



## TEAMWORK AND COMMUNICATION ACTION SERIES: *Improving Patient Outcomes through Effective Teamwork and Communication*

### ACTION PERIOD GUIDE

#### Webinar 3: Navigating Conflict Effectively

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**By the end of this session, participants will be able to:**

- Understand some causes and costs of conflict in teams
- Recognize their personal conflict style and how it influences their team
- Apply new tools and strategies to assist in navigating conflict effectively

**Summary of webinar content:**

- Definition of conflict
  - Distinction between functional and dysfunctional conflict in teams
- Why conflict can be so hard to navigate
  - Biological & physiological responses to conflict
  - System stressors
- Four strategies to assist in navigating conflict effectively
  - Strategy #1: Know yourself
  - Strategy #2: Curiosity, not conclusions
  - Strategy #3: Balance the power
  - Strategy #4: Focus on the problem, not the person

**Action period outcomes:**

- Increase awareness of your own conflict style and how it impacts you and the rest of your team.
  - Practice using new skills and tools to navigate conflict effectively.
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#### Your Action Period Challenge This Week

**Instructions:** There are two required activities for this week (personal reflection and the conflict style quiz and discussion). Pick at least one other to do as a team in order to help apply the learning from the webinar.

**Applied learning activities:** see following pages for detailed instructions

Required – 1. Personal Reflection

Required – 2. Conflict style quiz

Pick at least one {

- Optional – 3. “Anything Goes” Activity
- Optional – 4. Conflict Q&A Game
- Optional – 5. Guided Discussion



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### Required - Personal Reflection:

1. Complete a Thomas-Kilmann conflict style quiz and then reflect on the following questions:
  - When you are in conflict, what are the things you will always tend to do? (*ie: withdraw and think about the conflict, try to talk about it as quickly as possible, feel nauseous*).
  - What is one thing you think you could do to improve how you respond to conflict in a group setting?

Thomas Kilmann conflict style quiz

University of Arizona

<http://academic.engr.arizona.edu/vjohnson/ConflictManagementQuestionnaire/ConflictManagementQuestionnaire.asp>

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### Required Activity: Conflict Style Quiz & Team Debrief (estimated time is 20-30 min)

1. Come together with your team and share the results of your conflict style quiz.
  - Allow each person to describe his or her conflict style. If you are working in a larger team, ask members who have the same results to group together to discuss their communication style. Then, have one member of the group report out to the larger team.
  - Remember, everyone has their own unique conflict style and one is not better or worse than another.
  - Remind yourself to speak from a place of 'I' rather than labeling other communication styles and saying things like 'you always...'
2. Once everyone has reported out on their style, consider and discuss these questions
  - What do you have in common and what is different about your styles?
  - What improvements could we make to how our team navigates conflict?
3. Revisit your teamwork agreement
  - Based on your discussion about conflict styles, does your teamwork agreement need to be updated? Do ground rules need to be set around how you approach conflict?
  - Consider when and how to request assistance in navigating conflict – either between individuals or within the team itself.

#### Resources needed for this action:

- Completed conflict style quiz (found above in the personal reflection section)
  - Your teamwork agreement
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### Activity: Anything Goes

(estimated time is 15-20 minutes)

Listening is an incredibly important part of good communication; however, it is a skill that people often ignore in team activities. This exercise can show team members how to listen with an open mind.

#### What to do:

- Ask participants to find a partner.
- On the count of three, each person shouts out the name of any item they can think of (e.g. dog, coffee, shoe).
- Now team members must debate one another for 2 minutes as to why their item would 'beat' the other person's item. E.g. Why coffee is better than a shoe? Or why a shoe is better than coffee?
- Call a brief time out to discuss the difference between debate and dialogue.
  - Note: A dialogue involves asking questions and listening to answers, whereas a debate involves two opposing arguments being put forward.
- Now have the team members continue with their conversations, only now, encourage them to engage in dialogue to come to an agreement between the two of them.

#### Debrief as a team

- How did you react to your mini-conflict?
  - Is this how you normally act in conflict situations? Why or why not?
  - How were you able to come to a consensus?
  - What happened when you switched from debate to dialogue?
  - What did you notice about the other person's tone of voice and body language?
  - When someone disagrees with you, do you always stop to ask questions?
  - Is it difficult to listen when someone disagrees with you? Why?
  - In what ways could you use these skills the next time you're in conflict with another person?
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### Activity: Conflict Q&A

(estimated time is 10-15 minutes)

As a team, divide into pairs. Set a timer to two minutes and then sit facing one another.

