



CLEAR TEAMWORK & COMMUNICATION WEBINAR SERIES

LEARNING CHALLENGE GUIDE

Effectively Navigating Conflict

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
- Strategies to assist in navigating conflict effectively

Action period outcomes:

- Describe some causes and costs of conflict in teams
 - Recognize your own conflict style and how it impacts you and the rest of your team
 - Utilize new skills and tools to navigate conflict effectively
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Your Learning Challenge Overview

After each webinar, a learning challenge will be provided to each team. Teams are expected to report on their experience completing these challenges in their usual monthly report. We will also be asking teams to share their learning and progress at the next webinar.

Questions? Don't hesitate to reach out to your improvement advisor for help or to ask clearbc@bcpsqc.ca!

Applied learning activities:

1. Conflict Style Quiz & Personal Reflection
2. Conflict style Team Debrief
3. "Debate and Dialogue" Activity
4. Conflict Q&A Game
5. Guided Discussion

Activity 1: Conflict Style Quiz & Personal Reflection

(estimated time is 20-30 minutes)

1. Complete a Thomas-Kilmann conflict style quiz:

<https://www.psychometrics.com/assessments/thomas-kilmann-conflict-mode/>

Activity 2: Conflict Style 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 3: Debate and Dialogue

(estimated time is 15-20 minutes)

When we have a difference in opinion, we can engage in debate or dialogue. In debate, we are working to persuade or advocate for our own point of view, trying to prove that our perspective is correct and that another's perspective is wrong. With dialogue, on the other hand, we are working to understand another's point of view and re-evaluate our own point of view in light of that dialogue. With a true dialogue, the process is collaborative as people work to achieve a shared understanding.

What to do:

1. In advance of the session, prepare enough word pair "opposite" cards for each team to have its own card. Each card will have 2 opposite words listed on it (e.g. cats versus dogs, early birds versus night owls, e-books versus print books, staycations versus travel, summer versus winter, toilet paper over the top of the roll versus toilet paper under the bottom of the roll, etc.).
2. Ask everyone to pair off.
3. Provide each pair with their own "opposite" card.
4. Invite each partner to choose one of the topics on the card.
5. For five minutes, team members are invited to debate each other as to why their respective topic is better.
6. Stop the debate. Share with participants that the intention of this process was to put the pairs into a mini-conflict by picking opposing views on their respective topics and debating why their perspective was better.
7. Discuss with the group the differences between debate and dialogue.
 - In debate, we are trying to "beat" another's perspective.
 - In dialogue, we are trying to "understand" another's perspective.
8. Now, repeat this activity with a new approach. Instead of debating the two topics, invite the pairs to engage in dialogue about their respective topics. In doing so, invite them to ask questions and take the time to truly listen to the answers. The goal of this round is to create the space for each person to have a chance to be heard and learn from each other in order to come to a shared understanding about each other's respective topic.
9. After five minutes, stop the dialogue.

Debrief as a team

- How did you react to your mini-conflict?
- 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?

Resources needed for this action:

- Debate and Dialogue worksheet



2.0 Debate and
Dialogue Worksheet.pdf

Click on the link in the attachment tab to open the file

Activity 4: 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 5: 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-Kilmann 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

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

Resources needed for this action:

- None - just an open mind
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Report it!

We would love to hear how your team worked through these activities. Please include them in your monthly report, or let your Improvement Advisor know which of these activities you completed. We would also love your feedback in how to improve these activities for next time. We look forward to discussing and building on this as a collaborative at our next webinar!

Additional Articles:

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



Click on the link in the attachment tab to open the file

Conflict Engagement
6 part series.pdf

The brain's empathy gap: 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

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>

A little bit of humour

