



Conflicts Management

Conflict, in all of its forms, pervades our lives in ways both good and bad. Sometimes conflict effects positive change. Faced with friction, people can learn to respect differences of opinion and allow others to be themselves.

They can learn to share, work together, and coexist in a world in which individualism and diversity are both embraced and rejected. At other times, conflict spirals into negativity, leading to violence and abuse and threatening safety, security and peace.

Handled correctly, most conflicts can be resolved to the satisfaction of everyone involved.

That's what conflict resolution is all about: **training people to respond effectively to conflict and preventing the harm that results from emotions that have spun out of control.** Conflict resolution is not a quick fix or a bandage applied in the wake of a problem. It is a process of learning, a means of preventing discord and hostility by teaching adults to react in ways that promote peace, respect, understanding, and communication.

What are Feelings?

Feelings lie at the base of conflict and confrontation. When in conflict, people often feel angry, afraid, frustrated, or confused. Recognizing and acknowledging these emotions is a primary step toward handling them appropriately. All must be able to identify their feelings in order to express them in ways that promote understanding and peaceful conflict resolution. As children and adults come to realize and respect their own feelings, they will feel less threatened by others and more confident in managing their own reactions to conflict.

What is Diversity?

Cultural diversity is currently an important training topic because the participants can be different in terms of race, ethnic group, gender, age, language, and several other such factors.

The diversity simulation games help us explore the increasing diversity in world:

They focus on diversity. All the activities deal with the impact of differences among groups and among individuals. However, these differences are not specific ones, such as the racial differences, but broad differences encompassing all aspects of human life.

They are simulations. The rules of the simulation games reflect aspects of the real world, especially the workplace. They require the players to assume roles and to pursue different goals. The games are low-fidelity metaphors that are effective in teaching general principles which can be applied to a variety of situations.

They are games. All the activities involve some elements of conflict but not necessarily competition among the players

They are flexible. The activities are designed to permit rapid adaptation and adjustment. Each activity is followed by suggested variations that enable the facilitator to accommodate different time periods, numbers of players, characteristics of players and physical facilities.

Why to Use Simulation Games?

Simulation games encourage self-examination. Few people consciously think about the impact of diversity in their lives. In the diversity simulation games, they are placed in situations that force them to re-examine their attitudes and values toward diversity.

Simulation games provide an experiential base. They provide a common set of experiences that the players can analyze and discuss to understand the nature of diversity.

Simulation games permit the participants to be themselves. The playful nature of these activities disarms the players and removes their self-consciousness. Paradoxically, by taking on different roles, the players are encouraged to be themselves and to gain important insights.

Simulation games provide a low-risk environment for learning. The most powerful way to learn is on the job. However, some of the risks associated with real-world learning without prior preparation may merely strengthen the learner's anxieties and prejudices. In contrast, the diversity simulations games are designed to provide low levels of anxiety that produce optimal learning.

Simulation games provide practice. People do not master skills and concepts by passively reading or listening. The diversity simulation games provide the participants several opportunities to interact, observe, analyze, practice their skills, and reinforce their understanding.

How?

Make other adjustments. Think of any special constraints or requirements you may have. Read the Variations section and decide what modifications you would like to make in the play of the activity.

Collect the supplies and equipment.

Arrange the room. Before the actual play of the simulation game, locate a suitable room and rearrange the furniture as suggested in the instructions.

Begin the activity. Assemble the players and brief them according to the instructions.

Be flexible with your time limits. The instructions include time limits for different steps. However, remember that psychological time is different from the chronological variety. If your players have completed their task ahead of time, blow your whistle and move on to the next step. On the other hand, if they are still struggling with the task at the end of the allotted time, don't interrupt them.

Conclude the activity. Bring the simulation game to a clear stop. Take care of the final steps as explained in the instructions.

Conduct a debriefing session. Debriefing is as important as the play of the simulation game.

Remember this important requirement: Have fun. While you should carefully review the instructions and systematically prepare yourself for conducting the activity, your effectiveness as a facilitator depends on your flexibility. Don't become too obsessive about implementing all the rules and emphasizing all the learning points.

Same Difference

Purpose:

- To identify several "cultural" groups to which you belong.
- To discover the similarities and differences between you and others.
- To identify personal attributes that are immediately recognized and others that require time and effort to discover.
- To differentiate between relevant and irrelevant attributes in a given situation.