1. Identify one person who will be asking the question, and the other who will be answering the question. Don't worry – after two minutes, you will switch!
2. Start a timer set for two minutes. Note: This exercise will be most valuable when you answer the question as honestly as possible. You may notice your answers changing as the timer progresses.
3. Ask the question: "When you are in conflict, what do you tend to do?" and listen to the response. Once the person responding has finished, ask the same question again. Do this until the two minute time is up. Once that has happened, switch roles and repeat.
4. Debrief with your partner:
  - a. Did your answer change as the question was repeated? If so, why might that be?
  - b. What did you learn about how you normally respond in conflict?
5. Debrief with the group:
  - a. Talk about everybody's experience with the exercise. How did it make you feel? What was your initial gut reaction – and did it change or shift as the exercise wore on? What about when you switched roles?
  - b. Is there anything you learned that you think could apply to how you navigate conflict as a team?

#### Resources needed for this action:

- A phone or watch with a timer.
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### Activity: Guided Discussion

(estimated time is 10-15 minutes)

Use the following questions as a guide to discuss the various topics discussed during the webinar and how they might be playing a role in your team.

1. What role does conflict play on your team?
2. Recalling the Thomas-Kilman model of conflict from the webinar, what is the conflict tendency of your team? Accommodating, avoiding, compromising, competing or collaborating? Is this style working for your team? Do any adjustments need to be made?
3. Read the following case study. As a team, complete the PEACH-BFVs for the “old team” and the “new team”.
  - a) What are the similarities – and the differences?
  - b) What impact do expectations and assumptions have?
  - c) If you were the manager for this team, how could knowing the PEACH-BFVs for both groups improve your ability to understand the conflict?
  - d) What would you do with this information?

### Case Study:

Miranda, Sam and Judy have worked together on a regional small team for about five years. Their work is detail-oriented and fast-paced, and up until recently they all felt like they were doing a great job. A few months ago, their team doubled its size to create health-authority wide service. The new staff are more junior, take longer to do the work, and (according to Miranda, Sam and Judy) don't work very hard. Training the new team members, in addition to the increased workload, has created a lot of resentment among the older team members. They don't think this is fair – and are worried that the quality of their work is suffering.

There is a lot of tension and resentment on the team – and that's manifesting in emails getting ignored and training sessions being cancelled or cut short. The conflict has escalated to a point that nobody really feels happy in their role, and a few staff are starting to look elsewhere for work.

### PEACH-BFV Acronym

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|----------|--|
| <b>P</b> | What are my <b>priorities</b> ?              |
| <b>E</b> | What are my <b>expectations</b> ?            |
| <b>A</b> | What are my <b>assumptions</b> ?             |
| <b>C</b> | What are my <b>concerns</b> ?                |
| <b>H</b> | What are my <b>hopes</b> ?                   |
| <b>B</b> | What are my <b>beliefs</b> ?                 |
| <b>F</b> | What are my <b>fears</b> ?                   |
| <b>V</b> | What <b>values</b> might be undermined here? |

### Resources needed for this action:

- None - just an open mind



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There will be **one informal support webinars** held on **June 8<sup>th</sup> from 2-3pm**. There will be no formal agenda. Feel free to attend if you have questions or want to share your experience or have a tricky situation you want to talk through. An organizational development consultant who works with the Council will also be on hand to provide group support.

The last formal action series webinar is **June 14<sup>th</sup> at 2pm**.

### Additional Resources:



Conflict Engagement  
6 part series.pdf

### Additional Articles:

If you are interested in doing some further reading on the topics we covered today, here are a few articles that we recommend:

The brain's empathy gap: [https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/22/magazine/the-brains-empathy-gap.html?\\_r=0](https://www.nytimes.com/2015/03/22/magazine/the-brains-empathy-gap.html?_r=0)

Imaging conflict resolution: [https://www.edge.org/conversation/rebecca\\_saxe-imaging-conflict-resolution](https://www.edge.org/conversation/rebecca_saxe-imaging-conflict-resolution)

Conflict across cultures: <https://www.amazon.com/Conflict-Across-Cultures-Experience-Differences/dp/1931930228>

Teenage brains shut down after hearing criticism: <https://www.wired.com/2014/11/teen-brain-shuts-hears-moms-criticism/>

### Interested in learning more about conflict styles? Check out this great podcast!

This is a wonderful 30 minutes podcast from the Harvard Business Review on 'Dealing with Conflict Avoiders and Seekers.'

<https://hbr.org/ideacast/2017/04/dealing-with-conflict-avoiders-and-seekers.html>



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## A little bit of humour

