

# Developing competence in working with conflict

- Learning & development programmes
  - Skill development workshops
    - Presentations
      - Seminars

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## Conflict-competent leadership

### ...better leaders and better organisations

Whilst most leaders have developed strategies for handling conflict, they are all too aware that these strategies are often more about avoiding or reducing conflict and not about using conflict positively and constructively.

Leaders have an opportunity and a responsibility to model effective and efficient ways of using conflict to grow the organisation and to grow their people.

### Conflict-competent leadership

- enables leaders and leadership teams to engage with conflict personally and to model skills and techniques that will shape their organisation's culture and behaviours
- contributes to CSR (Corporate Social Responsibility) – people who work in organisations that engage constructively with conflict take their skills into their communities
- encourages ways of doing business differently - collaboration in preference to competition, co-operation rather than opposition, partnership instead of division
- engages with difficult issues as opportunities and challenges – a “can-do” culture that has robust and responsive systems and processes for handling conflicts and disputes
- involves stakeholders in creating mutually beneficial ways forward – problems are owned collectively and blame is avoided
- requires leaders with courage and openness to change – people who say what they mean and mean what they say

**Conflict-competent leadership** programmes are designed with your organisation and leadership team in mind.

They are likely to include one-to-one and team coaching, group facilitation and learning & development events.

The precise mix will be decided in consultation with you and informed by the learning outcomes and organisational objectives you want the programme to deliver.

## **Walking the tightrope: conflict and the HR role**

### **...a workshop for HR practitioners**

Human Resource practitioners often find themselves walking a tightrope, balancing the needs of the individual and good people management practice with the demands of the business and organisational pressures. At these times, working relationships come under pressure and can be strained beyond their tolerances.

This workshop explores how HR practitioners can bring conflict handling skills and processes to bear on difficult situations at work.

### **Specific outcomes**

By the end of the workshop, participants will be better able to:

- Assess how their organisation currently responds to and manages conflict
- Understand the scope and limits of their own role as in-house 'independents'
- Use 'conflict mapping' to help analyse a conflict situation
- Coach line-managers in the use of this model to manage their own conflicts
- Promote mediation as part of an informal in-house dispute resolution system
- Use independent third parties appropriately in workplace conflict
- Support and encourage colleagues in working constructively with conflict.

### **Workshop content**

During the workshop participants will:

- consider the nature of interpersonal conflict in the workplace
- identify their own and others' conflict handling styles
- examine the balance between maintaining relationships and completing tasks
- learn how to use conflict mapping in planning how to handle workplace conflict
- prepare to manage a real work conflict situation

## Mediation in the workplace

### ...what is it and how can we use it?

With the increasing pressure on employers to find in-house solutions to disputes at work, more people are using workplace mediation as an effective, quick and economical way of enabling people to resolve their own conflicts without recourse to formal, adversarial and expensive procedures.

This half or one-day seminar will provide an opportunity for you to hear how workplace mediation is an essential addition to existing dispute resolution procedures; to find out more about what advantages workplace mediation offers to everyone involved in negotiations at work; and to discover how it can be used within your specific work setting.

#### **By the end of the seminar, participants will better understand**

- what workplace mediation is
- how it differs from other conflict resolution options
- how workplace mediators work with parties to a dispute
- the outcomes of mediation
- the benefits to both the individuals and the organisation of using mediation
- how mediation in the workplace saves time and money

#### **The seminar will include**

- input from a practising workplace mediator
- small and large group discussion
- a case study based on our experience
- a participative exercise around handling conflict at work
- consideration of the relevance of workplace mediation to the organisation .

## Early dispute resolution skills for managers

### ...creating positive outcomes in difficult times

This two-day skills development programme enables managers to handle for themselves interpersonal conflict between and with people they manage.

Benefits to the organisation of using **Early dispute resolution skills for managers** include...

