

Confronting the Idiot in Your Chapter

Question #1

Where does your chapter draw the line with regard to negative behavior by members?

Question #2

Do we draw the line differently for our members than we would for other people in our lives?

Question #3

Are you ready to confront the idiot?

Who is the right person to do it?

The person who most wants to do the confrontation is often the worst person to do it. Best case: someone who the person respects, who is not emotionally involved, who will handle the confrontation with confidence.

What is the best environment?

Seek neutral turf. No time constraints or interruptions.

What is the best thing that could happen?

Know your campus resources. Know where to go for help.

Be ready for ANY possible reaction.

Anger, insincere apology, emotional breakdown, excuses, jokes, accusations, tangent issues, threats, physical intimidation, confession, silent treatment, downplaying, blame you or others, request for help, etc.

Make a list of behaviors.

You are confronting behavior, so make a list of the specific incidences or causes for concern. Builds your confidence going in.

Practice the confrontation with a friend.

By role-playing the confrontation with a mutual friend in advance, you build your confidence, alleviate the stress, and prepare for all the possible responses. Also gives you someone to support you before and after the confrontation.

Know when you are in over your head.

You are not a licensed counselor or psychologist, so recognize when you are dealing with something too big for you. There are people on every campus who are trained and willing to help you. Seek them out for advice before the confrontation.

Use "I" statements.

Harder for someone to get defensive if you are talking about how their behavior makes you feel.

Are there contributing factors?

If there are legitimate factors contributing to the person's damaging behavior, offer to help them seek out assistance for those. However, these do not excuse negative behavior.

Demand a first, positive step

An apology to someone impacted, restitution for damage, appointment to see a counselor, clean up the mess, etc.

What does the person stand to lose?

A person will only change a negative behavior if he stands to lose something that is more important than the positives he gains from the negative behavior. What could he lose? Respect, membership, leadership role, housing, relationship? *Most importantly, can you back it up?* If not, you lose your credibility.

Take care of yourself.

Confrontation is stressful, even when it comes from a caring place. Don't allow your friend's negative behavior to start impacting your own health and wellness. Don't be afraid to seek out a counselor for yourself if you're experiencing negative consequences from the stress of this person's behavior.

Remember #101