CONFLICT RESOLUTION

a WIN/WIN approach

Leader’s Guide
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INTRODUCTION

ABOUT THIS PROGRAM
The Conflict Resolution: A Win-Win Approach program is designed to teach employees how respectful, open communication can be used in the workplace to overcome conflict. To accomplish this, the collaboration method and the A-E-I-O-U communication model are illustrated in a realistic and practical format. This program will increase employees’ awareness of conflicts happen at all levels of an organization and will demonstrate that by using some basic communication skills, every employee can resolve conflict.

This Leader’s Guide is designed to help you conduct a thorough training session on identifying and solving conflict. It offers ideas on how to use this program in different ways, giving your organization the flexibility to determine which training format is best for its specific needs. The video is 25 minutes long and can be stopped easily for discussion of important points if you wish.

The overhead information in this Leader’s Guide will assist you in the presentation of this material. The overhead information may be transferred to transparency sheets or a flipchart as an alternative to overhead projection.

Illustrated employee handbooks are also available for use with this program. These handbooks cover the highlights of the training and are a helpful note taking and reference tool.

We recommend that you tailor the program to your organization’s needs by including specific information unique to your employees. The specifics of how you teach the class are up to you.

TRAINING MATERIALS
You will need:
- A training room located away from major distractions or interruptions
- A comfortable arrangement of chairs and tables, preferably in a circular pattern, with an opening for a TV monitor and other visual aids (Be certain all participants can see the TV monitor and other visual aids)
- Adequate lighting that can be adjusted while viewing the video
- A location, possibly including a podium and/or a flipchart, from which the trainer/speaker can lead discussion
- The training video Conflict Resolution: A Win-Win Approach
- TV/VCR with remote
- Copies of the class agenda (see page 4)
- Paper and pencil for each participant
- A flipchart or dry-erase board and appropriate markers
- An overhead projector, transparencies and transparency markers
- Other useful visual aids
- Copies of the Post-Test and Evaluation for each participant (see pages 17-19).

PREPARATION
Preparation is the key to effective training. There are several things you need to do prior to the session:

Invite Participants
Send out letters or memos to participants or post a notice two weeks in advance of the training date. (Sample included on page 5) State the location, date and time, and the meeting agenda. Administer the Pre-Test in advance (see page 15).

Establish Training Objectives
Define the training objectives of this presentation. Training objectives should coincide with the particular needs of your organization and reflect the content of the video. Some examples are:

- Identify sources of conflict in the workplace
- Discuss how the collaboration method works
- Practice using the A-E-I-O-U communication model
- Examine the role of a mediator
- Explain the need for active communication skills.

Determine the training objectives so that you can identify the approach to take for the training session. It is also important to decide what level of proficiency is expected from participants upon completion of the training.

Determine the Audience
Another aspect to consider in planning this training session is the audience. Tailor your presentation to the skills or experience of the participants. The focus of your discussion and the depth of content presented may vary, depending on whether you are providing an orientation for new employees or a refresher course for experienced employees.

The ideal group size should range between 10 and 20 people. Most of the exercises in this program require that the group break into smaller groups in order to increase participation. When the group is too large, individual attention may be lost.
SAMPLE OF INVITATION MEMO
Date: September 2, 1999
To: The Production Department
From: Sandy Edwards, Human Resource Manager
Re: Conflict Resolution: A Win-Win Approach Training Session

We have an interesting session planned to show you how to resolve conflict on the job. Our company wants to provide a safe and pleasant work environment where differences can be aired comfortably. Resolving conflict benefits all parties and provides positive change.

Please plan to be at the training session on September 17, 1999, at 2:00 p.m. We will be meeting in the main conference room for a three-hour session. If you are unable to attend, please contact me at 555-8788 as soon as possible.

Goals of the training session are:

- To equip employees to recognize misconceptions that cause conflict
- To identify the cause and nature of conflict so it can be resolved
- To illustrate how avoiding conflict is not the same as solving it
- To practice using conflict solving methods
- To enhance communication skills.

