

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT



INSTRUCTOR GUIDE 1-DAY COURSE

HRDQ[®]

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

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Instructional design and learning philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SME)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:






- Learning objectives — effective tools for managing, monitoring, and evaluating training
- Meaningfulness — connects the topic to the students' past, present, and future
- Appropriate organization of essential ideas — helps students focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- Modeling techniques — demonstrate to students how to act and solve problems
- Active application — the cornerstone to learning — helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- Consistency — creates consistent instructions and design to help students learn and retain new information
- Accelerated learning techniques — create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course. This ensures that the learning will appeal to all learning styles and will be retained.

Course timing

Chapter One: Understanding Conflict

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Introduction/Objectives	30
	Reasons for conflict	20
	Two types of conflict	10
	Rational versus emotional orientation	10
	Detached engagement	15



Reading



Written
Exercise






Facilitate



Group
Activity

Chapter Two: The Basic Steps of Conflict Resolution

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Four typical approaches to conflict	10
	The ABCD of conflict resolution	5
	Approach	10

Course timing (cont.)



Reading



Written Exercise



Facilitate



Group Activity






Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Getting buy-in	10
	Lawn problem	30
	Consensus	15
	Do it	5

Chapter Three: Listening Skills

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	How to listen effectively	5
	Obstacles to listening	5
	Asking questions	5
	Assess your listening skills	5
	Listening practice	20

Course timing (cont.)

Chapter Four: Communication Skills That Support Conflict Resolution

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Establish credibility and trust	5
	Communicating feelings	10
	Confrontational language	10
	The escalation process	15
	Positive language	10



Reading



Written Exercise






Facilitate






Group Activity

Chapter Five: Handling Challenging Personalities

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Conflict denial	5
	Uncooperative person	5
	Angry hothead	5

Course timing (cont.)

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Confronting when intimidated	5
	Dealing with defeat	5
	Challenging personality practice	15



Reading



Written Exercise



Facilitate



Group Activity

Chapter Six: Handling Specific Situations

Type of Activity	Segment	Time
	Dealing with your boss or upper management	5
	Dealing with a co-worker or peer	5
	Dealing with team conflict	5
	Dealing with an employee you supervise	5
	Dealing with a customer or client	5
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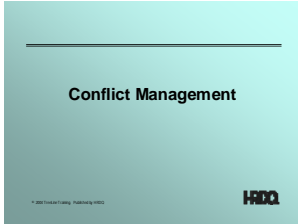
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[Review the ground rules for attending and participating in training.](#)

Conflict training ground rules

Participation is allowed, expected, and encouraged. Your ideas will enrich the session.

Set cell phones on silent; return calls during breaks or lunch.

Frequent breaks will be taken, but feel free to take care of your biological needs when necessary.

Take time getting to know the other participants. They can be great resources after the program.

The leader is also a resource and is available for questions before and after the session, as well as on breaks.

You are encouraged to ask questions.

Each person has a contribution to make. Respect each other.

Course objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

Understand the two basic types of conflict and reasons they occur.

Recognize four typical approaches to conflict.

Implement the basic steps of conflict resolution.

Practice communication skills to minimize and even prevent conflict.

Employ strategies for responding to challenging people such as dealing with an extremely angry person or someone who won't acknowledge the conflict.

Handle specific situations including dealing with your boss, client, or another department.

Key principles

Conflict is inevitable.

Conflict is not always bad.

The only behavior I can control is mine.

If you don't deal with conflict early, it will escalate.

Icebreaker activity: Complete the following sentence in 10 words or less. "In my opinion, conflict most usually occurs when _____." Allow a minute for participants to think of their answer, and then have them share with a partner or in small groups. Set a strict time limit to avoid lengthy venting. Debrief by sharing answers with the entire group.

Review the course objectives and key principles with the group.

Course objectives

- Understand the two basic types of conflict.
- Recognize four typical approaches to conflict.
- Implement the basic steps of conflict resolution.
- Practice communication skills to minimize conflict.
- Respond effectively to challenging people.
- Handle specific conflict situations appropriately.

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Key principles

- Conflict is inevitable.
- Conflict is not always bad.
- The only behavior I can control is mine.
- If you don't deal with conflict early, it will escalate.

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Chapter One



UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT

Objectives

Successful completion of this chapter will increase your knowledge and ability to:

- Identify reasons conflict occurs

- Describe two types of conflict

- Analyze conflict situations and determine their type

Introduction

Getting ready to face conflict

Describe a conflict you recently handled well.

Situation:

Resolution:

Describe a conflict that is currently unresolved.

Describe a desirable result for this conflict from your perspective.

Describe a desirable result for this conflict from the other party's perspective.

Activity: Focus participants on real-world situations. The first question shows them that conflict can be resolved. Have them answer on their own and then share with a partner or in small groups.

You can also use their examples to determine what types of conflicts to focus on during the day. Use their real-world examples as much as possible so that participants see exactly how to apply the concepts to their own situations.

"Civility ... is the sum of the many sacrifices we are called to make for the sake of living together."

