# FACILITATED SOLUTIONS

## MEDIATING GROUPS TRAINING MANUAL


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*EMPOWERING PEOPLE TO MANAGE DIFFERENCES AND BUILD RELATIONSHIPS*

# MEDIATING GROUPS

**2008**

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

# INTRODUCTION

# *BASIC ASSUMPTIONS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION*[1]

## BOTH CONFLICT AND AGGRESSION CHANGE THINGS

Conflict changes people, relationships, organizations, social and economic structures and even cultural patterns. It can change things for the better or worse.

Aggression, however, rarely if ever changes things for the better. On the other hand, once we move beneath the specific actions of aggression to the hurt experienced by those who are attacked and the sources of the behaviour in the aggressor (i.e. the underlying conflict) and try to address these dimensions, positive change becomes possible.

## WE WANT TO CHANGE THINGS AND CHANGE TAKES TIME

We have dreams and visions for ourselves, our relationships, our workplaces and institutions and our world as a whole.

We do not just want to end or prevent conflict, we want to create something new. We want and need transformation.

While we often respond to conflict in such a way as to squelch it and are oriented, as a society, towards "quick fix" solutions, change takes time.

In general, we can assume that it will take us as long to "get out" of the problems related to conflict as it did to "get into" them.

## CONFLICT IS OKAY

Conflict is a natural and inevitable part of life. Conflict happens even in the best personal and professional relationships.

Approaching conflict from this perspective greatly affects how we choose to respond and how others will respond to us.

## I *ONLY* HAVE PART OF THE STORY! I *HAVE* PART OF THE STORY!

Understanding what happened requires every voice in the conflict to be heard.

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[1] Adapted from Mediation Services and John Paul Lederach by © David Dyck, 2003.

## PEOPLE HAVE CHOICES IN THEIR RESPONSE TO CONFLICT

We generally do not choose to have conflict, but we do choose how to respond.

In itself, conflict is neither bad nor good. It can change things for the better if handled well, for worse if handled poorly.

## PEOPLE CAN SOLVE THEIR OWN CONFLICTS

People are problem-solvers in most of their daily roles, both at work and at home. The most appropriate resolution comes from those involved in the conflict.

People may need help to communicate effectively and to understand a complex conflict that has escalated.

Resolving a conflict and/or identifying the path to healing build both skill and confidence that can be of use in the next situation and in the community as a whole.

## THERE CAN BE "WIN/WIN" RESOLUTIONS

Assuming competition limits the perceived outcomes to a win/lose situation.

Past experiences of being winners or losers can keep us locked into this conceptual rut. This is especially true of our adversarial systems (e.g. court or grievance procedures). Either the "wrong-doer" is harshly punished and the victim "wins" or the accused "gets off light" and s/he "wins." From the perspective of healing and positive change in the group, however, in both of these situations, often everybody loses.

A win/win resolution is more likely when individuals look at addressing their interests or underlying needs as opposed to focusing on their stated positions.

## RECONCILIATION IS POSSIBLE IN A WIDE RANGE OF SITUATIONS

This is true from Kabul to the community to your kitchen. While "making things right" and restoration can take root at the mediation table, it takes time for healing and restoration to fully blossom.

Interest-based resolutions can lead to reconciliation, even in situations of long-standing conflict within families, workplaces, or communities.

# *BASIC ASSUMPTIONS DISCUSSION*

Read through your assigned assumption as a group.

Discuss the following:

- Do you agree with the basic premise?  Why or why not?
- What "edits" would you make? What would you add or take out?
- What are the practical implications of this assumption for the way in which we conduct our work as "group mediators/facilitators"?  Give a practical example of how an intervenor "grounded" in this assumption might approach her/his task differently than another intervenor who did not share this assumption.

# *GROUP INTERVENTION: AN OVERVIEW*

**CONTRACTING**
Initial Contact (see page for more information)
- Intake call
- Discussion of services
- Conversation on fees (generally followed by proposal)

**PHASE I** (ideal time period 1 – 2 months)

1. Set The Stage For Phase I
   - Negotiate access one level up, to Human Resources and Union
   - Make arrangements for introductory meeting with the staff
   - Agree on what will be said to staff ahead of time
   - Arrange to collect any relevant documentation (e.g. staff survey, previous assessment)
   - Ask if any recent grievances or harassment investigations
2. Meet With The Group
   - Introduce the process to the staff (15 minutes)
   - Respond to questions
   - Arrange interviews (if possible)
3. Interviews And Report Preparation (Written Or Verbal)
   - Talk to manager, HR and Union at the end of the interviews
   - If relevant, meet with staff who are particularly highlighted in report
4. Deliver Draft Report
   - Give people about a week to call and ask questions prior to finalizing the report

**PHASE II** (ideal time period 3-6 months)

1. Renegotiating the Contract
   - Negotiate Phase II fees, process and timeline
2. Intervention Options
   a) Intrapersonal: Coaching
   b) Interpersonal: Mediation, Facilitated Conversations
   c) Group Process:
      - Group facilitation on specific topic (i.e. decision making)
      - Critical Incident Debrief
      - Training on Interpersonal Conflict Resolution
      - Developing a conflict resolution protocol

## FOLLOW-UP

Often it is helpful to build in a follow-up/touch base conversation with one or two of the key players three to six months after the intervention.

# *INITIAL CONTACT*

**THINGS YOU WILL WANT TO KNOW OR BE LISTENING FOR**

- What is the motivation of the person making the initial contact?
- Is s/he the person responsible for the group?
- Is s/he a person who is involved in the conflict?
- Who else knows that they are calling (e.g. human resources, union, board)?
- Can s/he make a decision about moving forward?
- Who referred them to you?

**THINGS THEY WILL WANT TO KNOW**

- What the process is
  - Phase I – Collecting information
  - Phase II – Identifying process options for intervention
- How much it will cost (often a formal proposal is required)
  - Note you can only quote on Phase I
- When you will be able to begin

**OTHER POSSIBLE QUESTIONS**

- What are typical recommendations in Phase II?
- Does our process work?

**ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN THE FEE PROPOSAL** (see example next page)

- Interviews with all parties (1-1.5 hours each)
- Conversation with Union if relevant (15 minutes)
- Conversation with Human Resources (if involved)
- Conversation with the manager one level up beyond the conflict (45 minutes)
- Preparing a report (verbal or written)
- Consultation with senior management (if relevant)
- Meeting with identified problem people (if relevant)
- Report back to staff (1 hour)

## *COSTING PROPOSAL*

## MEMO

**Date: January 20, 2007**

**To: George Brown, HR Director <gbrown@mts.net>**

**From: Janet P. Schmidt, <JSchmidt@facilitation.org>**

**Re: Costing for Phase I – An Assessment**

| | |
|---|---|
| Interviews: IT Department Staff (approx 12 people)<br>• Interviews are approximately 1 hour in length<br>• Includes reviewing relevant documentation<br>• Interviews will be individual | $2000-2500 |
| Consultation with Management/Human Resources/Union | $300-$500 |
| Written Report: Identifying issues and recommendations<br>• Including possible time line and fees for Phase II | $400-$600 |
| Deliver Report: To all parties<br>• Including meeting with critical parties identified in interviews | $200-$400 |
| **PHASE I – Cost Range** | **$3000-$4000** |

This process will include interviews with staff, management and the union to identify the specific issues that need to be resolved, and a plan developed together with management and human resources to address the outstanding issues.

Please note that we will not exceed these projections without further consultation.

For more information about our services visit our website at www.fscanada.org.

# *REFLECTIONS FOR THE INTERVENOR*

1) Are you being confident, hopeful and realistic?

2) Do you have the skills and experience to deal with this situation?

   - If not, what are your options?

3) Do you have time to add this to your schedule?

4) Do you want to add a case like this to your workload?

   - Do you have the mental energy to deal with a conflict like this?
   - Do you have unresolved issues that would exclude you from being involved in a situation like this?

5) Reflect on one or two past situations in your life where you have unresolved issues. Identify situations where you still have some degree of intense negative feelings when you remember them. They could include: an over controlling parent, a boss who would not address inappropriate behaviour, a worldview that you have strong feelings about (e.g. theological certainty), or sexist behaviour.

# PHASE 1

# *CONTRACTING CALL*

## INFORMATION YOU NEED

- Affirm their role in the situation and clarify the contact person
- What is their big picture view of the situation? (keep to 10 minutes as you will interview them at the end of the process)
- How long the situation has been going on?
- What has been tried to address the problems?
- Talk about time line for Phase I
- Who will invoices be sent to?
- Ask the person if there is anything else they think you need to know
- Do they want a verbal or written report?

## GATHERING INITIAL INFORMATION (OPTIONS)

- Flow chart of organization(s)
- Names of individuals to be involved
- Mission statement of organization
- Recent studies or surveys done on the organization/department

## AGREE ON WHO WILL BE INVOLVED

- People who can support the process
- People who have critical information
- People with unique perspectives
- All people within a definable group

## PLANNING FOR MEETING WITH STAFF

- Arrange for meeting with the group – often a staff meeting (can include other people including a representative from human resources and/or the union)
- Agree on what will be said to staff regarding the initial introductory meeting

## WHAT IF GROUP IS TOO LARGE AND PHASE I COST IS PROHIBITIVE

- You could prepare a survey for staff
- You could run focus groups
- Either of the above options would require some interviews

## OTHER QUESTIONS

- What are typical costs for Phase II? (we give our hourly rate and typical group intervening fees– however, it is difficult to quote)

# *INTRODUCING PROCESS TO STAFF*

Prior to the interviews the larger process needs to be introduced to the staff involved. This meeting is generally twenty to thirty minutes long. Frequently groups will have this as the last agenda to a regularly planned staff meeting. If the Union or Human Resources department are in attendance, clarify their role prior to the meeting as simply being observers. Note that the purpose of this meeting is to let staff know what they can expect (reduces fear) and to develop some initial confidence and rapport.

This meeting is not always possible given a distant location or shift work. If that is the case, the facilitator needs to work with the manager to provide the following information in a written format so that the employees have some basic information as they proceed to the interview stage.

1. The manager of the group introduces the mediators. Often it is a good idea for the manager to say less rather than more. It should not be a surprise that you will be attending and that you have been asked to assist in addressing the challenges facing the department.

2. The facilitators introduce themselves in the context of conflict intervention and a bit about their experience.

3. Introduce the process as two phases.
    - Two-phase process
    - First phase includes interviews and either a verbal or written report. Remember that verbal reports take a lot less time than written reports.
    - The goals of Phase I are to identify outstanding challenges/problems and to make process recommendations.
    - The first phase begins today and ends back with the group to report findings.
    - Phase II is following through with whatever process recommendations are agreed upon.

4. Participants are told that the interviews are confidential from the perspective that no one will be quoted or identified as expressing concern about a specific issue. Issues will be identified that are raised by at least two staff. Staff are invited to prepare for the interviews by thinking about what is going well, identifying areas of concern and possible ways to address their concerns.

5. The staff is then given an opportunity to ask any questions. Some typical questions include:
    - What kind of interventions do you suggest? (Answer: give 3-4 typical examples)
    - How long will it take? (Answer: give a realistic range)
    - Will management see the report first? (Answer: Yes, but only for information and correcting errors, not changing content)
    - Has management consented to Phase II? (Answer: We have not asked that question because it requires information. Sometimes there is not a role for us given the nature of the concerns. Invite management to speak to the question.)

    If possible have your schedule book available and make appointments with people as quickly as possible. The other option is to get names, phone numbers and email addresses. The latter always takes a lot more time and effort. Note: Interviews should be in a place that is confidential and feels safe to the participants.

6. Mediator gives out contact information.

7. Occasionally it may make sense to share a conflict resolution tool with the participants. Tools that may be relevant are:
    - Where the Conflict Lies
    - Role Renegotiation Map

8. Other Considerations

# *THE INTERVIEW*

The interview with the parties in conflict can be conducted in person, with a group of persons or over the telephone.  Here, the facilitator establishes credibility with the participants and prepares them for the process.  Interviews typically take 1 – 1 ½  hours.  If you are doing many interviews, those at the end of the process tend to get shorter because there is less need for questions.

If you are working with a co-facilitator it is often wise for each of you to interview at least one third of the group.  Otherwise it can be challenging to write the report together because you will have contradictory perspectives. Also, it is often important to interview the manager and one or two of the key parties together.

Generally we will interview the manager, the person who is the next level up and the union at the end of the majority of the interviews.  It is important to have "Where the Conflict Lies" at the forefront of your thoughts as you interview the parties.  This will help you identify the issues.

**Purpose:**

- Assess the level of emotion
- Identify the issues
- Hear individual's goals
- Develop trust (you may be asking them to do difficult things in the future)
- Collect data for process recommendations
- Clarify role of facilitator/s
- Prepare participants for intervention

**Process:**

1. Beginning
2. Background Information
3. Strengths
4. Challenges
5. Goals and Hopes
6. Strategies
7. Closing

# *THE INTERVIEWEES*

All interviewees are unique on the one hand and fall into some patterns on the other. Here are some common patterns we have observed. It is not unusual that interviewees fall into more than one category.

- **The 'Venter'** – This person takes little prodding. S/he needs to be heard and is just happy someone is listening. If you interview this person first, not everything will make sense. Often s/he will need help with focus.
- **The 'Victim'** – This person has been traumatized by what has been happening and often needs support and reassurance. It is often important to see if s/he has supports in place and to encourage him/her to take advantage of the programs the employer has (e.g. EAP).
- **The 'Documenter'** – This is the person who comes with reams of evidence to prove his/her point. Seeing email exchanges does give you insight into how the group is communicating and/or fighting.
- **The 'Tattle Tale'** – This person is hesitant to share any specific information that involves others because s/he feels badly talking about others behind their back. S/he will often not give names (unless encouraged to) and will be evasive about what is going on. S/he needs reassurance of confidentiality and needs to know that identifying what is not working will help you be more effective. Push carefully because s/he may feel guilty for days.
- **The 'Rose-coloured Glasses'** – This person does not see many difficulties. S/he often is confused about why you were hired and may even question whether this will be good for the group. S/he is often very uncomfortable with conflict.

# *THE INTERVIEW PROCESS IN DETAIL*

1. **Beginning**
   - Welcome
   - Review purpose and process
   - Any questions about facilitators' role
   - Reaffirm confidentiality

2. **Background Information**
   - How long have you worked for organization/department?
   - Other historical information that may be helpful

3. **Strengths**
   - What do you enjoy about your job?
   - What is working for the team?

4. **Challenges**
   - What are the issues that need to be addressed?
   - What are your concerns with your workplace/community?
   - Events and situations that stand out?
   - Are there any patterns that you think need to be addressed?
   - Can you give me an example of what that behaviour looks like?
   - Why do you think we were called in?
   - What needs to change for work to be more enjoyable?
   - When did these concerns first arise? How do you make sense of that?
   - How does this situation compare to other similar situations you have experienced?
   - Are there two or three people who are in conflict and who are impacting the group?
   - How have you been impacted by the situation?
   - Would you benefit from having a safe, candid conversation with someone in your group?

5. **Goals and Hopes**
   - What are your hopes/goals for this process?
   - How would your workplace/situation be different if most or all of the issues were resolved?
   - What do you imagine happening if the issues are not resolved?
   - What are possible outcomes you can imagine?
   - What would you like to see happen?
   - Six months from now, if things were better, what would have changed?

6. **Strategies**
    - What needs to happen so that the unit (and/or you) can move forward?
    - How are problems usually dealt with in this organization?
    - What has the group tried in the past? What worked? What didn't work?

7. **Closing**
    - Thank you for your time
    - Clarify next steps and time line
    - Get contact information (home phone numbers can be helpful especially in shift work situations)
    - What other important information do we need to know?
    - Who else should we speak to?
    - Anything else that you think would be helpful for me to understand?

**OTHER**

- Normalize post interview regret and open door for them to contact you if they would like to add anything else or qualify any of their comments.
- If we proceed with a group facilitation, would you be willing to participate? Do you have any questions about this process?
- Is there anything you have done that has contributed to the situation?
- Coach person on coping (if needed)

**POTENTIAL TEACHING TOOLS DURING INTERVIEW**

- Intent Action Effect
- Role Renegotiation
- Johari's Window
- Social Discipline Window

# *WHAT TO INCLUDE IN A REPORT*

There are many different ways to write a report. The report should paint a picture for the reader so they can clearly understand the situation. Generally the situation is more complex than people imagine. Most people look for someone else to blame for what is happening. Rarely do people see their part in the situation. Issues tend to be a combination of root causes and symptoms. Given that everyone believes that others are responsible, they do not see how their behaviour is a contributing factor.

If you are going to write a report you need to understand that this takes time and can significantly add to the costs of Phase I. It is best to keep the information brief and to the point. Prior to writing the report make sure you review all your notes. The four sections of the report are identified below.

**INTRODUCTION**
This is generally one half to one page in length. These are standard paragraphs that are regularly used in written reports.

**Purpose:**

- Provides information about who was interviewed
- Comments on confidentiality and how issues were selected
- Puts the current situation in a historical context (if relevant)
- Discourages the organization from using the information in the report for purposes other than the intention (e.g. dismissing people)

**STRENGTHS**
This section usually includes three or four sentences clearly identifying what is working well. In every situation there are some positives that can be highlighted. Without this, the report can feel overwhelmingly negative to some.

**Purpose:**

- Provides affirmation by Identifying what the group is doing well

**ISSUES**
There are invariably multiple issues occurring prior to an outside facilitator being called in. In fairness, probably any group, even healthy teams, have issues to work on. It is not unusual that there are between four and ten issues. It is often best to keep the number to eight or less (can do this by grouping issues) so that the report does not feel overwhelming. The issues should be clearly named so that someone unfamiliar with the situation could pick up the report and know exactly what the group is struggling with.

**Purpose:**

- Clearly identify the issue in neutral language
- A short description of how the issue is manifested
- Give an indication of the number of people who expressed this area of concern

Each issue will include the number of people who have identified it as a problem. Here we do not use numbers but rather descriptors like: all, the majority, many, some, a number, a few and a couple. Each issue will then be described in three to four sentences to give the reader a picture of how the problem manifests itself.

Two things to keep in mind when writing the report are: a) use neutral language to name the issues, and b) do not mention names. In some cases positions will need to be named.

If a particular person has been identified as a significant contributor to the situation it must be named. Use the title or position of the person, rather than his/her name. Say only enough that the staff understand their concerns have been noted and are being worked on. Humiliating people with excessive detail invariably leads to an unsuccessful intervention and the facilitator then becomes part of the problem.

NOTE: If a specific person is identifiable in the naming of issues they need to know this ahead of time and have the ability to shape how the issue is worded (not *if* the issue is named). Ideally this conversation would be face to face.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

There needs to be a recommendation for each issue you identify. This can provide some hope for the participants in providing a path through their difficulties. Do not assume that you will be the one carrying out the recommendations. Sometimes the recommendations require the expertise of others.

**Purpose:**

- Identify clear steps – a map for management
- Provide some hope for a way forward

# *TALKING TO PERSON ONE LEVEL UP*

We believe it is important to communicate with the persons who have a role in supporting/managing the ones directly involved in the conflict. After doing the interviews we will touch base with the manager one level up or the person who has hired us. If the person who hired us is the manager of the group, then we would communicate with the person the manager reports to.

**Purpose:**

- To make sure there is support for the group and process
- In case the person calling you in is part of the problem
- To get their view of the problem/perspective
- If manager is the problem, you can then work together to support her/him

**Phone Call would include....**

1. Greeting and Connecting

2. Any questions about the process?

3. Their take on the issues?

4. Give them information regarding additional issues that were identified by staff

5. Share your recommendations: Broad strokes

6. Negotiate their level of involvement.
   - If management is part of the problem, then the more visible their involvement the better. Involvement could include attending the report back to staff and possibly even attending a group facilitation or training.
   - If they have information that the group needs then you would coach them to share information. Generally this occurs at the report-back meeting. For example, if the manager is being blamed for something that s/he were told to do or that the system decided, then it would be helpful to set the record straight.
   - If the manager is not a critical player this will be a 10-20 minute touch base meeting and no further involvement is required.

7. Thank them for their time and invite them to call you at any time should they have questions.

# *TALKING TO THE UNION*

If some of the people involved in the process are unionized it will be important to involve the Union. We will contact the Union either prior to the initial staff meeting, after the staff meeting but prior to the interviews, or after the interviews and prior to the staff report back. The more the Union is currently involved, the earlier you should make contact.

We would generally contact the Union Representative who is working full time in the Union office rather than the employee who is also the Shop Steward. Shop Stewards work within the organization and this creates more challenges in terms of confidentiality. If the Union office is outside of Winnipeg, we generally then work with Shop Stewards because of access and level of knowledge. Unions strongly dislike situations where their members are fighting each other and work hard to support processes that can address these issues.

**Purpose:**

- To make sure that the Union supports the process
- To build a relationship in case you will need them to encourage members to be involved
- To get their view of the problem/perspective
- To see if there are any other processes in place that could effect the intervention.

**Phone Call would include....**

1. Greeting and Connecting

2. Let them know how you were called in and a bit about your work in these situations.

3. Ask them about their take on the situation and what you need to know.

4. Let them know the process and ask them if they have any questions about the process.

5. The level of Union involvement depends on the situation. The more the Union has already been involved, the more they should be connected with. Possible involvements include:
    - Attend introductory meeting and at the end encourage their member's support
    - Attend report-back to staff
    - Encourage their member's participation in a specific recommendation
    - Do reality checks with members when they expect something that will not happen (i.e. believe they will win a grievance when it is unlikely).

6. Thank them for their time and invite them to call you at any time should they have questions.

# *TYPICAL ISSUES*

1. Interpersonal Communication
2. Flow of Communication / Information Flow
3. Roles and Responsibilities
4. Decision-Making
5. Interpersonal Conflicts
6. Organizational Structure
7. A Defining Incident (i.e. suicide of colleague, harrassment investigation)
8. Leadership/Management Style (directive/hands off)
9. Divided Staff
10. Intrapersonal
11. Staff Meetings
12. Accountability

# *DESIGNING THE INTERVENTION PROCESS*

The possibilities for the actual intervention are endless. Each group has its own needs and each conflict has its unique aspects. As a result, each intervention will need to be designed to address these needs specifically. Rarely do two facilitated processes look the same.

**The facilitator should consider the following questions:**

1. Am I the person to deal with this situation?

2. What other resources would be helpful to draw on?

3. Who else is involved in the conflict?

4. Who else needs to be involved in the resolution of the conflict (i.e. Union)?

5. Does the environment perpetuate conflict? If so, how can this be addressed?

6. Do participants know how to address conflict?

7. What process should be recommended?

8. Considerations
   - Are individuals willing to speak out in a group?
   - Will the key players be present?
   - Can the group facilitation process provide sufficient safety?
   - How can the identified issues be best addressed?

