

## EXERCISE 1: CONFLICT STYLES

**Overall outcome:** To encourage critical and proactive thinking to deal with anticipating challenges, dealing with conflict and promoting fair and equal opportunity in workplace settings.

### Lesson objectives:

1. Participants will learn about and improve on conflict styles and conflict management
2. Participants will better anticipate challenges so as to avoid conflict or bad situations at work

**Objectives:** Begin the session by thinking of instances of conflict within our own lives. To help participants see that people tend to deal with conflict in a number of set ways and that different styles are appropriate in different situations.

1. Ask the participants to form groups of five or six.
2. Ask them to spend five minutes discussing instances of conflict that they themselves have been involved in during the last year. The conflict can be large or small.
3. Once they have all shared, introduce the following questions the small groups should discuss:
  - How do you feel when you are in a conflict situation with someone?
  - Do you feel the need to push your message when you are having a conflict with someone?
  - Is it a great relief when you resolve a conflict? Why?
4. After they have had 5 minutes to discuss, explain that everyone has a different conflict style, or in other words, a preference for how they approach, engage in and deal with conflict.
5. Explain to the participant that different people choose to handle conflict in different ways that match their personalities. Ask participants for some examples of how people might react differently in situations of conflict.
6. After listening to their ideas, suggest that some people might try to avoid the conflict, perhaps by ignoring it. Others might want to compromise with the other person with whom they find themselves in conflict. Each of us chooses how we want to handle conflict. Some conflict styles can be more effective than others depending on the situation.
7. Review the below four conflict styles with the group. Below are the definitions of each conflict style. Begin by reading out the name of each style and asking participants to suggest what they mean. Then read the definitions offered below.

### Conflict styles:

**Avoid:** When you pretend the conflict is not happening, ignore it, and hope it will go away.

**Compromise:** Both people give up a little of what they want in order to reach an agreement or resolution in the conflict.

**Accommodate:** One person gives up what they need in order to allow the other person to get what they need in the conflict.

**Collaborate:** Both people in the conflict work together to come up with a resolution that is good and resolves the conflict peacefully.

1. You can relate this back to what they should remember about their personal preference for being passive, assertive or aggressive when communicating, especially in difficult communications such as conflict.

2. Tape a line down the center of the room. If you do not have a tape, point out to participants where the imaginary line runs.
3. Tell the participant that you are going to read a few statements aloud. They will need to decide if they agree or disagree with each of the statements. There are no right answers, only personal opinions. If they agree with the statement, they should step to the right side of the line. If they disagree with the statement they should step to the left side of the line. Participants can stay on that side until you read the next statement and then choose again which side to stand on. Allow time for participants to take a step to the right or left side of the line after each question.

#### **Conflict statements**

1. When I am with my friends, I sometimes have conflicts with them.
2. When I have a conflict with a friend I try to avoid talking about it.
3. I do not like to have conflicts with my family members.  
When I am in conflict with family members I try to agree with them so I do not have to talk about the conflict.
4. Conflict is fun for me.
5. I think having conflict in the workplace can be good and necessary sometimes.
6. I think I can improve how I handle conflict.
7. I like to resolve conflicts with others because it is better to get along with them.
8. I never want to have a conflict with someone.

4. After you have read all of the statements, ask the following questions:
  - Which conflict style are you most comfortable using?
  - Why do you think you use that preferred style?
  - Is it important to you to resolve conflicts with friends, classmates and family members?
  - Are you more likely, less likely, or equally likely to argue with someone in the workplace? For example: a boss, a co-worker, a business partner, an employee, a client. How is it different for each of those people?
  - Do you think you can improve how you handle conflicts with others? How? Specifically talk about it in relation to the styles.
5. If they are not already, divide participants into 4 groups. Let participants know that you want them to come up with and present a short role play that shows one of the four conflict styles in action and also demonstrates an attempt at resolution. Explain that even with avoidance or accommodation, there is still an underlying problem that hasn't been dealt with. They should try to show a conflict from beginning to resolution within a few minutes role play. The conflict they come up with needs to be set in a workplace and all group members need to play a speaking role.
  - a. Assign each group one of the four conflict styles quietly. Indicate that this is the style they must demonstrate in a work-related conflict/resolution role play.
  - b. Give groups 15 minutes to come up with and plan out their idea.
  - c. Invite groups up at random. Once they have finished their role play, ask the rest of the participants which conflict style they saw. And ask how and if the conflict was resolved.
  - d. After all groups have presented, ask:
    - Why might it be important to adjust your conflict style when you are in a conflict situation?
    - What kind of conflicts and challenges would you expect to encounter in a work setting?

## EXERCISE 2. LISTENING SKILLS

**Overall outcome:** To gain soft skills that employers are increasingly prioritizing by building on networking skills and building up to effective communication and interviewing skills.

**Lesson objectives:**

1. Participants will become aware of how verbal and non-verbal communication can influence how others perceive them and they gain self-awareness about their own habits and tendencies.
2. Participants will discover that by modifying their speech and body language they can exert a positive influence on how others perceive them.
3. Participants will gain an understanding of how to create an advantage for themselves by using this in future interviewing or workplace situations.

**Objective:** To further practice good communication skills

1. Remind participants that a key to communication is the ability to listen. Ask participants which most people find easier – talking or listening? Inform them that in this exercise we are going to look together at the skills of good listening.
2. Ask participants to form pairs of A and B. A is going to be the talker and B is going to be the listener.
3. Explain that A's are going to spend 30 seconds telling Bs about something that happened to them recently which they feel very strongly about. For those 30 seconds B should demonstrate the behaviour of a good listener.
4. Explain that when you clap your hands at the end of 30 seconds, person A should continue with her story but B should now start demonstrating the behaviour of a bad listener.
5. After another 30 seconds clap your hands and ask As and Bs to switch roles so that B is now the talker and A is the listener. Repeat the exercise as above.
6. Now put participants into groups of four and give them ten minutes to discuss the following questions: How can you tell if someone is a good listener?  
How does it feel to talk to a good listener?  
How can you tell if someone is a bad listener?  
How does it feel to talk to a bad listener?
7. Finally ask them why listening is a skill that will help them in their job? Ask participants to add “be a good listener” to the ‘Do’ section of ‘Behave’ in their workbook from the earlier exercise. If time, you can also have them add notes about what good listening is/looks like. Tell participants that this is a skill and behaviour you will return to several times throughout upcoming sessions