

Leadership cheat-sheet series
CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

Definition:

Conflict is a disagreement or having different points of view. Emotion – ours and the uncertainty of others’ responses – is what creates anxiety and fear.

Different views are valuable – if everyone agrees all the time we will not get the best possible relationships and outcomes.

Why it's important:

Avoiding conflict leads to people saying yes too easily and too often, which creates overload, stress and anxiety. Avoiding discussions with others where conflict may arise causes a lack of accountability, a perceived lack of fairness and the possibility you are being taken advantage of.

Avoiding conflict means you are not telling *your truth* which leads to a lack of openness and breaks down trust

Need to improve if:

- You avoid discussions where conflict and emotion will or may arise
- You say Yes too often and too easily to avoid conflict
- When there is a discussion with conflict you allow the other person to take control and you concede regularly.

How to improve – Conflict discussion guide

1. Establish rapport
2. Clarify the desire to work together to understand each perspective and find a “win-win” solution
3. Ask the other person to describe their view of the situation
4. Listen – 100% actively focused – no interrupting or defending your view
5. Describe your view of the situation and ensure you feel heard
6. Identify points for further clarification
7. Clarify and agree on each person’s desired outcome and the point of difference
8. Generate possible solutions and compromises
9. Come to an agreement on a “win-win” solution for all parties
10. Confirm the benefits from this solution
11. Commit to specific actions and milestones
12. Acknowledge the contribution of the other person and show appreciation for being able to find a solution

Benefits for changing

- Reduced anxiety and stress
- Reduced workload
- Increase in confidence
- Increase in respect and perceived capability
- Increase in influence and ability to get your ideas heard
- What specific benefits are there for you? What would change in these area mean to you?

Actions:

1. Understand the causes of your concern around conflict
2. Identify the types of situations that trigger these concerns
3. Decide and commit to change and clearly identify the benefits for changing
4. Identify what it is costing you to stay the same
5. Create a script to make to easier for you to say No!
6. Use the guide (above) to discuss and create a solution for any conflict situations
7. Reward yourself for making these changes
8. Give yourself time to improve - don’t expect for it to go perfectly the first few times – notice any improvements, such as having the conversation, and give yourself credit for that.