



Team Conflict Management - TCM

Teams are composed by different people, with different thinking and ideas when facing daily situations. This may lead to have relations where tension and conflict can be present.

This activity brings awareness around how a team is managing conflict situations, and allows them to initiate conversations and deepen on what is needed for the team to manage conflicts from a healthier perspective.

How many people can participate in this activity?

This is specifically useful for groups and teams that are together, or work together, as well as couples and groups that have a personal and/or professional relation. 2 and up, being the ideal number of participants between 8 and 12 people.

The objectives of the process are

- Identify the way participants are managing conflict
- Share their own points of view around the experience of the conflict
- Commit on a different way of relating when conflict or difficult situations appear

How long is the activity?

6 hours, in two days (4 hours + 2 hours)

Room/space set-up:

The ideal room set-up is a circle of chairs, and a side table to place all The Coaching Game cards face up.

Facilitator preparations:

Place one chair for each participant (plus yours) in a circle.

Consider the following aspects before starting the activity:

- Aim of the activity, and main goal you want them to take away
- Tone/energy you want to bring to the activity

Activity Dynamic

1. Introduction

Explain the aims and importance of this activity, and what the participants can gain from it.

“At today’s meeting we are going to explore around how this team/group is managing interpersonal conflicts when relating to each other, and we are going to do it in a complete new way.

Conflict is a natural part in relations. We all are different and see things from a different point of view. Today we are going to spend some time exploring how are we going with it, and maybe we will want to decide to integrate some new or different ways to approach this moments.

We are going to spend 4 hours today in this activity, and we will have a 15 minutes break. In two weeks, we will meet again to have the second part of the activity. And remember, this activity is going to be a creative way to look at conflict situations.”

2. Define the game rules

You are going to be working as a group together in this circle. Explain you will lead them through a process to have a Metaview of your way of managing conflict, and decide individually and as a group what do they need to include to have an empowering way of interacting when facing conflict situations.

3. Activity step by step

DAY 1

Stage one – Present Situation

Each participant chooses one card from the table, where cards will be faced up. The card represents how are they managing conflict today as a group.

In the circle, each participant will share his card, with the following structure:

“I have chosen this card because I see/think/feel/experience we are managing conflict in way.”

The rest of participants in the circle will only listen. Once the first participant has finished, each participant will add what he or she sees in this first card, and they will share it beginning with the sentence

“If I have chosen this card, I will see/think/feel/experience....”.

Each participant shares his perception around the card. This expands the meaning of the card, bringing richness as well as making present what is there in the group.

Then is time for the second participant to share his card: The process is repeated with all participants.

Once they have all shared, we will dedicate time for debrief.

Check as facilitator how's the energy in the group.

It is usually quite dense and down. When the energy level is low, you can intervene asking:

What is present now in the group?

How is it that the energy level is low now?

What do you feel the group needs?

...

Explore with them about what has been said, and also about what are group needs.

Depending on the group energy, and from the answers you may decide to include now something, as a quick physical activity, including change of body geography.

The time for this stage can vary. For a group of 15 people, time is around 2 hours, 90 minutes for the first part, and 30 minutes for the debrief.

Break is usually ideal at this point of the process.

Stage two – Desired Situation

Each participant chooses now a card representing the ideal way of managing conflict. The outcome now is that they share what would be the most ideal situation, where conflicts are addressed in a positive, constructive and empowering way.

Again, one participant starts sharing "I have chosen this card because for me it represents".

Now the rest of participants will only share one or two words from their perception on other's card.

For example, a participant shares and says, "I have chosen this card because for me this two boys are the symbol of respect and care, and I would love this respect to be present when conflict arises, and the word forgiveness brings me also to understand others perception without judging".

The rest of participants share now one word about this first card: and for instance different people says "love", "empathy", "cooperation", "complicity"....

The second participant now starts, and the process is repeated until the last participant shares his card.

It is useful if they have a learning journal, or some paper to write what is being said.

From all the cards (images and words) we have now in the floor, and all the information from the debrief, ask the group to come up with a specific purpose for them as a group.

What's our purpose, as a group, in conflict management?

What is one card that collects all the ideas we have shared about the ideal conflict management?