# *TYPICAL RECOMMENDATIONS*

**INTRAPERSONAL**
- Management Coaching
- Staff Coaching

**INTERPERSONAL**
- Mediation
- Facilitated Feedback Session

**GROUP**

a) Neutralizing History

b) Critical Incident Debrief
  - Dealing with Unanswered Questions
  - Date Discernment Circle
  - Debriefing – Manager's Sudden Leaving
  - Small Group Conference

c) Facilitated Conversations
  - Clarify Decision Making Structure
  - Polarity Management Conversation
    (Quality/Quantity, Task/Relationship, Individual/Team)
  - Appreciating Differences, Decision Making, Information Flow

d) Training
  - Building A Respectful Workplace/Develop Conflict Resolution Protocol
  - Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Training

Note: Sometimes if the group is large or involved in shift work, we will work through a steering committee that is selected by the staff.

**OTHER RECOMMENDATIONS (that we do not do)**
- Staff Meetings
- Strategic Planning Process (reviewing vision, mission and values)
- Team Building
- Review Work Assignments
- Training within organization (i.e. Accountability in Action - WRHA Training)
- Interim Decision on Specific Issue
- Performance Management
- Sensitivity Training
- Labour/Management Committee
- Clarify or Develop Policy and Procedures (i.e. hours of work)
- Accountability (hold people to policies and procedures)

# *SHARING DRAFT ASSESSMENT REPORT WITH MANAGEMENT*

Generally before you share the report with the group in conflict you will share the report with the person(s) that hired you. This will often include the level of management that is not involved in the conflict and the Human Resources Department (or, in other cases, the Board). Depending on the nature of the conflict you may also include the Union in this conversation. The goal is to have the people in the room who will provide support for Phase II.

**PURPOSE:**

- To provide the key figures with information
- To get feedback as to the history (this will often serve as the interview with these players)
- Get feedback on the recommendations and buy-in to Phase II
- Get them to correct any information in the report that is not accurate
- Get an organizational perspective of the conflict

**TYPICAL MEETING PROCESS:**

1. Facilitators provide the people with a copy of the draft report* to read and inform them that you will be collecting the drafts when the meeting ends.
2. Give the parties an opportunity to read the report.
3. Ask for any questions of clarification regarding the introduction and issues. We often have not yet completed the ‘Recommendations’ section, only listing ideas and areas of focus.
4. Begin to talk about possible recommendations, sharing your suggestions and asking for any ideas they may have. If possible get some agreement that they are willing to move forward with the recommendations.
5. Agree on next steps including who will be attending the report back to staff.
6. Facilitators collect the report.

*Note: Sometimes you will give this group more information in the report than will ultimately remain in the final copy. This is especially true if they will need to make a difficult decision (e.g. move a leader)

**FREQUENT QUESTIONS**

- Is this fixable? (Answer honestly based on your judgment. If you believe that someone is so locked in the conflict that they will not be able to change their behaviour, say so - tentatively.)
- Are the parties willing to work at issues? (Answer: Our experience is that people are just about always willing to work at issues. Management has invariably vilified someone and this is often not a complete picture.)
- Will the Union support this process? (Answer: If you have spoken to the Union you will discover that Unions are invariably supportive of this kind of process.)
- We already knew this! (Answer: That’s good because that means that we got it right, so it will be important to start working at the issues.)

# *PREPARING THE LEADER FOR THE REPORT DELIVERY*

## IF THE LEADER IS SEEN TO BE A SIGNIFICANT CONTRIBUTOR

The following outline is intended to assist leaders prepare a statement to share at the report debrief when one of the major issues indicated in the report is leadership. The intention of this statement is for the leader(s) to demonstrate leadership competence by acknowledging issues, verbalizing both openness and commitment to the work ahead and requesting the staff to join them in working through the next steps.

If this is required you would need to meet with the leader ahead of time to share the draft report and then talk about options. It should also be noted that this meeting will likely take two sessions. The first meeting would be to show the leader the report, hear his/her initial response and begin to strategize next steps. The second meeting would be to prepare the leader to make a public statement during the report delivery.

## THE MEETING WITH THE LEADER:

1. Arrange to meet with the person at the end of the day to discuss the report, ideally with someone higher on the organizational chart, who is seen by the leader to be supportive (a manager or human resources). Let him/her read the entire report.
2. Ask for responses to the report in general and if there are any surprises.
3. Ideally you would have gleaned some acknowledgement from the leader during the initial interview. This would be the natural entry into the conversation about his/her part in the team challenges. ("Others indicated the same thing you observed in our initial interview").
4. You may want to share *Intent Action Effect* so you can help him/her separate his/her intention from the impact of the actions (can reduce defensiveness).
5. At this point you can turn the conversation to how the leader might respond at the sharing of the report. Depending on readiness you may ask him/her to think about what the staff may need to hear from their leader and schedule another meeting, or you may begin coaching them to develop a leader's statement for the report delivery. If s/he is ready to work on the statement you may want to start by asking about their thoughts on what the staff need from them as a leader and add to it based on the typical elements.

**OUTLINE:**

1. Personal impact of report
2. Thank you to staff for honesty and contribution during the interview process
3. Acknowledge problem (issues)
4. Honest disclosure about where you are at
5. Personal commitment to address issues and work through next steps
6. Request for participation from others in the process

**NOTE:**

- These statements must be concise.
- It is important during this statement for the leader to be mindful to avoid behaviours that the staff have experienced as "turn-offs" or "triggers" in the past (e.g. crying, defensiveness, minimization, humour, yeah buts…).

**Sample Leadership Statement:**

**Leader Statement #1**
This assessment report has been a very sobering process for me.
I knew there were issues but was surprised by the magnitude of what the report outlined.
I appreciate the risks you took in being so candid in the interviews.
I still do not completely understand what it is about my leadership style that has created so much difficulty; however I want to understand, I want to learn.
You know that I take great pride in doing a good job.
This makes the findings of the report difficult but it also motivates me to work hard with you in addressing these issues.
I can only be effective in the future with your involvement in this process.

**Leader Statement #2 – If leader leaves the meeting** (*Sometimes the leader may choose to leave the meeting to allow the staff to separately process the report. Sometimes the facilitator will decide that the leader should allow the staff to separately process the report.)*
I have had the opportunity to privately discuss the next steps together with the consultants and we would like to provide you the same opportunity now.
I will now leave and turn the meeting over to the consultants to outline the next steps and facilitate a discussion of any questions that you may have of this process.
Thank you again for being here and for your involvement in this process.

# *PREPARING AN 'OUTED' EMPLOYEE*

If a specific person is identifiable in the naming of issues they need to know this ahead of time and have the ability to shape how the issue is worded (not *if* the issue is named). Ideally this conversation would be face to face.

**The process:**

1. Arrange to meet with the person at the end of the day to discuss the report.
2. Ideally you would have gleaned some acknowledgement from this person during the initial interview and you could simply confirm that, yes, others also identified some of their behaviours as one of the challenges.
3. You may want to share Intent Action Effect so you can help him/her separate their intention from the impact of their actions (this generally reduces defensiveness).
4. Indicate that you have had to mention something because of your commitment to state what two or more people identified as a problem.
5. Share only this section of the report. Let the person read it and ask for their response.
6. At this point you need to respond to their questions. Often people need the following reassurance:
   - That there are other issues as well
   - They are not totally responsible for the conflict
   - Their intentions are good
   - Some of the impacts of actions aren't working
   - That some of their responses to the conflict have been getting in the way for people
7. Agree on what will be written in the report.
8. Explore together what if anything will be said by them at the reading of the report. It is common that nothing is said by this person at the meeting. If something is required because of their desire to say something or something is expected from the staff, possible components to consider include:
   - Personal impact of report
   - Thank you to staff for honesty and contribution during the interview process
   - Acknowledge problem (issues)
   - Honest disclosure about where you are at
   - Personal commitment to address issues and work through next steps
   - Request for participation for others in the process

**Sample Employee Statement:**

I was somewhat surprised by what has been shared by the facilitators.
I still do not completely understand why this is such a big issue; however I want to understand, I want to learn and be a better team member.
You know that I take great pride in doing a good job.
I am willing to work on issues and get past this point.

# *SHARING ASSESSMENT REPORT WITH STAFF*

The last part of Phase I and the first recommendation in Phase II is to share the draft report with the group that was interviewed. Generally by this time the key leaders have already seen an initial draft of the issues and there has been a conversation about the recommendations.

The people invited to this meeting should be the same people who gathered prior to the interviews. These meetings are often tacked on to a staff meeting. This could include human resources and a union representative. Again their role is simply to observe the process to keep them informed.

**PURPOSE:**

- To provide staff an opportunity to hear and affirm the summary of the issues identified by the facilitator
- To give the staff an opportunity to understand possible next steps
- To provide the leader(s) with an opportunity to establish commitment to the next steps
- If relevant, to provide any individual (staff person or manager) with an opportunity to acknowledge their contribution and model a commitment to working at the issues

**TYPICAL AGENDA:**

**Manager:**

1. Welcome group back
2. Statement of the purpose of meeting (to review the report)
3. Brief personal statement – if relevant
4. Turn meeting over to facilitators

Note: On rare occasions the manager may wish to leave the meeting at this point

**Facilitator:**

1. Thank you to leader
2. Reiterate purpose of meeting
   (It will be critical to state clearly that this is NOT an opportunity to get into the issues)
3. Identify process of the report delivery
4. Read through the entire report (overhead or audio visual equipment)
5. Return to each section and ask people for questions of clarification only
6. Normalize typical responses to assessment reports
   (Range of relief to despair)
7. If relevant, the Leadership statement generally fits here. After, and if relevant, facilitate clarification of information
8. If relevant, do information sharing on other issues (i.e. board wants to clarify the funding decision that staff is upset about)

9. Provide update (details) on next steps
   - Provide a time line for people to call you if they have questions they would like to ask in private or if they wonder what has happened to an issue that seems to be missing
   - Let people know where they can access the report (Generally there are one or two people who will have a copy of the report in addition to the facilitator. One copy is in the managers' office and should be available for people to stop by and read.)
10. Clarify access to report
11. Close meeting

**FREQUENT QUESTIONS**

- Why can't we have a copy of the report? (Answer: Our experience is that people need access to the report but not personal copies. It is too easy for these reports to be left somewhere and that has the potential to increase conflict. It is important to note that many people are often embarrassed about the need to hire someone to help them with conflict.)
- Is management committed to the next steps? (Answer: management should be prepared to make a statement about this.)
- Where do we start? (Answer: Let's wait until everyone confirms the report and then we will start with interpersonal mediations.)
- We already knew this! (Answer: That's good because that means that we got it right, so it will be important to start working at the issues.)

**POSSIBLE CHALLENGES**

- People will want to get into the issues – the sooner you stop this, the better. This can be handled by simply focusing on the purpose of the meeting and reiterating that the issues will be talked about directly during the recommended processes.

**OTHER VARIATIONS**

- If the report is verbal, you can still follow this general flow. In these cases we will flipchart the titles of the issues and recommendations and then speak to the description.
- Occasionally, we will let staff see a shortened form of the report on a screen (or overheads). We will never cut out issues but in shortened reports we will include less detail on the descriptions.
- Teaching some tools to help people understand the conflict and help them to make sense of the situation can be important. The tools that may be most helpful are the Role Renegotiation model with Intent Action Effect and a brief teaching piece on how to do a perspective check. Sometimes we will also use the Navigation Metaphor to help people see where they are at and where they need to move to.
- Occasionally we will add an appendix for the managers and human resources person to help them understand what has happened. Tools we would use commonly include: Johari's Window, Social Discipline Window, Routes to Excess, Polarity Management.

**WAYS PEOPLE RESPOND TO THE REPORT**

People have different emotional responses to reports. Here are some that we have identified:

- Relief – Finally the elephants have been named!
- Overwhelmed – There is a lot to do.
- Discouraged – Is it possible to turn this around?
- Excited – Let's start working, NOW!
- Surprised – Are there really that many problems?
- Embarrassed – I wasn't aware that I was part of the problem and/or What will people think of me or the team?
- Disappointed – There is nothing new.

**Report attempts to:**

- Name all significant issues/themes
- People feel their concern is named; they feel included
- No one is humiliated or "outed" too much
- Spectrum of view is identified
- Short and tight
- No personal names (sometimes position is named)
- Opens door to everyone's involvement

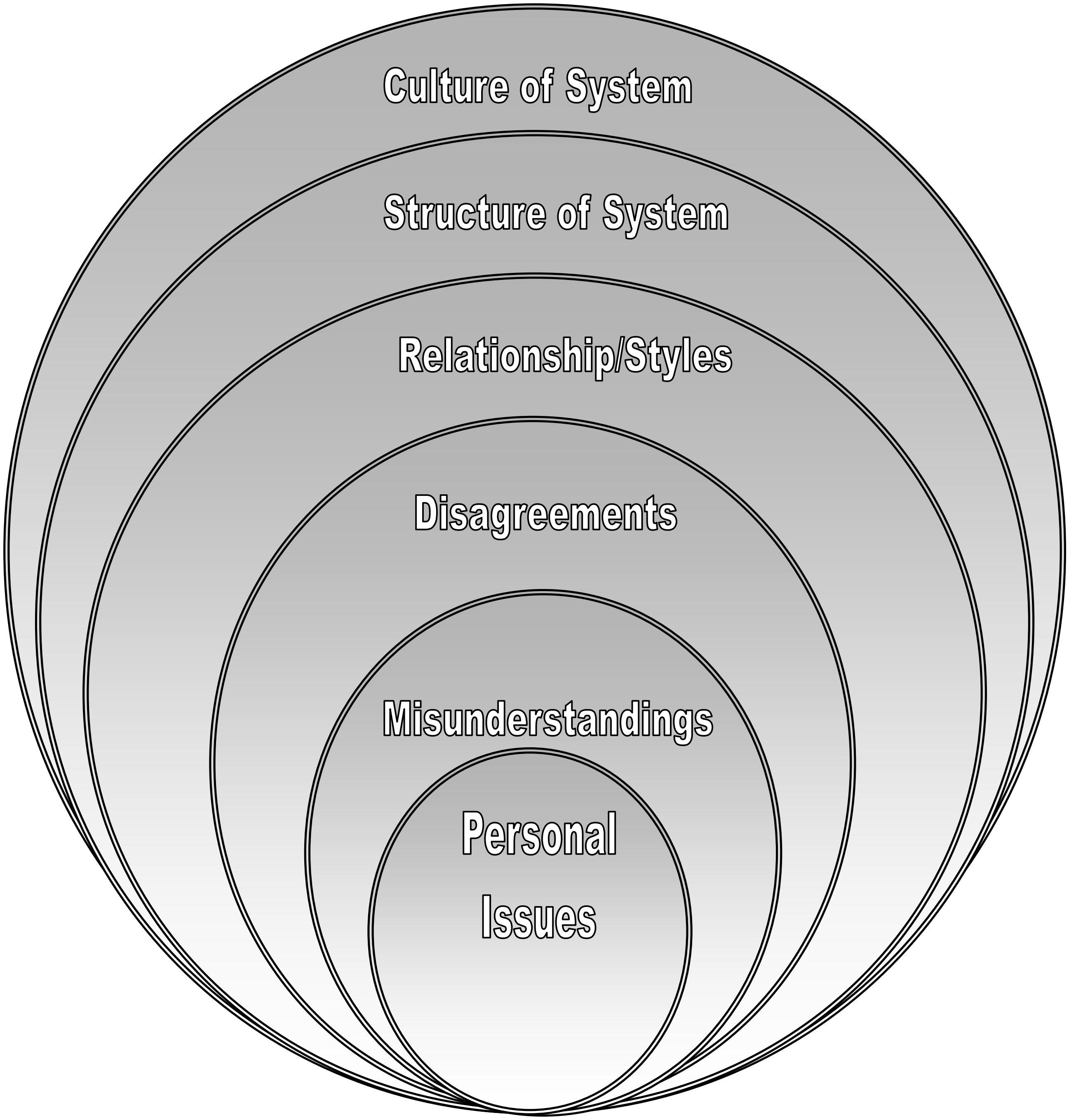
# “TOOLS” TO UNDERSTAND THE ISSUES

## ***TOOLS TO UNDERSTAND CONFLICT***

The following tools are sometimes used to help people understand the situation they are in:

**Where The Conflict Lies**
**Role Renegotiation**
**Intent – Action – Effect**
**Naming Issues**
**Johari's Window**
**Social Discipline Window**
**Positions and Interests**
**Routes to Excess**
**Anger Mountain**
**Conflict Management Styles**
**Polarities**
**Navigation Metaphor**
**Forms of Dispute Resolution**

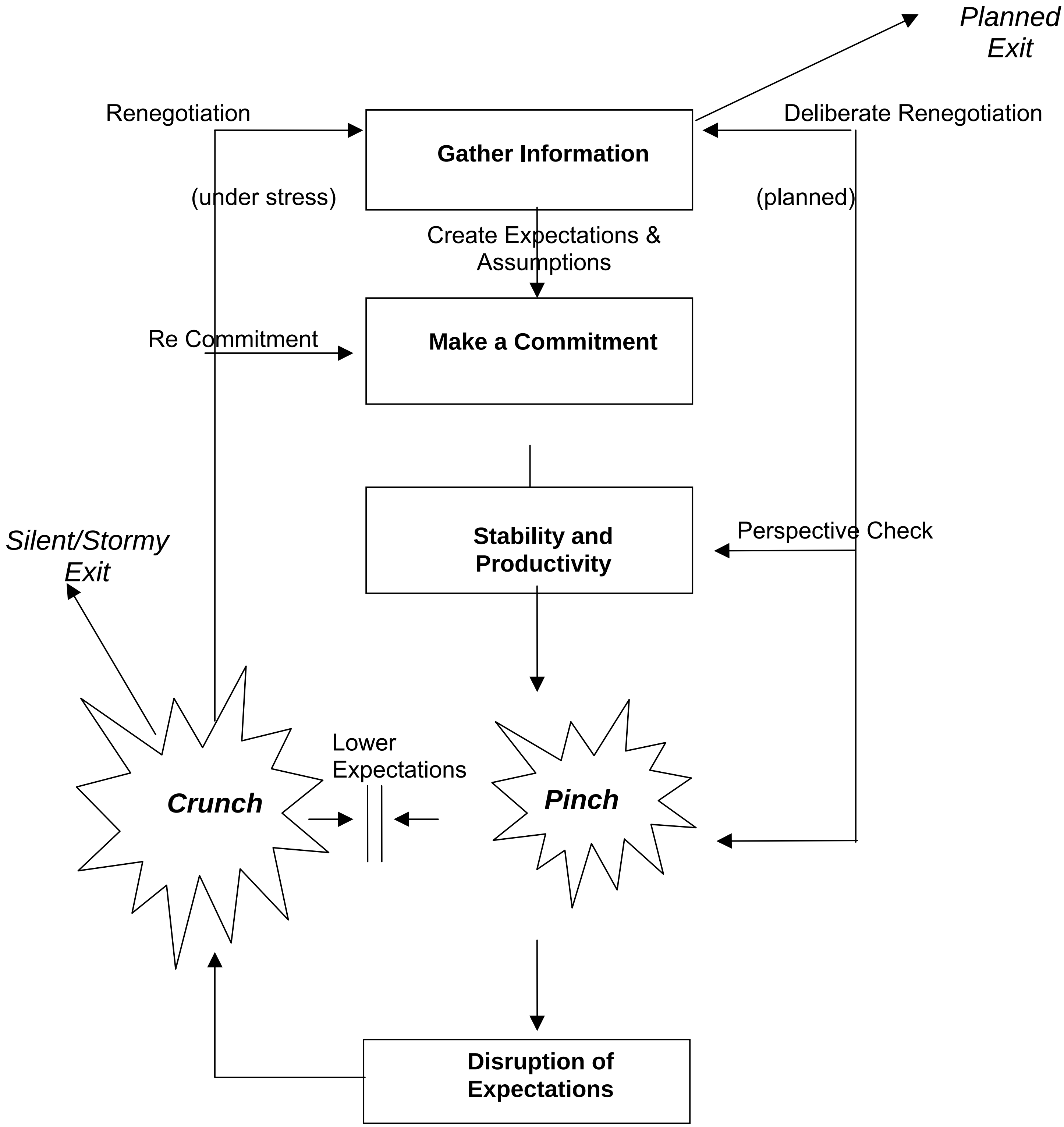
## *WHERE THE CONFLICT LIES: MODEL*



# *WHERE THE CONFLICT LIES*

| ***NATURE OF PROBLEM*** | **DESIRED OUTCOME GOAL** | **APPROACHES** |
|---|---|---|
| ***PERSONAL ISSUES*** | | |
| ▪ Personal physical, mental, emotional, spiritual, financial health problems | ▪ Personal health<br>▪ Increased awareness | ▪ Talk to a friend<br>▪ See counsellor |
| ***MISUNDERSTANDINGS*** | | |
| ▪ Problems with perception<br>▪ Miscommunication<br>▪ People taking things the wrong way | ▪ Clarity, clear up misunderstandings<br>▪ Improve communication | ▪ Explore action/intent/effect<br>▪ Clarify assumptions<br>▪ Be aware of “blind-spots” |
| ***DISAGREEMENTS*** | | |
| ▪ Disagreements over specific issues | ▪ Decision on issue | ▪ Name areas of misunderstanding<br>▪ Shift from positions to underlying interests |
| ***RELATIONSHIP/STYLES*** | | |
| ▪ Individuals not getting along<br>▪ Lack of trust or good will amongst staff | ▪ Behaviour change<br>▪ Manage diversity<br>▪ Increase trust<br>▪ Closure on negative history | ▪ Acknowledge parties’ communication styles<br>▪ Highlight the differences in style/approach<br>▪ Shift judgement to curiosity |
| ***STRUCTURE OF SYSTEM*** | | |
| ▪ Rules, roles, policies, set up of organization is causing problems | ▪ Improve organization’s structures (rules and roles) | ▪ Requires involvement of others in the organization or family<br>▪ Assess who has influence and ask if they can be involved<br>▪ Assess what can or cannot be changed |
| ***CULTURE OF SYSTEM*** | | |
| ▪ Values, beliefs and or the culture of organization and profession is part of the problem | ▪ System change<br>▪ Develop, renew, align organizational values/ beliefs/ culture | ▪ Requires involvement of others in the organization or family<br>▪ Consider “fit” within organization<br>▪ Cost/benefit analysis of staying in organization |

# *ROLE RENEGOTIATION*




Source: L.E.A.D Consultants

# *ROLE RENEGOTIATION*

**Information Gathering**: All relationships begin and develop through the gathering and sharing of information.

**Expectations & Assumptions:** We create expectations and assumptions from the information that we have gathered.

**Commitment:** We choose to make commitments based on the information that we have gathered and our belief about the relationship's ability to meet enough of our expectations/goals to make it workable. Commitments can be formal or informal, articulated or kept private.

**Stability And Productivity:** This is the period of time where things are going as we expected they would.

**Pinch:** A pinch is something that is done or not done, that violates one of our expectations/assumptions. Pinches are private. We feel them though the one who caused the pinch may not be aware that we are disappointed or have been offended.

