

CONFLICT



Name

Overview

Conflict is a training program that provides you with the essential information and skills needed to help you deal with conflict in your personal and professional life.

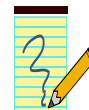
This program will help you respond to anger in others, especially when it's directed personally. You will understand how to manage your own anger, and you will learn to recognize and deal with someone who challenges a value such as fairness, trust, integrity, etc. You will also learn what to do when someone sees the facts differently than you. And finally, you will gain a basic understanding of how to manage conflict in others when you are in a third party role.

Conflict is designed for you to actively participate with your peers in the training workshop. This training program encourages you to improve your knowledge and skills by integrating your work-related situations into the workshop.

Course Objectives

Our goal is to build greater personal skill and confidence in your ability to deal with conflict in the organization by focusing on the areas listed below.

- *Working With an Angry Person*
- *Identifying Poor Responses to Anger*
- *Managing Your Own Emotions*
- *Using Key Listening Acknowledgments*
- *Dealing with Challenges to Values*
- *Resolving Differences in Facts*
- *Managing Conflict in a Third Party Role*



Personal Objectives

In this section of your workbook, write out one or two personal objectives you would like to accomplish by the end of Conflict. Use these objectives as your measuring tools to help you determine where to focus your energies during the workshop. Try to limit your initial objective to about 10 to 15 words and maybe one or two bullets. As you get into the exercises and talk to other participants, you can modify your objectives.

Working With An Angry Person



An important skill for you to master is the ability to work with people in negative emotions. This is hard to do, especially when it gets pretty heated. When a person gets angry, it's easy to forget about collaboration and move into an anger mode. The number-one skill in collaborating is the ability to deal with an angry employee without getting angry ourselves. Identified below are several of the most common responses when confronted with anger.

Poor Responses to Anger

1. Return Anger With Anger

- If you match the person's anger with your own, the situation will only escalate, sometimes out of control. It will not help in resolving the situation or calming down the person. You've also told other people in the organization that it's okay to return anger with anger, which may create further problems for you.

2. Ignore the Person

- When a person is angry, he or she wants to be heard. Don't ignore the person's anger. If you do, the likelihood is high that the anger will get worse.

3. Patronize the Person

- Telling the person to calm down usually comes across as being condescending. It's similar to telling the person that his or her prevailing feelings aren't legitimate.

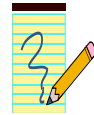
Exercise

We know that those three responses are poor responses to anger. The two questions below briefly define the skills you need to deal successfully with an angry person.

A) How can you indicate to the angry person his or her message has been received?

B) What skills should you use?

Controlling Your Anger



A critical skill for you to learn is the ability to maintain your poise when faced with hostile or angry emotions. It's easy to get dragged into a confrontation. It's hard enough to collaborate under calm conditions. Throw in strong emotions (verbal abuse, for instance) and most of us fall back into our non-collaborative strategies. Most of us aren't too good at showing concern when we're really angry. There are some things you can do to help yourself in these tough situations. To calm yourself, learn to manage breathing, body language, and facial expressions. Answer the following questions in your small group.

Exercise

1. How do you know when you're angry? What are the clues?

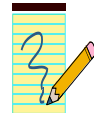
It's important for you to use these clues as indicators to manage your own emotions. Once you sense these indicators appearing in any manner, then you need to put something in motion to control yourself.

2. What do you do to get your anger under control?

- Think of times when you've been so angry you were nearly out of control. What helps in those situations? How do you regain control? What works for you?

On the following pages are some additional suggestions that may mirror some of the things you now do to maintain control. If you read some other suggestion, or you hear one from a peer that you believe could work for you, then make a note to yourself to give it a try the next time you're feeling angry.

Using Self-Talk



Identified below and on the following page are several examples of self-talk that other people use when confronted with anger or another negative emotion. Talk out-loud with your small group and see what other phrases or words you can develop. Maybe a few of the words are similar to ones you already use.

