

# CONFLICT RESOLUTION SKILLS

## OVERVIEW

Conflict happens all the time. It is a natural phenomenon which we encounter both as individuals and as organisations. *Why?* Because everyone has different goals and access only to resources which are scarce.

Because conflict is natural, it can never be completely eliminated. Neither is that necessarily a bad thing. Conflict can be highly positive, stimulating creativity, innovation and change. Organisations entirely devoid of conflict would be apathetic, stagnant and unresponsive to change.

However, conflict is often highly dysfunctional. It has been said that no skill is more important for organisational and individual effectiveness than the constructive management and resolution of conflict.

The good news is that the interpersonal skills necessary for effective conflict management and resolution can be learned. The Conflict Resolution Skills program is designed to achieve precisely that.

## AIMS

The program aims to equip participants with the skills and understanding necessary to enable them to deal positively with conflict.

## OBJECTIVES

Participants will be taught:

1. The nature of conflict, its sources and consequences.
2. A sound understanding of conflict management models and their own preferred conflict handling style.
3. Intensive work on the range of supporting interpersonal skills, including listening, goal setting, feedback and oral persuasion, necessary if they are to manage conflict effectively.
4. Strategies to take these understandings and new or improved skills back to the job.

## PROGRAM CONTENT

At the conclusion of the program, participants will :

- a. Know and understand the sources and consequences of conflict, including both its positive and negative aspects.
- b. Know and understand the importance of conflict management and resolution skills and their role in effective management.
- c. Have developed and practised a range of improved conflict resolution skills and techniques.
- d. Know and understand strategies for the continued development and enhancement of conflict resolution skills in the workplace.
- e. Have the confidence to use these new skills.

Every effort is made to tailor the precise program content to reflect the major needs and interests of individual participants.

The program uses a blend of classroom sessions, interactive group work and experiential learning activities.

## EVALUATION

Participants themselves are always invited to provide their responses to the program which provides an indication of participant "comfort level".

However, over time the only real determinant of program success is the extent to which the program may be seen to have impacted upon participant performance. Our approach is to provide the participant, or a nominated manager or supervisor, with an evaluation instrument for completion several weeks after conclusion of the program.

This is essentially an in-house tool for use by the client, although we encourage organisations to return a copy of the completed instrument for use in the future review, development and general improvement of the program.

## **DURATION**

The basic program is designed to cover one eight hour day. However, both shorter (half-day) and longer (two-day) versions have been successfully conducted to meet particular client needs. Often, conflict resolution is included as a key element in the "Negotiation Skills" or "Interpersonal Skills" courses (see separate Fact Sheets).