Conflict Resolution and Difficult Conversations

Conflict Resolution and Difficult Conversations Training

Audience: Professionals of all levels and job types.

Prerequisites: None.

Training description

This Conflict Resolution and Difficult Conversations course is designed to give participants an understanding of how to avoid and resolve conflict. It also includes conversational tips and techniques on how to properly prepare for difficult conversations using the ALERT process, to maximize conversational effectiveness. The program is highly practical, with case work, role-plays and real workplace examples throughout. Day 1 focuses on understanding and resolving conflict; Day 2 on preparing for and holding difficult conversations.

Learning objectives

By the end of the program, participants will be able to:

1. Understand conflict sources, dynamics and resolution.
2. Use key conflict resolution strategies to reduce or end conflict.
3. Employ a seven-step conflict resolution process.
4. Use the ALERT Difficult Conversation Process.

Day 1: Understanding and resolving conflict

Module 1: Initial thoughts and vocabulary

- 1.1 The typology of conflict
- 1.2 Types of conflict
- 1.3 The Conflict Spiral: how conflict escalates and how to break the cycle
- 1.4 ERIC, VASE and special question types
- ***Activity:*** *classify short workplace scenarios by type of conflict and stage of the spiral*

Module 2: Conflict strategies and quick conflict resolution tips

- 2.1 Conflict strategies: rationale and action
- 2.2 Collaboration vs compromising: when to use each
- 2.3 Techniques to establish positive dialogue
- 2.4 Defining a workable solution
- 2.5 Dealing with and defusing high emotions
- ***Activity:*** *choose and justify a strategy for each case, then practise defusing a heated exchange*

Module 3: The conflict resolution process

- 3.1 Overview of the seven-step conflict resolution process
- 3.2 Defining the issues at hand
- 3.3 Working through the steps to resolution
- 3.4 Ways to prevent future conflicts
- ***Activity:*** *apply the seven-step process to a team conflict case*

Day 2: Preparing for and holding difficult conversations

Module 4: Conversational tips and techniques

- 4.1 General ground rules
- 4.2 Constructive feedback
- 4.3 Question restatement
- 4.4 Addressing employee responses
- 4.5 Action / reaction(s)
- 4.6 Ways to say ‘no’
- 4.7 Use and observation of body language
- 4.8 Value of storytelling
- ***Activity:*** *practise feedback, restatement and saying ‘no’ in pairs*

Module 5: Discussion preparation

- 5.1 Defining your goals, risks and results
- 5.2 Time, location and venue
- 5.3 Orchestrating the listening framework
- ***Activity:*** *prepare for a real (anonymised) difficult conversation; peer review*

Module 6: The 5-step ALERT conversation process

- 6.1 Overview of the five ALERT steps
- 6.2 Applying ALERT to a difficult conversation from start to finish
- 6.3 Capstone role-play using ALERT, with observer feedback
- 6.4 Personal action plan: the conversation you will have and how you will prepare
- ***Activity:*** *triad role-plays (speaker, receiver, observer); rotate roles*