



# CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE





# Understanding Conflict

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

# Defining Conflict

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A discussion between 2 or more people

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

# Is This Really A Conflict?

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- 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

# Strategic and Empowered Responses

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

# Conflict and Choice

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## Tools for Addressing Conflict

- Effective Communication styles
- Timing
- Navigating the dialogue
- Best/worst practices
- Motive, intention and attitude

## Consequences

- Dealing with or ignoring

# Benefits of Addressing Conflict

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- 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

# Impacts of Ignoring Conflict

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



# Conflict and Conversations

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## Critical Conversations

- Performance Appraisals
- Bullying and disruptive workplace behaviors
- Managing Change
- Meetings, collaborations

## Challenging Conversations

- Stakes/outcomes are high – extreme visibility
- Opinions differ among stakeholders
- Stakeholder histories differ
- Organizational history challenges contributor's input
- Emotions run strong

# Typical Reactions

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

# Physical Preparation: Conflict as a Management Tool

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## Physical Preparation

- 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?
  - Have I eaten?
  - Sleep deprivation?

# Preparation: Situational Assessment

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## Situational Assessment

- 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?

# The Importance of the Conflict Management Skill Set

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- 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

# Myth vs Truth About Conflict

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## Myths

- “Tell the truth and keep the peace”
- “Speaking up now will have a cost later” – reprisals and grudges
- What else?

## Truths

- 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

# Review: Your 6 Step Process

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- State the issue, challenge or problem
- Describe the impact of the issue, problem or challenge
- Provide opportunities for the other person to respond
- Discuss or state the desired outcome or required change
- Describe resources available, time frames and clarify expectations of understanding or correction
- Conclude with Confidence



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# Your Kepro EAP

- EAP Services available to employees, any household members and dependents
- Confidential
- EAP Counselors available 24/7/365 via 833-539-7285
- Up to 6 in person counseling sessions, per issue, per year
- Unlimited Management Consultations
- Financial/Legal Consultation and Referral Service
- Work/Life & Convenience Services
- <https://sowi.mylifeexpert.com> Company code: SOWI



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# Questions & Answer

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Conflict Management in the Workplace