Running Conflict Resolution Courses

Objectives: To familiarise trainers with the training principles underlying the material and the design of the manual.

To offer suggestions on how the material can be used effectively.

Sections:
A. Experiential Learning and CR
B. Training Hints
C. Ethical Considerations in Training
D. Constructing Courses
E. How to use the Conflict Resolution Manual – 12 Skills
F. Acknowledging The Conflict Resolution Network
G. A Practical Guide to Becoming a Trainer in Conflict Resolution Skills
H. Bibliography, Recommended Reading and DVDs/Videos

Handouts:
Section C Course Evaluation

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A. Experiential Learning and CR

"I still remember the material covered in the Conflict Resolution course two years ago, and I keep using it every day." These are words trainers love to hear. CR trainers hear them frequently.

Learning means change. It means change in how we think and how we act. It involves altering our mental processes, expanding and adapting our repertoire of behaviours, and reviewing our habits. Using an interactive and experiential approach makes it much more likely that participants will consistently implement CR attitudes and skills in their workplace, community and personal lives.

Participants bring with them the ideas, intuitions, and behaviours they have spent a lifetime building. Trainers usually have only a brief time in which to encourage effective learning, and real and useful change. How is this best achieved?

Identify Participants' Current Views

Help participants to recognise and clarify their current ideas and behaviours, and assess the usefulness of these ideas in resolving conflicts in their lives.

This heightens their interest in learning effective alternative ideas and strategies.

Help Participants Construct Their Own Understandings

Training isn't about just giving people a new set of ideas. The ideas have to fit into a framework of what they already know. You activate the framework by discussing their current views first of all and then help them make new links to the material you are presenting.

New meanings are not transferences by the trainer; they are transformations by the learner.

Be Aware of Participants' Level of Readiness to Learn

Participants in a course will be ready to learn if they are there voluntarily, and if they identify problems and their limitations in solving them. If participants are not yet "ready", it is not advisable to proceed too far. Instead, work on encouraging their commitment, identifying their needs, and getting them to recognise the weaknesses in their current ideas and behaviours.
Use a Variety of Interactive Approaches

Learning occurs by engaging the participant actively in the process. Use lots of questions. Questions hook the mind. (They are bold in the text so the trainer can glance down to find them easily.)

Encourage a debate and discussion within the confines of your time limits. This will be most fruitful if your questions do not require the "right" answer. Try to treat all answers as a contribution to the group's understanding. When people are assured that they won't be made "wrong" they are far more likely to contribute actively.

The attitude shifts and understandings you are working towards can usually be elicited from the group, by astute questioning. They are more likely to become part of the person's behavioural repertoire if they can say "I thought of that myself".

Always structure a session with some activities which require active participation. People need to talk and practise.

People love stories. Tell personal anecdotes that illustrate a point. Keep them short and relevant to the group's purpose. With the same provisos encourage participants to personalise the materials with their own stories.

Wherever possible, work on current conflicts experienced by participants. This heightens the significance of the example.

Active investigations and practical experiences are especially valuable because they engage participants in moving repeatedly between mental concepts and actual behaviours.

Be Precise

People also need to be reminded of what they have learnt and what they are about to learn. Use introductions, summaries, and blackboard key points to focus and reinforce learning. This manual will help you be precise about the teaching points you are getting across. Woolly thinking does not promote change. Sharp clarity does.

Use Language Appropriately

Ideas are made and shared using language. Where the vocabulary and syntax is precise and engaging (without being pedantic and overblown), the ideas can more clearly be expressed, recognised and adapted to the uses of the participants.

Many CR words have distinctive meanings and usages, even though they also appear in common use. Draw attention to how these words are deliberately distinctive, or confusion and distortion will easily occur, e.g. the distinction between mediation and arbitration.
B. Training Hints

Group Size

A group of 12–25 works well. Larger groups benefit from more activities and small groups discussions. Also consider two trainers for large groups.

Seating

Optimum seating arrangement is circular or semi-circular. It is essential that chairs are movable so that participants can do the activities.

Flip chart/whiteboard/blackboard: Use a board, preferably with flip chart paper, to record key points and catch phrases as they emerge for visual reinforcement.

Coloured Pens

Ideally use a variety of coloured pens to distinguish headings and points, and make board notes visually interesting.

