# *RESOLVING CONFLICT AT WORK:*

# *IMPROVING WORKPLACE RELATIONSHIPS*

**INSTRUCTOR GUIDE**

**1/2-DAY COURSE**

HRDQ®

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# Instructional design and learning philosophy

We are committed to providing the best core-skills content possible for Instructor-Led Training (ILT). The following principles are applied in the development of programs:

## Sound Instructional Design

All course content is developed using a variety of research techniques. These include:

- Brainstorming sessions with target audience
- Library research
- Online research
- Customer research (focus groups, surveys, etc.)
- Subject Matter Experts (SME)
- Interviews with trainers

Expert instructional designers create imaginative and innovative solutions for your training needs through the development of powerful instructional elements. These include:

- Learning objectives — effective tools for managing, monitoring, and evaluating training
- Meaningfulness — connects the topic to the students' past, present, and future
- Appropriate organization of essential ideas — helps students focus on what they need to know in order to learn
- Modeling techniques — demonstrate to students how to act and solve problems
- Active application — the cornerstone to learning — helps students immediately apply what they have learned to a real-life situation
- Consistency — creates consistent instructions and design to help students learn and retain new information
- Accelerated learning techniques — create interactive, hands-on involvement to accommodate different learning styles

## Application of Adult Learning Styles

Adults learn best by incorporating their personal experiences with training and by applying what they learn to real-life situations. Our experienced instructional designers incorporate a variety of accelerated learning techniques, role-plays, simulations, discussions, and lectures within each course. This ensures that the learning will appeal to all learning styles and will be retained.

# Course timing

## Module One: Understanding the "System"

| Type of Activity | Segment | Time |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| | Course objectives | 5 |
| | Introduction | 10 |
| | Styles of behavior within the system | 10 |
| | Your network of relationships at work | 10 |
| | Assessing roles in the system | 10 |

## Module Two: Preventing Conflict from Occurring

| Type of Activity | Segment | Time |
|:---:|:---:|:---:|
| | Keys for improving business relationships | 15 |
| | Case study | 10 |
| | Analyze your interactions | 15 |
| | Develop, test and revise your strategy | 10 |
| | Case study revisited | 10 |

Reading

Written Exercise

Facilitation

Group Activity

# Course timing (cont.)

## Module Three: Focusing on team relationships

| Type of Activity | Segment | Time |
|---|---|---|
| | Team communication roadblocks | 10 |
| | Practice these communication skills | 15 |
| | Keys to effective listening | 15 |
| | Meetings communications assessment | 5 |
| | Enhance cooperation in meetings | 10 |
| | If conflict occurs during a meeting | 10 |

## Module Four: Resolving Conflict Productively

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | What doesn't work | 5 |
| | Four steps of conflict resolution | 20 |
| | Coping with rocky relationships | 15 |
| | Dealing with tricky team members | 30 |

**Reading**

**Written Exercise**

**Facilitation**

**Group Activity**

# Contents

**Module**One



# UNDERSTANDING THE SYSTEM

# Course objectives

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:

Recognize your network of relationships at work and your part in them

Positively manage business relationships to avoid unnecessary conflict

Use effective conflict resolution steps when conflict occurs

Deal with difficult team members

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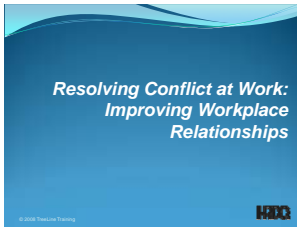
**Review the course objectives.**

**Course objectives**

Successful completion of this course will increase your knowledge and ability to:
- Recognize your network of relationships at work and your part in it
- Positively manage business relationships to avoid unnecessary conflict
- Use effective conflict resolution steps when conflict occurs
- Deal with difficult team members
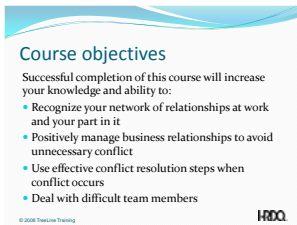
Relationship building was identified by two recent studies from the Center for Creative Leadership as a key skill for leaders. In addition, a survey by the Center for Creative Leadership found that more than 50 percent of 1,144 managers who completed the survey were rated by an immediate boss as "ineffective at managing conflict." In addition, the ability to "confront others skillfully" was rated as a development need by more than 40 percent of the 7,028 peers and direct reports who provided feedback.

