Workplace Conflict Resolution Foundations

Doctors of BC Business Pathways
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Conflict Theory Foundations
Conflict Mindset:
Adversarial

Conflict Mindset:
Problem-solving
Layers 1 & 2: Disagreements

Layer 3: Misunderstandings

- **Intention**: private/known only to sender
- **Action/Message**: public/known to both
- **Interpretation**: private/known only to recipient
Layer 4: Intense Emotions

- Fight
- Flight
- Freeze

Anger arousal cycle

Conflict Resolution
Foundational Skills

1. Calm Self

• Slow breathing
• 5 senses grounding exercise (5 things you see; 4 things you can touch; 3 things you hear; 2 things you can smell; 1 thing you can taste)
• Ongoing mindfulness practice (e.g. meditation, yoga, journaling)
• Take a break/go for a walk
2. Calm Upset People with EAR Statements™

- **Empathy**: “I can see how frustrated you are by this situation and I want to help.”
- **Attention**: “Let’s talk about it, so that I can really understand what’s happening.”
- **Respect**: “I have a lot of respect for the efforts you have made to deal with this problem.”

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3. Problem Identification

- Collaborate to identify the current problem to be tackled together
- Describe the “topic” for discussion in neutral wording
  - E.g. “Let’s talk about the team vacation schedule”
- Avoid position statements
  - Not: “I need to tell you why you can’t take vacation next week”
- Avoid either/or statements
  - Not: “We need to talk about whether or not you are taking vacation next week”
4. Speak from your own experience

“**You**” statements = blaming/accusing
- You need to ...
- You always/never ...
- You said/did ...
- You think ...

“**I**” statements = problem solving
- When X happens
- I feel/the result can be Y
- What I need/is needed instead is Z

5. Get curious: ask questions

- **Open vs closed** - “Can you tell me more about __?”
- **Gather data** - Who, what, where, when, how? (not why?)
- **Clarify** - “When you said that, what did you mean?”
- **Dig for interests** - “What is your biggest hope for this situation?”
6. Active listening: People want to feel HEARD

Attend - Lean forward, eye contact, nod, open stance

Encourage - “Uh-huh, go on, tell me more…”

Restate - “You were talking to Joe and he said ___ and then ____.”

Reflect feelings - “It sounds like you’re feeling embarrassed and frustrated.”

Reframe - “What’s really important to you is ___”

7. Solution-building: Proposals

What is your proposal for what to do going forward?

I have a proposal, would you like to hear it?

• A: Make a proposal
• B: Ask questions to understand the proposal
• A: Give answers to help the person understand
• B: Say yes, no or I’ll think about it; If no: make your own proposal

Questions?

Thank you

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