Learning Outcomes:

- Skills:** Identifying personal attributes, discovering shared attributes, and recognizing differences.
- Concepts:** Groups, attributes, similarity, diversity, salience, and relevance.
- Contrasts:** Similarities vs. differences; salient vs. subtle attributes; relevant vs. irrelevant attributes; and dyads vs. larger groups.

Time:

30 minutes (20 minutes for playing and 10 for debriefing)

Players:

Four to 40. The best game involves 15 to 30 players.

Handout:

People Attributes handout.

Supplies

A deck of playing cards, arranged with the four aces on top, followed by

How did this Meeting Go?

OBJECTIVE

- ▶ To encourage honest feedback from team members at the conclusion of a meeting or discussion.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

2 flip charts and several colored markers.

PROCEDURE

Place 2 flip charts at the front of the room.

- ▶ On the first, write: "Here are some things we especially valued about the way the meeting was run today."
- ▶ On the second, write: "Here are some suggestions as to how future meetings like this could be even better."

Invite participants to spend the next 6 to 8 minutes processing the meeting (consciously reflecting on it and examining both what went well and what merits improvement). Record the essence of all ideas.

Tear off the flip charts and return to your office. You may choose to type up the comments and distribute them to the team members, or you may simply study them yourself to identify any relevant themes or constructive comments affecting things within your control. Then celebrate your success, and change something needing improvement!

After identifying what went well and what needs improvement, ask the group to convert those comments into specific, action-oriented implications. What new behaviours would they recommend for both



Expectations

OBJECTIVE

- ▶ To help ensure that the stated objectives of the presentation are in general concert with those of the participants.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Expectations Form.

Handout with session objectives and key topics.

PROCEDURE

At the beginning of the session, distribute a handout describing the session objectives and key points. Then state the objectives and present an overview of the session with the major points and subpoints of the session.

Tell the attendees to review the handout with objectives and key topics and check or circle their primary objective in attending this session so that you can make sure their individual objectives are "in sync" with those objectives already stated. (If the attendees were given an advance agenda of the topics, most of their expectations will likely fall into these already identified areas.)

If participants have objectives that have not been mentioned, ask them to jot down their objectives.

If there are fewer than 15 people in the group, after participants individually identify their primary objectives, ask each person to state the objective.

If there are more than 15 people, read each objective and ask for a show

Throw Away Your Troubles

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To enable participants to get several responses to an individual problem or concern.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Paper, pencils, empty boxes or containers.

PROCEDURE

This exercise can be used at almost any time during a training session. For programs over a half-day in length, this activity can be used intermittently during the course.

Announce that participants will now have a chance to "throw away" their problems. Have each person think of a question, problem, or concern about the topic being addressed. (If a participant cannot think of a relevant item, any problem is okay.) After participants write out their anonymous particular problems, ask them to crumple up the papers and throw them in a container (a box or receptacle that will be placed in the center of the room). For larger groups, have several containers around the room.

After all papers are in the receptacles, ask any person to pick out a crumpled paper and toss it to anyone in the room. Whoever catches it opens the paper and reads the problem aloud. A three-person team is formed (the receiver and one person on each side). The team is given a "30-second timeout" to discuss possible solutions or answers. During this time, the rest of the group is asked to jot down two or three answers or responses.



Quickie Review

OBJECTIVE

To provide intermediate review checkpoints on how well participants are retaining and learning the material.

PROCEDURE

For full-day or longer programs, this technique is used to measure participant learning in an enjoyable way.

Just prior to the first scheduled break, suggest to the group that a lot of material has already been covered. To check on what they've learned so far, you're going to do a quick review.

Before you break the session for coffee, etc., you need to hear ten things they've learned so far. Then, as rapidly as possible, asking for responses. After each one, say "Thank you, that's one" etc., until ten key points are stated.

At the end of the morning session, and just before lunch, repeat the exercise by reminding the group of the content covered and asking for seven things they've learned since the mid-morning break. Repeat the procedure at mid-afternoon break and again at final closure time.

Note: The number of things learned (to be solicited from the group) is arbitrarily chosen each time by the presenter.

The Top Ten Time Wasters

OBJECTIVES

To demonstrate the value of group effort.

To provide a light-hearted opportunity for individuals or groups to test their knowledge of current business research regarding time-wasters.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

A transparency/slide of the master list of time-wasters for managers; prizes.

