” of the others.</i> Also known as “co-dependency”</p>
<p>This is a genuine emergency, which truly requires immediate attention to avoid adverse consequences and/or threat to physical health or safety.</p>		<p>This person panics every time something does not go as they expect; and/or This person failed to properly plan and prepare for a situation, and is therefore dealing with the consequences of their inaction or lack of planning and preparation.</p>
<p>Your friend is generally capable of taking care of him/herself.</p>		<p>Your friend has a habit of asking for help (or needing help) to solve everyday issues.</p>
<p>Everyone is satisfied with the outcomes.</p>		<p>Everyone is unhappy about the outcomes.</p>
<p>Your friend is concerned about both your needs as well as his/her own.</p>		<p>Your friend only cares about his/her needs and not yours.</p>
<p>Your friend asks for help only when necessary because he/she is considerate of your time.</p>		<p>Your friend is not concerned about whether his/her requests are an imposition on you.</p>
<p>You are not more invested in and/or worry about your friend’s problems more than he/she does.</p>		<p>Your friend is unconcerned about his/her problems and/or is unconcerned with addressing his/her problems.</p>
<p>He or she accepts responsibility for solving his or her own problems and willingly does what he or she can do towards problem solving.</p>		<p>You spend more time, money and/or energy on solving his/her problem(s) than he/she does.</p>
<p>Your friend will allow you to set boundaries on your ability to help.</p>		<p>Your friend will not hear/accept/honor your attempts to set boundaries on your helping.</p>
<p>Your friend would not want you to do something for him/her if it would cause</p>		<p>Your friend does not care about how his/her requests impact your life.</p>

you harm.	
If your friend borrows money s/he will either pay it back; or you both agree that it was a gift rather than a loan.	Your friend borrows money and does not pay it back.

1) **How to Engage in Responsible Helping:**

a) **Urgent/Important?** Ask yourself if this need is **Urgent and Important?**

i) **Urgent** – Requires immediate action. There will be adverse consequences if you don't drop everything and deal with this right now. (Death, people getting hurt, loses a job, etc.) If yes, then you should definitely consider responding. However, you might also want to consider #C below if this problem tends to be a recurring problem where your friend is simply experiencing the consequences of inappropriate behavior. Also ask if this is a situation that should best be handled by skilled professionals such as police, firefighters, doctors, counselors, etc. If so – and if appropriate, contact the appropriate authorities. If yes, See #5 below, “Where to get help”.

ii) **Important** – Your friend may feel their request is important to them; but is it important to you? Does this situation matter in the ‘big picture of life’? Is their need more important than what you need to do right now? Will there be major consequences in the long run if you don't do this favor?

b) **Do you have the time to deal with this?** Another important factor in determining whether or not to help is if you have the time. It is possible that perhaps the favor is not Urgent or Important, but maybe you are bored and have nothing else to do. Or maybe their favor is Important, but not as important as what you are dealing with right now. In this case perhaps you can offer a better time. See “#2) Set Boundaries” below.

2) **Tips for Responsible Helping:**

a) **Effective Listening/Empathy:** Sometimes, some people can be best helped by simply being heard. True empathizing simply involves repeating back to a person what they have said in your own words (paraphrasing). Oftentimes feeling heard and understood can give a person a sense of validation and healing. (*i.e.* “*You feel hurt because he didn't ask you before acting.*”)

b) **Recognize that consequences are often an excellent teacher.** Sometimes your friend will be seeking help to avoid dealing with the consequences of choices s/he has made. If so, sometimes the best thing her friend can do is to let her experience the full effect of the consequences because that is the only way she will be motivated to change inappropriate behavior. However, if this is a true a life or death situation, it is appropriate and the ethical thing to do to intervene. **Word of caution:** You must be careful in how you respond to her, especially if she doesn't understand that she is experiencing the consequences. Saying too much or blaming her may make the situation worse. Wisdom and discretion are crucial. A simple, “I'm sorry, but no, I can't.” May be the best response under many circumstances.

c) **Teach them how to solve their problem by themselves.**

d) **Helping with Problem Solving/Goal Setting.** Sometimes some people are overwhelmed and/or don't know how to address goals and problem solving to address their situations. Since this is not your situation, you may be able to be a little more objective and level-headed about the situation.

e) **Providing Your Talents and/or Skills** (*fixing cars and computers, cooking, etc.*)

