CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING
# CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

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This guide will help you develop a training program that will support a safe and productive workplace environment for your employees. It will help you to:

- Prepare and organize your training session.
- Assemble training materials.
- Present the PowerPoint slide show.
- Conduct training exercises.
- Stimulate discussion that applies to the topic presented in the presentation and to your organization’s work environment.
- Document the training and training feedback for continuous improvement.

Training Objectives
When the training is complete, supervisors will be able to:

- Recognize the impact of workplace conflict.
- Identify common causes of conflict.
- Understand how positive communication helps prevent conflict.
- Resolve conflicts successfully.
- Build consensus among employees.

Rationale for Training
Management experts estimate that most supervisors and managers spend as much as a quarter or more of their valuable work time managing conflicts.

Workplace conflict may be based on disagreements over work procedures, different needs and interests, clashes of personalities, or a range of other situations and circumstances that lead to confrontations between or among employees.

When your supervisors and managers know how to resolve workplace conflicts effectively, they can save time and turn potentially destructive situations into positive, productive opportunities for growth and development within their departments and work groups.

Additionally, when supervisors and managers know how to build consensus among employees, they can enhance motivation and cooperation as well as create an atmosphere in which agreement generally prevails over conflict.

Legal Overview
There are no general employment laws or regulations that require you to train supervisors in conflict resolution and consensus building. However, when supervisors know how to manage conflict and build consensus among employees,
you are more likely to avoid disputes with employees that can lead to discrimination complaints, wrongful discharge lawsuits, and other legal problems.

Training Requirements
Your conflict resolution and consensus building training program should contain, at a minimum, the following elements:

- Definition of conflict
- Benefits of well-managed workplace conflict
- Potential damage caused by poorly managed conflict
- Common causes of workplace conflict
- Basic options for addressing conflict
- Conflict assessment
- Communication skills that help prevent conflict
- Conflict resolution process
- Resolving recurring conflicts
- Mediating personality conflicts
- Definition of consensus building
- Importance of consensus building
- Basic building blocks for creating consensus
- Common mistakes when trying to build consensus

Trainer qualifications. The person conducting the training must be knowledgeable in the subject matter covered by the elements contained in the training program, and as it relates specifically to the workplace that the training will address.

Audience. All supervisors should receive conflict resolution and consensus building training.

Training frequency. Supervisors should be trained when they are hired or promoted into a supervisory position and periodically thereafter. Retraining is recommended whenever you detect increased levels of workplace conflict.

Delivery method and format. Trainers may use hands-on demonstration, classroom, and any other method of training that leads to comprehension and understanding of the topic. There should be an opportunity for interactive questions and answers with the person conducting the training session.

Trainee evaluation. Measures of training effectiveness can be performance-based (observed behavior), or by written or oral test.

Recordkeeping. Training records should be kept showing when the training was held, what was covered, who gave the training and the trainer’s qualifications, and who attended.
Basic Principles of Adult Learning
Most adults are self-directed learners; they want to learn what they want, when they want, and how they want. Adult learners have their own style of learning that includes four key elements: motivation, reinforcement, retention, and transference. See the Basic Principles of Adult Learning guide in this product for more information about the key elements of adult learning and other insights for training adults.
This section will help you prepare for your presentation and ensure that you have all the materials you will need. You may use different materials that cover the topic if you believe they will be more effective.

Resources and Materials
The following resources and materials should be available for every training session:

- A quiet room with basic accommodations for the comfort of trainees
- Sign-in sheet (included with this product)
- Printed copies of the training program (PowerPoint slide show notes, slide show handouts, exercises, and employee handouts)
- Copies of relevant regulations or company policies (if applicable)
- Computer and projector with the PowerPoint slide show loaded
- Screen or blank wall for projecting the slide show
- Copies of the evaluation form (optional)
- Copies of the quiz (optional)

See the Appendix: Training Program Support Materials section for a complete list of support materials that come with this product.

Prepare the PowerPoint Slide Show
Before presenting the PowerPoint slide show, read the PowerPoint slides, slide show notes, the handouts, the exercises, and the quiz.

Prepare equipment and other support materials as suggested and appropriate for your workplace.

Slide show notes. The following slide show notes describe recommended interactive activities and materials to have on hand as you present the slide show. Each note is also embedded with the slide show notes for each slide to assist you as you are presenting your training program. They are listed here in the sequence that they are presented in the slide show:

- Lead a discussion about the conflicts trainees have dealt with on the job. Ask them to explain how they resolved these conflicts.
- Ask trainees to discuss these benefits and suggest other possible benefits of well-managed conflict drawing from their own experience.
- Ask trainees to draw on their own experiences to suggest other causes of workplace conflict.
- Discuss other issues trainees consider when faced with a conflict on the job.
- Lead a discussion about the importance of good communication skills in avoiding workplace conflict.
- At the transition slide, answer any questions and conduct an exercise, if appropriate.
- Lead a discussion about the conflict resolution process. Ask trainees to describe the process they use and comment on its effectiveness.
CONFLICT RESOLUTION AND CONSENSUS BUILDING

- Lead a discussion about resolving personality conflicts between employees. Ask trainees to describe cases they have dealt with and comment on how successfully the conflict was resolved.
- Ask trainees to describe instances in which they have successfully created consensus among employees and the benefits of this effort.
- At the transition slide, answer any questions and conduct an exercise, if appropriate.
- Give trainees the quiz.

