

Managing moody people at work

If you work with someone moody—whether a boss or a coworker—don't just deal with the highs and lows of the person's ever-fluctuating mood. Instead, find a way to safely talk about the problem.

Example: On her blog Let's Grow Leaders, Karin Hurt recounts an experience with her favorite boss. She says her boss had such highs and lows that the team gifted her with two Barbie dolls to keep in her office. The first doll was polished and impeccably dressed; the other was dressed in ripped clothing, had messy hair and had Magic Marker on her face.

They requested that she make visible the doll that represented her mood. Employees knew that if the "evil" Barbie was out, they should avoid the boss until her mood turned. The manager accepted the gift graciously and used it to benefit her team.

Find your own way: That may not work for you, but do come up with a system for alerting one another when you need some alone time. For example, provide everyone—including yourself—with "Do Not Interrupt" signs. If people are just not up to connecting with others, they can post their signs. Note: Remind everyone not to abuse the system, by always posting their signs, for example.

—Adapted from "Dealing With Moody People at Work," Karin Hurt, Let's Grow Leaders, <http://letsgrowleaders.com>.