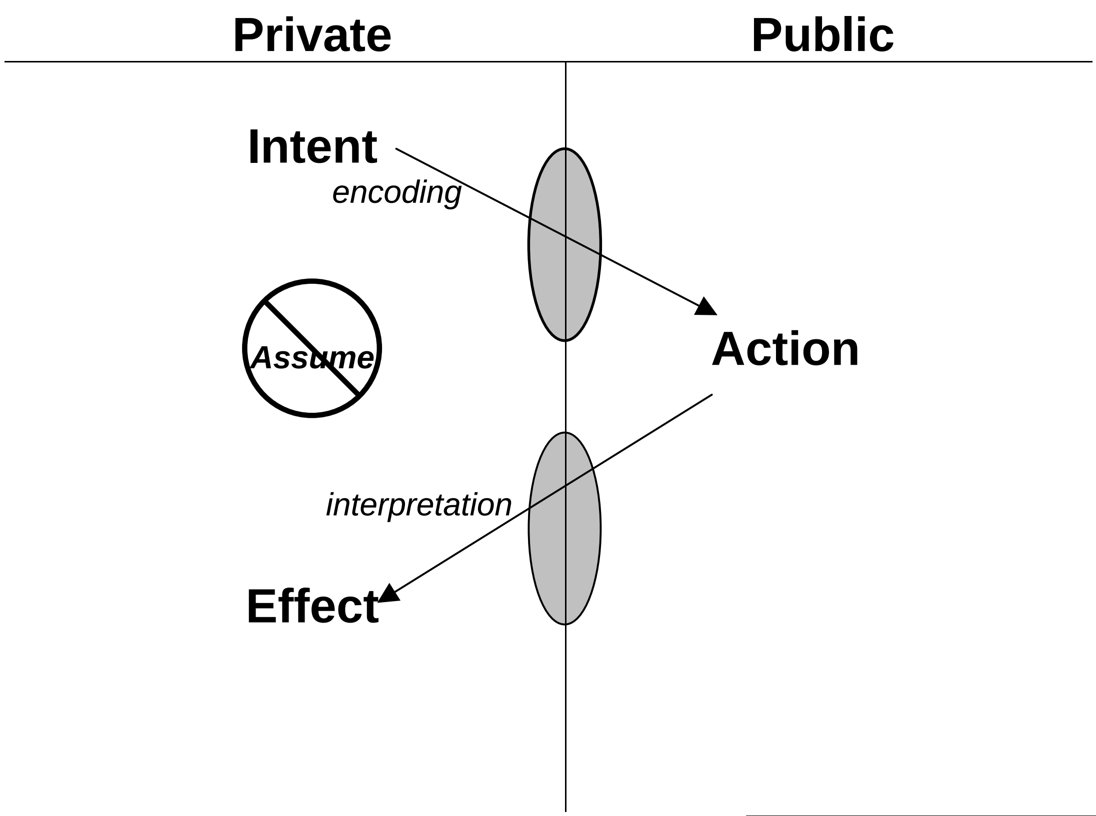
**Disruption Of Expectations:** By not acting we may come to doubt our initial judgment of a situation. We are not sure if we can trust our operating expectations and assumptions because we have been disappointed already. Tension and stress builds as our situation becomes increasingly unpredictable.

**Crunch:** A crunch is open conflict. Both parties are now aware that there is a problem. However, if I have been suffering silently my crunch may be my partner's pinch.

**Crunch Management Options:**

- **Silent Ending:** This is where one party terminates the relationship after the fight without any further communication.
- **Re-Commitment:** This is where we smooth things over and play nice (kiss and make-up) with each other, with the hope to quickly have the relationship return to stability and productivity. The pinch however, remains private and unresolved.
- **Lower Expectations**: By lowering our expectations and just "putting in time" people hope to reduce the number of pinches and crunches that they are experiencing with each other. Over time this can lead to apathy and cynicism.
- **Re-Negotiation:** By engaging in a difficult honest conversation after a crunch, information can be gathered, expectations and assumptions clarified and parties can either renew their commitment to their relationship or agree to disagree and explore the final option of a planned and/or agreed upon ending/transition to the relationship***.***

## *INTENT – ACTION – EFFECT*




Words: 7%
Tone: 38%
Body language: 55%
(Dr. Albert Mehrabian at UCLA)

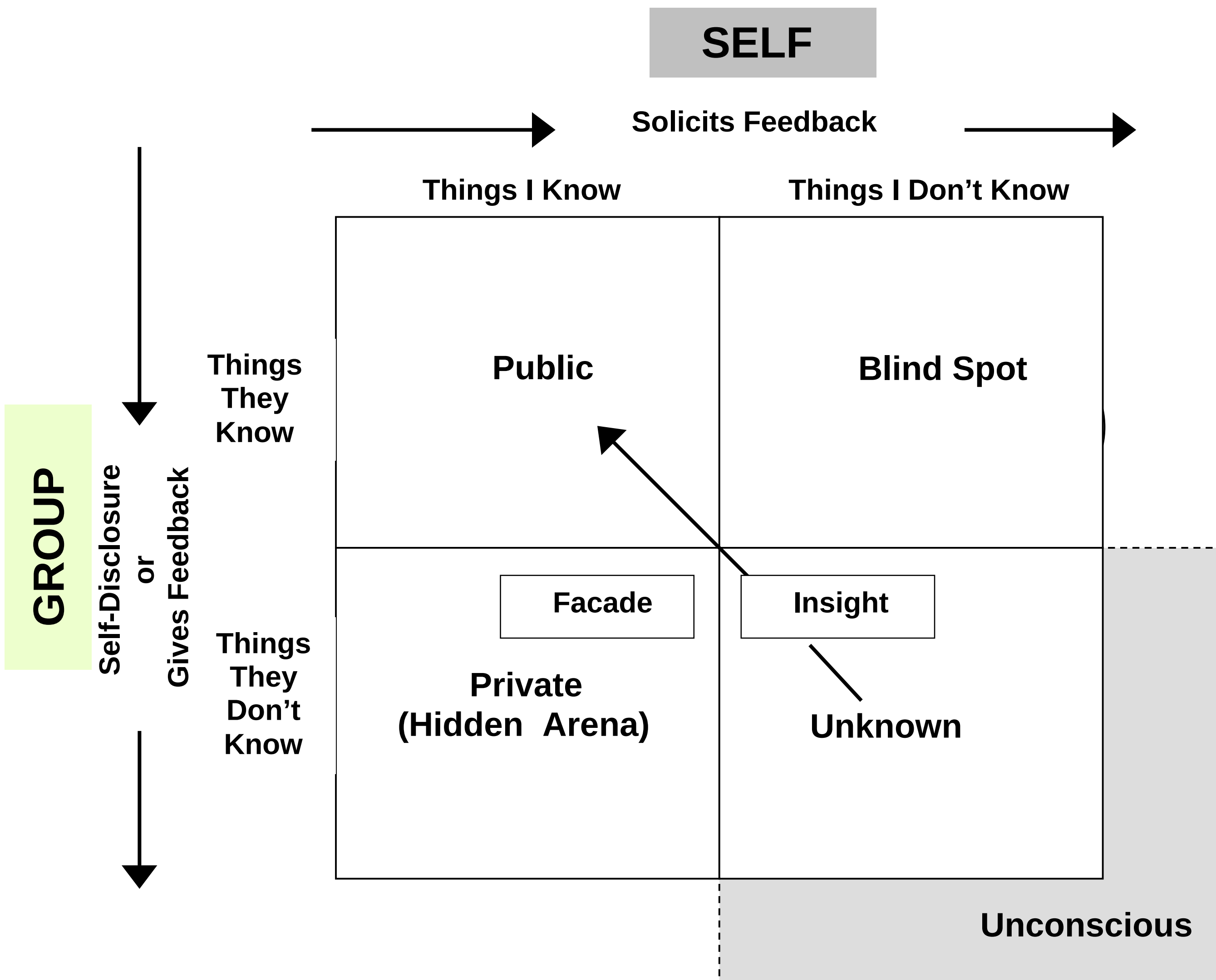
# NAMING ISSUES

When naming behaviours or issues it is important to identify them factually without implying negative judgement. A behaviour is a specific action that someone has done and an issue is a pattern of the behaviours (e.g. behaviour – you were 15 minutes late yesterday, issue – arriving at meetings on time). People generally respond defensively when their behaviour is named as being problematic. This is intensified when the issues are named in front of others. In the assessment report it is critical that behaviours are named neutrally.

To name issues effectively, choose neutral or positive language, (e.g. "communication" instead of "miscommunication"). The following are some tips:

- Remove adjectives like "more", "less" or "too much"
- Leave out pronouns like "you", "them", etc… Pronouns are often experienced as pointing a finger at someone
- Use nouns such as "staff meetings", "communication", "interpersonal conflict", "job descriptions" and "management style"
- If possible, name an issue in a way that relates to more than one party. If it clearly identifies one person you will need to talk to them prior to the report delivery.

## *JOHARI'S WINDOW*[2]




Use when coaching someone who has been identified as having a significant contribution to the conflict. This can help normalize the experience of missing something that others are talking about. It can help a person 'save face'.

[2] The Johari Window from *Group Processes: An Introduction to Group Dynamics* by Joseph Luft. Copyright ©1984.

# *LABEL DESCRIPTIONS FOR JOHARI'S WINDOW*

The **Public Arena** contains information both the group and I know about me, and is characterized by open communication between others and me. This area grows through communication and results in increasing trust.

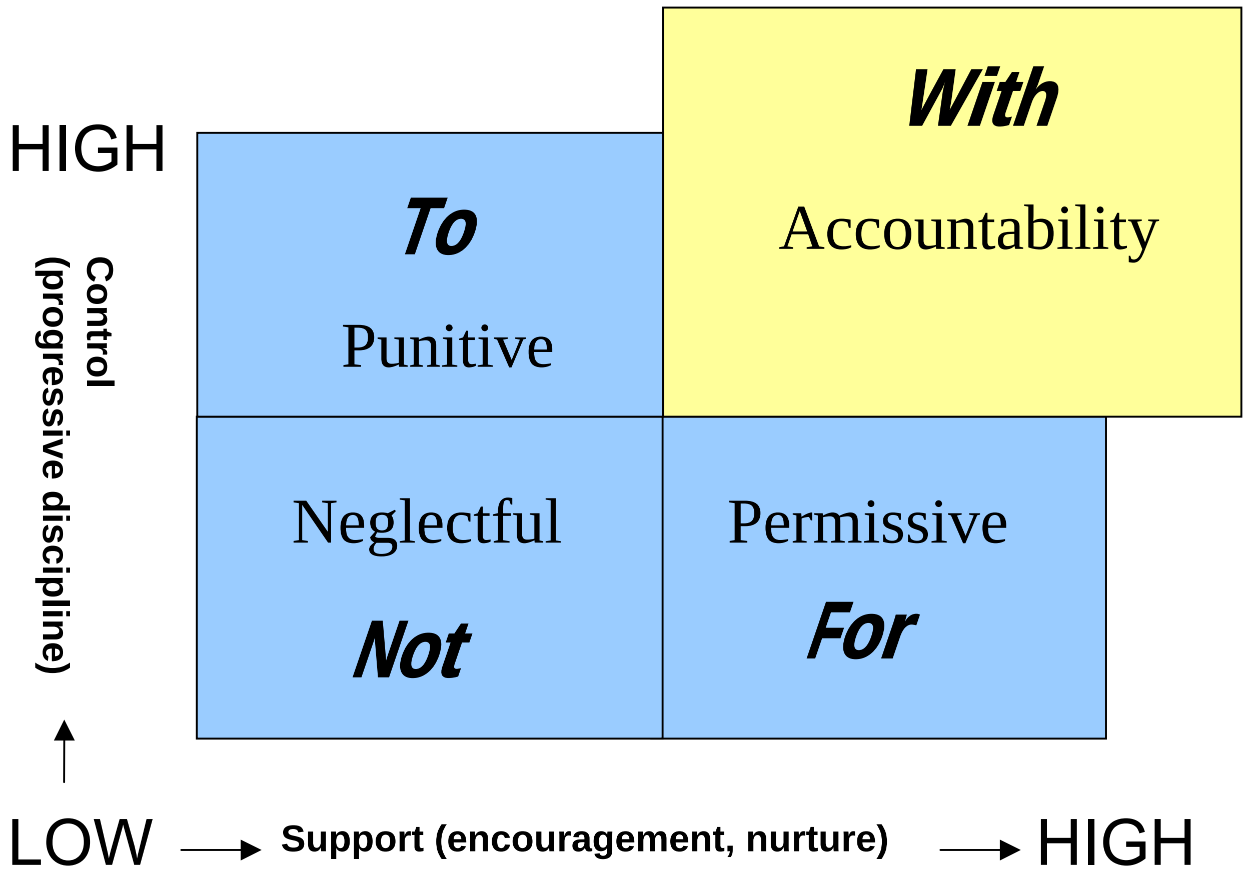
The **Blind Spot** is information known about me by others but not known by me. It may be seen in body language, habits or mannerisms, tone of voice, etc., through which information is passed that we are not aware we are communicating. This area may decrease as communication and trust with others grows.

The **Facade** is the information I know about myself but don't share with others. It may include feelings, opinions, prejudices and past history. I withhold either from fear of rejection or ridicule.

The **Unknown** area is information neither others nor I know about me. It is the area of the unconscious, some of which may become known through exchange of feedback.

**What are my blind spots?**

## *SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW*




To foster accountability and to achieve sustainable results, leaders must provide:

- Clarity on what is expected (i.e. task and relationship goals),
- Support in the form of encouragement, coaching and open dialogue to reach those goals, and
- Evaluation, feedback and progressive discipline to ensure progress towards the goals is made and monitored.

Used most often with managers and Human Resource professionals when an organization has moved from years of a permissive or neglectful response to a punitive response. Often when this shift happens, the person it is 'done to' will exhibit 'victim' behaviours believing that they are being treated harshly. This tool can also be used to encourage managers to be supportive and hold people accountable.

Adapted by Janet Schmidt from Ted Wachtel (1999, February). ***Restorative Justice in Everyday Life: Beyond the Formal Ritual.*** Paper presented at the "Reshaping Australian Institutions Conference: Restorative Justice and Civil Society," Canberra, Australia.

# *LABEL DESCRIPTIONS FOR THE SOCIAL DISCIPLINE WINDOW*

This particular frame looks at the intersection of controlling problematic behaviour and supporting the person. While we generally use all four quadrants, people and systems have preferences in how they deal with problematic behaviour.

The **neglectful** quadrant is where problems are ignored. Often people take this approach hoping that the situation will resolve itself or the person will figure it out on their own. It is not unusual that people will give clues of their disapproval, but these clues are not always caught. People with limited Emotional Intelligence often do not notice that their behaviour is out of sync with others.

Another frequent action is to inadvertently support the questionable behaviour. This is done by encouraging staff to pick up the workload for others without talking to the person in question or by answering the phone for the person when they arrive late without a conversation. Often this is viewed by the individual as supportive and as consent to their behaviour. It is not unusual that people will believe their circumstances are unique and that therefore they can expect differential treatment. What is differential to one person may be seen as preferential treatment to another. The staff observing these actions often experience this to be **permissive** behaviour.

The **Punitiv**e quadrant is where the organization takes action. It is important to note that these actions are all perceived by others. Disciplinary responses invariably fall into this quadrant whether they be verbal warnings or suspensions. If the punitive action comes as a surprise to the individual they invariably take on a 'victim' response, feeling like they are being treated harshly. In large part, this occurs because the emphasis is on controlling the behaviour and not on supporting the person.

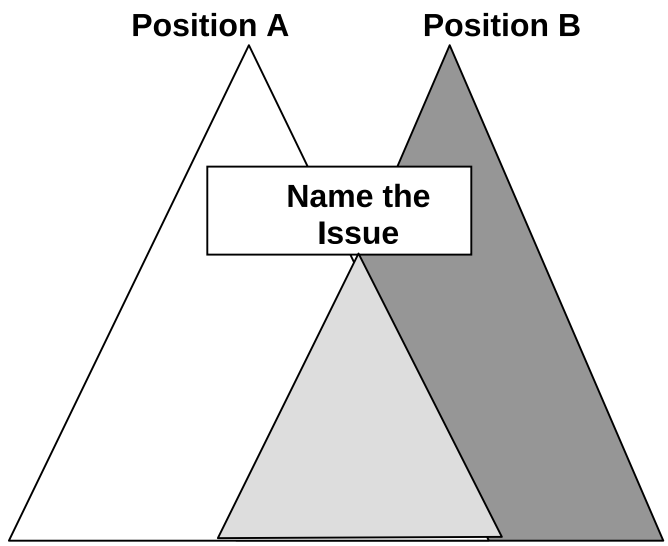
The final quadrant is the **accountability** option. Here the person is supported at the same time as the problematic behaviour is addressed. The person with the problematic behaviour is seen as a participant in the problem solving process.

Questions:

Often we address problematic behaviour differently over time. Identify your strategy, where you begin and what you do next if the behaviour doesn't change?

What happens when the person refuses to participate in the problem solving process?

## *POSITIONS AND INTERESTS: Conflicts That Need to be Solved*




**Identify the Interests**
Wants – Needs – Fears – Concerns – Values – Priorities

Shared – Different - Opposing

**TIPS:**

- Identify what the conflict positions are
- Seek to identify a neutral way of framing the issue (the topic of the disagreement)
- Move beyond the rational for each persons positions by asking open ended questions to seek to understand interests related to the identified issue
- What interests are shared, different and opposed?
- What are the options to meet as many of these interests as possible?

Use this when a group is locked in a problem that needs to be solved (versus unpacked or managed). This model is described more fully in the "Group Processes" section.

# *ANGER "MOUNTAIN"*

We experience anger in our bodies as well as in our minds. As we begin to experience angry thoughts and feelings our bodies prepare for action. The following graph illustrates our body's response over time.

## THE AROUSAL CYCLE[3]

| | Trigger | Escalation | Crisis | Recovery | Depression |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Physiological Arousal | | | | | |
| *normal* | | | | | |
| Quality of Judgement | | | | | |
| Strategies | | | | | |

Use this when someone is struggling with anger issues and is minimizing the impact of their response when they are angry. It will help them see the connection between anger and decision making. This would generally be used in coaching sessions.

[3] Lee Allan Rengert and Paul Smith, 1986 (used with permission)

## *RELATIONSHIPS: FROM STRENGTH TO EXCESS*

"Too much of a good thing can become annoying"

**Accommodating / Harmonizing**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Clever | Tricky | Deceptive |
| Sympathetic | Fickle | Wishy-washy |
| Flexible | Inconsistent | Unreliable |
| Affectionate | Fawning | Groveling |
| Innovative | Changeable | Erratic |

**Achieving / Directing**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Lead | Dominate | Oppress |
| Challenge | Argue | Fight |
| Stimulate | Jar | Overwhelm |
| Self-assured | Unsympathetic | Ruthless |
| Eager | Impatient | Driven |

**Analyzing / Preserving**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Reserved | Guard | Unresponsive |
| Careful | Inflexible | Obsessive |
| Even | Unfriendly | Rejecting |
| Cautious | Pessimistic | Defeated |
| Systematic | Ritualistic | Compulsive |

**Affiliating / Perfecting**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Responsive | Critical | Righteous |
| Concerned | Fussy | Furious |
| Innocent | Gullible | Victimized |
| Hopeful | Disillusioned | Despairing |
| Contemplative | Defensive | Martyred |

For more on the four communication styles listed above see: Style Profile for Communication at Work: Gilmore & Fraleigh. Friendly Press, Eugene Oregon (1992)

# *ROUTES TO EXCESS: THE HOW*

**Process:**

1. Cover the 'strength' column.
2. Ask the interviewee to identify traits in the remaining 2 columns that are similar to the 'other party' when they are at their worst. Generally it is helpful to identify one or two clusters.
3. Once 1-2 clusters that represent their colleague have been identified, reveal the 'strength' column and reflect on the point that often what is most difficult for us is not our colleague's weaknesses but rather 'too much of their strengths' (This helps them to begin to reframe their definition of the problem from a more negative/accusatory definition to one of managing different styles)
4. Now cover the two 'excesses' columns.
5. Ask the person, "Looking only at the strength column what are words that are the words that best describe you at your best?"
6. Once they have identified a cluster or 2, reveal the 'excess' columns and ask if they recognize any of the 'excesses' that they may sometimes exhibit. This question is often helpful to determine self awareness.

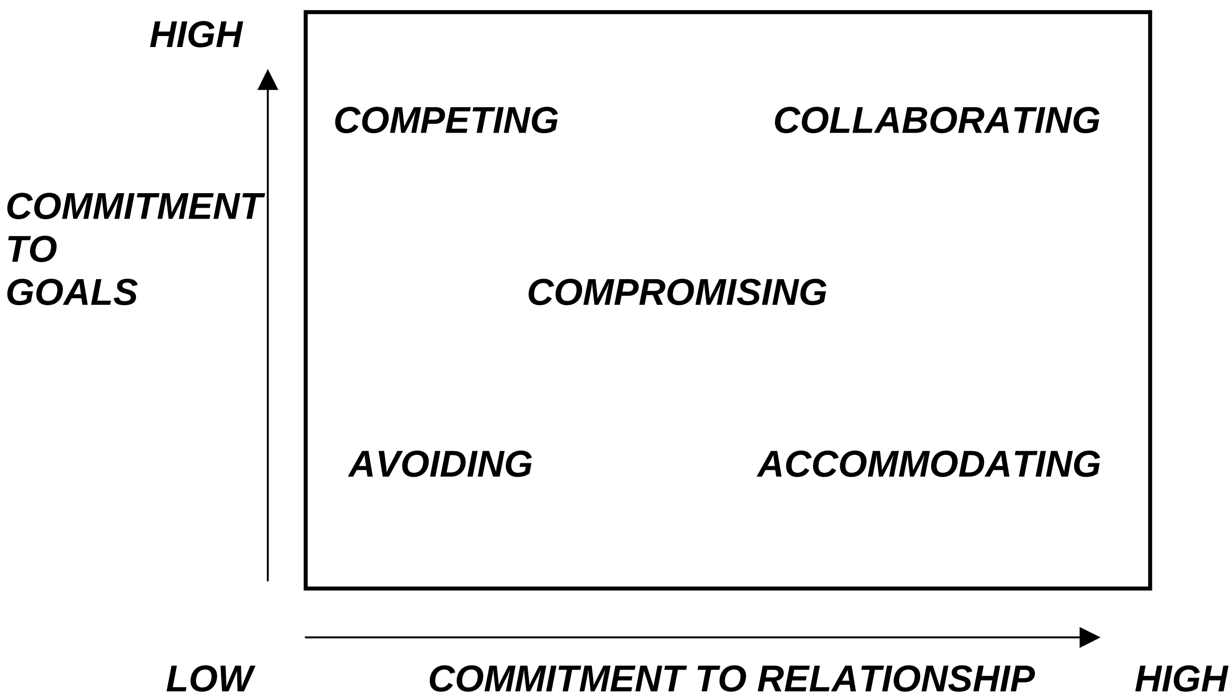
**Things to note:**

- Your excess is not always in the same cluster as your strength due to the 'stress shift'.
- People often believe they are in their strength area but others are experiencing the negative impacts of their stress which is lived out in 'too much of a good thing'.