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- f) **Offer a Place to Live.** This is appropriate helping if: 1) The individual does not stay longer than as mutually agreed, 2) “Pulls their own weight” by either paying rent or helping out with household needs (cleaning, repairs, child/elder care, etc.), and 3) The person does not take advantage of you and your home.
 - g) **Manual Labor** (help with moving, cleaning, babysitting, etc.)
 - h) Loan money. This is only responsible helping **if you are willing to accept the possibility that it may actually turn in to a gift** if it never gets repaid. (*This will allow you to forgive them for not paying you back.*)
- 3) **Set Boundaries:**
- i) Who should set the boundaries? The person who holds the power (**you - the helper**)
 - (1) **It is your responsibility to determine what and how much you can give without placing an undue burden on yourself.**
 - (2) **It is your responsibility to communicate what and how much you are willing to give.**
 - ii) If your friend does not want to honor boundaries you set, then you should ask yourself why you would want to have him/her as a friend.
- 4) **Recognize When a Problem Is Too Much for You:**
- a) You don't know how to help
 - b) Problem and/or solution requires knowledge and/or skills you don't have
 - c) Suggested solutions may lead to adverse consequences (*legal, threaten life, etc.*)
- 5) **Consequences of Ineffective Helping** (*i.e. engaging in Drama Triangles*):
- A person who chooses to proceed with helping a friend in a way, which is not effective, will likely find that there will be many consequences:
- a) Wastes your time
 - b) Jeopardizes lives
 - c) Jeopardizes relationships (people get hurt)
 - d) Jeopardizes jobs/job marketability
 - e) Loss of money
 - f) Jail/Prison
 - g) Permanent criminal record
 - h) Reputation for being “A trouble maker” or “having people problems”
 - i) Lawsuits
 - j) Can potentially negatively affect financial credit rating
 - k) **Undue stress and burdens on those people who love you the most!**
- 6) **Where to get help**
- a) Professional Skilled Helpers (*Counselors, social workers lawyers, teachers, pastors/clergy, doctors, nurses, police, etc.*) All these people have been trained on how to recognize and respond to complex problems.
 - b) Government (*city, county, state, federal*) (dial 2-1-1 in most areas)
 - c) Non-profit agencies (dial 2-1-1 in most areas)
 - d) Support groups focused on addressing specific needs (*Alcoholics Anonymous, Alanon, Alzheimer's Care Givers, etc.*)
 - e) Resource Centers focused on addressing specific needs (*Employment One-stops, Veterans Resource Centers, Elder Care, Disabled Person's Support Centers, Women's Centers, etc.*)

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- f) See list of contact information for “Help for Victims of Abuse” (*K. High website – listed along side of “Responsible Helper” assignment.*)
- g) Churches or other places of worship will often have a list of referrals
- h) Parents (*or others who have more life experience than you*)
- i) Become a skilled helper yourself by acquiring the proper training/education to learn how to do it right.

Responsible Helper Application:

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1. Describe a time when you helped someone and the situation turned out well.

2. Was the problem?: 1) **Urgent** – requires immediate attention – Yes / No
2) **Important** – negative consequences if not done – Yes / No
3. What was the outcome of the situation?

4. Why did you get involved in the situation?

5. How did you help? Did it fit the criteria of responsible helping Page 1? Explain your response.

6. What do you think would have happened had you not gotten involved?

7. Where there any negative consequences of the situation?

8. In looking back, should you have handled the situation differently? If so, in what ways?

Drama Triangle Application

1. Describe a time when you thought you were helping someone, but in retrospect think it may have been a “Drama Triangle” situation. (*If you can’t come up with your own example, then think of a time when you observed someone else doing this.*)

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2. Was the problem?: 1) **Urgent** – requires immediate attention – Yes / No
2) **Important** – negative consequences if not done – Yes / No
 3. How did you participate in the drama?

 4. What was the outcome of the situation?

 5. What was the payoff for you to participate in the situation? (*In other words you got something out of doing this or else you would not have done it. Payoffs can include things such as: feeling good about yourself for helping, avoiding conflict by not saying “no”, or the perks of the “friendship”.*)

 6. In looking back, you should be able to identify “warning signs” that you were about to engage in a Drama Triangle. What were they?

 7. What were the negative consequences of the situation?

 8. In looking back, how could you have handled the situation differently so that the outcome was positive instead of negative?

Test your understanding:

What is the main point of this assignment?

Why were you expected to do this exercise?

What type of person would need to do this exercise?

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How well do you fit the profile of the person for whom this assignment was created?

Reflection: *(Write down your response after completing this assignment.)*

Drama Triangle

