MODULE 4 – CONFLICT SOLVING

**M4.WS8 - BRIEF REVIEW ABOUT CONFLICT**

* Unhealthy conflict (relationship conflict) – counterproductive and even destructive if not managed effectively, some of the consequences of unhealthy conflict include:
* Damaged relationships
* Poor decision-making
* Dissatisfaction and stress
* Wasted resources (time, energy, and money) dealing with the conflict
* Withdrawal and disengagement
* Lack of teamwork (decreased productivity)
* Harmful to the overall culture
* Healthy conflict (task conflict) – beneficial when managed effectively, some of the benefits of healthy conflict include:
* Positive change
* Better decision making
* Stronger relationships
* Better problem solving
* Increased commitment
* Beneficial to the overall culture
* Conflict management serves as a way to address the conflict in positive terms

**Workplace conflicts**

1. Leadership conflict

* Keep in mind that your employees may have to work under the leadership of different people throughout the day. Dealing with different leadership styles may cause irritation and confusion.

2. Interdependency-based conflict

* An employee has to rely on someone else's co-operation, input or output to get their job done. This can cause dissension. This type of interdependency-based conflict can be resolved by clarifying roles and responsibilities while ensuring that each employee is held accountable for their tasks.

3. Work style differences

* Everyone has a different style of working to complete assigned tasks. It is important to keep this in mind when training new employees and managing workload. For example, there are people who prefer to work with a team-oriented approach. On the other hand, there are those who are independent and task-oriented; they prefer to complete the work quickly without external input. If you understand that people have different styles of working, then you can better manage employee conflicts as they arise.

4. Cultural-based dissension

* Culture is defined as a set of values, practices, traditions, or beliefs a group share, whether due to age, race, ethnicity, religion, or gender. Naturally, [employees from various backgrounds](https://yfsmagazine.com/2016/09/22/if-you-want-a-strong-company-culture-hire-a-diverse-team/) will experience conflict. In order to handle and pre-empt disputes, it is essential to strike a balance between these differences.

5. Personality clashes

* Personality clashes at a workplace are generally fuelled by perceptions about someone’s actions, character, or motives. For instance, if a [team leader](https://yfsmagazine.com/2017/09/29/7-ways-to-unleash-your-employees-potential/) verbally insults another member of your staff, they will easily view him or her as inappropriate and disrespectful. When left unchecked, that employee (and others) may harbour resentment. The best way to tackle this type of situation is to understand each other’s feelings and encourage team members to push their egos aside.

Actively resolving these conflicts can create a more positive and enriching working environment.

**Conflict prevention according to Shay and Margaret McConnon**

* Find some time for regular discussions
* Annoying people – getting rid of prejudice
* Let's deal with the present
* Talk sooner than later
* Find a solution
* Try to empathize with our partner's situation
* Express ourselves openly
* Dead end
* Do not use harsh words

**Symptoms that signal conflicts at your workplace**

* We are not looking for a solution, but the culprits.
* Efficiency decreases.
* Group communication is more formal.
* Indifference to ongoing activities.
* There are smaller squabbles and prickling.
* Occasional quarrels over trifles.
* Concerns about change and introduction of new processes.
* Instead of results, formalities are the main topic.
* Creating power cliques between people.
* Team members are exhausted and frustrated.
* Absences and fluctuations are starting to increase.

**General phases of conflict**

* stage of potential formation of conflicting interests, values, norms
* incubation – the conflict has not yet erupted, but preconditions have already been made (e.g. different work pace of individual co-workers, temperature in the office)
* first symptoms – first manifestation (e.g. reduced number of eye or personal contacts, reduced interest)
* transition from a potential conflict to a real one
* outbreak – open conflict or, conversely, blocking communication between the parties to the conflict
* polarization – the conflict is getting worse by involving other participants
* solutions – suggestions for solutions
* consensus – discussion and selection of a suitable solution
* stage of conflict resolution

**Seven Steps to Conflict Resolution**

The ability to resolve a conflict is a highly prized skill. Getting into conflict is easy, getting out of it is something else. The following steps will guide you through the conflict resolution:

1. Develop an attitude of resolution

2. Set the stage, plan your approach

3. Arrange a place and time to talk

4. Tell your stories; gain an understanding of the issues

5. Listen actively and with empathy

6. Generate solutions and a shared, win-win vision of resolution

7. Test for satisfaction

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