MODULE 4 – CONFLICT SOLVING

**M4.WS15 - CONFLICT AS A WAY TO POSITIVE CHANGE**

Weiss (1997) indicates the following four skills that team members are responsible for practising in order to disagree on issues without creating consequences damaging to the team.

**1. Listening:** The first skill is listening. For a person to listen effectively, he or she must clear their mind of all distractions and concentrate on the people’s words, as well as nonverbal gestures, such as tone of voice, posture, and hand movements. Being a good listener enables a person to understand the content and feeling of a disagreement, thus increasing the likelihood of reaching an agreement.

**2. Acknowledging:** The second skill is acknowledging someone else’s position and feelings within a dispute. Acknowledgment assures each team member that they are not being misunderstood.

**3. Responding:** The third skill is responding. A person responding with constructive feedback to another person’s argument clarifies his or her points of contention, while offering an alternative for that person to contemplate. It is noted that efforts should be made to avoid defensive responses.

**4. Resolving:** The fourth skill is resolving remaining differences. First, the real problem is defined by looking for the direct cause of the dispute. Next, the problem is analysed into segmented parts. At this point, each party suggests alternative solutions. Finally, working together, both parties select the most reasonable and acceptable solution.

**Positives of conflicts**

* New and better ideas
* New solutions and approaches
* Long-term problems are named and begin to be solved
* Clarification of individual views and opinions
* Stimulation of interest and creativity
* Opportunity to test your skills
* They encourage superiors to communicate more with their co-workers
* Conflicts motivate co-workers to reflect on their job descriptions and professional perspectives
* Positive change
* Bringing the team closer together by overcoming obstacles