PROCEDURE

Ask the members to identify the 10 most significant ways in which a manager's time is wasted. Individual quizzes can be distributed for this purpose.

Following the individual response period, group competition (i.e., breaking the team into two equal parts) works particularly well. In this way, no one feels embarrassed for not knowing some of the 10 items. Answers are generally discovered more rapidly, and the collective responses are usually more accurate than individual ones.

Trust Me

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To demonstrate teamwork for support, leadership, and cooperation.
- ▶ To build mutual support and trust.

REQUIRED MATERIALS

Bandanas.

PROCEDURE

Divide the group into teams of 4. Participation should be voluntary. One person in each group is blindfolded; another is the leader who will verbally instruct the blindfolded person to go from Point A to Point B in the room or adjacent area. The leader must not touch the blindfolded person. The other two persons assist the leader and make certain the blindfolded person doesn't bump into anything.

When the walk (10 minutes) is completed, switch roles and repeat the exercise using a different route. Repeat as time allows.

QUESTIONS

1. How did you feel when blindfolded? (Uncertain, frightened, dumb, etc.)
2. Did you trust your leader? Why or why not?
3. Did you trust your coworkers? Why or why not?
4. What did you need when you were blindfolded? (Support, assurance, advice, etc.)

Zap! You're a Group

OBJECTIVES

To speed the development of working groups into teams.

To demonstrate issues related to group dynamics, team building, problem solving, time management, organization, and leadership under a severe time constraint.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Flip chart and felt-tip pens.

Optional: A written statement of a work problem and its background.

PROCEDURE

Divide the group into subgroups of 3 to 4 persons.

Announce that the team is to work on a specific task for the next 6 minutes.

Assign a task related to the work they are carrying out or in which they are encountering a problem. At the end of the time period, a representative needs to present a written flip chart summarizing the team's conclusions. The presentation is limited to 1 minute.

Present the team with a task of your choice, preferably one that is organizationally relevant.

Answer any procedural questions they may have, then walk away (to a place where you can observe and listen, but not interact).

Playing With Matches

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To allow participants to practice creativity during a group meeting.
- ▶ To provide a warm-up exercise or an opportunity for a change of pace to a group of participants.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

A supply of 6 matches, or equal-length sticks, for each participant. Also a transparency/copy of the key to expedite explanation and illustration to the participants upon completion of the exercise; prizes.

PROCEDURE

Distribute a supply of 6 match sticks to each member of the total group. Ask each person to arrange the sticks in a configuration such that they create (progressively):

- ▶ one equilateral triangle
- ▶ two equilateral triangles
- ▶ three equilateral triangles
- ▶ four equilateral triangles
- ▶ six equilateral triangles
- ▶ eight equilateral triangles

Then ask a volunteer to come forward and demonstrate to the entire group the solution to each task. Provide praise or a small reward to each successful person. Lead the group in a discussion of the work-related implications of engaging in a task such as this.



What is Team Building

Teams are cooperative small groups engaging in regular, coordinated action to attain results.

Nature of Teams

High-performing teams usually exhibit an overall team purpose, mutual accountability, collective work products, shared leadership roles, high cohesiveness, collaboration in deciding task assignments and procedures, and collective assessment of their own success.

Stages in Team Development

Especially in the creation of new teams, a number of critical questions need to be addressed. These include:

- Who should be included?
- Whom can I trust?
- What guidelines will we follow?
- What contributions will each person make?
- Who will perform which roles?
- How do we resolve conflicts?

As these questions emerge and are addressed, teams often evolve through a series of classic stages:

Forming: Team members share personal information, start to get to know and accept one another, and begin turning their attention toward the group's tasks.

Storming: Team members compete for status, jockey for positions of relative control, and argue about appropriate directions for the group. Tensions arise as individuals assert themselves.

Norming: The team begins moving together in a cooperative fashion, and a tentative balance emerges. Group norms evolve to guide individual behaviour, and a cooperative spirit begins to blossom.

Performing: The team matures and learns how to handle complex challenges. Roles are performed and exchanged among members as needed, and tasks are efficiently accomplished.

Adjourning: Most committees, task forces, and short-term groups disband at some stage (but not necessarily ongoing teams). The break-up, called adjournment, requires dissolving intense social relations (letting go) and returning to permanent assignments.

