

Conflict Resolution in the Workplace: Skills for Legal Aid and Public Interest Law Advocates May 2018

Introduction, Syllabus & General Information

As advocates and attorneys, we deal with conflict a lot. But do we know how to address it when it arises within our own organizations? Conflict can be both healthy and productive, revealing key tensions and opening up the possibility for constructive solutions. But if managed ineffectively, conflict has the potential to reduce productivity, damage morale, and undermine our ability to secure justice for our clients. As supervisors, it is our responsibility to ensure that our organizations operate smoothly and our staff work together effectively. In the [Shriver Center’s new conflict resolution course](#), you will build the skills necessary to manage workplace conflict:

- between you and an employee;
- between employees, or;
- between an employee and a client.

Course Structure: Prior to the live sessions, participants complete a number of self-paced activities via the course site including a training assessment and reading assignments. On Tuesday and Thursday, participants participate in a number of webinars and small group sessions where they have opportunities to share challenges and best practices and practice specific skills.

Learning objectives: In future conflict situations in your organization, you will be able to:

- Distinguish latent conflict from open conflict.
- Use objective criteria within the organization to manage employees, without escalating to conflict.
- Identify and apply the three parts of a “difficult conversation” in a conflict situation.
- Use “active listening” to better acknowledge the concerns and goals of a party to conflict.
- Practice the “re-framing” skill to diffuse negative or one-sided statements by a party to conflict.
- Identify options for resolving a conflict and assist parties to generate options for a solution.

Time Commitments: This training involves a significant time commitment. It is essential that you clear your schedule for the times outlined below so you can participate in all activities. This is particularly important since many of the activities involve small groups and paired exercises that require involvement of all participants. **NOTE: All times are Eastern (ET).**

Prior to live sessions	Day One Live Sessions Tuesday, May 15	Day Two Live Sessions Thursday, May 17
45 minutes – 1 hour Prep computer, Assessment, Readings, Pre-training Survey	4 hours 12:00 - 4:00 pm ET Webinars & small group activities	3 hours 12:00 - 3:00 pm ET Webinars & small group activities

	One 30-minute break One 15-minute break	One 30-minute break
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Overview of Activities: Following is a list of all course activities. There is also a copy of this document on the course site where you can access the more detailed information about each activity. You should always read this detailed information before beginning an activity.

We want you to have a great experience with this course and we are happy to answer your questions. If you have any questions as you proceed with any of the assignments or if you run up against technical problems or challenges with the course site, please email: coursehelp@povertylaw.org.

Prior to Live Sessions

Schedule	Activity	Time
By Monday (May 14)	Prep Computer for Live Sessions Complete the Adobe Connect diagnostic test to ensure computer is properly configured for live sessions.	5'
By Monday (May 14)	Complete Pre-training Survey Participants complete the Pre-Training Survey via the course site, which provides the training team with information about participants' prior experiences and aspirations for the training.	10'
By Tuesday (May 15)	Readings & Self-Assessment Complete selected readings and self-assessment.	30'

DAY 1: May 15, 2018

Schedule	Activity	Time
12:00 – 1:00	PART 1 Nature of Conflict The difference between latent vs. open conflict and how to distinguish between conflict and personnel management issues.	60'
	Organizational Tools A look at tools that can be used to guide conflict management (Mission Statement, Job Descriptions, Org. Chart)	
	Conflict Resolution Styles A review of the Thomas Kilmann Instrument and the five styles.	
1:00 – 1:20	PART 2 Two Case Studies An introduction of the case studies to be used throughout the large group and small group sessions.	20'
1:20 – 1:50	Break	30'
1:50 – 2:20	PART 3 Overview of Four Skills An introduction to the skills to be covered in depth: Difficult Conversations, Active Listening, Re-framing Statements, Generating Options.	30'
2:20 – 3:00	Skill 1: Difficult Conversations An explanation of framing the conversation in three parts.	40'
3:00 – 3:15	Break	15'
3:15 – 3:45	SMALL GROUPS 1 (groups of 4) Difficult Conversations Practice Using one of the case studies, participants practice applying the three-part conversation.	30'
3:45 – 4:00	Small Groups Debrief and Day 1 Wrap-up	15'



DAY 2: May 17, 2018

Schedule	Activity	Time
12:00 – 1:00	PART 1 Recap of Day 1 & Overview of Day 2 Includes ‘A Common Challenge – The Confidentiality Request’	60’
	Skill 2: Active Listening Active vs. passive listening and the three aspects of active listening.	
1:00 – 1:30	PART 2 Skill 3: Re-framing Statement to Define Dispute Between the Parties How to reframe ‘loaded’ or one-sided statements via three parts: turn negative to positive, look to the future, generality.	30’
1:30 – 2:00	Break	30’
2:00 – 2:30	SMALL GROUPS 2 (groups of 4) Re-framing Using one of the case studies, participants practice re-framing.	30’
2:30 – 2:45	PART 3 Skill 4: Generating Options A look at ways to generate options, including: brainstorming, separate meetings, timeouts.	15’
2:45 – 3:00	DAY 2 Wrap-up Session	15’