

Conflict Management in the Workplace



AnthemEAP

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Understanding Conflict

- What are examples of workplace conflict?
- Impacts?
- What triggers a conflict?
- What behaviors or reactions are demonstrated during conflict?

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Defining Conflict

A discussion between 2 or more people

- The stakes are high
- Opinions vary
- Emotions run strong
- Personal or emotional histories get in the way



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Is This Really A Conflict?



- Crisis: Interferes with productivity or safety
- Clash: Differing opinions both with apparent value, stakes moderate
- Blip: No visible value in engaging, no or low impact, issue has low stakes

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Strategic and Empowered Responses

- Responding versus reacting
- Determining what's at stake
- Understanding history, personality and communication style



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Conflict and Choice



- Tools for addressing conflict
- Effective communication styles
- Timing
- Navigating the dialogue
- Best/worst practices
- Motive, intention and attitude
- Dealing with or ignoring

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Benefits of Addressing Conflict

- Allows focus to remain on behaviors, impacts, consequences, processes, outcomes,
- Avoids making an individual the center of the conflict
- Encourages development versus defensiveness
- Facilitates problem solving



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Impacts of Ignoring Conflict



- Misunderstandings continue
- Damage to reputation
- Impacts on team or unit
- Impacts to productivity
- Unspoken messages sent to team
- Position/workplace satisfaction
- What else?

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Conflict and Conversations

<p>Critical Conversations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Performance Appraisals ◦ Bullying and disruptive workplace behaviors ◦ Managing Change ◦ Meetings, collaborations 	<p>Challenging Conversations</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Stakes/outcomes are high – extreme visibility ◦ Opinions differ among stakeholders ◦ Stakeholder histories differ ◦ Organizational history challenges contributor's input ◦ Emotions run strong
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Typical Reactions

- Avoid, Deflect, Defend – the person with the authority wins!
- Changing the conversation in the middle of a sentence
- Grudges and gossip



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Preparation: Conflict as a Management Tool

<p>Physical Preparation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Drunk on Adrenaline: The Amygdala and the Flight, Fright or Fight Response ◦ How do I feel about the person, the discussion, the outcome? ◦ Is this the right time to have this discussion? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Have I eaten? ◦ Sleep deprivation? 	<p>Situational Assessment</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Do I have all the facts and information? ◦ What is the value of this conflict? ◦ What outcome do I hope to achieve? ◦ Do I have motives contrary to the desired outcomes? ◦ What are the emotional or political risks? ◦ How will I open the discussion? ◦ What challenges do I expect to encounter?
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The Importance of the Conflict Management Skill Set

- Managers with skill set avoid, or diminish the possibility of workplace violence
- Save by addressing versus avoiding
- Reduce costs when managing virtual or global team members
- Accountability and productivity increase
- Increases manager/leader influence and integrity

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Myths about Conflict

Myths	Truths
<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ "Tell the truth and keep the peace"◦ "Speaking up now will have a cost later" – reprisals and grudges◦ What else?	<ul style="list-style-type: none">◦ Varying histories, education, work experience provide a rich context for growth, process development and efficiency◦ Respectful disagreement can be healthy – the best ideas surface!◦ Passion is often mistaken for conflict

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Review: Your 5 Step Process

1. State the issue, challenge or problem
2. Describe the impact of the issue, problem or challenge
3. Provide opportunities for the other person to respond
4. Discuss or state the desired outcome or required change
5. Describe resources available, time frames and clarify expectations of understanding or correction

Conclude with Confidence

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Evaluation Survey QR Code



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