

Conflict Resolution

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Managing and Resolving Conflict in
the Workplace
The Operator and Superintendent

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Introduction

This training session will focus on workplace conflict and your role in helping to mitigate and work through these situations.

Additionally, we will provide action tips on how to manage yourself and keep your emotions in check.

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Class Outcomes

- Understand different types of conflict
- Understand various sources of conflict
- Recognize the positive and negative impacts and outcomes of resolved conflict
- Recognize the positive and negative impacts and outcomes of unresolved conflict

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More Class Outcomes

Identify potential barriers to conflict

Understand and recognize multiple conflict resolution strategies

Apply Dual Concern theory to conflict situations

Become aware of your personal conflict management style when dealing with conflict

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Pre-Test

What is your **conflict management** style?

This pre-test is designed to provide you with an "unscientific" description of your style of dealing with conflict.

It is designed primarily for the workplace but may also indicate your overall style for dealing with conflict.

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Conflict

Conflict is a struggle between two parties who perceive their facts, methods, purpose, values or goals as incompatible.

Conflict in the workplace is natural, very typical and can be healthy.

The key is how conflict is managed.

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Conflict....

- ⇒Is inevitable because of competing or incompatible options
- ⇒Involves personalities with differing concepts of pride, self-esteem, ego and values
- ⇒Is not necessarily a sign of poor management
- ⇒Will **not** take care of itself if left alone

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How's this for conflict????

The men say....

"Woman, without her man, is nothing"

The women say....

"Woman! Without her, man is nothing"

What do you say.....?

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Types of Workplace Conflict

- ⇒ Conflict over facts and data
 - different ideas, data & interpretation
- ⇒ Conflict over process and methods
 - clash over how to reach our destination
- ⇒ Conflict over purpose
 - why are we doing this?
- ⇒ Conflict over values
 - honesty, respect, diversity, flexibility

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Organizational Conflict

- ⇒ Change(s) in the workplace
- ⇒ High stress workplace
- ⇒ Unclear lines of responsibility
- ⇒ Lack of communication
- ⇒ Diversity in the workplace

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Organizational Effects

- ↪ Low morale
- ↪ Complaints and bickering
- ↪ Limits creativity
- ↪ Impacts team spirit
- ↪ Contributes to absenteeism, turnover and retention issues
- ↪ Dysfunction -

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Sources of Conflict

- Differing opinions
- Incompatible/conflicting values
- Unclear job descriptions and responsibilities
- Power struggles
- Insufficient knowledge
- Organizational changes

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When conflict is destructive it..

-Diverts attention
-Undermines morale
-Polarizes people and groups
-Jeopardizes teamwork
-Leads to negative behavior
-Creates stress

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Conflict is constructive when it..

-Identifies and clarifies issues
-Solves problems
-Results in "win-win"
-Enhances communications
-Promotes information sharing
-Encourages cooperation/teamwork
-Builds/strengthens interpersonal skills

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Conflict Management

- Recognizes that a problem exists
- Focuses on problems
not individuals
- Listens and provides feedback
- Develops collaborative thinking skills
- Strives for fairness
- Is open to change

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Managing Interpersonal Conflicts

- ⇒ Timely intervention
- ⇒ Determine if a problem exists
- ⇒ Meet with the source
- ⇒ Explain your side
- ⇒ Listen to their side
- ⇒ Feedback
- ⇒ Open mind - receptive

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Dual-Concern Theory

The dual-concern theory posits that the most effective negotiation strategy and the best outcomes will occur when the negotiators care not only about their own outcomes but also the outcomes of the other party.

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Resolving conflict - simple approach

- * Your turn - I'll listen to your side
- * My turn - You listen to my side
- * Mutual planning - brainstorming & negotiating
 - finding a plan both can live with
- * Follow through - agree to specific and then evaluate later

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Working it out

Find a way to make goals compatible:

- **Responsibility**-communicate directly
- **Relationship**-built before/preserved during
- **Real Problem**-shifted attention, secondary conflict

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What to avoid....

- ↳ Cold shoulder
- ↳ Backstabbing
- ↳ Memory lane
- ↳ Social zinger
- ↳ Trivial fights
- ↳ Having the last word

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Moving Forward

- Find some truth in the other person's position
- Identify areas of agreement
- Defer to another time
- Negotiate in private
- Seek out an uninvolved third party
- Business not personal

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Working it out - now

- Express your view, don't force an agreement
- Create a compromise position
- Strive for consensus
- "Let it ride" - sometimes
- Move on to the next topic

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Working it out - later

- Mutual goals
- Frequent communication
- Honest and open about concerns
- Leave your ego at the door
- More information
- Emphasize policy

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Working it out - with the boss

- No surprises
- No hidden agendas
- Team player
- Team concept
- "Win-Win" solutions
- Boss isn't always right but.....
he's always the boss

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Some Final Thoughts 1

Be humble. You're probably going to learn something. Each person is likely to have gaps in knowledge or perception on the issue. It helps to remember that we are often ice bergs with respect to each other, with 90% or more below the surface.

Defer judgement. Give yourself time to listen and listen with an open mind.

Practice dignity, civility, empathy, and the Golden Rule throughout. Again, this reemphasizes the need to practice listening, understanding, and patience as well.

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Some Final Thoughts 2

Remember the importance of the relationship. The relationship has to be more important than a day to day trivial conflict.

Help establish core mindsets, values, and expectations so to perhaps avoid this in the future.

Face to face communication is key. Never text

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Practical Application

Vickie was so upset she couldn't eat her lunch. "I've had it with Carol and her radio blaring from her cubicle. She's driving me crazy. I can't concentrate, I can't hear people on the phone. I hate coming to work."

How should Vickie handle this?

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Practical Application

Juan, the day supervisor, yelled at Reggie, the night supervisor, "You need to check those knuckleheads working for you."

"Excuse me," Reggie responded. "Don't play games with me Reggie; your boys aren't pulling their load at night, and we get stuck with your work as well as ours. Get off your butts, do your job," Juan yelled.

How would you handle this?

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Practical Application

A veteran employee has accused you of lowering her evaluation because of her newly acquired unconventional lifestyle*. She states this is discrimination and threatens to complain to the EEOC if you do not raise her evaluation.

How would you respond?

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Conclusion

Conflict and its resolution isn't always textbook perfect. Despite your best efforts, situations just don't go the way we wanted or expected.

Be patient, have faith in the process. Most of all, have faith in yourself as a person who is willing to do what it takes to get a win/win result.

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