# *CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES*

Individuals and groups manage conflict in a variety of ways. The following five designations represent one way of identifying and understanding different management styles: competing, avoiding, accommodating, compromising, and collaborating. No single conflict management style is the "cure-all" approach to conflict. Rather, the appropriateness of each style is dependent on the specifics of each situation. While most of us use all of the styles to some degree, we also tend to have a dominant style with which we feel most comfortable.

Each style of conflict management can be described in terms of the individual or group's commitment to their desired goals and their relationship with the other party.




Use this when the group or leader is struggling with an overuse of one of the decision making strategies. Generally this will be used when a leader is too directive, or the group is being slowed down because of an overuse of consensus (see collaboration). This can be used either in a coaching session or during a group process on exploring decision making.

# *SUMMARY OF STYLES*

1. **COMPETING**
   Deriving power from expertise, authority, position, and/or majority rule, an individual using this style seeks to "win" as a means of resolving the conflict. In an extreme form, this style can lead to the injury of people and relationships.
   **Appropriate when**: the relationship is not important; in an emergency situation; processing trivial issues; it is the agreed upon mechanism.

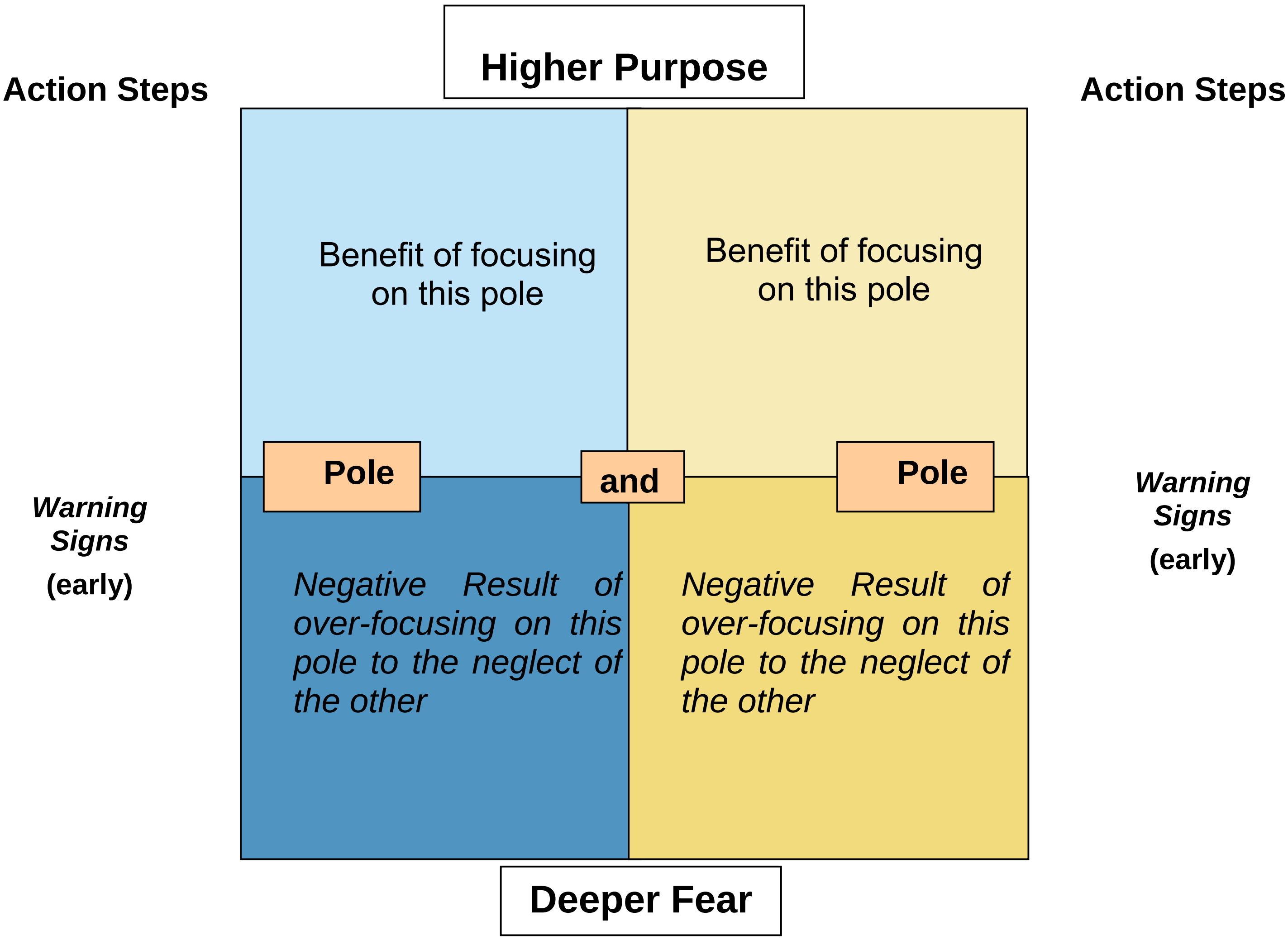
2. **AVOIDING**
   An individual seeks to resolve the conflict without explicitly pursuing his/her goals or pursuing the maintenance of the relationship through direct interaction, and as a result does not involve open discussion of the issues in conflict. When used in excess, this style can facilitate the denial of conflict, thereby causing the gradual disintegration of healthy relationships.
   **Appropriate when**: the issue and relationship are not important; a cooling off period is needed; the timing is extremely important.

3. **ACCOMMODATING**
   An individual seeks to resolve the conflict without explicitly pursuing her/his goals while actively pursuing the maintenance of the relationship, and as a result involves discovering and facilitating the achievement of the other's goals. Those utilizing this approach excessively ignore, suppress, or deny their own goals in order to satisfy the goals of the other party, often causing the deterioration of healthy relationships.
   **Appropriate when**: the issue and one's goals are not important or relevant and preserving the relationship is extremely important.

4. **COMPROMISING**
   The individual using this style allows for the partial realization of the other's goals even though, in doing so, s/he obtains only partial realization of her/his goals. People using this style to excess miss opportunities for creative solutions and instead settle for a solution that all parties consider inadequate which, in turn, leads to a sense of frustration and future "flare-ups" around the same issue(s).
   **Appropriate when:** co-operation is important but time or resources are limited; the issues are important but do not warrant extensive collaboration; there is a danger of stalemate; a temporary, interim solution is required.

5. **COLLABORATING**
   In the collaborating response, emphasis is placed on understanding each other's specific values and interests, from which a solution is derived that is acceptable to all involved. In using this style to excess, people cause a sense of "analysis paralysis" in which parties to the dispute feel frustrated over the length of the deliberations, the lack of action and/or clear direction and the sense that the process is "making a mountain out of the mole hill."
   **Appropriate when**: the relationship and goals are both significant and there is sufficient time and commitment to resolve the conflict.

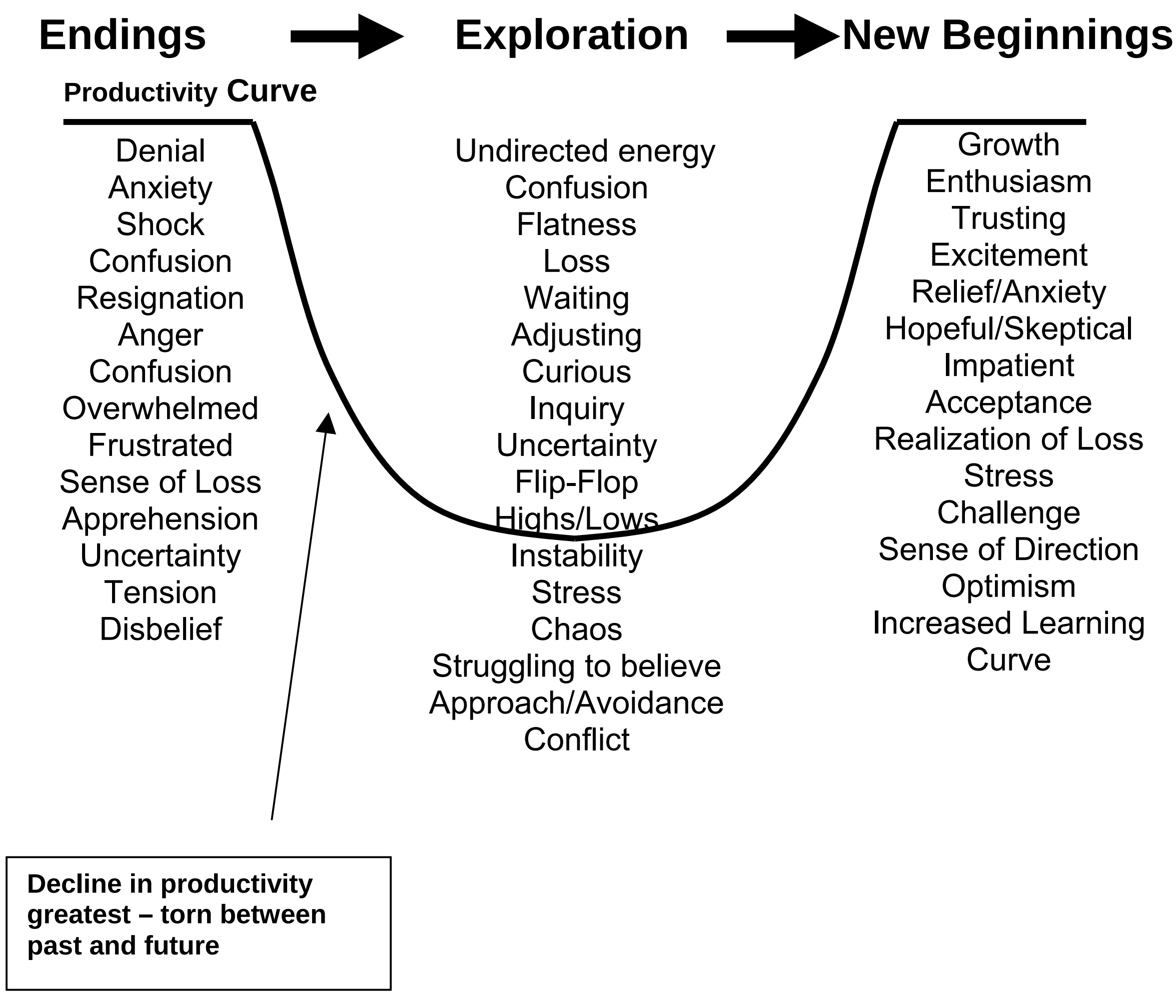
# *POLARITIES: CONFLICTS THAT NEED TO BE MANAGED*




Use when there is a polarity that needs to be managed. There are both individual polarities (work styles) and team polarities. This is another management tool or team planning tool. There are typical polarities in different contexts. Leadership polarities could include: clear/flexible, decisive/participatory, critique/encouragement, competition/collaboration, speaking/listening. Individual work styles could include: individual/team, planning/action, accuracy/getting the job done, being/doing, stress/tranquillity. Organizations also have polarities to manage which include: centralize/decentralize, cost/quality, diversity/homogeneity, innovative/standardized, informal/formal.

Source: Berry Johnson--http://www.polaritymanagement.com/

# *LEADING CHANGE:*
# *Three Phases of Transition*

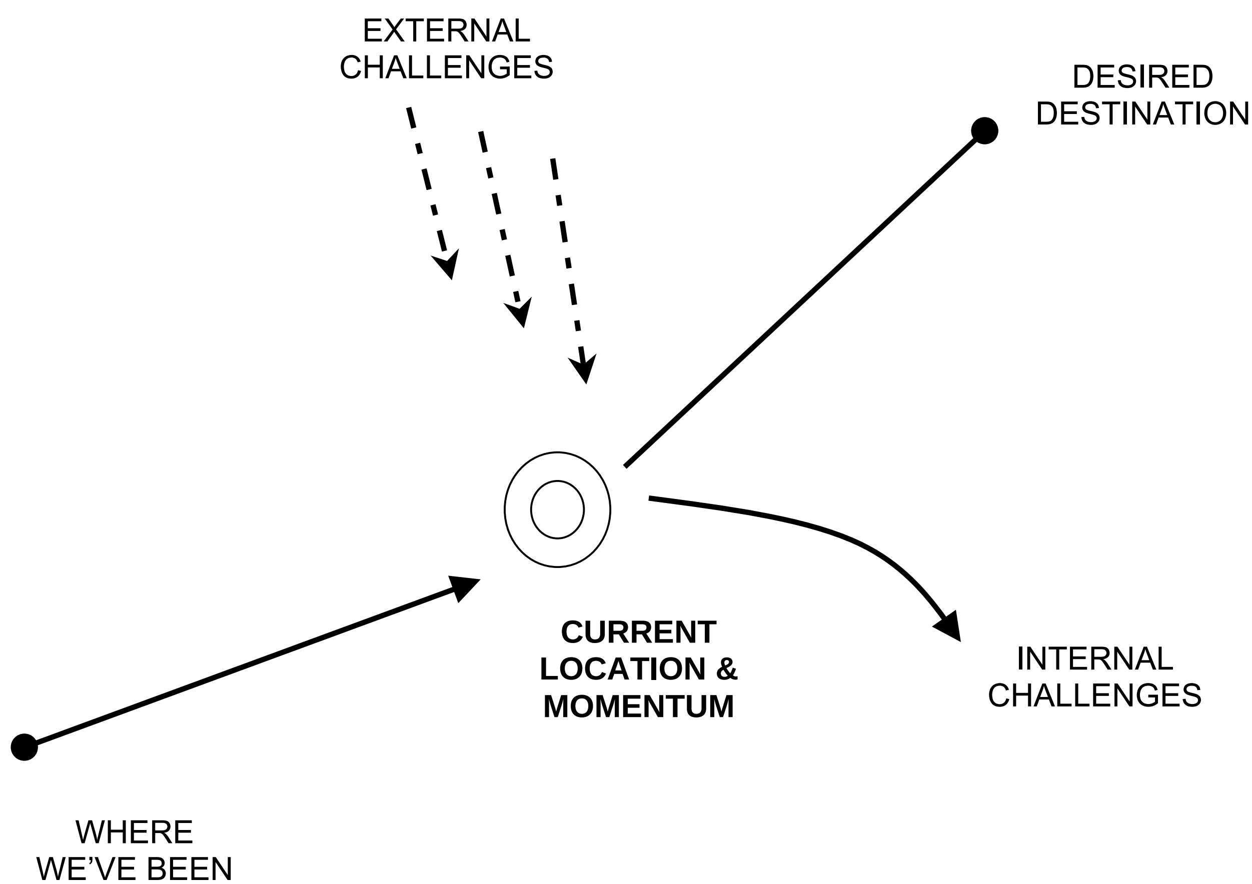



## Needs Required to Support Transition In Each Stage:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Empathy Validation** | **Information Communication Structure** | **Participation A Role Alignment with Personal Goals/Vision** |

Source: William Bridges and Susan Mitchell Bridges

# *NAVIGATION: A CONFLICT ASSESSMENT GUIDE*



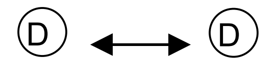

Use when working with a group in conflict and you want to help them reflect on where they are currently at, what they would like to be, and conversation about how to get there.

# *FORMS OF DISPUTE RESOLUTION:  ADR SPECTRUM*

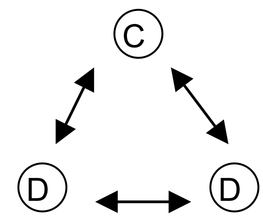
***"Conflict Resolution"*** is a very broad term used by many professionals involved in the field and refers to **many** forms of dispute resolution.  ***"Alternative Dispute Resolution"*** (ADR), or ***"Alternative Dispute Resolution Methods"*** (ADRM) is usually used in the legal context.  Several specific forms of dispute resolution are defined below.  Third-party intervention and control increases as one moves from negotiation to adjudication.

**Diagrams**

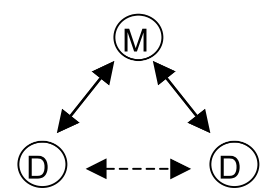
**NEGOTIATION**
Disputing parties agree to solve their problem by talking about their concerns face-to-face and working together to find a solution that is mutually acceptable.  It is in this form of intervention that the disputants maintain the greatest degree of control.



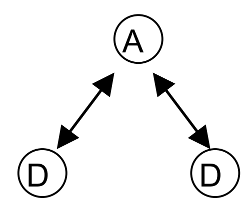

**COACHING**
A coach is a third party who encourages disputing parties to solve their problem.  For example, s/he may make suggestions on how to approach the other party to the conflict, help the person understand her or his underlying interests, and/or provide shuttle diplomacy (act as a "go-between").



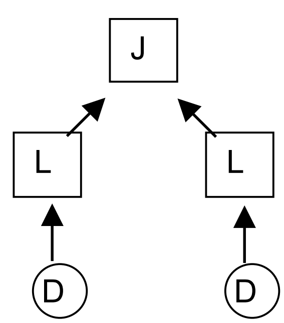

**MEDIATION**
Mediation is a voluntary, co-operative, problem-solving process in which a person acceptable to the disputing parties assists them in clearly defining the issues in dispute and helps them work towards a resolution that is mutually satisfactory.  The mediator has primary responsibility for guiding them through the process and the disputants maintain primary responsibility for the resolution of their conflict.




**ARBITRATION**
An arbitrator is a person appointed by two disputing parties to settle their dispute.  In arbitration, the third party makes a judgement after hearing both sides of the dispute.  Disputants no longer have decision-making power.




**ADJUDICATION**
The courts are well established as a form of dispute resolution in North America to the point that their popularity in the public mind is reflected in statements such as:  *"You'll hear from my lawyer!" or "I'll take it to the highest court!"*  Such popularity often makes it difficult for people to think of alternatives.  In adjudication, disputants are represented by lawyers and, as a result, their control is minimal.



# PHASE II

# INTRAPERSONAL AND INTERPERSONAL PROCESSES

# *THE MEDIATION PROCESS*

In many group interventions, there are often at least one or two interpersonal mediations required. Generally, these mediations are the first things that need to occur in the Phase II process. If there is significant tension between two people and the first intervention is a group process, invariably one or both of the parties will act out their conflict in the group. If it is obvious, the facilitator can address the behaviour but too often it is obvious to the team and less clear to the facilitators who do not recognize the clever jabs people take at each other when they are locked in conflict.

The comprehensive mediation process is taught in our Mediation Skills I course. A brief overview of the process is found below.

Prior to the actual mediation sessions you will need to call both parties, preparing them for the session and identifying the key events that they would like to talk about. In a group conflict, often only two sessions are required. It is important to be as efficient as possible with these meetings because costs can add up quickly.

**SESSION #1**

- Typical introduction, emphasizing purpose, is to share/listen for new information
- Ask parties to share goals for mediation (optional)
- Review and draw Intent Action Effect (IAE)
- Work through 3-5 events using IAE
- **Close**: Agreement on confidentiality, reflect on new learning, next meeting focus on needs and offers.

**COACHING** conversation with both parties

**SESSION #2**

- Contributions
- Any last events you need to share using IAE
- What are your offers?
- What are your needs?
- **Close:** Agreement on confidentiality and what will happen with summary of agreements.

**CLOSE** with the manager who needs to support the two parties in their working relationship.

# *A TYPICAL FLOW OF KEY ACTIVITIES*

**1. Intake Call**
(generally from leader or manager/HR representative)

**2. First Mtg/Interview with Each Party**
(to gather info, build rapport)

**3. Follow-Up Call**
(to leader or manager/HR rep to report your findings + recommendations)

**4. Second Mtg/Phone Call with Each Party**
(to prepare for first joint session)

**5. Mediation Session #1**
(to share stories, explore differences)

**6. Touch Base Meeting/Phone Call with Each Party**
(to debrief first session and prepare for second session, including coaching for acknowledgements if appropriate/ready)

**7. Mediation Session #2**
(to clarify + continue to share stories, explore differences)

**8. Follow-Up Email & Touch Base Meeting/Phone Call to Each Party**
(to reflect on offers/needs + get ready for final session)
(to coach for acknowledgements + presenting offers/needs)

**9. Mediation Session #3**
(to explore acknowledgements, needs, and offers)

**10. Results Summarized To Parties Via Email**
(to fine-tune and finalize into an agreement/MOU)

# *SECOND INDIVIDUAL MEETING: PREPARING FOR THE FIRST JOINT MEETING (HOW TO)*

***HOW TO:***

1. **Welcome & Affirm**
   - encourage/offer hope

2. **Explain Focus for Joint Session #1**
   - to share stories and share impact so others can understand
   - to leave the session with a better understanding of each other's experiences

3. **Identify Stories to be Shared**
   - confirm story(ies) you want person to share
   - draw out additional story(ies) as needed

4. **Teach Action-Intent-Effect**
   - have I-A-E model or paper/pen to sketch model
   - teach the model by using the stories the person will tell
   - explain your expectations re: their sharing action + effect (not intent)
   - explain that other person will share their intent

5. **Explain that Other Person will also Share Stories**

6. **Do They Have Questions?**
   - stress management before session
   - create interim arrangements/commitments for interaction between the parties
   - other?

# *FIRST JOINT SESSION (HOW TO)*

***HOW TO:***

1. **Welcome & Introduction to Joint Session #1**
   - encourage/offer hope & normalize discomfort

2. **Explain Focus for Joint Session #1**
   - to share stories and share impact
   - to leave the session with a better understanding of the other's experience

3. **Re-Visit Intent-Action-Effect**
   - have I-A-E model on whiteboard or flipchart paper on wall
   - remind that they will share action + effect (but not intent)
   - other person will share their intentions
   - obtain consent to proceed

4. **Identify Which Event to Begin With (sharp focus)**
   - invite one party to share a specific action that they found troubling
   - ensure that you are steering them away from loaded/evaluative descriptions of the action (i.e. observation without evaluation)
   - invite the same party to share impact (may draw out an emotion)
   - invite the second party to respond by clarifying intent
   - invite additional comments/clarifications (if tension low) OR provide re-cap of "new info" using I-A-E framework (if tension remains high)
   - invite parties to reflect on the new information and seek to integrate between now and the next joint session

5. **Identify Next Event (sharp focus)**
   - repeat step #4 above until the effects and intentions of all the significant events have been clarified
   - this usually necessitates a second joint session with the same focus

6. **Closing the Joint Session #1**
   - begin closing process at least 10 minutes before your total time expires
   - revisit confidentiality: develop consensus on what will be said if asked
   - discuss who you will be in contact with (e.g. the person who called you)
   - give instructions re: things to consider prior to next session
   - inform re: what they can expect from you (i.e. re: follow-up calls, emails, next steps etc.)