-- Yale law professor Stephen Carter

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Death of civility: Deborah Tannen wrote a book on the subject called *The Argument Culture*. Have participants think of TV shows that are based on arguing and polarizing each position—"McLaughlin Group" or "People's Court"- type shows.

"I doubt that X will really find a solution to the problem until well into the next century, and probably not during my lifetime. You know as well as I do that most people over at X are complete wastes of DNA, and are an embarrassment for the theory of natural selection."

—An extremely rude associate professor

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Read the example of extreme rudeness on the PPT. It was sent by an associate professor at a major university to 13 people, including the vice chancellor, and is verbatim except for removing the department names.

Incivility statistics

- 53% lost time worrying about the incident or future interactions.
- 37% said their commitment to the organization declined.
- 28% lost work time avoiding the instigator.
- 12% actually changed jobs to avoid the instigator.

—Study conducted by Christine Pearson at the University of North Carolina

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Have participants share their "war stories." Check out www.workplacebullyinglaw.org and refers participants to it for ideas and support.

Competing priorities: A classic example is sales versus quality control. Sales usually want the newest product or service immediately, while quality control wants to make certain all the kinks are worked out.

Reasons for conflict

Death of civility

The number one thing that drives people crazy at work is people who steal other people's food from the office fridge. It may be petty, but it points to the disintegration of politeness and common sense in the workplace.

Atmosphere of animosity

Tendency to polarize every problem as two opposing viewpoints offering no middle ground

Fueled by culture, media, and politicians

Loss of manners

Sense of isolation and de-personalization fueled by e-mail and voice mail

The House of Representatives felt obligated to hold a civility retreat for its members in Hershey, Pennsylvania ("the sweetest place on earth"); fewer than 200 of the 435 House members attended

The faster we go, the more disconnected we become

Lack of resources: time, money, and people

Competition and frustration arise when employees attempt to complete their tasks without enough resources. Internal competition often fuels conflict within an organization.

Competing priorities

This occurs when two tasks must be completed at the same time, but doing one prevents the other from getting done.

Workload: too much, too little, or unevenly distributed

Too much work causes stress and tension, which can foster conflict.

Too little work can produce boredom and a sense of unimportance, which may lead to conflict behaviors.

Uneven workload (real or perceived) creates low morale and hostility or contempt.

Responsibility without control

An employee who is responsible for work but doesn't have the power to control it is likely to:

- Complain about and criticize those out of their control

- Make demands on those they have control over and become difficult to get along with

Case study: There are several possible sources of conflict. They include:

Responsibility without control—needing information from insurance companies but not having authority to get it

Overwork or competing priorities

Incivility—atmosphere of animosity

Note: We will revisit the case study after covering the next section.

Case study

Instructions: Read the case and identify the source of the conflict.

Janet is an accounting supervisor. Gretchen, an analyst, is late again turning in the monthly budget report. Janet has discussed this with Gretchen and thought she had been clear about deadlines.

Janet: "Gretchen, this budget report is late again. This is turning into a regular event, and I'm getting sick and tired of it. When will you get it done?"

Gretchen: "I'm waiting for the figures from the service company. I've called them and they promised to fax them yesterday, but I still haven't seen anything."

Janet: "Why didn't you say something before? I could have called Mr. Jones and asked him to look into it. I'm frustrated that you never talk to me about these delays."

Gretchen: "Whenever I ask for your help, you're too busy. I'm just doing the best I can."

What is the source of the conflict?

What type of conflict is this?

Two types of conflict

Conflicts are either about issues—decisions, systems, ideas, and actions—or about people who are bugging you. And in reality, most conflicts are a combination of both.

Issue-based

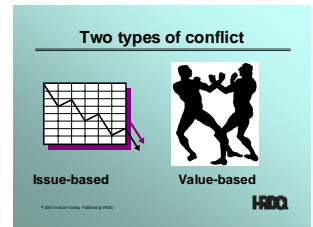
- Objective, rational
- Involve ideas, actions, decisions, systems, procedures
- Can be productive and lead to creative solutions

Personality-based

- Subjective, emotional, personal
- Anger and frustration are the most common emotions
- About attitudes, behaviors, motives perceived as negative
- Almost never productive and usually get worse over time
- Become polarized

Ask yourself the following questions to determine if a conflict is issue-based or personality-based.

- Do I dislike the other person or become easily frustrated when dealing with this person?
- Do I see this person as untrustworthy, uncaring, and undeserving of respect?
- Do I want to “win”?
- Is my emotional reaction to this conflict appropriate to its importance?
- Do I stick to one issue or incident, or do I find new and different reasons for the conflict?



Very few, if any, conflicts are strictly issue-based. Because all conflicts occur between humans, all are influenced by personality to some degree.

Provide an example of an issue-based conflict that deteriorated into a personality-based conflict.

Explain the concept of finding what you look for, i.e., once you decide a person is difficult, you look for behaviors that reinforce your judgment and don't notice behaviors that don't support your judgment about that person.

Clearly, the key to handling conflict is to de-personalize it. The more you focus on issues and use effective communication skills, the more likely the other person will too. (A later chapter discusses what to do if the other person remains noncooperative.)

