

Managing Conflict

Course Summary

Description

Conflict in our changing workplaces has become increasingly apparent. Customers demand better service, managers demand improved performance and co-workers compete for limited resources. As we strive for excellence we encounter differences in values, styles and expectations. Increased work diversity - cultural, ethnic, gender, religious, racial - brings opportunities and challenges. Changing organizational structures and the reliance on teams require improved interpersonal skills. Successful employees must learn to manage conflict and turn it into an opportunity for collaboration.

Do you ever avoid a sticky situation and then later discover that you are angry or resentful? Do you find that even when you have the best intentions, a conflicted situation seems to escalate? Do you avoid giving colleagues or others direct feedback about behavior that displeases you because you don't want to hurt their feelings? Do you know how to give objective feedback in a way that is comfortable?

As a manager or supervisor, are there certain employees who you avoid confronting? Do you sometimes think that talking with this individual about their behavior will just make matters worse? Do you encounter situations where two or three employees are in conflict or have "a personality clash" and you don't know how to help them resolve the problem?

Objectives

At the end of this course, students will be able to:

- Identify barriers to effective communication and strategies to overcome barriers
- Learn and practice active listening skills
- Learn and practice assertive communication techniques that are respectful of ourselves and others and increase the chances of getting positive results
- Discover and apply methods to tailor messages to the needs of the receiver using real work examples
- Learn and apply approaches, including mediation basics, which can turn conflict into win-win
- Commit to addressing one or more behaviors which interfere with effective communication in the workplace.

Topics

- Introductions
- What is Conflict?
- Effective Communication
- Basic communication styles: aggressive, passive, passive aggressive, assertive
- Turning conflict into win-win
- Guiding principles for managing disagreement
- Closure

Audience

This course is designed to assist managers and employees in learning to manage conflict in a way that is constructive to workplace relationships.

Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites required for this course.

Duration

One day

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Course Outline

I. Introductions

- A. Inclusion exercise
- B. Objectives / Expectations

II. What is Conflict?

- A. Brainstorm types of conflict
- B. Conflict worksheet - individually jot down one situation you wished you managed better, your emotions, what's happened since
- C. Overview of conflict, conflict management and conflict as a catalyst for change

III. Effective Communication

- A. Barriers and approaches to effective communication
- B. Active listening techniques – theory and practice
- C. Review barriers to effective listening

IV. Basic communication styles: aggressive, passive, passive aggressive, assertive

- A. Understanding conflict management styles
- B. Assertiveness video (optional)
- C. Uses and liabilities of each style
- D. Increasing assertiveness - DESC response for clear and respectful messages
- E. Case study

V. Turning conflict into win-win

- A. Reverse brainstorming – reducing / escalating conflict
- B. Behaviors that encourage / reduce defensiveness
- C. Mediation basics
- D. Turning conflict into win-win
- E. Application to real life work situations

VI. Guiding principles for managing disagreement

VII. Closure

- A. One thing you will do differently in dealing with conflict
- B. Evaluations