# *COACHING FOR FINAL JOINT SESSION: AN OVERVIEW*

***HOW TO:***

1. **Introduction to Coaching Conversation**
   - encourage/offer hope
   - if on phone, check to ensure that this is a good time to talk
   - check-in with them as to their general impressions/feelings at this stage of the process (e.g. "So, what are your thoughts and feelings on where we are at this point?") - active listening!

2. **Explain Focus for Final Joint Session**
   - to clarify anything that still needs to be clarified from previous sessions
   - to allow a final opportunity to unpack any situations which still need to be discussed
   - to explore needs and offers - what is required to move forward with the relationship or situation
   - to, ideally, lay the foundation for an agreement/memo of understanding

3. **Re-Visit the Questions from Email (& given at end of previous session)**
   - you may wish to use your email as a guide to this part of the conversation
   - explore the questions as found in the email (active listening - paraphrase & probe for more as appropriate)
   - use open questions to probe and reality test as necessary; examples:
   - *So what needs to happen between you and __ in this meeting to move forward?*
   - *What do you really need her/him "to get" in order to have some peace about this and move on? How might we achieve this?*
   - *What is it that you think s/he may need you "to get?"*
   - *What are the consequences of not resolving this between you?*
   - *What is it that you think s/he is going to need to hear from you with respect to ________? How might you say this? (give feedback)*
   - *How might you name that particular need? OR How might you ask for that?*
   - coach/encourage/support for taking responsibility as necessary

4. **Closing the Coaching Conversation**
   - re-cap the basic outline of what you have heard in the conversation
   - re-cap the basic outline of what will occur in the final session
   - obtain consent to proceed (any final questions?)
   - let them know where they can reach you if something comes up between now and the final session
   - thank them for their time and continuing energy/commitment

# *FINAL JOINT SESSION (HOW TO)*

***HOW TO:***

1. **Welcome & Introduction to Final Joint Session**
   - encourage/offer hope, recap progress, & normalize any remaining nervousness as necessary

2. **Explain Focus for Final Joint Session**
   - to clarify anything that still needs to be clarified from previous sessions
   - to allow a final opportunity to unpack any situations which still need to be discussed and/or offer acknowledgements
   - to explore offers and needs (in that order) with respect to future
   - to, ideally, lay the foundation for an agreement/memo of understanding

3. **Re-Visit the Concept of Offers & Needs (as necessary)**

4. **Identify Who Will Begin (which party) Sharing Offers**

**Option A**

- invite one party to share their first offer (record)
- invite the other party to share their first offer (record)
- continue taking turns until all offers have been shared (con't recording)
- allow for clarifications/responses along the way as appropriate
- next, invite both parties to silently cross off any needs they had listed which have already been addressed by the exchange of offers
- only then invite both parties to share any needs which remain (again, taking turns)
- fine tune until consensus is achieved
- re-cap the joint list of accepted offers which has been created (and which now forms the basis of the MOU/agreement)

**Option B**

- invite one party to share their entire list of offers (record)
- allow other party to respond once list is complete (if tension is still high) OR
- allow other party to respond to each offer along the way (if tension is low)
- repeat above process with the second party
- next, invite both parties to silently cross off any needs they had listed which have already been addressed by the exchange of offers
- only then invite both parties to share any needs which remain
- fine tune until consensus is achieved
- re-cap the joint list of accepted offers which has been created (and which now forms the basis of the MOU/agreement)

### 5. Closing the Final Session

- begin closing process at least 15 minutes before your total time expires
- revisit confidentiality: develop consensus on what will be said if asked
- inform the parties re: how the MOU/agreement will be developed
- inform re: what they can expect from you (i.e. when they will receive a draft of the agreement/MOU and what you need from them by when)
- discuss anyone else you will be in contact with (e.g. the person who called you) in terms of bringing closure to the case
- negotiate who else may need to receive a copy of the agreement/MOU (if anyone)

# *CONSULTANT DIRECT FEEDBACK*

**For behaviours that cannot be mediated**

The primary purpose for direct feedback from the consultant to share with "key contributors" is to help the staff member appreciate the gravity of the problem (a wake up call) so that they will be more likely to:

1. admit that there is a problem;
2. make the choice to work at addressing the problem; and/or
3. become aware of the consequence of choosing not to address the concerns.

This process is helpful when:

- The culture of a workplace has drifted significantly off an acceptable course
- The whole staff needs to have a fresh start and to be held accountable to clarified expectations, but key influencers of the workplace culture need the direct challenge to help ensure that they work to tip the balance/momentum of the group in the right direction
- When the power differential is such that facilitated feedback would be too risky for others to participate in
- When the issues that need to be raised are of an extremely sensitive nature (i.e. sexual)
- When issues have gone on for so long that they have become normalized in the culture

**PROCESS:**

Senior Management is fully briefed on all the issues/themes raised with each party and needs to be prepared to follow up these conversations with both support and accountability (performance management/discipline only for future problem behaviours, not past behaviours). This process could happen before or after the report back to staff.

1. Inform senior management of key players, themes and specific examples of the concerning behaviours, level of certainty. Agree on next steps:

- Ensure that management agrees if reported behaviours are true, that they are inappropriate. Ensure that management is willing to performance manage such behaviours in the future.
- Ensure management understands and is supportive of the purpose and process of the feedback.

2. Management informs identified staff member that they are to meet with the consultant to review some significant feedback that surfaced during the interviews that is important for the employee to be made aware of. (Done one day prior to the meeting).

3. Consultants and identified staff member meet.

- Few minutes of chit chat – conversation (it is critical that there was a positive connection between the consultant and the staff member in the initial interview)
- Name purpose and be transparent about full process
- Name theme
- Walk through examples:
- Let them respond (be supportive and challenging back and forth)
- Continue until all issues have been outlined
- Close: “We have shared a lot of details, give it some thought, if you need more clarity or need to debrief this give us a call”

4. Consultants contact management to debrief the meeting and help prepare management for the next step.

5. Management meet with identified party to debrief the feedback session and to work on details of their recovery/action plan.

**Consultant’s Role:**
- Help party appreciate the gravity of problem (Examples need to illustrate gravity - not “he said, she said”…)
- Provide a wake up call for them
- Check the individual’s willingness to engage on path of reintegration or explore their wish to exit the organization
- Prepare party to admit there is a problem or make a choice

**Management’s role:**
- To meet with parties first to give them a “heads up” of the meeting
- To communicate an endorsement of the seriousness of feedback
- To meet post feedback to debrief the information heard and to set up agreements on how to performance manage from here on in…

Use when the gap between the current culture and needed culture is so great… need a clean start… Focus on key contributors/culture influencers.

# *FACILITATED FEEDBACK SESSIONS*

In most mediation sessions, contribution to the conflict is not equal. Sometimes most of the problematic behaviour is coming from one party whether that is a manager or a colleague. In these situations the challenge is to lead a process that is a positive learning experience for the major contributor and yet does not make the other party feel blamed. A facilitated feedback session is utilized when only one party brings up problematic behaviour.

**Process Options:**
1. Mediation (interpersonal)
2. Mediation (with manager observing)
3. Feedback by managers (prior to the feedback session the mediator coaches the manager)
4. Feedback by managers (with mediators present)
5. Feedback by another staff person with mediators
6. Feedback by staff with mediators (with the manager observing)
7. Feedback by mediator(s) (with manager or HR person)
8. Feedback by mediator (s) without manager

Mediation processes tend to be more successful than a facilitated feedback session because of the natural feelings of defensiveness getting in the way of the person integrating information. It is best to use the lowest process number possible. The higher the number, the more likely the person will view the mediator as being against them.

**Factors that point to a Facilitated Feedback Session**
- Someone with the skills to participate in the process is willing to talk to the person in question, and is seen by him/her as credible.
- The feedback is too personal (i.e. hygiene or an affair). If this is the case, the manager or the mediator needs to share the information in private.
- Manager doesn't have skills to effectively provide feedback.
- Relationship between manager and employee is not good.
- Mediator's relationship with the person needing feedback is **very positive**.

**Models you can use to give the person feedback**
1. Ask the person what they think people are saying. Johari's window suggests that people often have a glimpse of their weaknesses, they just don't know the impact on others (especially if the person is in a position of power, since power amplifies effects).
2. Share intent action effect and point out that our good intentions can still have bad effects.
3. If relevant, use the concept of Polarities or Routes to Excess and share the concept of 'too much of a good thing becomes a bad thing'

**Preparing People for a Facilitated Feedback Process**

1. Pick a person(s) based on their credibility in the eyes of the person needing feedback. If possible use one person, if not possible use two. The more people involved, the more difficult it is for the person to save face.
2. Meet with the staff person(s) who will give feedback to select the stories that demonstrate the behaviours that are having a negative impact. Teach Action Intent Effect.
3. If relevant (i.e. the person giving feedback to someone with more organizational power) talk to the next level up to ensure that the staff person participating in the facilitated feedback session will not experience any negative job action.
4. Prepare the receiver of the feedback for the session. Explain that the other person will be sharing a number of experiences that have left them feeling uncomfortable. Teach Intent Action Effect. If possible share enough information about the stories so that they can reflect on the incidents. Let them know that they will be able to speak to their intent. Clearly indicate that you want to be a support to them, that you are on their side in terms of being a respected competent employee and you want to assist them in being more successful.

**SESSION (generally 1 to 1.5 hours)**

**1) Introduction**

- Welcome parties
- Identify goal: to provide XXXX with feedback
- Mediator's Role - Process guide
- Guidelines - Be patient
- Confidentiality (discuss at end of meeting)
- One of 1 or 2 sessions
- Breaks - anyone can call
- Review Action Intent Effect
- Other person is a representative of staff and will share both actions and impacts
- Receiver can clarify intent and ask questions of clarification
- Questions? Ready to proceed

**2) Sharing Examples**

- Mediator invites staff person to share a specific story (name story)
- Staff person shares action and effect (ideally personal experience)
- Receiver can ask questions of clarification and share intent
- Mediator highlights/emphasizes what is relevant for learning and possibly identifies the broader theme of the specific behaviour

Note: This repeats for 3 to 5 stories depending on Receiver's ability to take in information. If there are two staff persons sharing stories, alternate between their stories. As needed, Mediator emphasizes that these stories represent themes that are causing some challenges and that the person sharing the situations is a representative of staff.

**3) Closing**

- Confidentiality - What will be said to other staff by the staff
- What the receiver will say to staff about the conversations
- Next steps: Mediator will speak to the receiver and the givers of feedback in the next week.

## POST SESSION

- Ideally the Mediator calls the receiver of the feedback within 24 hours to help them process the information. The person often goes through a variety of stages from denial to anger to victimization to self-critique. It is important that they have support as they come to terms with what they have heard.
- Generally the mediator will also set up a meeting approximately a week after the session to help the receiver integrate the information and find new actions to meet their intentions.

## FOLLOW UP

Coach the next level up and if relevant, Human Resources, to continue working with the person and performance managing them. This would include giving positive feedback for change and documenting events if change does not occur.

# *COACHING EMPLOYEES WITH PROBLEMATIC BEHAVIOUR*

Sometimes it is necessary to work with a particular person in regards to a specific pattern of behaviour. Invariably this behaviour is social interaction with clients or colleagues. Frequently this behaviour is inappropriate expressions of anger or behaviour that is experienced as harassment or discriminatory. In order for coaching to be successful the person needs at some level to want to change. Employees who need coaching do not understand the extent to which their behaviour is problematic. There is always some level of defensiveness or minimization when working with employees who have been sent to be coached.

## PRE-COACHING

- Meet with manager and determine if coaching is appropriate to address the specific situation and needs of the manager.
- Assess the compatibility of client and coach (i.e. match age, consider gender).
- Ask the manager what they understand the client's awareness of the problem and commitment to the process.
- Find out what the manager and organization has done to address the problem.
- Strategize and agree on a plan of action.

## SESSION #1 – Deconstruct

- Be transparent about how and why you were contacted
- Explain the coaching process including how many sessions
- Emphasize the voluntary nature
- Role of coach: not therapy or counselling, champion of the client, client determines what they would like to work on (unlike sports coach)
- Get client's perspective of the problem (why you were called in):
  - What is your understanding of the problem?
  - Why do you believe we were called in?
  - What do others perceive to be the problem?
  - What do you hope to accomplish (goal) in this relationship?
- Share Action Intent Effect and possibly Johari's window to provide a framework for the person to appreciate how they could be missing something that others believe is serious.
- Homework needs to be contextual: Could include reading an article. Asking them to notice when they experience anger? Reflection on how they impact others?

**SESSION #2 - Reconstruct**

- Reiterate your role (sometimes client comes to the second sessions feeling more defensive than the first and believing they are being picked on).
- Review Homework assignment.
- What are the triggers or context where you do this behaviour?
- What does it say about you?
- What was the intention of the other person? (point out that often our assumptions are wrong)
- What do you assume about the other? (impact on them)
- As the client speaks, consider these questions:
  - What would the other person say about this?
  - What would the other person have felt?
  - What would the other person have intended?
  - What would trigger the other person?
- Provide coaching that will identify steps to address personal issues and take responsibility for actions.
- Provide coaching and support to assist client to internalize appropriate ways of behaving, responding or managing their reactions.
- If relevant, identify other supports required (i.e. change in workload, counselling, medical attention).
- Homework: Have the client reflect on other alternative strategies when these situations arise. (What do you need to do differently?)

**SESSION #3 - How to react / How to approach**

- Review Homework: How will you react / approach others?
- Negotiate a plan that will allow employer some way to assess the success in addressing the personal issues identified in the coaching sessions
- Determine if other assistance (i.e. counselling) is required

**CLOSING with MANAGEMENT**

- Provide a written summary to client indicating what has been achieved and any further recommendations that may be required.
- If possible call the client two to three months later to see how they are doing.

# *COACHING FOR APOLOGIES*

Often you will need to coach someone to apologize. In some cases people believe they have delivered a sincere apology and it is not being accepted. They are often angry and resentful about this fact. In the book The Five Languages of Apology (Northfield Publishing 2006), Gary Chapman and Jennifer Thomas suggest the notion that people have different apology languages. They give numerous examples of apologies that seem to be situational and personal. Some work and some don't. They claim that people have five different apology languages and what can happen is that people will apologize using their language but it leaves the other person feeling like the person apologizing doesn't care about what they have done. And yes, you can be bilingual.

The role of the coach is to help the person apologize using the other person's apology language.

An effective apology includes the following elements:

- Acknowledge impact/effect
- Name action specifically
- Take full responsibility for your action: words, tone and body language (no "buts")
- *Always end* with a statement about regretting the impact ('I'm sorry')**. I**f the behaviour has occurred before, put a plan in place to address the issue of reoccurrence (i.e. counseling, training)

The five apology languages according to Chapman and Thomas are:

1. Expressing Regret "I am sorry"
2. Accepting Responsibility "I was wrong"
3. Making Restitution "What can I do to make it right?" Reassurance that the person who hurt us still cares about us is needed.
    - words of affirmation "I really appreciated you staying late and finishing that project"
    - acts of service – go out of your way to help the person out
    - receiving gifts – buy a small gift as a symbol of your appreciation
    - physical touch – this can be challenging in a non-family setting but there are contexts where a light touch is appropriate and helpful
4. Genuinely Repenting "I'll try not to do that again"
5. Requesting Forgiveness "Will you please forgive me?"

It is usually obvious when a person has not gotten over the harm that they have experienced from another person.  They often need to repeat the details of what happened or they are clearly closed to the other person.

**Here are some ways in which you can discover the person's apology language:**

1. Ask the person, "Tell me what hurts you most about what Loren said or did?"
2. "What would Loren need to say that would sound like she was sorry for what she did?"
3. "When you express an apology to someone for something you have done that hurt him or her, what do you think is the most important part of an apology?"

**Coaching Someone to Apologize Again**: (best done after you know what the apology language of the other party is)

1. Introduce the topic of the need for the person to apologize.
2. Let the person vent.  People are often very insulted when their apology is not accepted.
3. Ask the person what they said to the person to apologize.  If they have missed one of the fundamental elements (i.e. use of word 'but') use intent action effect to illustrate how a genuine apology can not have the intended effect on the other person.
4. Share with the person the concept of the five apology languages.
5. Share that research states that we generally deliver apologies in our language not in others and that if you have a different apology language people often have a difficult time receiving the apology as a genuine apology.
6. Ask the person to explain their intent for apologizing.
7. Highlight that their intent was to acknowledge that they had not handled the situation well.
8. Explore what they can say to ensure that their intent is actually experienced as they had hoped.
9. Coach them to deliver an apology in the way that the other party needs to hear it.

# *COACHING MANAGEMENT: The Problem Employee*

We have found that in 25% of the situations we are involved in someone will need to leave the department or organization. There are times when it is healthier for the individual or the group for someone to leave the organization. It is the role of the facilitator either to make it safe for people to look at that question or to coach management to address a person who is holding the group back.

Often In group cases where we are called in, there have been years of problems with one or two employees and little to no action to address the problems. Generally there is little documentation as well. In an ideal situation where there is a problem with an employee, it is important that the person is given an opportunity to change or to leave on his/her own. It is also important that while the manager is addressing the persons behaviour, they are also documenting it in case they are not successful.

A consultant who comes in as a mediator does not tell management to get rid of someone. Some consultants do share these recommendations, mediator consultants by definition of their role, don't.

Some reasons why people need to leave....

- they do not have the hard skills to perform their job,
- there is too much 'water under the bridge' for others to give them another chance,
- they are trapped in victim energy and are not ready to let it go and will hold the group back,
- a leader has intimidated too many staff and they are not psychologically able to start over,
- they are relationally not suited to do the job, and
- the group has lost confidence in their ability to do their job (especially true about management).

If you are working with a manager to address a problematic behaviour here is one way of guiding the conversation:

1) Ask the manager questions that highlight the problem behaviour of the employee
2) Summarize the behaviours
3) Add observations that you have heard in interviews or that you have observed in meetings that affirm what has been said
4) Ask the manager what they have already done to address the behaviour
5) Ask the manager what success they have had to date with these behaviours
6) Ask the manager what impact the person's behaviour has had on the team
7) Add information that again affirms the cost to the team
8) Ask future focused questions like: " Where does this information leave you, what hope do you have for the future, and what are you willing to sacrifice in this situation?"
9) Begin to ask questions that result in a specific plan that the manager can implement with a time line

# *THE PARADE OF HORRIBLES*
## *Creating Doubt and Dissonance*

There are times where a person is hesitant to participate in the Phase I Report Recommendations. This is more likely to happen in an interpersonal process than group process, but both are possible. It is important that all parties participate in the recommendations (especially those viewed as key players) if the group is going to be able to positively address their difficulties. The challenge is that the facilitator needs to maintain a positive relationship with the person and get them to the table. If this is not well managed the facilitator can find themselves in a conflict with the one of the parties.

The 'Parade of Horribles' is getting the person to think through the consequences of not participating in the Recommendations. The hope is that as the facilitator (or manager or union representative) explores the 'Parade of Horribles' together with them, it will create doubt and dissonance in their position and they will begin to participate. It is important to note that generally the resistance is a deeper fear and that not participating feels safer than participating.

**Some reasons why people refuse to participate are as follows:**

- they do not perceive themselves to be part of the conflict;
- they think it is a management problem not an employee problem;
- they don't think anything good could come out of the process;
- they are emotionally too vulnerable and are afraid of crying;
- they don't want to be picked on.

When you get a 'no' it is important to change the conversation to another level. The more often the person says no (rehearses their position out loud) the less likely they will be able to return to the process and save face. When you get the first variation of 'no' (I don't think I'm ready to/ I'm not going to participate) you need to immediately begin to explore the person's interests (i.e. fears, concerns, needs). It is important to note that doubt and dissonance techniques should not be utilized until effective rapport has been established with the party. Highlighting a party's vulnerabilities before effective rapport is established will seem like an attack. If you have good rapport with the person and can then highlight the possible ramifications of their choices, you will seem like you are being a good friend who cares enough about the party to give them some potentially challenging information.

It is also challenging to induce doubt or dissonance with an individual party and still remain consistent with the mediator's impartial role.

If the person says they will either not attend a group session or attend under duress and not participate in any activities, here are some questions to explore with them:

- What impact do you think this will have on your colleagues?
- Refer to the Intent Action Effect may and ask them what their intent would be to be present and not participate
- Ask them what they believe the impact of their actions will be and what people will start thinking and possibly even talking about.

If you have managed to change the 'no' to a 'yes' in participating in a group session, it is important to call the person approximately 24 hours prior to the group session to see where they are at. Often some of the fears have re-emerged and they need some reassurance.

If the person refuses to attend an interpersonal process here are some questions that you may want to explore:

- What kind of relationship would you like with that person?
- How do you hope to get there?
- What is the cost of the conflict on you?
- How will 'not participating' reduce the stress of the conflict?
- What will be the impact of this on your relationships with your colleagues, direct reports, manager, human resources?
- What is the worst thing that could happen in a mediation session?
- How will not participating be viewed?
- What might happen if this is not resolved in a way you are suggesting? Are there any implications for you personally?
- Have you talked to your manager about your concerns about participating, if so what did they say? Were they able to guarantee you a particular outcome? (Note: generally before the employee talks to the manager we have coached the manager on how to continue the 'Parade of Horribles').
- Have you explored the pros and cons with your Union Representative? (Note: if we are experiencing resistance we will speak to the Union Representative to recommend that the person participate).
- What would the other person need to say in order for you to feel the risk is worthwhile?
- What are the possible outcomes of trying another process (i.e. harassment, grievance, litigation)? How long will it take for this situation to be resolved through this process? What is the impact of not trying this process and moving to another one? If you use another process what impact will it have on you?
- What do you want me to say to the manager, human resources and the other person about not participating?

When utilizing ‘doubt and dissonance’ techniques, be aware that you are working with the ‘soft underbelly’ of the party's situation, so push lightly. You only need to raise doubt enough to create the ‘glimmer of recognition’ in the party's eyes. If you push any harder, you will create unnecessary resistance to both the concept you are offering and, even worse, to you as mediator.

# GROUP PROCESSES

# *DEALING WITH UNANSWERED QUESTIONS*

**CONTEXT:** This process is used where people need information to help them move on. This could be as the result of a critical incident or a long standing situation where there is a lot of misinformation.

**PURPOSE:** To get questions answered, stop misinformation, and help the group to heal.

**PRIOR TO THE MEETING:**
Collect the unanswered questions. Many of them will be identified during the interviews. Sometimes we will invite staff to send us an email with the questions they need answered. Some of the questions will need to be edited so they are clear and respectful. If a question is not appropriate you may want to talk to the person and explain why this question cannot be asked. Occasionally there is another question they can ask to get some of the information they would like.
Identify who has the information that needs to be shared. It is ideal that the primary players attend the meeting. It is not unusual that this could include more than one person.
Invite the primary players to the meeting. Let them know what questions the staff will need answered. Invariably you will need to coach them on how to answer some questions. Rarely can people give all the information. People need to be coached to be seen as open and transparent but also clear about what they cannot share. They will need to be coached on how to respectfully say, “I can’t share that because of…. “ You will also need to coach the primary people on how they will respond to the group after hearing impact.