1. Take-Charge of Your Emotions

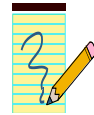
Take-charge statements help you focus on your own emotions and help you avoid getting “hooked” by a person’s abuse. Instead of letting the person control your emotions, you de-couple yourself from what the person is saying. You take charge of your own feelings. Once you’re in charge of your emotions, you can be at your best during the confrontation.

- *“I can manage this situation. I know how to handle my anger.”*
- *“Just roll with the punches. Stay in control.”*
- *“This employee isn’t worth getting angry over. I can deal with this.”*

2. Take-Charge of Your Physical Reactions Through Self-Control

Self-control statements help you manage your angry reactions. They focus your attention on what your body is doing so you can bring it under control.

- *“Take it easy, a deep breath will help.”*
- *“Stay calm, look concerned, the employee will talk it out.”*
- *“Keep my voice calm, speak slowly and carefully. Use good words.”*



3. Focus on the Situation

Focus on the situation statements help you keep to your own strategy. Sticking to your own strategy helps to prevent you from being pulled into the person’s agenda.

- *“I’ll begin by getting this person to vent.”*
- *“I’ll ask what this person wants to see happen.”*
- *“I’ll describe exactly what I want and listen to the reaction.”*

4. Physical Switches

Because anger has a physical side, there are some physical switches you can use to gain control. These switches range from taking a couple of deep breaths, changing your position in your chair, to taking a walk with the person. What are some physical switches you’ve found helpful in controlling your anger?

5. Time Outs

If you’re really upset, and you don’t think you can switch off your anger, then you’d better tell yourself to get out of the confrontation. Losing your temper in the middle of a confrontation almost never works. There are two elements to consider in taking a time out. First, how will you get out of the immediate confrontation? What will you say or do? Second, what will you do during the waiting period before the two of you get back together?

What do you say to get out of these situations?

Listening Acknowledgments

Outlined below and on the following page are several key listening acknowledgments critical to your success in managing conflict. Using these skills abundantly helps create rapport with virtually anyone, regardless of the other person's prevailing emotional level.

1) Give Your Full Attention

- Really focus your energies and make a concerted effort to listen to the other person's perspective. This visible effort automatically generates full attention as well as much better understanding.
- Try to listen for the attitude. This effort helps to keep you interested.
- Have a goal that does not put you in a difficult win/lose position.
- Stop what you are doing.
- Keep good eye contact with the other person.

2) Clarify What is Being Said and Confirm Back to the Other Person You Fully Understand

- If you are unsure of the meaning of what's being said, let the other person know this.
- You want to provide feedback to prove you clearly understand what is being communicated.
- To let the other person know this, briefly restate the substance of what was said. A few words are usually enough to let the other person know he or she is making sense to you.
- Try not to repeat what the other person has said. Use analogies or examples instead of exact repetitions.
- The purpose is to let the other person know he or she is having an impact on you.

*Listening Acknowledgments - Continued***3) Be Respectful**

- You can show respect by being willing and able to communicate at the other person's emotional level and understanding of the situation. You do this by adjusting your tone of voice, rate of speech, choice of words, and energy level.
- Use both verbal and non-verbal responses.
- Try to speak at approximately the same energy level as the other person. You do this naturally with people you really care about in your personal life.
- Keep in mind you only need to speak at the other person's energy level temporarily. Show the other person you are willing to follow their views and opinions for a while without making him or her feel inadequate or misunderstood.
- Learn to demonstrate that you are impressed rather than trying to be impressive. Think about this paradox. The more interested you are in what the other person has to say, the more that person will be interested in what you have to say. And you will naturally come across as an impressive person without really trying.

Common Listening Barriers**1) Evaluating the Person**

- You tell the person how he or she feels or what he or she means; "What you really mean is . . .," or, "What you are trying to say is . . ." Instead, don't tell the person how he or she feels or means by his or her words. Focus on getting the word "you" out of the conversation. "It sounds like . . .," or, "It looks like . . .," are more effective.

2) Presenting Too Much Information

- You talk too much or give a person more information than he or she can handle.

