

Information Leaflet on Conflict Management Coaching – Building Conflict Competency for Leaders

Overview

Conflict Management Coaching is a structured process that helps Managers and Leaders on a one-to-one basis, to develop or enhance their skills, knowledge and competencies, to either prevent, engage or manage conflict or difficult relationships at work or at home more effectively.

One of the best known models for team leadership and management is John Adair's Action Centred Leadership Model™ which identifies three: three core management responsibilities:

- Achieving the **Task**
- Managing and developing the **Team or Group**
- Managing and developing **Individuals**



Most Managers have excellent skills, knowledge and experience in managing the **Task**. It's usually the core professional area in which they have been trained and qualified. Promotion to management level has usually been because they have consistently demonstrated high quality performance in their field. They are also usually highly motivated and passionate about ensuring that the job and organisation deliver a good service or product to end-users.

Equipping Managers with competencies in the other two areas: managing the **Team** and the **Individuals** is often neglected. Managers are expected to instinctively be able to acquire the skills and abilities to engage with the people on their team – from performance management to building team spirit and morale; from dealing with group conflict to understanding and bringing the best out of each member of the team as an individual – even people they find difficult to deal and interact with.

A key aspect of this is developing managers **Conflict Competencies** and encompasses four areas:

- **Knowledge and understanding at a theoretical level:**
Understanding the dynamics of conflict – so you gain an intellectual insight into what's happening. For example knowing the difference between 'positions' and 'interests', causes of defensiveness and its link to our identity, how the retaliatory cycle works, the fight/flight response to perceived threats. It can also include knowledge of processes such as Mediation and Fisher and Ury's (1996) key negotiation tenets.
- **Emotional awareness:**
This refers to being able **to understand and manage your own emotional reactions** and being able to **tune in to and work with the emotional reactions of others**. To what extent are you even aware of your own 'hot buttons' – the particular actions or behaviours of others that irritate or set you off?

➤ **Effective behavioural response and habits:**

This is about having **default constructive responses and behaviours when a conflict situation arises**. This means that in the stress and 'heat of the moment' and not just on a good day, you are able to act in ways that de-escalate rather than inflame the situation.

These would include:

- Listening and reflecting back what you hear rather than arguing back
- Probing for key needs and interests in a non-judgemental way, prompting if necessary "is it that you think I'm being too picky about this?"
- Pausing to consider and get clarity on our own key needs and interests in a situation
- Communicate these in a way that is disarming rather than escalating
- Easily distilling important elements of each side's key views and issues and framing these neutrally as a problem to be solved
- Knowing and managing our own 'hot buttons' so we don't get derailed in tricky interactions and communications with others
- Able to remain upbeat and optimistic despite a situation not being resolved immediately

➤ **Conflict competent culture:**

No man is an island and we are all influenced by the organisational environment. Effective conflict management can only flourish in **a culture that fosters pro-active engagement with conflict rather than avoidance strategies**.

Contact Us to Learn More About Our Conflict Competency Programme for Leaders