**ROOM SET UP:** The people answering questions would sit at the front of the room. The rest of the people sit in a circle or around a board table.

**PROCESS:**
Facilitator leads the meeting and welcomes people (possibly teach Intent Action Effect)
Leaders express general statements of regret for the difficult period and desire to help the group recover.
Facilitators ask questions provided to them by employees. If answers are not clear the staff or facilitator can ask questions of clarification.
When all the questions are answered the participants are invited to speak about impact of the events (often we do this in a ‘round’).
Leaders are then invited to respond to the impact statements. It is important that leaders clearly express statements of regret or apologies. If the regret or apology is weak the mediator may want to summarize, focusing on the regret and ignoring other comments.
Mediators close the meeting by thanking people for their honesty, statements of regret, hopes for the future and identifying next steps in the process.

# *CRITICAL INCIDENT DEBRIEF*

**CONTEXT:** This process is used when a group of people have suffered a traumatic event. Sometimes this process is combined with the “Dealing with Unanswered Questions”

**PURPOSE:** To help the group recover from a significant negative event. This could include a sudden death of a loved colleague or a group being traumatized by a bully who has left the workplace.

**PRIOR TO THE MEETING:**
In the interviews it will become clear that people are stuck in grief by the way they talk about a particular event.

This process would ideally happen early in the intervention. Sometimes it would even make sense to combine this with the report delivery meeting. This would all depend on how traumatized people are by the event. A very significant event would need more careful planning.

If the system has not handled the process well (i.e. even the delay of the critical incident debrief) it would be good for someone to attend and speak on behalf of the system. Invariably somebody did something that was not helpful, it is just about impossible to respond to these situations perfectly. Some acknowledgement from somebody can be helpful.

**ROOM SET UP:** The people answering questions would sit at the front of the room. The rest of the people sit in a circle or around a board table.

**PROCESS:**
- Facilitator leads the meeting and welcomes people
- The facilitator identifies the event and invites people to speak about the effect that the event has had on them. Start with someone who will be measured and yet honest and candid. A talking stone can be helpful with the guideline that you can only talk if you are holding the stone.
- After everyone has had one opportunity to speak (gone around the circle), the facilitator then briefly summarizes the impacts and invites anyone to add something else.
- The facilitator then invites the person representing the system to apologize to the group.
- The facilitator thanks everyone for their honesty and expresses the wish that this will hopefully be one more step towards their healing journey.

# *DATÉ DISCERNMENT CIRCLE*

**WHAT IS IT?**

A listening process that combines indigenous sharing models with a Western counseling procedure called "Neutralizing History."

**PURPOSE?**

To promote understanding of the past and initial discernment about what is required for healing through careful listening & facilitation.

**WHEN TO USE IT?**

Early in the conflict resolution process (in "the healing phase") to begin to address past hurts before moving to a future focus.

**WHAT IT DOES AND DOESN'T IT ACCOMPLISH?**

- It is a powerful process for people to "let go" of the past or "neutralize" the power of memories/traumas, which are holding the group back.
- It generally does not serve the purpose of generating resolutions or new agreements to specific issues or problems.

**WHAT DO YOU NEED?**

A room large enough for circle, flipchart & markers, kleenex (2 boxes, one for front & one for larger circle), overheads/handouts for ground rules

**VARIATIONS?**

The *Samoan Circle* (does not include the listener's chair)

# *DATÉ DISCERNMENT CIRCLE*

**BACKGROUND**
The Daté Discernment Circle (developed by Dr. Barbara Daté) is a listening process that combines indigenous sharing models with a Western counseling procedure called "Neutralizing History". The purpose of this process is to promote understanding and discernment through careful, skilful listening. It is most helpful to use this process early on in a larger conflict resolution process to deal with past hurts and wrongdoings before moving to a future focus.

Among many indigenous cultures, when leaders or community members are ready to dialogue or are in a conflict situation, they meet together in a circle in a ritualized process that promotes sharing and respect. Often the speaker uses a talking stick, an eagle feather, a stone or other object when it is her/his turn to share. This object is then passed to another person when the speaker is finished sharing.

The Daté Discernment Circle (DDC) adds to this model a specific role for a listener. This listener is a person selected by the speaker to reflect back what s/he has said. The speaker responds to a focus question provided by the facilitator and the listener communicates, using paraphrasing skills, what s/he has understood the speaker to say. If there is not understanding, the speaker can clarify him/herself until there is assurance that understanding has been reached. In the traditional use of the DDC, the facilitator intervenes or assists minimally once the process is underway, only helping the listener to paraphrase or speaker to express her/himself if they have tried repeatedly and are really struggling.

**STRUCTURE**
A circle is constructed; a semi-circle of chairs, one for every person participating, and three empty chairs at the front of the semi-circle and one empty chair on the inside of the circle, facing out toward the middle of the three. Three of the empty chairs are designated as "speaker's chairs"; one for the primary speaker and two for the persons waiting to speak next. The fourth empty chair is a "listener's chair". The listener faces the primary speaker at a comfortable, conversational distance.

The facilitator explains this structure to the participants and outlines the roles and guidelines for participation. Because the listener's role is to communicate understanding, the facilitator must briefly teach/review the skill of paraphrasing with the group. A focus question is provided for participants to respond to when in the speaker's chair.

**NOTE**: In preparation for the use of the DDC, it is often useful for a facilitator to "tap the shoulders" of particular participants and ask them to be ready to speak first if no one else volunteers.

## GUIDELINES

### For the Speaker:

- Only the person seated in the speaker's chair can speak
- To speak, participants must assume a position in either the speaker's chair or one of the waiting chairs.
- The speaker is to respond to a focus question provided by the facilitator.
- When the speaker's chair becomes empty, the person who has been waiting the longest to speak moves into the speaker's chair, vacating a waiting chair. Anyone in the group can move into that waiting chair.
- The speaker can choose anyone in the circle to assume the listener's chair facing her/him. They may either choose a person with whom they share rapport or a person with whom they have had tensions that need to be resolved (i.e. conflict).
- The speaker should discuss or speak about only one issue per "sitting", but can return as often as he/she likes.
- The speaker speaks from his/her own experience and may address the listener directly (using I-Messages about actions/issues, their intent, effects on them, but *not* others' intent).
- Once a speaker finishes speaking, s/he must return to his/her original seat in the circle for at least one speaker before returning to a waiting chair.

### For the Listener:

- If a person is chosen as listener, but they do not wish to listen, they do not have to.
- The listener and speaker do not engage in dialogue – the listener only listens and paraphrases every couple of "paragraphs" of the speaker's perspective.
- If the listener does not "hear" right (as revealed by the paraphrase), the speaker re-states his/her concern or perspective and the listener continues to attempt to paraphrase until s/he "gets it" to the speaker's satisfaction.
- The same individual cannot be chosen as a listener twice in a row.

### For the Circle:

- Throughout the process the rest of the circle listens silently and respectfully (no side conversations).

[1] In your casework preparation for using the DDC, you may encounter a reluctant individual who does not wish to participate (e.g. they state that they do not want to be forced to assume the Listener's Chair when asked). If faced with this situation, there are several options:

### For the Facilitator:

- The facilitator reserves the right to intervene or change the question and, in general, is guiding the process.
- The facilitator may need to intervene if s/he feels that the message is getting lost and/or help "coach" at points in the process.

- Towards the end of the time the facilitator could ask/invite, "Anything else that needs to be shared."
- The facilitator may also make a few notes for use later in the process.
- When you draw the time to a close, thank the people for taking risks, keep talking with each other, identify outstanding issues and identify next steps (if relevant.).

**Sample Agenda to put on Flipchart:**

- Welcome
- Purpose of Today
- Roles (Facilitator, Participant)
- Guidelines for the DDC
- Our Goal ("to turn the corner & begin working our ways towards the positive")
- Key Skills & Attitudes: Paraphrasing & Intent-Action-Effect

**Sample Question for Opening Round (i.e. prior to starting the DDC):**
"In one or two sentences, what are your hopes/goals for this process for your workplace?"

**Sample List of Hopes as they might be recorded on flipchart:**

- enjoy coming to work again
- increase our understanding of one another
- reduce stress on health and family life
- help group realize its strength
- clarify policies, expectations
- improve our communication
- build on the fact that the job is great, the people are good people – we need to learn to work together
- a day-to-day experience that feels fair and respectful
- reduce tensions, sense of "walking on eggshells"

**Sample Focus Question to put on the flipchart for use with the Date Discernment Circle:**

- "What makes it difficult to come to work in the morning?"
- "Something that's been difficult at …… over the past number of months is ______"
- "An area where I feel that there has been misunderstanding among our work team is ______"

**Frequently Asked Questions**

- Does everyone need to 'listen' if asked? (Answer: We cannot force people to do anything against their will but it is important that everyone participate as much as they possibly can. We will help you if you get stuck as a listener.)

Always begin by exploring the interests underlying the position of not participating (e.g. "I don't feel safe") and explore whether there is something you could do to meet that interest (e.g. "What is it that is making it feel unsafe? Is there anything we could do that would make it feel safe enough for you to participate?").

Make attendance at the DDC conditional on full participation.

Seek the permission of the group as a whole to allow the person to attend in an observer status. Do reality checking with the reluctant person (e.g. "What are the implications (costs/benefits) of the rest of the group going ahead and discussing matters that affect you and making decisions in your absence?")

# *UNPACKING MISUNDERSTANDING PROCESS*

**WHAT IS IT?**

A step-by-step guided sharing and listening process based on the Intent-Action-Effect model in which parties who have misunderstood or been hurt by one another are guided to “unpack” intentions and impacts surrounding a contentious issue or event.

**PURPOSE?**

To promote clarity and understanding regarding critical events, issues, or decisions where misunderstanding, assumptions, and hurt feelings have previously dominated discussion.

**WHEN TO USE IT?**

- Often this tool is used earlier in the conflict resolution process (in “the healing phase”).
- However, it can be useful whenever an issue emerges that is highly charged and which involves elements of misunderstanding.
- Generally after careful preparation, particularly regarding accepting & expressing responsibility.

**WHAT IT DOES AND DOESN’T IT ACCOMPLISH?**

- It is a powerful process for people to “let go” of the past as parties slow down and explore context, impact, and the acknowledgement of impact in a safe and controlled setting.
- It generally does not serve the purpose of generating resolutions or new agreements to specific issues or problems.

**WHAT DO YOU NEED?**

- A room large enough for all the participants, often set up in a circle or semi-circle, flipchart & markers, and kleenex.
- Pre-coaching, especially of the person (or spokesperson for the group) whose behaviour had a negative impact.

# *UNPACKING MISUNDERSTANDING PROCESS*

**BACKGROUND:**
There is a specific set of steps that can help resolve misunderstandings. The process can address circumstances that have resulted in some of the group members feeling disappointed, frustrated, hurt and/or angry. As the facilitator guides the group through the following process, the conversation should be focussed, though not hurried. Everyone who needs to speak should be given time to speak to the issue.

**Note**: Careful preparation of the parties involved is critical for this process to be successful. The facilitator may need to spend time coaching the participants on how to accept and express responsibility for their roles in the situation.

**OVERVIEW:**

**Introduction:** The topic is introduced and framed by the facilitator. 'It has come to our attention that there are still some concerns about the way in which a bingo was presented as an alternative to the address the $50,000 budget short fall.'

**Providing Context:** The person who has the background information shares what they know about the issue, e.g. specifically how and when did the bingo idea get introduced and what were the 'bingo' conversations up to this point. This information should be quite factually detailed regarding the process, not what individual people *believe* on the issue. Generally, the person with the greatest power would speak to the issue. Other group members would add information at the end if required.

**Clarification:** The rest of the group is encouraged to ask basic questions of clarification. Again, answers should be as clear and open as possible. It is critical that people feel that information is not being withheld.[4]

**Sharing Impact:** The people who are experiencing difficulty with the issue share the impact that this situation has had on them and the questions that this has raised for them. They may also wish to share how that has affected their participation in the discussion to date.

[4] The facilitator should exercise caution at this stage. Participants who are still angry or hurt may seize upon the Clarification phase to begin to "cross-examine" the spokesperson who provided Context. Questions should therefore generally be restricted to areas of genuine confusion relating to basic facts.

**Acknowledging Impact:** The spokesperson for the group expresses clear and unqualified regret about the impact of their actions. They may wish to go as far as acknowledging that they made a mistake or expressing what they wish they would have done differently. This is not the time to provide information or reasoning as that could easily be heard as an excuse or a "but". Others who were involved may also wish to acknowledge their contribution and regret.

**Closing:** Facilitator thanks group members for their honesty, highlights the statement of regret and gently encourages people to move forward from this point.

***Throughout the process the facilitator may summarize and paraphrase as is required. These skills should be used when the facilitator wants to a) highlight/emphasize a certain piece that has been spoken or b) to clarify understanding.***

**SAMPLE AGENDA FOR FLIPCHART:**

- Introduction
- Leadership Provides Context (the background to original decision)
- Clarification (a chance for others to clarify)
- Sharing Impact (team shares effects)
- An Opportunity for Leadership to Respond
- Wrap-Up & Check-in Re: Next Steps

# *POSITIONS & INTERESTS PROCESS*

**What is it?**

- A step-by-step guided process based on the Positions and Interests model in which parties "stuck" on divisive issues are guided to explore underlying needs, wants, fears, hopes and concerns.

**Purpose?**

- To assist polarized groups to begin to understand what is important to the "other side" and why, so as to move to deeper levels of mutual understanding and, eventually, mutual solutions.

**When to use it?**

- Often this tool is used later in the conflict resolution process (in "the future focused phase"), after some of the more emotionally difficult issues or events have already been explored.

**What it does and doesn't it accomplish?**

- It is a powerful process for pushing people to "get in the shoes" of those with whom they disagree. As such, it can lead to break-through moments of new understanding.
- It serves the purpose of generating resolutions or new agreements to specific issues or problems.

**What do you need?**

- A room large enough for all the participants, two or more flipcharts & markers for small group activities, kleenex.

# *POSITIONS & INTERESTS PROCESS*

**BACKGROUND**
Often used within a larger group conflict resolution process (such as the Small Group Conferencing process), this model is helpful in terms of assisting polarized groups (within a larger group) to begin to understand what is important to the "other side" and why. Using the Positions and Interests model, this process helps discover and explore the wants, needs, fears and concerns of the parties in conflict. This model is usually used to greatest effect later in the intervention process (i.e. after the healing phase) with a view towards building new agreements and understandings.

## PHASE A: INITIAL EXPLORATION

### Opening
- The facilitator outlines the process, including the purpose of the meeting, his/her role and any helpful guidelines.
- S/he then articulates the main issue to be addressed in the meeting (as identified in the preparation/pre-meeting process) and seeks affirmation and consensus.
- The facilitator may wish to get participants to make "Hope Statements" to identify what they hope to achieve out of this process (to be later connected with the Positions and Interests framework).
- The basic Positions and Interests framework/model is taught by the facilitator, using a clear and relevant sector example to illustrate the idea.
- The facilitator then outlines the goal for the session: to learn about each others' interests.

### Naming Positions
Facilitators name the positions that they have heard to date, briefly confirming this with the parties. The facilitator then asks the parties to set aside these as possible solutions to be revisited with other options at the end of the conversation. You want to spend very little time on this because the more that the parties talk (rehearse) their current position – the more difficult it will be for them to agree to another solution.

### Exploring Interests
In small intact groups:
- Each is asked to identify (on flip chart paper) the interests of the other "side" that they have come to understand up to this point.
- Each group should record the interests of the other and categorize them under the headings: Needs/Wants and Fears/Concerns.
- If there is little discussion at this point the facilitator may need to direct the groups to identify their own interests.

In the larger group:

- Each group shares how they understand the others' interests.
- The groups then have the opportunity to add what is missing from the lists and, if necessary, correct any misconceptions or misunderstandings.

**PHASE B: DIGGING DEEPER:**

In small intact groups:

- The groups are instructed to identify their primary interests versus their secondary or tertiary interests.
- Are there any other interests that need to be added to the list?

In the larger group:
Participants share their primary and secondary interests with one another.

**PHASE C: BUILDING AGREEMENT:**

**Brainstorming**
The facilitator mixes the "sides" (thoughtfully) into small groups.

In small mixed groups:

- The groups are asked to identify a number of solutions that would meet the interests of both "sides".
- It may be helpful for the facilitator to ask the parties to set aside some of their earlier ideas and focus on the solutions that would meet all interests equally well.

In the larger group:

- All groups share their ideas for possible solutions.
- The participants respond to questions of clarification.
- Ideas are adapted and modified as the group sees appropriate.

**Agreement**

- The facilitator reviews the process so far.
- The facilitator asks the group which option or solution has the greatest potential to meet the interests of all "sides".
- The facilitator then leads the group through a consensus process regarding the specific solution.
- Once consensus is reached, a formal agreement is often written to outline the details, including steps of implementation.

### Closing

- The facilitator highlights the progress made (even if there is no resolution), normalizing the fatigue of the process.
- The facilitator and the group make a plan for any follow-up, if necessary.

***Note:***
As with any conflict resolution process, this framework assumes thorough preparation with the parties involved, including careful assessment and coaching.
*There are many junctures within this framework for appropriate places to adjourn.  It is most likely that several meetings would need to take place, over the course of several weeks or months, to work through this model.*

# *THE SMALL GROUP CONFERENCING PROCESS*

**WHAT IS IT?**
A group sharing and dialogue process which involves all the persons in a community or group who are deemed to have a significant "stake" in the conflict.

**PURPOSE?**
- To acknowledge the "ripple effect" of conflict (that it usually spreads well beyond those deemed to be most directly involved).
- With the aid of a facilitator, to create a safe and inclusive atmosphere for those who have been impacted to discuss that impact.
- To explore possibilities for addressing and repairing harms and systems that give rise to harms.

**WHEN TO USE IT?**
- Early in the conflict resolution process (in the "healing phase") to address past hurts if the parties have a relatively high ability to engage in constructive dialogue (or they have had significant "coaching").
- Later in the process (in the "agreement-building phase") if work has already been done to "heal" past hurts.

**WHAT IT DOES IT AND DOESN'T IT ACCOMPLISH?**
- It can be understood as providing a broader framework for both the "healing" and "building-agreement" phases. I.e.
  -The "listening" & "responding" parts can assist people to "let go" of the past as they hear each others' "stories."
  -The "discussion" & "prevention" parts can help parties generate agreements about specific issues and understanding about how they wish to relate in the future.

**WHAT DO YOU NEED?**
A room large enough for circle, flipchart & markers, kleenex, overheads/handouts for ground rules, basic preparation of all participants, and specialized "coaching" for those more centrally involved.

# STEPS TO CONSIDER WHEN FACILITATING A SMALL GROUP CONFERENCE

## Case Development:

- Introduction – role of facilitator, purpose
- Hearing concerns, needs
- Exploring goals
- Conflict Resolution Discussion (preparing for meeting – process discussion, coaching)
- Determining through consultation with parties who needs to be involved, who will invite additional support people
- Transition – setting date and time
- Screening and assessment (throughout)

## The Conference:

***Overall Structure, Environment and Seating***

- Think about where the parties and their supporters might be seated most comfortably
- Consider arranging a seating order ahead of time with name tags on chairs
- Other considerations – refreshments, washrooms, proximity to exit
- Consider when might be a natural time to take a break

***Greetings***

- Greet participants upon arrival
- It is often helpful to have victim and victim supporters waiting in separate waiting areas
- Seat parties in prepared room; ensure that they have been offered a beverage

***Introduction***

- Introduce self (and co-facilitator)
- Allow all participants and indicate their relationship to the victim and offender
- Explain reason for meeting & the role of the facilitator(s)
- Explain process of meeting and voluntary nature
- Review basic ground rules (e.g. respect, no interrupting)
- Acknowledge the possibility of separate meetings (i.e. caucusing)
- Obtain consent to proceed

***Victim's Story***

- What happened from your perspective?
- How did you feel about it then?  Now?
- How has this impacted you?  Your family and community?

***Offender's Story***

- What happened from your perspective?
- How did you feel about it then?  Now?
- In what ways do you think others might have been impacted?

***Victim Supporters' Stories (each given space to speak)***
- How did you find out about what happened?
- How did you feel about it at that time?  Now?
- What has happened since the incident?

***Offender Supporters' Stories (each given space to speak)***
- What is your reaction to what has been shared?
- What did you think when you heard what had happened?
- What has happened since the incident?

***Offender's Initial Response***
- Is there anything you would like to say in response to (the victim)?  To anyone else?

**POSSIBLE BREAK POINT**

***Discussion/Building Understanding (a second round or facilitate controlled dialogue)***
- Does the victim have any questions for or response to the offender?  Any specific issues s/he would like to explore further?
- Do the victim's supporters have any questions for the offender?  Any themes they would like to pursue in discussion?
- Do the offender's supporters wish to express anything to the victim or the victim's supporters?  Themes that need attention/discussion?  (facilitator must exercise caution at this stage)
- Summarize victim's concerns, needs, and hopes going forward (check with victim)
- Summarize offender's hopes going forward (check with offender)
- Summarize victim and offender supporters' concerns and hopes (as appropriate)
- What other issues need attention or discussion before moving to the question of what to do from here?

***Discussion/Moving Forward (a third round or facilitate controlled dialogue)***
- Discuss what needs to happen from here?  What do we need going forward to address the concerns/needs?
- Explore offender's ideas for making things right and helping to move towards healing/closure
- Explore victim's responses to offender's ideas
- Explore victim's and offender's supporters' response to the ideas (as appropriate)

***Closure***
- If appropriate, group discusses (and agrees on) specific plans to address harm(s) done
- Written agreement signed, if appropriate

***Follow Up and Monitoring***

# *SMALL GROUP CONFERENCING*

***BACKGROUND:***
First introduced by the Maori People of New Zealand as Family Group Conferencing, this process was intended to provide opportunities for empowerment and decision-making by families, communities and individuals that have been impacted by crime. This model has been adapted throughout North America and Europe to reflect the needs of different and diverse communities. It has also been used with tremendous success in many conflict contexts outside of a justice-related setting, including neighbourhoods, faith communities and workplaces.

Conferencing is a process that involves the community or group of people most affected by the conflict or wrongdoing. It acknowledges that the impact of conflict spreads beyond just two people. The affected parties (those primarily involved, those more peripherally involved and their key supporters) come together with the help of a trained facilitator to discuss how they and others have been impacted by the situation and how that harm might be addressed or repaired. Participation by all involved is voluntary.

## A FRAMEWORK FOR SMALL GROUP CONFERENCING

### Preparing for a Conference
After receiving a referral, the facilitator contacts the involved parties and, after a significant and in-depth period of assessment, preparation and case development, invites them to the conference. A preliminary assessment will include deciding whom to contact first.