- reduced use of formal procedures to resolve disputes
- increased manager efficiency through more productive use of work time
- managers handle low level interpersonal conflict between and with people they manage
- saving on HR practitioner time spend advising managers on handling interpersonal disputes
- reduced absence levels, in particular long term stress related leave
- improved morale and workforce engagement due to early resolution of disputes
- constructive approaches to conflict at work.

After completing **Early dispute resolution skills for managers**, participants will be better able to...

- use effective listening skills with individuals and groups in conflict
- maintain an impartial stance with people who are in conflict with one another
- work with people's strong feelings and forthright ways of expressing them
- choose appropriate responses to conflicts and disputes at work
- help people in conflict to identify key issues, consider options and plan ways forward
- understand the role of mediation and how it complements other forms of dispute resolution
- make appropriate choices about when to use other formal and informal processes
- handle difficult conversations sensitively and firmly
- transform unproductive argument into creative dialogue to create positive outcomes.

## Personality and conflict

...increase your effectiveness

Mediation at Work has teamed up with Marian Hardiman of Hardiman HRD to create an opportunity for people to learn about their ways of handling conflict and to develop these through using the Myers Briggs Type Indicator - a powerful tool for gaining insights into one's own personality and into understanding other people's.

The one or two day workshop is likely to be of interest to people who have responsibility for managing and leading individuals and teams, to people who need to teamwork and work in partnership with others, and to those who support and advise people in handling interpersonal conflict at work - HR professionals, trade union officials, occupational health staff...

### **By the end of the workshop, participants will be better able to:**

- Understand the likely causes of conflict for themselves and for others, and their own drives and preferences
- Identify what 'resolution' is for them and how that may be different to resolution for others
- Apply their learning to increase their effectiveness as employee, team member or manager
- Respond to conflict constructively to defuse emotional charge and achieve positive outcomes
- Improve communication and relationship building through insights into differences and similarities with others

## Handling difficult conversations

### ...effective skills for managers, team leaders and supervisors

In all organisations people hold different viewpoints, reach conflicting conclusions and want to take contrary actions. Disagreements are an inevitable and healthy part of organisational life. They indicate that there is more than one solution to the problem, more than one way forward. They are therefore potentially creative, positive and constructive.

Talking about our disagreements is the most effective way of trying to resolve them. If we find it hard to talk about them, the ensuing conversation is likely to be difficult. How we handle those conversations often determines whether the outcome is constructive or destructive, positive or negative, one step forward or two steps back.

This course provides managers and team leaders with an opportunity to develop skills and techniques in holding conversations that deal effectively with difficult issues, for example around performance, and at the same time, maintain healthy and effective working relationships. It will help to transform difficult conversations into an opportunity to build relationships, to get the best out of the people we lead and manage - and to get the best out of ourselves.

The course will be based around real work situations that managers and team leaders face and will help to prepare participants to handle a forthcoming conversation that they think is likely to be difficult.

### **By the end of the course, participants will be better able to:**

- Bring structure and purpose to difficult conversations at work
- Work with underlying interests as well as positions that people take up
- Identify different responses to conflict - including their own
- Respond to feelings as well as facts, using effective listening skills
- Raise difficult issues effectively and with confidence
- Use a practical method of mapping out different aspects of difficult issues
- Engage colleagues in collaborative approaches to problem solving.

## Getting round the table

### ...collaborative approaches to management/staff negotiations

Respect for the different and important roles of management and staff representatives in negotiating at work is at the heart of this practical workshop. In it we explore collaborative approaches to negotiations as an alternative to the adversarial styles both management and staff representatives have tended to adopt. This workshop provides a unique opportunity for people from both 'sides' to come together to analyse the dynamics of conflict and to consider collaborative approaches to dispute resolution.

#### **By the end of the workshop, participants will be better able to:**

- Identify the interests of each side in negotiations
- Value the respective roles of staff representatives, management and HR staff
- Make use of collaborative approaches to problem solving
- Encourage the resolution of disputes at an early stage
- Identify their own and others' responses to conflict
- Use a model for exploring needs, interests and fears in conflict
- Help others to handle conflict more effectively
- Avoid the escalation of disputes where appropriate and possible.