Obviously, “yes” answers to the questions at the bottom of the page indicate a personality-based conflict.

Activity: Conduct in pairs, small groups, or with the entire group.

Answers:

1. Issue-based
2. Personality-based
3. Issue-based (though likely to deteriorate into personality-based)
4. Issue-based (though likely to deteriorate into personality-based)

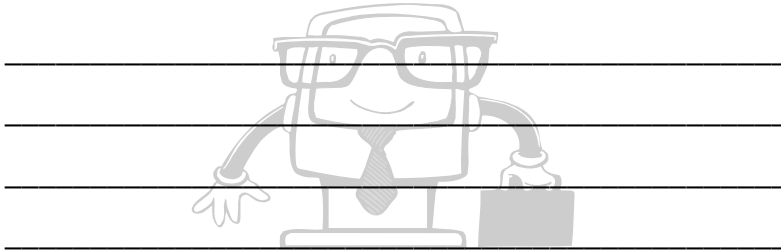
Identifying personality-based conflicts

Instructions: Read each description and decide whether it's an issue-based or personality-based conflict.

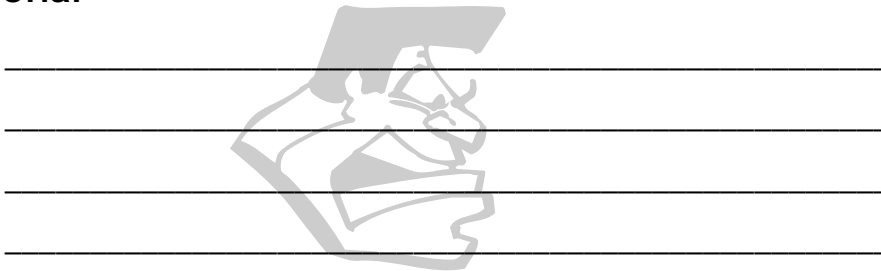
1. Two employees want to take vacation the same week, and the schedule allows only one person to be gone.
2. Mary and Helga work in the same office and seem to be on each other's nerves a lot. Mary is critical of Helga's messy desk and constant socializing.
3. Peter has worked with Karl for two years, and Karl has never made a deadline.
4. Monty's boss repeatedly "borrows" employees whom Monty supervises without checking with Monty first.

Rational versus emotional orientation

Rational



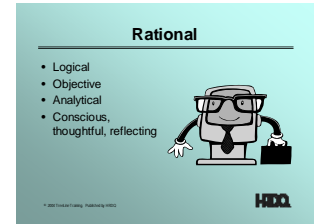
Emotional



Associates current info with feelings or moods from memory and reacts to current situation without distinguishing from the past.

Optimally, the two orientations work together to interpret verbal (literal) and nonverbal messages. Problems occur when our emotional side ignores our rational side. Note: It's also important not to ignore our intuition (emotional side); however, "traditional" conflicts more often arise from letting our emotions direct our behavior.

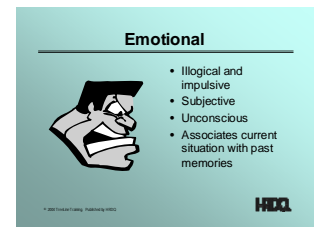
Have participants fill in the blanks with the trainer leading a discussion and participants calling out answers.



Rational characteristics:

- Logical
- Objective
- Analytical
- Conscious, thoughtful, reflecting

Other points: The rational mind seeks data to carefully assess and compare to past data. However, this thorough consideration takes time and often the emotional mind has already acted by the time the rational mind has reached a logical conclusion.

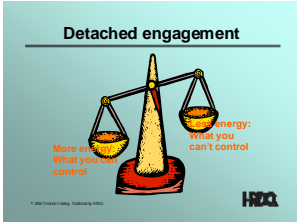


Emotional characteristics:

- Illogical and impulsive
- Subjective. Quicker and more powerful than the rational mind, but often wrong. Operates based on its perceptions of data (not necessarily reality).
- Unconscious. Takes chunks of info and acts without thinking.



Detached engagement: Roger Fisher and William Ury call this “separating the people from the problem.” In a way, it is combining the best of your rational and emotional sides.



How to attain: This is easier said than done. You can control your thoughts and feelings. You can't control others' thoughts and feelings (although you can influence them).

Letting go of what is not in your control is often the most difficult part of conflict resolution. The best way to do this is to accept reality and create an alternative.

When you're putting in more energy and getting fewer results, it's time to let go.

As a wrap-up for this chapter, refer participants to the Appendix: Application activity. Inform participants that they will be working with this conflict throughout the program. Encourage them to choose one that is substantive and that they'd really like to resolve.

Detached engagement

Detached engagement is a particular mindset that is necessary in order to use the steps of conflict resolution successfully. It is the ability to separate negative emotions from the issue in dispute.

The components of detached engagement

- Desire: To collaboratively achieve a mutually beneficial outcome
- Discipline: To address unpleasant or uncomfortable situations
- Patience and persistence: To pursue the conflict resolution process and allow time for it to work

How to attain detached engagement

Recognize what you can and can't control.

You can control:

You can't control:

Control what you can, and let go of the rest.