Ideally the case preparation will include one-to-one interviews with all persons affected by the situation. This gives the facilitator the opportunity to hear each individual's perspective and concerns. This also is the chance for the facilitator to explore the parties' goals related to the conflict and its resolution.

It is critical for the facilitator to have a clear picture of what the conflict is about and the parties range of responses in order to assess what kind of intervention is most appropriate for that particular situation. The facilitator's assessment explores such questions as what roles did individual parties play in the conflict, who needs to be at the meeting and what should his/her role be, what are the most pressing or critical discussion topics, what dynamics and/or flags are present that may impact the conference. It is also very helpful for the facilitator to coach the participants to assist them in preparing for the conference.

### Opening the Meeting

At the conference, the facilitator welcomes the parties, explains what to expect, including an overview of the process and an explanation of the role of the facilitator, reviews the process guidelines, addresses confidentiality issues and any other outstanding concerns. Once the parties have identified that they are feeling comfortable with the process, the facilitator will proceed with leading the group through the meeting.

### Listening

The persons primarily involved in the conflict are given the opportunity to speak first. The facilitator asks the parties to share what the conflict is about and how it has impacted them. Using active listening skills, the facilitator works to ensure that the parties' concerns are heard both by the facilitator and by the others present at the meeting. Key facilitation skills are paraphrasing, restating and summarizing.

Parties who have been secondarily or peripherally impacted by the conflict are invited to speak next. Again, they are asked to share what the conflict is about from their perspective and how it has affected them. The facilitator again uses her/his skills to clarify key points and demonstrate understanding.

Key support people may (or may not) be invited to speak at this time, depending on how they and the facilitator understand their role in the process.

### Responding

Participants are invited to respond to anything that they have heard. Has new information been shared? Have any assumptions or misunderstandings been uncovered? Has anything changed?

### Setting the Agenda

Using the information shared by the group, the facilitator uses a consensus process to set the agenda for the remainder of the conference. The agenda includes any issues or topics that need to be addressed in order for the group to be able to put the situation in the past and move forward.

### Discussing the Issues

Topic by topic, the facilitator leads the parties through the agenda, exploring what is important about each issue and why. The goal is to work towards a greater understanding of each topic by all participants. Often, once this understanding has been reached, the parties brainstorm ideas for what needs to happen in response.

In addition to basic communication and listening skills, helpful tools for the facilitator include open-ended questioning, reframing, mirroring, intent-action-effect, positions and interests and empowerment and recognition.

### Preventing Destructive Conflict in the Future

The facilitator asks the group to consider what needs to happen in order to prevent a similar conflict from erupting in the future. What assurances need to be made? What structures should be in place? What supports would be helpful?

### Closing the Conference

After each topic has been fully explored and some ideas have been generated regarding possible outcomes, the facilitator leads the group through a consensus process to finalize what needs to happen. The facilitator walks through a general summary of what has transpired during the meeting. He/she then helps the parties come to consensus on any outstanding details that need to be addressed. It is very helpful for a written document to outline what has been talked about and agreed upon. This written summary includes a general overview of what was discussed in the conference as well as any specific agreements that have been made. Details are critical for these agreements to be effective.

Bringing a sense of closure to the conference is critically important for the parties to leave the meeting feeling good about the process and their participation in it. Even if there has been no formal resolution, it is necessary for the facilitator to close the conference in such a way that parties feel as comfortable as possible. Thanking the group for their involvement and acknowledging the time, work and energy that is necessary for participation in such a process is a very helpful way to conclude a conference.

### Following Up

The facilitator may want to follow up with the group at some time in the future. This may be a formal function (sometimes it is built into the group's agreements), as a way of monitoring the outcomes, or more informal, as a "check-in" to see how the group is doing. Some helpful follow up assessment questions: Is it necessary or important to check in with each individual? How might the facilitator decide with whom to follow-up? What information should the facilitator be looking for in a follow up?

# *NEUTRALIZING HISTORY*

**CONTEXT:** When a group has experienced years of a very negative (toxic) work environment that has become part of the culture. The work environment has created a culture that repeats itself in spite of the entry of new leaders and staff members.

**PURPOSE:** To stop the pattern and help the group develop a positive workplace culture.

***PRIOR TO THE MEETING:***
1. Clarify some of the critical events that have happened over the last 10-15 years.
2. Place flipchart paper on wall with a time line on the wall. You may want numerous flip charts mapping out the time line to the beginning of the story.

***WHAT YOU WILL NEED:***
Flip chart paper, masking tape, markers and kleenex.

**PROCESS:** (3 hours)
1. Facilitators identify the purpose of the meeting.
2. Participants are invited to identify critical events during the time line on the wall and facilitators record the events on the flip chart at the time period the event happened.
3. Other information can be added that is relevant to the story (i.e. when current employees arrived, when significant employees left)
4. Participants then get divided into smaller groups (groups should be a mix of new and older employees). Have the group reflect on the question, "What did you learn to survive in this culture?" Depending on the situation you may also want to add at some point, "What impact has this work environment had on you?"
5. Responses are shared in the large group and flip charted.
6. The group then is invited to reflect on the list. New employees specifically should be invited to reflect on what they have heard and their experience coming into this context.
7. The group is then invited to identify the kind of workplace culture they would like to develop. The question may be, what would you like this workplace to be like in a year from now?

**NEXT STEPS:**
This would invariably pave the way to a training event on interpersonal conflict resolution and developing a conflict resolution protocol. The group will not change because they want to, culture is too 'thick' to will it away. Individuals need to be taught to respond differently and this over time will change the culture.

# *DEBRIEFING – MANAGER'S SUDDEN LEAVING*

**CONTEXT:** Mary, the previous manager, had been in her position for a long period of time. She was very laid back and left the department run largely on its own. Over time some staff began to underperform resulting in complaints from colleagues and clients. Complaints included: long coffee breaks and lunch hours, people leaving early in the evening shift, and numerous other policies and procedures were treated as suggestions rather than the way to do work. When Mary left, it was determined that a more involved manager would be required. Joe was hired and given the mandate to get people following the 'rules' again. Joe rose to the task and began to implement changes immediately. Joe insisted that people obey all rules. Suddenly there was no flexibility - even in cases where flexibility would be granted in most departments in the organization. The more push back from staff, the more Joe insisted it be 'by the book'. Progressive discipline was followed and before long a number of grievances were filed against the manager. While many appreciated the change in the direction - the extreme nature of the shift was too much for the majority. As Joe experienced more and more resistance the more he became defensive and argumentative, taking some of the comments personally.

You were hired to assist in the situation. Needless to say there was 'too much water under the bridge' and Joe had begun to drown evidenced in not sleeping at night and increasingly becoming agitated. Your hope was that Joe would resign sooner rather than later. As the situation continued to intensify, Joe gave you a call saying that he was thinking of resigning. You helped Joe think the situation through and within 24 hours, Joe resigned. Human Resources have asked you to debrief the last year with the staff.

## *AGENDA: (2 hours)*

1. **Share a bit of history of your involvement and respond to questions of role and process**.

2. **Introduce the concept of polarities**. Focus in on the task/relationship polarity that exists in all teams. Guide the group to come up with their own words for each of the quadrants.

   **Teaching Point:** All of us in our work need to pay attention to both task and relationship. Sometimes our strengths in one area result in us missing the other, and therefore we develop difficulties with staff or clients. Teams also need to attend to both task and relationship.

3. **Leading Change - 3 Phases of Transition**
   Explain the change process. Starting with the 'Endings' lead staff through the three phases of change and get them to identify emotions connected to each phase. At each phase invite a few to share a story that represents the emotions of that phase.

This could be in small group or large group.  (Note you could get people to physically move in the room to signify the movement.)

**Purpose:** To help staff name their experiences and assist them in moving towards the New Beginnings.

4. **Vision – Invite staff to reflect on where they would like to be in 3-6 months.**

   a) Invite people to share how they would like their department to be in 6 months time.  Get them be specific in terms of how they would relate to each other, their managers and their clients/ task.   Get people to be as specific as possible.  For example if someone says respectful interactions, ask them what specifically that would look like.

   b) Then invite each individual to look at the list and have them identify what behaviours they would need to do more of and less of in order to get to that place. If there is time, have them share that in a large group or in groups of two or three.

   **Purpose**: To get the group to focus on New Beginnings and not get stuck.

5. **Close the meeting in the context of what is next**.  If you are finished your involvement with the group you need to close off with the group.

# *DECISION MAKING*

**1 day facilitation**

Many groups struggle with decision making. This is especially common in today's work culture. People expect to be part of decisions that affect them.

**Prior to the Meeting**

- During the interviews identify the various ways in which decision making is an issue including how decisions are made (i.e. voting or consensus – formal or informal)
- Determine if there are any current decisions the group would like work on

**Beginning of the Day**

- History of involvement with group
- Reference to decision making in issues section of report
- Refer to the triangle of Communication – Decision Making – Structure and how one aspect of the triangle effects other parts.

**Small Group Discussion**

- Where has decision-making been problematic? (Groups of 3 – self select)
- Get them to identify if the problem is pre decision (i.e. not enough anticipation), during decision making (i.e. who decides and who has input) or post decision (i.e. information sharing)

**Large Group Debrief**

- F/C the identified struggles (one per group until all are recorded)

**Teaching Pieces**

- The 3 C's of Decision Making (see article)

Below are some definitions you may want to use.

**Concentrated** – One person makes the decision. This is generally used when the decision maker has all the information required, there is low impact to the organization/department or there is an emergency. Job descriptions are often helpful in clarifying this responsibility.

**Consultative** – The person does not have all the information needed to make the decision. This requires deliberately seeking out others who have the additional information. Consultation can happen in staff meetings or more informally in hallways and offices. It is often not necessary to ask everyone for input on a decision.

**Collaborative (Voting or Consensus)** – A group of people make the decision together. If voting, does the majority rule or what percentage is needed? If using consensus, it is important that the group has a clear definition of consensus.

Consensus can be formal or informal. Whenever a decision is significant, it is important to use a more formal process.

**Large Group Question**

- What type of decision-making do you use? (especially what kind of collaboration?) Again note that all groups use all 3 types.

**Small Group Discussion**

- Identify decisions that have been made in the past # of months by each category. Place the decision in the category you think should have been used. Groups of 3-4 by area of work. Get group to F/C answers

**Large Group Debrief**

- Share F/C with larger group
- Any merging agreement/disagreement?

**Developing Criteria/Guiding Principals for each decision-making process**
When choosing a decision-making process many factors need to be considered including: a) timeliness b) impact on the group/department c) who has background knowledge of issue

**Small Group Discussion** (groups of 4 – groups across areas)

- What are some underlying principles that could be used when determining which decision making process to use when?

- What are larger process considerations when implementing each decision type?
  a) **Concentrated** – inform people asap and provide rationale (explanation)
  b) **Consultative** – consult people impacted (all or some - depending on significance), state clear time line for decision, inform people who will decide, who needs to be consulted, how info will be rolled out, rationale/factors considered/weighing of factors, process leader, participant, one on one or in group or sub group.
  c) **Collaborative** – be clear on time line, start early enough so group has time to process decision over a number of meetings (i.e. time for brainstorming, debating, etc.)

- How to respond to people when you do not agree with the process they have used?
  a) Disagree with decision (not my call)
  b) Disagree with process used (may agree with decision)

**Other**

- When a decision needs to be made it is important to identify what process will be used, and if concentrated or consultative, who will ultimately make the decision.
- When you approach people with concerns about a specific decision-making process it is important to ask questions from a place of curiosity and respect.

**<u>Optional Teaching Pieces</u>**
Polarity Management (i.e. stability/change, team/individual, concentrated/ collaborative, lead/follow, initiative/respond) Pick polarities that are relevant to decision making and the dynamics of the group.

**Criteria used to decide the decision-making process:**

**Concentrated**
- urgent
- small impact
- responsibility → job description
- confidential
- (self-interest)
- political implications
- confidentiality
- damage control
- clearly within role

**Consultative**
- expertise required
- impact on others
- public persona
- implementation
- solution unknown
- decisions that require review/ re-evaluation
- variety of perspectives
- affirmations (sounding board) required
- when something is in development
- if issue is complex
- if there is need to ensure transparency

**Collaborative**

- buy in
- knowledge/opinions of group required
- time available
- impact on all
- office culture
- looking for a very long term solution
- having the interest of shared power / accountability
- shared clients
- timely valuable decision because there is already agreement
- evolutionary process
- affects everyone (internal)
- affects everyone (large scale / external, i.e.strategic planning)

**Criteria - Challenges And Reminders**

- some criteria are mutually exclusive
- more of an art than science
- more like guiding principles
- there are often multiple factors
- judgement and discretion are important
- some factors trump other factors (i.e. confidentiality)

# *CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROTOCOL: BUILDING A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE*

**Process**

Using the “Mapping the Problem” (Pinch Crunch) chart and/or the “Navigation” chart as an opening framework, this facilitated group session helps members in the work unit develop a conflict resolution protocol for future situations.

Using the acronym S.T.O.P., the session dedicates time to developing shared expectations of how future situations of disrespect and conflict will be responded to by the four categories of people in all situations; the **S**ource, **T**arget, **O**bserver and the **P**erson with authority.

## Who is responsible?

| | |
|---|---|
| **S**ource | The person who does the disrespectful behaviour. If you have reason to think your action offends others, the most respectful response is to apologize and stop the behaviour. If you believe they started the conflict and you were simply responding and your response is disrespectful, you are still 100% responsible for your response. |
| **T**arget | The person who is the recipient of disrespectful behaviour. Tell your co-worker his/her behaviour is disrespectful, and ask him/her to stop. If serious, report the incident to an appropriate person in the organization. |
| **O**bserver | The bystander who observes the disrespectful behaviour but is not the target of it needs to respond. There is no such thing as an innocent bystander. You have a responsibility to call attention to it whether that is talking to the Source, Target or Person in Authority. |
| **P**erson with Authority | Supervisors and managers should address disrespectful behaviour of direct reports as soon as possible. If they observe the disrespectful action, they must act by speaking to both the observer and the target, or people will believe that the behaviour is condoned. If the behaviour is reported to you, you still must act and address the offensive behaviour. This is more challenging given that there are at least two sides to a story and you need to act, taking into account the larger context – but never by communicating that disrespect is a legitimate response. |

# *BUILDING A RESPECTFUL WORKPLACE:*
## *DEVELOPING A CONFLICT RESOLUTION PROTOCOL*
## *TRAINING AGENDA*

- *Introduction*
  (welcoming comments, workshop objectives, reason for the course etc.)

- *Defining Respect & Disrespect: Largely a Matter of Interpretation*
  (reflection, discussion, & presentation of basic assumptions)

- *Video Quiz*
  (a non-threatening, safe way to begin exploring differing perceptions in the group)

- *Pinch-Crunch Map*
  (a visual representation of how respect is eroded in the workplace and how to re-build it)
  (introduce Intent-Action-Effect as "the anatomy of a pinch" and teach the Perspective Check)

- ***STOP** Acronym Introduced*

- ***S**ource*
  (reflection, discussion, practice using Perspective Check, and group agreements when you have been the Source of someone else's experience of disrespect)

LUNCH

- ***T**arget*
  (reflection, discussion, practice using Perspective Check, and group agreements when we feel we have been the Target of someone else's disrespectful behaviour)

- ***O**bserver*
  (reflection, discussion, practice, and group agreements when you have been the Observer of disrespectful behaviour)

- ***P**erson in Authority*
  (reflection, discussion, and group agreements with respect to our expectations of the Person in Authority in relation to disrespectful behaviour)

- *The Muscle Level Model and/or Problem-Solving Model (OPTIONAL)*
  (or, what to do if we still cannot agree or how to work with a "repeat offender"?)

- *Wrap-Up*
  (closing comments, personal commitments, and workshop evaluation)

# OTHER RESOURCES

# *OBSERVING GROUP DYNAMIC*

## COMMUNICATION AND PARTICIPATION

- Who talks? For how long? How often?
- Who interrupts whom? Who talks after whom?
- Is there a time when quiet people become talkative or talkative people become quiet? When does this seem to happen?
- How are silent people treated? How is their silence interpreted?

## INFLUENCE

This is not the same as participation. Some people say little but get the group's attention. Others say a lot but are not listened to.

- Which people are listened to when they talk? How can you tell?
- Who is not listened to? Can you see any reason for this?
- Are people fighting for leadership? How is this affecting group members?
- In what way do people try to influence each other?
- Do they try to impose their will, judge others or block action?
- Do they try to avoid conflict and leave decisions to others?
- Do they try to get attention by being uninvolved and uncommitted?
- Do they try to include everyone by being open with their feelings?

## DECISION-MAKING

Groups are making decisions all the time, even when they don't realize it. Understanding how decisions are made and whether a group is doing what it wants is important. It is difficult to undo group decisions after they have been implemented.

- Does a majority push a decision through over objections?
- Does the group jump from topic to topic? What are the reasons for this?
- Is there an attempt to get everyone involved in the decision?
- Does anyone say something that gets ignored? How does this affect that person and others?

## ATMOSPHERE

Many of us are brought up to be competitive. Sometimes there is more conflict and disagreement in groups than is necessary. Some people may seem to prefer conflict, while others are afraid of it.

- Who seems to push for a friendly atmosphere? Is there an attempt to suppress conflict or unpleasant feelings?
- Who seems to disagree constantly? Does that person annoy or provoke other group members?
- Are people involved or interested? Are they working, playing, bored?
- Are there any subgroups? Sometimes two or three members may constantly agree with and support each other. Sometimes they disagree and oppose whatever the other says.
- Do some people seem “outside” the group? Are others “in?’ How are the “outsiders” treated?
- Do people move in and out of the group? When?

## NON-VERBAL DYNAMICS

The way in which people communicate non-verbally can be important. These are some things you can watch for (being careful not to over-interpret):

- Who sits where? Where are they in relation to each other?
- How are people sitting? Slouched, legs crossed, head down?
- Who looks to whom during a meeting?
- Is silence allowed? What role does it play?
- What are the expressions on people’s faces?
- Do people’s expressions match what they are saying?

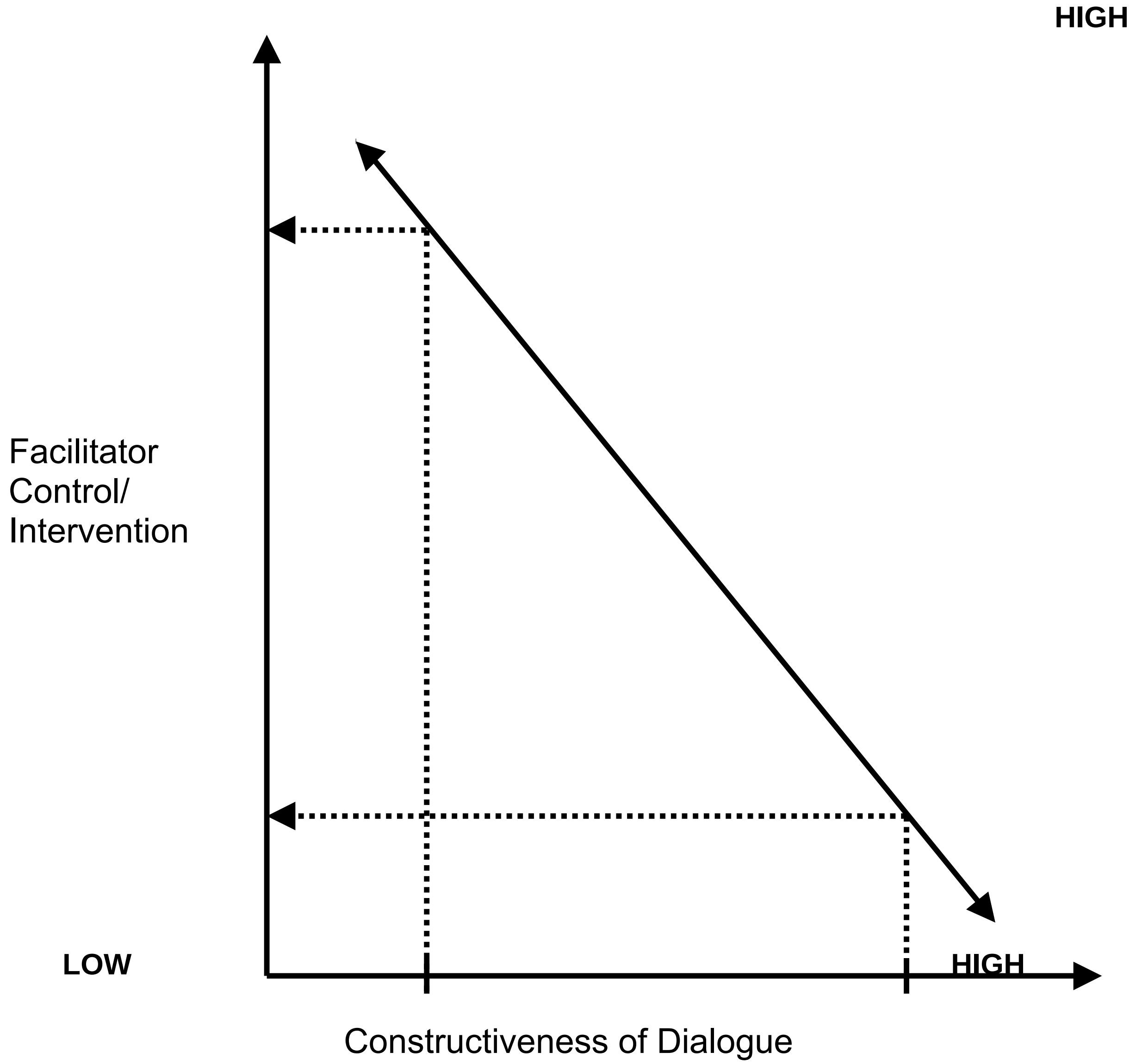
## NORMS

Most groups develop ground rules about how people should or should not behave. These are called norms. If everyone knows what the norms are, they are clear or explicit. If the norms are not talked about directly, they are unclear or implicit. These norms can help or hurt group progress. Are certain topics avoided, such as talking about feelings? Why or how do people avoid these topics?

# *POTENTIAL FACILITATION DYNAMICS*

- guideline violations
- a person leaves the room in tears
- a key player leaves early or is not attending
- one participant continually makes hostile remarks
- the group is feeling hopeless
- one individual wants to renegotiate the agenda
- issues of power differential
- differing levels of commitment to the process

## *FACILITATOR CONTROL BY CONSTRUCTIVENESS OF DIALOGUE*



# *FACILITATING A CONSENSUS*
***by Janet P. Schmidt***

I have recently participated in a number of meetings and conferences where the intent of the process was to facilitate consensus. My role at these meetings has been both as participant and as facilitator. This article grows out of these experiences. Hopefully this article will be a catalyst for dialogue on this important issue.