Agenda:

- Introduction 2:00 - 2:15
- Video and Discussion 2:15 - 2:55
- Exercise 1 2:55 - 3:05
- Exercise 2 3:05 - 3:35
- Break 3:35 - 3:55
- Exercise 3 3:55 - 4:35
- Session Summary 4:35 - 5:00

We look forward to seeing you on September 17, 1999.
**PRESENTATION TIPS**

**Overcoming anxiety**
The best way to overcome anxiety about speaking before a group is to be prepared. Although it’s natural to be nervous, your sweaty palms will disappear once you focus on what you are saying. Concentrate on what you want people to understand and your presentation will flow naturally.

**Choosing your vocabulary**
Don’t lose your audience by using overly complex words or phrases. It’s best to use the same comfortable language that you would use during individual conversations.

**Getting rid of the “umms”**
One of the most annoying mistakes a speaker can make is saying “umm” every time there is a break between thoughts. Remain silent while you think about what you’re going to say next. The silence will seem longer to you than it will to the audience. If you remember this, you’ll feel less pressure to fill the silence. You’ll gain credibility because the audience will perceive you as being more in control. You can control your “umms” by jotting down notes before-hand of the points you want to cover. If you want to include personal anecdotes or examples, write down a few notes to trigger your memory.

**Controlling the speed and tone of your voice**
You’ll put your audience to sleep if you speak too slowly, and they won’t be able to keep up with the content if you speak too quickly. Approximately 150 words per minute is the best speed. If speaking too slowly doesn’t put your audience to sleep, using a monotonous tone will surely do it. Vary your tone often, especially when making an important point. Adding emotion to your presentation will keep your audience involved. Again, speak to your audience as if you’re having a conversation with each person individually.

**Sticking to the schedule**
Begin class on time and restart the session promptly at the end of the break. Explain that, except for emergencies, messages will be held for participants and distributed to them at the start of the break.

**Asking for questions**
Ask for questions throughout the session. Be prepared to answer all types of questions, but don’t be worried if you don’t know every answer. Simply say, “I’m not sure of that, but I’ll find out and get back to you.” Then, after class, make sure you do find the answer to that question and give the answer to the person who asked the question.

**TRAINING SESSION OVERVIEW**

**GIVING THE PRE-TEST**
It is recommended that you send the Pre-Test along with the invitation before the training session. That way, you will have an opportunity before the session begins to review the participants’ answers and get an idea of what they already know. Otherwise, administer the Pre-Test at the start of the session so you can review participants’ responses during the break.

**PRESENTATION OUTLINE**

Open the session. Welcome the participants and introduce yourself to the group. Give a brief explanation of the purpose of the session and quickly review the agenda. Have participants introduce themselves and state the department or area in which they work. You may want to use an “ice breaker” to get the class warmed up for group discussion and to get to know each other. However, be sensitive to people who may be shy or nervous in front of groups.

Distribute and discuss copies of the training objectives for the session. (An example of objectives are provided in the handout/overhead on page 20.) Be sure the participants understand what you expect them to learn and what skills they need to display as a result of this training. Knowing what is expected in advance better prepares the employees and helps them to participate successfully. Learning objectives for this program are:

- Identify sources of conflict in the workplace
- Discuss how the collaboration method works
- Practice using the A-E-I-O-U communication model
- Examine the role of a mediator
- Explain the need for active communication skills.

Start the video. It’s a good idea to adjust the volume of your monitor before the training session begins. Doing so avoids startling participants if the sound is too loud or frustrating them with missed information because the sound is too low.
Pause the video, as appropriate, to emphasize a point or discuss a practical application in your organization. You may want to practice pausing the video in order to freeze images on the screen that have significant meaning. Or, you may choose to wait until the end of the video for discussion.

DISCUSSION TOPICS
If you choose to view the entire video first, follow the video with a 20-minute discussion. Discuss the following highlights and scenes from the video:

1. Training Objectives from the Video (Use Overhead #1 provided on page 20.) Review overall objectives for this session, if you haven’t already discussed them. Points on Overhead #1 are:
   - Identify sources of conflict in the workplace
   - Discuss how the collaboration method works
   - Practice using the A-E-I-O-U communication model
   - Examine the role of a mediator
   - Explain the need for active communication skills.

The Theme — Discuss the theme of the video. Record key points that group members recall from the video on the flip chart. They might be:
   - Communicate openly to remove misconceptions
   - Respect each other
   - Learn how to collaborate
   - Improve communication skills
   - Identify viable solutions
   - Identify alternative solutions
   - Commit to making that solution work.