Team Games

Specifically, team building games can help accomplish these objectives:

- ▶ Games help the team leader to make a pointone that is clear, memorable, and relevant to the task at hand. They are, in effect, powerful teaching tools for driving home a key idea.
- ▶ Games help build team morale. They provide a sharp contrast to "business as usual" by injecting an element of competition, cooperation, and/or fun into team meetings.
- ▶ Games help team members learn to trust each other. They provide opportunities for sharing insights, feelings, and experiences as the team develops common solutions. Increased understanding and appreciation for each other's inputs are valuable by-products.
- ▶ Games help team members become more flexible and adaptive. Members soon understand and appreciate the fact that there may be more than one way to solve a problem.
- ▶ Games provide opportunities for team leaders to reinforce appropriate member behaviours. When cooperation is displayed, when creativity is demonstrated, or when interpersonal barriers begin to break down, a leader can show appreciation for the desirable responses elicited from a team building game.

Getting to Know You

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To get to know teammates.
- ▶ To build trust among people who work together.
- ▶ To develop a "personal profile sheet" on team members.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Copies of "Getting to Know You" forms for each participant.

PROCEDURE

Explain that each team member has special skills, knowledge, and talents that will help to make the team stronger as a unit. When team members are aware of each other's strengths, the team can function more effectively.

Distribute one copy of the form "Getting to Know You" to each team member.

Collect the completed forms, duplicate them, and distribute to team members.

Ask members to pair up and conduct 5-minute interviews of each other, using the "Getting to Know You" form as a worksheet. Tell members to be prepared to introduce their partners to the rest of the group by spotlighting 3 interesting pieces of information learned during the interview."



Learning Put Faces with Names

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To help the team leader(s) learn the names of team members.
- ▶ To help team members learn each other's names.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

Digital camera.

PROCEDURE

As new team members arrive, ask them to pose briefly for a head-and-shoulders photograph. Staple the instantly-developed picture to a biographical sheet for that person, which is then inserted into your own three-ring binder.

Type up (in large print) a roster of all team members in advance of the first meeting.

As individuals arrive, take their pictures and place them in the proper place on the poster. This not only helps you, but provides a "rogue's gallery" that members can refer to for identifying each other.

The Whole Room Handshake

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To have participants meet at least half of the entire group.

PROCEDURE

Have the group form into two large circles one inside the other. Participants in the inner circle turn and face those in the outer ring, quickly introduce themselves, and continually move to the right. The outer circle rotates left and the inner circle rotates right until all participants meet each other.



Portable Skills

OBJECTIVES

- ▶ To create team identity and build team spirit by helping members to learn more about each other.
- ▶ To establish self-disclosure as a team norm.

MATERIALS REQUIRED

3 x 5 cards, pins or tape.

PROCEDURE

Explain that skills are portable and every member of the team is bringing a briefcase or box full of knowledge and skills to the team. This next activity will help us to discover individual strengths that will make us a productive team.

Distribute 10 x 15 cards.

Ask participants to write their names on the cards and below their names list two specialties or skills that they bring to the team, e.g., knowledge of statistical process control, organizational skills, or proposal writing.

When participants complete the cards, have them pin, tape, or hold the cards up in front of them as they circulate in the room, allowing others to engage them in exploratory conversations about the items.

This activity illustrates that there is always something new team members can learn about each other that will increase rapport and make the team members aware of each other's strengths and applicable experiences.

Pushy Partners

OBJECTIVE

A good team accepts and knows how to handle conflict. Like stress, conflict is inevitable; like stress, it can also be both positive and negative. Positive dynamics of conflict include increased energy and attention. Negative ones include resistance and defensiveness. This quick game illustrates typical negative dynamics of conflict.

TIME NEEDED

5 minutes or more, depending on extent of debriefing.

MATERIALS NEEDED

Watch with timer.

A SUGGESTED FUNNY INTRODUCTION

We find it best to simply ask your learners to stand up and play this game. The lack of context builds curiosity, which lasts throughout the simple activity. It inspires a burst of bewildered laughter afterward when, without comment, you politely ask them to sit back down. The debriefing session is that much more intriguing for the suspense.

HOW TO PLAY THIS GAME

1. Pair up the learners and have them stand facing each other. Ask them to raise their hands and place their palms against their partners' hands.
2. When you call "Go;" they must push against their partners' hands.