There appears to be general agreement in the mediation field that a facilitator in a consensus process should determine neither the issues that are raised by the participants nor the outcome of the process. On the other hand, there seems to be considerable disagreement (at least in practice) over the degree to which the facilitator should control the actual consensus process. The following diagram illustrates this debate:

***The Continuum of Facilitator Control***

***Autocratic*** ***Differentiated*** ***Laissez-Faire***

The "autocratic" facilitator maintains a high degree of control over the process. Although this facilitator may consult with participants, s/he is likely to predetermine the agenda for the sessions. The agenda remains rigid and few changes are made to it by either the facilitator or the participants. Invariably, opportunities for unique and helpful detours are missed. In the end, this facilitator influences and possibly even determines both the issues and the outcome of the meetings.

Certainly, many facilitators at this end of the spectrum do not consciously choose to act autocratically. Nonetheless, given the need to provide a safe environment, to appear competent and to assist in the resolution of a difficult conflict, it is easy to be drawn into a more autocratic approach of conflict resolution. Our own fears and inexperience certainly contribute to this struggle. Many of us also feel vulnerable and uncertain when faced with highly conflicted groups. It is this feeling of vulnerability that can make it tempting to overcontrol the process. Inadvertently, however, this style betrays our values regarding participant ownership of the conflict.

At the opposite end of this extreme are the laissez-faire facilitators. At this end, facilitators provide only minimal intervention in the process. In essence, the task of the facilitator is to open the session and then allow the participants to “go at it.” Participants are expected not only to create a process for themselves, they are also expected to create their own safety. The task of the facilitator is to assist the group only as s/he deems necessary. This may include keeping a speakers list, writing on flip chart and looking after the logistical needs of the participants. Facilitators are motivated by a basic desire to increase participant control. To ensure they influence neither the issues nor the outcome, they divest themselves of all control of process.

Unfortunately, this style can be extremely frustrating for participants. Given this wide-open structure, participants quickly lose their feeling of safety. Vulnerability and fear are added to the already present tension participants feel as a result of the conflict. Participants who try to influence the process too strongly are often reinterpreted negatively by those they are in conflict with. Others will grow frustrated at a lack of movement on their issues of concern. This too, can be read as hostility by the other party. Although the intent of laissez-faire facilitators is to keep their role as “clean” as possible, their lack of structure has inadvertently complicated the conflict.

Between these two extremes lies the “differentiated” approach. A facilitator operating from this perspective consults with the participants prior to the meetings and creates a tentative agenda. At the start of the consensus process, the facilitator presents the agenda and invites “fine-tuning” suggestions. Throughout the facilitation, minor adjustments are made to the overall agenda. The group is also invited to make other decisions about the process within the agenda, such as small group work and breaks. The facilitator clearly takes leadership in moving the group through the agenda and takes initiative in naming behaviour that hinders the process. In essence, the facilitator takes responsibility for creating a climate of respect and safety for all participants. The facilitator is flexible enough to maximize windows of opportunity and occasionally set the agenda aside.

Facilitators operating from this perspective are unapologetic for the leadership they exercise. The facilitator also states clearly that the issues and outcome belong to the group and encourages participants to remember their responsibilities. In contrast, the facilitator takes responsibility for maintaining the process as this is his/her area of expertise.

## Some Tentative Conclusions

1. Likely each of these styles has an appropriate place in a given situation. Nonetheless, it is critical that facilitators not only know this continuum, but also that they can name which position on the spectrum they are operating from. Facilitators must be honest and must name their style when contracting with an organization and when beginning a facilitation process. Participants have expectations of a facilitator. Much needless frustration can be avoided if the facilitator's style is clarified at the beginning of the process. If participants' expectations are matched well with the facilitator's style, both can focus their energies on the resolution of the conflict.

2. The role of the facilitator is absolutely crucial to the consensus process. Regardless of how facilitators choose to lead their meeting, power and influence will be inherent to their role. It is the responsibility of the facilitator to be conscious of this reality. Whether facilitators are comfortable with this or not, people in conflict will see them as "experts." Participants will look to facilitators for direction, they will consider facilitator's comments more seriously and, moreover, they will look to facilitators to create safety. Many participants also look to facilitators for solutions. For some people in the mediation field, any leadership is equated with autocratic leadership and, as such, is unhelpful. Healthy consensus, however, grows out of good process and good leadership. This leadership must encourage participants to determine their own solutions, within a safe environment. Without the latter, few conflicted groups will reach healthy consensus.

3. The mark of a good facilitator is to listen to participants and to be willing to take their concerns seriously. If a facilitator's style is not meeting participants' needs, these concerns must be addressed. Certainly, facilitators are often tempted to place responsibility on "stubborn" participants if a consensus is not reached. The consensus field has assisted in this rationalization with such phrases as, "consensus takes time" or "consensus is uncomfortable." Despite this temptation, facilitators must remember to "shift judgement to curiosity." Facilitators must be careful not to use their knowledge to invalidate people's concerns. Instead, participants' critiques should encourage facilitators to become more effective.

The mediation field has had difficulty agreeing on whether or not it is a "profession." Hopefully, the field can agree on some basic tenets of the facilitation process, despite this tension. Certainly, the strongest ideas will develop through honest and open dialogue. Hopefully this article will be an opportunity to continue our understanding on the role of a facilitator in a consensus-building process.

# *THE THREE C'S OF DECISION MAKING*

**By Janet P. Schmidt**

Decision-making is both about the end decision, and about the process of the making of the decision. Who gets to decide? Who is asked to provide relevant information? Who has access to influencing the decision? How is the decision shared with others? These are frequent questions (often phrased as complaints) stated by staff at all levels in organizations and teams.

At the mediation centre I worked at until the mid-90's we worked very hard at ensuring that the decision-making process was open to everyone. In the end we discovered that there were three very important aspects of collaborative decision making. First, how the decision was actually made, second, what the decision actually was, and third, communicating that decision to those impacted. The end result of addressing all three of these aspects in a transparent, participative manner resulted in a productive and creative workplace.

The best way to address these three aspects was not as easy as one would imagine. When one is outside of the decision circle the answers seem more obvious than to the one(s) sitting with a decision that must be made - often in a short period of time without full information. The questions of the 'how' and 'who' of decision making at times poisoned what otherwise were good working relationships. At some point we as an organization decided to address some of the issues around decision making. As an organization, we valued collaboration yet sometimes we would spend far too long talking and not enough time fulfilling our mission. Other times people made decisions that left other staff feeling angry and isolated which also resulted in lots of talking - this time in the privacy of people's offices.

We looked for models of alternative organizational structures and found none that addressed the polar problems of imposed hierarchical decisions on the one hand and the endless conversations of consensus-based decisions on the other.

So we began to experiment. One of the experiments that eventually became the standard for our organization was to divide decisions into three categories. We realized early on that all staff, not just the senior staff, were involved in making a variety of decisions on a daily basis. There were also clear differences in the types of decisions staff made or participated in. This generally depended on a person's role and responsibilities. The decisions were broken up into three types: concentrated, consultative and collaborative.

Concentrated decisions were decisions that individuals made without any consultation with other people. A problem needed to be addressed. The individual had the resources and responsibility to make a decision to address the problem and therefore made a decision. The decision was concentrated because it focused on one individual getting the necessary information and then deciding.

The second type of decision was consultative. These tended to be decisions where the person was solely responsible for making the decision but did not have all the information to make a proper decision and so consulted with those who could provide more information and insight. Decisions in this group were ones that usually affected a larger group of people. It was believed that people who were impacted by a decision generally have information, which if shared with the decision-maker would lead to a good decision. Ultimately the person tasked with making the decision would sift through all the information and make the decision.

The third category was collaborative decisions. Collaboration can be done in one of two ways; voting or consensus. In most organizations voting is used to determine if the critical mass is in agreement, whether this critical mass is 50% or some higher figure is up to the organization to decide.

Consensus is when groups decide that the threshold of agreement is 100%, everyone agreeing on a certain course of action. In order to achieve Consensus, the response to a question needs to still include options – from ‘whole-hearted agreement’ to ‘I will support the decision even though I have serious reservations’ - in other words ‘I wouldn’t do it this way, but I don’t think this course of action will create enough problems for me to veto this process’. Consensus decisions tend to take longer and are often reserved for decisions that would have long term impact on direction in the organization. We observed that most organizations use voting - our organization agreed to practice consensus. Along the journey we discovered that effective use of consensus required education and high skills in dealing with conflict in an open and respectful manner.

Some lessons that we learned through this process:

1) When there was disagreement, it tended to be about the kind of decision process that should be used rather than the outcome of a decision. This was helpful in depersonalizing some of the challenges that were made to each of us when colleagues questioned the method we used. Staff were encouraged to see questions around decision making as an opportunity to learn from another perspective rather than as an attack on their character. It was assumed that none of us were above mistakes and so could be corrected.

2) There needed to be a forum to try and reach some agreement on what decisions required which decision making process. Early on we had a staff meeting where we selected some staff positions and identified collectively what decisions the person in that position needed to make and what decision making method should be used for each decision. This seemed to help people reach some collective clarity on what was expected.

3) When to use consultative decisions always remained a bit unclear. We noticed that the tendency of decision makers was that they always assumed that they had more information than the persons who were being impacted by the decision. This is not surprising given that people generally do not know what they don’t know. On the other hand, it was very clear to those who were not consulted because their concerns were not addressed by the decision. We discovered as a general rule that more decisions needed a consultative response rather than a concentrated response and with past experience in hierarchical decisions and pressure to make decisions and move on to other tasks, most of us erred on making too many concentrated decisions.

4) There needed to be an atmosphere where people felt free to challenge the type of decision model being used. I remember that on more than one occasion people came to me asking me about the decision making model I used. This was never comfortable, but I would say that it was always helpful (if I would listen to the other side, rather than just defend my choice). I had to learn the discipline of not being defensive and truly listening to my colleagues' concerns - not just listening for where they were wrong or ill informed.

5) At staff meetings when we discussed issues it became necessary early on to identify the kind of decision that would be used for different agenda items. We divided our staff meetings into a) Information - informing people of concentrated decisions, b) Consultation - where issues were discussed so the relevant decision makers could gather all the information to make the best decision possible and c) Discussion - where we continued the process of reaching consensus on some of the outstanding issues. We would never expect to reach consensus in a single staff meeting on an issue that would significantly impact the organization.

6) Staff meeting minutes were kept in a public place so all people had access to them. Our organization had many levels of meetings as we ran numerous programs. All these minutes were made available to all staff, those who attended the meeting and those who did not attend the meeting. Staff minutes were kept in the library so anyone including staff, volunteers and members could have easy access to them. Minutes at any level were never seen as an item of secrecy.

It took us some time before this new system went smoothly. Unexpected problems emerged, after all, we were treading on new territory. Also, all of the staff had to learn new ways of doing things. Some of us had to stop certain ways of working that did not support the new system.

As a staff, we worked very hard at ensuring that the decision-making process was open. Our hard work was well rewarded. By the end of the year many of us commented on the fact that this was the best organization we had ever worked for. It was without a doubt the most supportive, honest, happy workplace I have ever had the privilege to work in.

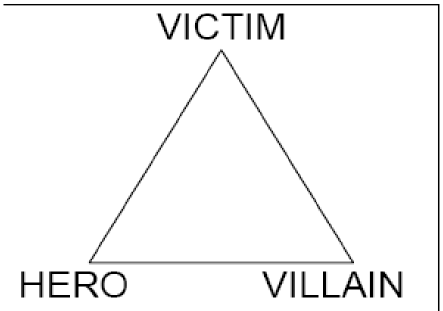
Article written while working in Zambia, Africa in 1998 (Revised, 2007)

# *ONCE UPON A CONFLICT:*
# *The Journey from Confrontation to Collaboration*

## What's Your Story?

In conflict, everyone has a story—and there are at least two sides to every story. We can better understand these stories by prefacing them with the words "Once upon a time." Fairy tale archetypes allow us to see the conflict and our roles differently and to find more constructive ways approach the situation.

Fairy tales feature three main types of characters: the victim (often represented as a damsel in distress or an innocent youth); the villain (a witch, giant or dragon); and the hero (the white knight or prince). We encounter these same character types on the front page of our newspapers, in our favourite television shows and on movie screens everywhere.



**The Drama Triangle**

Not surprisingly, we relate to these larger-than-life characters and even subconsciously view the world in their terms. Most often we see ourselves as the victim—innocent and powerless. Sometimes we play the hero and risk the discomfort of conflict to right the wrong and see justice done. And very occasionally we may even slip into the role of the villain, venting our anger or frustration on another person. Each role provides a limited perspective on the conflict. Together they form a "drama triangle."

People in conflict often talk of feeling stuck— trapped not by the conflict, but on a "drama triangle" of victims, villains and heroes. Once we are aware of it, we can step back and acknowledge our place on the drama triangle and choose to view and approach our conflicts differently. We can see our adversary not as the villain, but as someone with whom we must work to identify and solve the problem. In doing so, we move beyond the drama triangle and towards resolution.

### Roles We Play

In conflict, we have a unique perspective on the part we play. We may also move from role to role as the conflict unfolds.

### Innocent victim

Because conflict involves an attack or threat to us or our needs, we feel victimized. With the victim role comes a belief in our innocence as well as a feeling of powerlessness. We might withdraw—the "flight" part of "fight or flight"—or even freeze like a deer caught in the headlights. Other times we wait for something to change or for someone to rescue us. (Remember Rapunzel, trapped in her tower.) Although some people suffer in silence, we often express our frustration by complaining about the situation and blaming the person we see as responsible for our plight (the villain).

**Noble hero**

Though we initially experience conflict from victim mode, we may shift to hero mode to protect ourselves, defend our interests and even the score. This role encompasses courage and action, selflessness and nobility. The hero ventures forth to do what must be done—justice will be its own reward. The role represents the part of us that will step forward and risk taking a stand, despite our discomfort or fear.

There is a darker side to the hero role, however, when righteousness becomes self-righteousness. In the pursuit of justice, the hero slays or captures the villain. When we agree that the hero's cause is just, we condone and even applaud these aggressive behaviours. We justify our own aggressive, hurtful behaviour by telling ourselves "They had it coming."

Based on actions alone, a hero is simply a self-righteous villain. In a different context, Robin Hood would have done five to ten years of hard time for extortion and armed robbery. Instead, his actions are not only excused, but revered in legend because of his noble cause and earlier mistreatment by the evil Sheriff. Similarly, Jack (of "Jack and the Beanstalk" fame) made his reputation through trespass and burglary, though these acts are seen as heroic because the giant was mean.

**Evil villain**

Villains manipulate, control or deprive the victim for their own ends. This role represents the side of us that can be mean-spirited and vindictive (what *Star Wars* calls the "dark side" of the Force). This dark side is selfish, controlling and fearful. The villain attacks and takes what they want without concern for the impact on others. These tactics are used to control; when we experience someone controlling us, we quickly cast them as the villain in our conflict story.

In fact, the behaviours of the villain are similar to those of the hero, distinguished only by how we judge them. Internationally, acts of violence we condemn as terrorism are seen as the selfless deeds of freedom fighters by other ideologies. Looking strictly at behaviour in conflict, a villain is simply a misunderstood hero. Even people who act inappropriately or antisocially have their story, in which they see themselves as victims and in which they justify their actions as "evening the score." One person's justice is another's revenge.

> The size of the villain determines the size of the hero. Without Goliath, David is just some punk, throwing rocks.
>
> Billy Crystal, *My Giant*

**Stuck on the Drama Triangle**

When we see ourselves as victims or heroes, we automatically create villains in our conflicts. When we see (and treat) someone like a villain, they in turn feel victimized by us—and see *us* as the villain. Behaviours they consider self-defence, we experience as attacks and further evidence that we cannot trust or work with them. And the walls of judgement and justification thicken on both sides.

The drama triangle and its roles inevitably produce a win-lose approach to conflict. One person wins; the other must lose. No one likes to lose, and we will battle ferociously to avoid defeat. Even if one person loses the battle, the war is seldom over. The loser continues to seek justice and retribution. The cycle of revenge that underlies conflict persists and ultimately leads to a lose-lose situation.

### Casting New Roles

How do we escape the drama triangle? We can shift our perspective to seek resolution instead of victory. We can explore possibilities that allow both sides to get what they need. Let’s start with the role of victim.

### From passive victim to assertion

To set aside the role of victim is easier said than done. We begin by taking responsibility for our feelings and reactions in conflict. We do not have to deny or devalue our feelings or needs, but can accept them as our own. After all, whose problem is it if you go home frustrated with your boss at the end of a workday? Who “owns” the problem? (Hint: Your boss may be sleeping like a baby as you lie awake endlessly replaying the events of the day.) Consider the difference between the statements “You never make time for my issues at meetings” (victim) and “I’m frustrated that we didn’t discuss the budget during the meeting” (accountable). The first statement is loaded with judgement, casts the other person as the villain, and blames them for how we feel. The latter shares information, takes responsibility for feelings and begins to identify the problem to be discussed and resolved. Similarly, we can ask directly for what we need instead of quietly complaining to others about our plight. This is uncomfortable, yet empowering. It’s uncomfortable because we can no longer blame others and refuse to change, empowering because we become an active participant in shaping our life. To reap the rewards of assertiveness, we must risk the discomfort of confronting a person or problem.

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> In conflict, each person
> feels hit first.

### From hero to problem-solver

The role of hero can be as unproductive as that of victim in resolving conflict. This self-righteous mindset condones our attack on the villain as justice. Attack is met with counterattack; the conflict persists and usually escalates. Our ego fuels the need to be right and we become attached to a specific outcome. At this point, the conflict often becomes a power struggle.

We can address and resolve conflict much more productively if we let go of the need to be "right" and focus instead on ways to get our needs met. This opens up possibilities we might otherwise ignore. The energy devoted to a win-lose power struggle can instead be applied to problem solving. This approach is often referred to as "separating the people from the problem."

This in no way means we should give in or avoid an issue just to keep the peace. We need to exhibit a hero's courage in different ways: to raise an issue directly with the responsible person rather than to attack; to enter the uncomfortable place we experience as conflict and to stay present; to listen to things we may disagree with; to see the conflict through to real resolution. We need to stand up for ourselves in a way that doesn't knock the other person down. It means shifting our judgement to curiosity and our self-righteousness to openness—much easier said than done.

### From controlling villain to collaborator

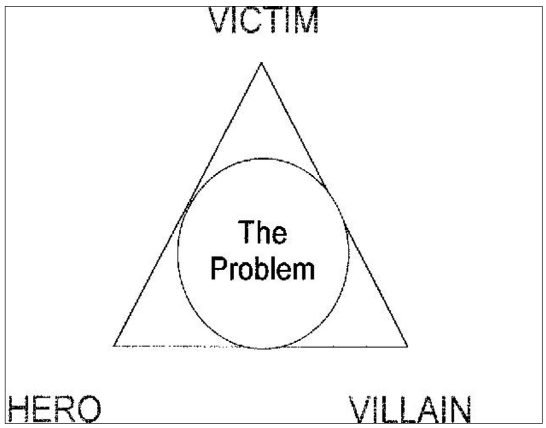
There is a fine line between the roles of hero and villain, and in conflict we can easily and unconsciously slip into the role of villain. When we attack another person (even in self-defense) and attempt to hurt them in some way, we have become the villain. Fuelled by anger or frustration, we may come out with statements such as "I don't care what you think" and "To hell with you." We may even "lose it" and exhibit the very behaviours (threatening, interrupting, swearing) we find so objectionable in others. This victimizes the other person anew and perpetuates the attack-defend cycle

Although others may see us as a villain, we can change that if we are willing to relinquish our need to control. When we surrender our need for control, we make room for fresh and creative possibilities to resolve our conflicts and even redefine our relationships. At the same time, we have to give up our need to be right. (I never said it would be easy.)

### From Adversaries to Partners

When we live on the drama triangle, we see the other person as our adversary—the villain. If only *they* would change, we reason, things would be fine. *They* stand between us and happiness. Ironically, they are usually thinking the same thing about us. To resolve conflict, we need to relinquish our roles as victim, villain and hero and work with the other person to solve the problem. If we need a villain, let it be the problem, not the person. The diagram below symbolizes this shift—from the drama triangle to the circle of resolution.

Interestingly, the circle and triangle intersect not at the three corners of the triangle, but in the middle on each side. Similarly, we must meet the other person in the middle. This doesn't mean "splitting the difference." It means telling them our story (in a way they will be able to hear it) and listening to their story with curiosity. Such open communication fosters mutual understanding. This understanding provides a doorway through which we can exit the drama triangle and enter into the circle of resolution.




Source: Gary Harper

# *ROLE PLAY INSTRUCTIONS*

Role plays provide an opportunity to integrate and practice theory and skills in life-like conflict scenarios. Role playing combines both the theatrical and the personal. You may be surprised how certain situations or roles will engage you in very personal and emotional ways. At the same time, role plays are artificial situations that permit the opportunity to experiment, take risks, "rewind" specific sequences of interactions and practice responding in new or different ways. Role plays can also be stopped at any time.

**GENERAL COMMENTS*:***

- Have fun!
- Remember that it is natural to feel some discomfort.
- Anyone can stop a role play by saying "STOP NOW!"
- Take time to debrief out of your role, particularly if you have become emotionally involved.
- Do something symbolic when moving out of the role play, like taking off a name tag or shaking hands.

**AS A FACILITATOR:**

- Practice different skills.
- Take risks. Role plays are a safe place to make mistakes. Real life may have more serious consequences.
- Stop the role play if you feel stumped and discuss options with others.

**AS A PARTY:**

- Tell your story as you know it. Add details consistent with your part.
- Don't read from the role description for it's not a script.
- Remember, you have chosen to participate in this process.
- Give the facilitators a challenge, i.e. be emotionally engaged and work to have "your" concerns addressed. But don't make the task impossible.
- Use your unique perspective as a participant to give constructive feedback.

# *ADDITIONAL RESOURCE SUGGESTIONS*

**The Skilled Facilitator: Practical Wisdom for Developing Effective Groups**, 1994, Roger M. Schwarz

**The Tao of Leadership**, 1985, John Heider

**On Conflict & Consensus: A Handbook on Formal Consensus Decision Making**, 1991, C.T. Lawrence Bulter and Amy Rothstein

**Six Thinking Hats**, 1995, Edward de Bono

**Building United Judgement: A Handbook for Consensus Decision Making**, 1981, Published by Centre for Conflict Resolution

**Effective Social Action by Community Groups**, 1990, Alvin Zander (Jossey-Bass)

**Collaborating: Finding Common Group and for Multi-party Problems**, 1989, Barbara Gray

**Effective Group Problem Solving**, 1990, William M. Fox

**Leading Teams: Mastering the New Role**, 1995, John Zenger, Ed Musselwhite, Kathleen Hurson and Craig Perrin

**Questions that Work: A Resource for Facilitators**, 2001, Dorothy Strachan

**Corporate Circles: Transforming Conflict and Building Trusting Teams**, 2006, Maureen Fitzgerald