Customize Slides, Slide Show Notes, and Quiz
The information contained in the PowerPoint slide show covers general guidelines and regulatory requirements for the topic that is presented. You may want to modify the slide show and quiz to meet site-specific objectives and policies or local regulatory requirements. If you have the PowerPoint software application on your computer, you may add, modify, or delete slides and slide show notes to meet your needs. See the How to Customize PowerPoint guide in this product for more information. Please note, however, if you modify the PowerPoint presentation, you may also need to modify the quiz to accommodate any changed or deleted information.

Customize specific slides and slide show notes. You may want to modify some slides and/or slide show notes to include information specific to your workplace. In the slide show notes of select slides in this presentation, we have recommended that you consider making such modifications.

Make sure that any modification or deletion of information does not diminish your ability to achieve your training goals or meet regulatory requirements.

The slides cannot be changed in the PDF version (included with this product) of the PowerPoint slide show. If you want to modify the slide show notes to correspond to any changes in the PowerPoint slide show, this can be done in the “notes” view of PowerPoint.

Customize the quiz. The quiz can be easily modified; simply type in your changes using Microsoft Word or other standard word processing application. In order to preserve the original document, change the name of the file before saving it.

Prepare Materials and Schedule the Training Session
Computer projection. If you have a computer video projection system, run a test to make sure the PowerPoint slide show runs properly.

Overhead projection. If you plan to use an overhead projector, print the PowerPoint slide show slides out on transparencies. The slides will be clearer if they are printed in color. If you don’t have a color printer, your local print or copy store can print out color transparencies for you.
Slide show handouts. PowerPoint offers four options for printing slide show handouts: six slides per page, four slides per page, three slides per page, and two slides per page (in the print dialogue). We recommend you print copies of the PowerPoint slide show in three-slides-per-page format if you want trainees to take notes during the slide show. See the How to Customize PowerPoint guide in this product for information about printing slide show handouts.

Employee handouts. Prepare and copy any handouts, such as the employee handouts provided with this product, or any site-specific handouts you may have.

Exercises. Determine which exercises you plan to conduct, and prepare any materials or equipment you need.

Scheduling. Schedule the class for a date and time convenient to most trainees. Groups of 15 or fewer people are ideal.
This section provides tips and suggestions for presenting training materials to trainees.

Present to Trainees
The time it will take to present the PowerPoint slide show and conduct the exercises will vary depending on the size of your facility, the complexity of issues in your workplace, the level of knowledge and comprehension of the topic by trainees, and the amount of site-specific information. In general, assume each slide will take 2 to 3 minutes to cover. If you practice your presentation, keep in mind that presentations typically take longer during the actual training.

You can use your own words rather than read from the slide show notes.

Note: To make your training job easier, we have included a subtle signal to indicate the last bullet on each slide. After the final bullet on each slide, a small gray box will appear on the bottom right. This is your sign that no further bullets will appear on that slide.

Training tip: Consider varying the format within your training program two or three times during each hour of training. For example, switch from the PowerPoint slide show to an exercise after 20 minutes of slides, then return to the PowerPoint. Most people learn via more than one format (e.g., seeing images, reading text, hearing, and activity); a multimodal presentation keeps trainees interested and energized.

Trainee Participation
Involve trainees as much as possible by asking them questions and getting them to talk about their own jobs. Encourage them to make suggestions they may have on how to improve conditions in the workplace related to the topic.

Ask trainees to talk about experiences in their workplace related to the topic. Use real-life examples as often as possible to reinforce learning.

Handout(s)
Give each trainee a copy of the handout(s) before the slide show or after the quiz.

Exercises
Multiple exercises for this topic are included with this product for your use during or after the PowerPoint slide show. The exercises may also be used independently of the slide show. Exercises are an excellent mechanism for reinforcing the training.
Questions and Answers
Answer any questions the best that you can. Even if you don’t have the technical knowledge to answer a lot of questions on the topic, you can still answer the important questions about the way that your workplace is addressing the topic-related issues. Follow up with responses to employee questions either personally, through the employee’s supervisor, or the facility’s intranet, if applicable.

Follow-Up
Document that the training took place and who attended. Also, provide the trainees with documentation that they have completed training (such as a certificate of completion), and be sure to notify any trainees who failed to satisfactorily complete the training.

Complete these follow-up tasks:
- Distribute the Certificate to successful trainees as proof of completion of training (optional).
- Distribute the Evaluation Form to employees and collect the completed forms (optional).
- Place copies of the Quiz results in each trainee’s personnel file.
- File one copy of the Attendee Sign-In Sheet with the workplace records, and file one copy in the trainer’s files.
- Fill in the appropriate information on the Training Record for each employee.
- Within 2 weeks of giving the training, talk to some of the employees and supervisors to make sure they understood what was presented and how it applies to them.
Below is a list of support materials included with this product to help you prepare the training program and document your activities.

Additional Training Materials

- **Certificate**—A customizable certificate of completion for attendees. The file allows the user to type in the training topic and the trainee’s name.
- **Exercise**—An activity to help trainees apply their knowledge of work practices.
- **Employee Handout**—A single-page summary of key facts the trainee should know about the topic.
- **Trainee Handout**—This PDF provides the slides without answers to the interactive exercises.

Forms

- **Attendee Sign-In Sheet**—A record of training program attendees
- **Evaluation Form**—An evaluation by trainees of the performance of the trainer
- **Training Record**—A record of all training sessions for each employee, including the date for refresher training

Guidance

- **Basic Principles of Adult Learning**—A guide for training adult learners
- **How to Customize PowerPoint**—A guide with instructions for using the PowerPoint application program and customizing the content of slides and slide show notes