The Process — Draw three columns on the flip chart. Label each with the following: DETECT, REACT, RESOLVE. Identify scenes in the video that illustrate each of these steps in the process of resolving conflicts. Consider asking questions such as:
   - Can any of the steps be left out?
   - Can you solve a problem that you do not know exists?
   - If you know a conflict exists and you avoid it, what may happen?

2. The Points to Remember (Use Overhead #2 provided on page 21.) Talk about how to detect the causes of conflict. Detection requires active communication, sensitivity and mutual respect. Remember:
   - Conflict is normal
   - Its causes are diverse
   - Not all conflict is out in the open
   - An open, honest work environment promotes successful, productive communication.

   Consider asking questions such as:
   - How would you go about detecting the root cause of an employee conflict?
   - What are several totally different conflict-causing circumstances?
   - How can you overcome a negative perception of a coworker?

3. The Win-Win Solution: Collaboration (Use Overhead #3 provided on page 22.) Collaboration is the most work-intensive path to a win-win solution. Collaboration:
   - Identifies areas of agreement and differences
   - Evaluates alternative solutions
   - Focuses on mutually agreeable solutions
   - Promotes a shared willingness to put aside agendas and mistrust
   - Uncovers misconceptions
   - Promotes mutual respect.

Review collaboration as a conflict resolution method. Consider asking questions such as:
   - How does the collaboration method work?
   - Why is it so important to respect one another while collaborating?
   - How do you go about finding alternative solutions to a work-related problem?
4. The A-E-I-O-U Communication Model (Use Overhead #4 provided on page 23.) Describe the A-E-I-O-U communication model. Consider asking questions such as:

• Why is it important to consider the other person’s point of view?
• Why is it important to tell your co-worker that you appreciate his or her point of view?
• Why is it more effective to use “we” and “our” instead of “me” and “mine”?

5. THE ROLE OF THE MEDIATOR (Use Overhead #5 provided on page 24.) Define the role of the mediator. When the parties involved in the conflict cannot work out a solution, the mediator steps in to:

• Ask for solutions
• State expectations
• Solicit and re-state each party’s input
• Help the parties to agree upon solutions
• Help the parties to prepare a detailed schedule for implementing the planned solution.

Consider asking questions such as:

• Why does the mediator ask for each party’s input?
• The mediator helps parties come to an agreed-upon solution rather than telling them what to do. Why?
• Why does the mediator usually repeat his or her understanding of the conflict after it is expressed by each party?

Exercises
Three exercises are provided on pages 11 to 13 for use after the discussion. Refer to the agenda to determine which exercises you have scheduled in your training session. Make sure that you stick to the time schedule for each exercise to avoid running out of time at the end of the training session.

EXERCISE 1

TIME: 10 MINUTES
MATERIALS: FLIPCHART AND MARKERS

Discuss the following questions, or similar ones, that apply to your organization. Record class answers on the flip chart.

What are some early signs of conflict? Give some examples.

What are some things a person can do to positively react to a conflict?

Why is it important to communicate clearly when resolving conflict?
EXERCISE 2
THE COLLABORATION METHOD
TIME: 30 MINUTES
MATERIALS: FLIPCHART, MARKERS AND NOTE CARDS

Prepare for this exercise by writing on notecards some traits of professional and non-professional persons. Some suggestions to get you started:

- A creative person
- An articulate person
- A complainer
- An organized person
- A workaholic
- A punctual person
- A perfectionist
- A leader
- A just-get-by person
- A just-the-facts person
- A comedian
- A diplomat
- A self-centered person

Have the class break into groups of four or five participants. Ask each group to come up with a conflict resolving scenario. Role play the scenarios by using the collaboration method. Give each group at least three note cards with recorded traits. These traits have to be woven into each group’s scenario. Allow 10 minutes to prepare the scenarios. Then reconvene and ask group members to report their results. Tell them to make sure that they describe how they came to a win-win resolution.

EXERCISE 3
COMMUNICATION — THE A-E-I-O-U MODEL
TIME: 40 MINUTES
MATERIALS: COPIES OF THIS EXERCISE HANDOUT

Form groups consisting of three or four members.