3) Interrupting

- As a person is speaking or thinking, you cut him or her off to present your line of thinking. This behavior clearly conveys a lack of respect for the other person's point of view.

4) Trying to Influence a Person Too Quickly

- Wait until you have developed sufficient rapport or the other person will resist.

Skill Practice

This is your first opportunity to practice skills in this program. Use any of the work-related situations on the following page. This first skill practice is fairly simple and is practiced in groups of three people. The person practicing the skills is to keep the conversation alive using his or her listening acknowledgments and any self-talk for about 2 minutes. That's all. The person responding to the person practicing is to act as an employee and respond as appropriately as possible. The third person in the group is the coach.

Coaches shouldn't allow the exercise to go longer than 2 minutes. There should be plenty to coach in that time frame. Once the exercise is stopped, the coach provides his or her insight using the Coaching Checklists on pages 10 and 11. Once the person coaching is finished, the person practicing goes again and tries to incorporate the coaching he or she just received. Remember, the repetitions are critical. If you follow the rules, and the coaches provide their insights properly, the exercises will be worthwhile. Outlined below are some basic coaching guidelines and rules for the skill practice.

Skill Practice Coaching

1) Tell the person practicing what you believe he or she did well. Say this first so you do not forget. Be specific. For example, if you like the fact that the person practicing used an effective listening acknowledgment, tell him or her. Don't assume anything. There is nothing too mundane or trite in coaching a skill practice. Everything helps.

2) Tell the person practicing what could use improvement. Think about what might make the practice session better from your perspective. Give the person practicing your suggestions. The time to experiment and make mistakes is in practice, not on the job. So don't be afraid to give your honest insights.

Rules

1) When completed, keep quiet. This rule is for the person practicing the skill. The tendency for many people once the practice session is completed is to rationalize, make excuses, and so on. Leave your egos outside the workshop. Once you've completed your 2 minutes of practice, keep quiet. It's your coach's turn.

2) Listen to your coach. As the person practicing, you may not agree with the coaching suggestions. You may not even like the person coaching you. None of that matters. What does matter is how your "coach" saw the 2 minutes. Take the coaching as an opportunity to improve.

3) Do 3 to 5 repetitions of each situation. This is where you really become skillful. It is based on sports, theatre, and music. To become skilled in any of those endeavors takes a lot of practice in a repetitive manner. Repetition means you do the same exact skill practice again and again based on the coaching. Only after you have mastered one of the situations, should you move to another. After the person practicing has completed his or her repetitions, then you can switch roles.

Skill Practice Situations

Listed below are 10 work-related situations you can use. If you have some specific work-related situations you would rather use, then go ahead and practice those. You decide what works the best. Feel free to make any modifications to the listed situations.

1. You notice a team member violating one of your team's goals. When you say something to him, he gets very upset and tells you to mind your own business.
2. A manager from another department misses an agreed upon deadline which causes you to be late with information back to your team. When you say something to the manager, she gets angry with you.
3. You notice a friend in another department being rude to someone else. When you mention your observations to him, he gets angry with you.
4. An employee complains about achieving or performing a team goal because of the difficulty or impossibility blocks getting in the way. When you say something to the employee, she gets angry.
5. A manager from another department angrily blames you for making a mistake and isn't interested in listening to you, even though it wasn't your fault. What do you say?
6. A manager from another department requests you look up some information for him, even though he really should do it himself. You have several key projects that make it difficult for you to do his request. When you mention this to him, he gets angry.
7. An employee made a mistake and isn't interested in fixing it for themselves. You're concerned it will be repetitive unless the employee does take the time to fix it. When you say something to her, she gets angry.
8. A customer angrily complains about the length of time she had to wait (on the phone or in person). The wait was due to problems out of your control. When you explain this to her, she still remains upset.
9. A long-time customer isn't happy about _____. You must explain to the customer the problems that seem to be causing his unhappiness.
10. You miss a deadline for your manager because of unforeseen problems. When you mention this to him, he seems to get even angrier.