# Introduction

All relationships occur in a system

Interactions and relationships are interdependent, not independent

A change in one part of the system affects other parts

## Functional roles

Supervisor

- − Ideal: fair, open, motivational
- − Worst case: egotistical, unreasonable, partial/biased

Employee you supervise

- − Ideal: dependable self-starter
- − Worst case: lazy, unmotivated or incompetent

Team member or coworker

- − Ideal: mutual respect, hardworking, trustworthy, considerate
- − Worst case: competitive, self-centered

## Practical roles

Leader

- − Ideal: visionary, inspiring, goal-oriented
- − Worst case: sets a bad example

Peer

- − Ideal: equal in praise and blame
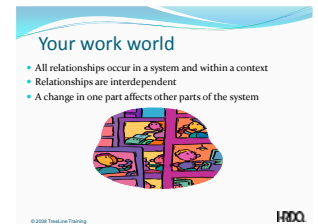- − Worst case: balancing act often difficult for many people

Follower

- − Ideal: takes direction well, knows the right questions to ask
- − Worst case: doesn't ask questions or do much work, requires lots of supervision

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Here's the good news: You can work with anyone. They may not be your best friend, but you can find a way to work with them.


You can work with anyone

Your work world consists of a system, or network of relationships. Within that system, you have a supervisor (and their supervisors), team members and/or coworkers, and possibly employees you supervise.


Your work world
- All relationships occur in a system and within a context
- Relationships are interdependent
- A change in one part affects other parts of the system

Every system consists of functional roles, i.e., supervisors, coworkers and those you manage (if you are a manager) and practical roles, i.e., leader, peer and follower. Although there is a natural match (see below), this is not always the case in reality. Some peers or employees are leaders, and some supervisors are followers.

Supervisor—leader

Coworker—peer

Employee you supervise—follower

Review each role and the ideal and realistic behaviors for each. Ask participants to think of people they know (personally or in the news) who fit each category. They will draw their own network of relationships shortly.

There are three basic styles of behavior that people use when interacting with each other: passive, aggressive and assertive.
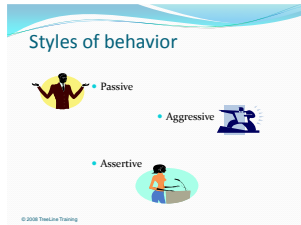


Most people will be familiar with these three styles; review them briefly with participants.

To reinforce the concept, conduct the following activity. Ask participants to stand, shake hands with a partner, and hold it. Then tell them they can get their fondest wish granted if, in the next few seconds, they can touch their hand to their hip without letting go. Participants will have to work together to make it happen. If they just tug on each other's hand, they won't succeed (that's aggressive behavior). If they take turns touching their hand to their hip, each gets what they want but only for a short time. They must sacrifice their needs for the other to succeed. That's passive behavior.

If they end up standing hip to hip, that's assertive behavior because both sides achieve what they want/need without sacrificing the needs of the other person.

Activity: Read each example and ask participants what behavioral style is exhibited.

1. Aggressive

2. Assertive

3. Passive

:

# Styles of behavior within the system

Passive

- Adds little input to the system

- Often difficult to "read," shy or distant

- May be hiding resentment and anger

Aggressive

- Domineering

- Often uses intimidation, threats, or accusations

- Get what he/she wants at any cost

- Influences the system far more than others

Assertive

- Positively uses direct communication

- Stands up for self while respecting rights of others

- Respected by passive types and avoided by aggressive types

## Activity: Recognizing styles of behavior

1. "Why can't you be like _____?"

2. "We need to communicate more. I realize I'm often unavailable. What can we do to help me keep up on what you're doing?"

3. "_____ asked me to talk with you about your absences last week."

# Your network of relationships

*Activity: Draw your network of relationships in your workplace*

*Then, assess the role(s) each individual plays and his/her usual style of behavior*

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# Assessing roles in the system

Your network will likely have more than three people in it; for now, examine your three most important relationships.

| | Person A | Person B | Person C |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. What is this person's functional role? | | | |
| 2. What is this person's typical practical role (leader, peer, follower)? | | | |
| 3. What is this person's typical style of behavior (passive, aggressive, assertive)? | | | |
| 4. How is this relationship working right now? | | | |
| 5. How would you like to change the relationship? | | | |