Leave them now working with this task, and stay as observer to detect behaviors and aspects shared in Stage 1 and/or 2.

This will be a rich information to feedback them and use in the debrief

When debriefing, as in stage one check out as facilitator how's the energy in the group.

In this moment the energy level has usually shifted, and we can debrief with questions as:

What is present now in the group?

How is it that the energy level has changed?

What can make this energy be more present in the group in a daily basis?

What do you feel the group needs?

...

Gather all the information around group needs, and write them down in a flipchart.

In general there is now a willing to embrace this energy and this way of being as a group.

It is time then to commit on something more "down to earth"

For a group of 12, time is around 90 minutes, 75 for the activity and 15 for debrief.

Stage three - Commitment

Participants are now invited, from what they have shared and heard, to express a commitment to bring to the group, so as to make real the ideal way of managing conflict.

Let them reflect for some minutes, before starting.

One participant can start, placing his/her card in the floor, in the middle of the group, and sharing his commitment:

"my commitment is to bring respect and cooperation to the group"

.....

Once last participant has shared his commitment, we ask the group:

Imagine that all commitments you have offered to the group are already a reality.

What else is needed?

And if there is still something needed, make them specify a commitment.

Now all commitments needed are there, present for the group.

As facilitator, share with them they have expressed their commitments, and they are now in the land of good intentions. There is still something needed to make all real.

They are now going to design an action plan from their commitment. They need to convert their commitment into an action plan, being very specific on the actions. The actions have to be observable, and be evident for anybody.

In fact, this will be their challenge for the next two weeks. Instead of explaining their action plan, they have to behave in a way that their colleagues can identify what is he/she bringing.

Let's see an example

Mary's commitment was "I'm going to bring respect and cooperation to the group". Mary designs her action plan with 4 specific actions:

I will listen to the other person before expressing myself
I'm going to talk with lower volume in difficult situations
I'll ask questions to understand the other's point of view
I'll act as mediator when I see two colleagues arguing

This is the specification of her commitment. When everybody has shared his commitment, then we explain.

During the next two weeks you need to implement your specific actions in such a visible and evident way so that the rest can see it and recognize this behaviors in you. You are not allowed to explain the actions you are going to be working in. And the rest of the group have to see in each one which specific behaviors they see, that relates to their commitment.

Time for this stage is around 30 minutes

DAY TWO

Stage one – Sharing Experience

We start day 2 choosing a card that represents the level of satisfaction of their perception around their purpose.

Have they been successful in their conflict management during these two weeks? They share with the group their level of satisfaction, starting with the card: "I've chosen this card because I feel our management has been like this desert, with a lot of persistence..."

After last card has been shared we do a short debrief with what's present, before starting with Stage two.

Time for this stage: 30 minutes

Stage two – Re-commit

Each participant takes the card of their commitment, and repeats the commitment:

For example, Mary would take the Forgiveness card, and will say:

"my commitment is to bring respect and cooperation to the group"

Ask now the rest of the group:

What specific actions or behaviors have you seen in Mary to bring respect and cooperation? We will collect all what is said, and Mary will then share for the first time her 4 specific actions.

Have these actions been visible to the group?

If yes, in which way? What has been the impact in the group conflict management? If not, what would be some ways to do it more evident? and/or, what other actions could bring respect and cooperation?

Allow the participant to take whatever is useful for his commitment, and share with the group if there are any new things to add to his commitment with the group.

We will use this structure with the rest of the group

Debrief in this moment to see if there is still something needed for the group, and allow time to talk around what is needed.

Time for this stage: 60 minutes

Stage three – Buddies!

Buddy experience.

We invite them to find a buddy (make a group of three if necessary).

The idea is that buddies, in couples will hold each other to stay accountable with their commitments.

The two of them will choose their last card. This last card will be the representation of their alliance, as buddies.

How are they going to work together with their commitments?

How often will they review how are they doing?

Which is the card that represents their alliance?

Each pair shares their alliance with the rest of the group, starting with their card, and then the group decides, as group, what is needed for the whole system to maintain accountability, and which card is going to be their symbol.

Time for this stage: 30 minutes



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