The A-E-I-O-U communication model is outlined below. After each step, there has been a space provided for notes. Using a real-life example of conflict at work, decide how it could have been solved by applying each of the A-E-I-O-U steps. For privacy, consider using a situation from a past job, or one that would not cause embarrassment for anyone. Have each group role play its example.

A — ASSUME the other person means well and affirm that thought by telling him or her your observation.

E — EXPRESS your feelings by affirming the other person’s positive intention and state your own specific concern.

I — IDENTIFY what you want to happen in a non-threatening way, such as: “I would like” versus “I want.”

O — State the OUTCOME you expect in a way that appeals to your co-worker, such as: “If we take more time, our proposal will be stronger and we’ll be more likely to get our bonus.”

U — Ask for mutual UNDERSTANDING. For example, “Could we agree to this for a while and see if it works out for both of us?”
SESSION SUMMARY

Summarize
One summarizing technique is to review the course objectives with the class. Another is to ask each participant to summarize what was learned from the training session. Ask the participants if they have any final questions.

Administer the Post-Test
Distribute copies of the Post-Test (on page 17) to each participant. You may want to customize the Post-Test to fit your organizational objectives. The Post-Test is an excellent tool for determining how much each participant learned during the session. Compare results to the Pre-Test and review the different answers.

Evaluation
Distribute the evaluation form (on page 19) to each participant when he or she has finished answering the questions on the Post-Test. When each class member turns in the evaluation form, thank him or her for attending and contributing to the session.

PRE-TEST

Please read each question carefully and write your answer in the space provided below it. Your answers will help us adapt the conflict resolution seminar to best meet the needs of your group.

Questions:
1. What do you think are some causes of conflict when people work together?

2. How does avoidance work as a way to solve conflict?

3. How do you think two people should go about resolving their differences if they always have a problem meeting project deadlines?
POST-TEST

Please read each question carefully and write your answer in the space provided below it.

1. What are the different methods of solving conflict?

2. Why is honest, open communication helpful in solving conflict?

3. What is the role of the mediator?

4. List different ways you have solved conflict.

5. What is a mediator?
4. What are some of the costs to an organization if conflict is unresolved?

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

5. What is the A-E-I-O-U communication model?

___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________

EVALUATION FORM

Please circle your rating for each statement.
Ratings: 1=NA, 2=Needs Improvement, 3=Satisfactory, 4=Very Good, 5=Excellent

SUBJECT:
The material was informative: 1 2 3 4 5
The information was interesting: 1 2 3 4 5
The material was easy to understand: 1 2 3 4 5

TRAINING PROGRAM:
The exercises as a learning tool were: 1 2 3 4 5
The use of the video as a learning tool was: 1 2 3 4 5
The program provided real-life examples: 1 2 3 4 5

TRAINER:
Trainer’s presentation of information: 1 2 3 4 5
Trainer’s level of knowledge: 1 2 3 4 5
Trainer’s ability to facilitate discussion: 1 2 3 4 5

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS:
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
___________________________________________________________________________________
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OBJECTIVES

• Identify sources of conflict in the workplace

• Discuss how the collaboration method works

• Practice using the A-E-I-O-U communication model

• Examine the role of a mediator

• Explain the need for active communication skills

WHEN DETECTING CONFLICT, REMEMBER...

• Conflict is normal

• Its causes are diverse

• Not all conflict is out in the open

• An open, honest work environment promotes successful, productive communication.
COLLABORATION:

- Identifies areas of agreement and differences

- Evaluates alternative solutions

- Focuses on solutions that are mutually agreeable.

THE A-E-I-O-U COMMUNICATION MODEL

A — ASSUME the other person means well and affirm that thought by telling him or her your observation.

E — EXPRESS your feelings by affirming the other person’s positive intention and state your own specific concern.

I — IDENTIFY what you want to have happen in a non-threatening way.

O — State the OUTCOME you expect in a way that appeals to your co-worker.

U — Ask for mutual UNDERSTANDING.
THE MEDIATOR:

• Asks the parties involved to offer their own solutions

• States what action will be taken if the issue is not resolved, and what behavior is expected

• Asks for each person’s input and then restates what appears to be each party’s perspective

• Helps the parties agree upon solutions which best meet their respective needs

• Helps to prepare a detailed schedule for implementing the plan which will be evaluated over time.