Methods

Use a range of training methods to provide variety and to suit the different ways that people like to learn e.g. large and small group discussion, role plays, simulations, completion of handouts, mini-lectures etc.

Handouts

Give out most handouts at the end of a session so that participants focus their attention on the discussion and developing their own ideas rather than on reading the handouts.

Bibliography for Training Presentation Techniques

Clarke, Jean Illsley Who, Me Lead a Group (USA: Parenting Press, 1998)

Hamer, Kerri Leading a Group (Sydney: Kerri Hamer, 1997)

C. Ethical Considerations in Training

Conflict Resolution sessions involve both emotions and opinions, and so there are important obligations between trainer and participants, and amongst the participants. Some of these require attention during planning, and some arise during the interactions within the sessions themselves.

It is the responsibility of trainers to:

- explain the intentions and objectives at the start of the course, the sessions and the activities. It needs to be clear what the participants can expect.

- discuss the need for confidentiality as a protection and an encouragement to everyone's honest and free participation. Consensus needs to be reached as to the level and type of confidentiality everyone can abide by, before the course commences.

- ensure that the privacy of trainers and participants is respected. Activities and discussions need to allow people to expose only as much personal information as they wish.

- minimise the amount of time they and some participants use when monopolising or rambling. This reduces participants' energy and enthusiasm, distracts from the effective pursuit of the session's objectives, and wastes the group's resources.

- ensure that there is sufficient debriefing discussion time at the end of activities for participants to talk through what they felt. In this way, participants can leave the session cleared of the strong emotions activities often evoke.

- state clearly that participants have the freedom not to participate in an activity. It is usually helpful to encourage participants to push through minor reluctance, but strong discomfort needs to be respected.

- be aware of signs of emotional distress in any participant. A session should never be planned or executed for this to happen deliberately, and trainers need to watch for such signs so the activity or discussion can be diverted to minimise the person's hurt and allow them to recover. Trainers need to be ready to support these participants and refer them to appropriate competent support.

- be alert to (and, indeed, actively seek) feedback from participants. Sessions need to be adjusted to deal with emerging issues and needs, wherever appropriate. Courses also need to be evaluated formally by the participants as to the matter and manner of the course, and the performance of the trainer. See the handout: "Course Evaluation"
D. Constructing Courses

Applying These Skills

The skills in this manual are useful in the workplace and in personal life. In workplace settings, it is appropriate for the trainer to mostly use workplace examples. However, employers and training officers are recognising increasingly that wherever people learn skills to resolve their personal disputes, they increase workplace productivity. Both workplace and personal examples are suitable, then, as the skills are transferable.

Names For Courses

Market courses in conflict resolution under a variety of names such as:

- The Skills of Conflict Resolution
- Resolving Conflict Constructively
- Creative Communication
- Communicating for Success
- Workplace Communication
- Creative Problem Solving.

Include conflict resolution materials in courses such as:

- Stress Management
- Effective Parenting
- Team Building
- Grievance Handling
- Change Management
- Classroom Management
- Leadership
- Achieving Peak Performance.
Needs Analysis

If participants are enrolling in an advertised course, obtain a clear picture of their needs and interests at the start of the course. This can be done when individuals introduce themselves in turn around the circle, or more formally by giving out a needs survey. If, instead, the course is being tailored to meet the specific needs of a group or organisation, send out a questionnaire designed particularly for the group or interview participants beforehand to ascertain their needs. Collating the results will help guide the trainer in ordering (and possibly selecting) the skills, activities and examples.

Skills Sequence

An understanding of what conflict is, the Win/Win Approach, and moving from reaction to response form the foundation for all the other skills.

Vary the sequence in which the skills are covered to suit the needs and interests of participants.

Course Duration

Sometimes a request is made for a seminar with a particular focus such as "managing emotions".

However, when the brief is "...a course in conflict resolution", consider the following suggestions.

3 days: explore the key concepts of all the twelve skills, with numbers of activities to reinforce learning.

2 days: focus on nine or ten skills, possibly omitting negotiation and mediation.

1 day: consider Understanding Conflict, The Win/Win Approach, Empathy (listening skills), Appropriate Assertiveness ("I" statements), and Mapping.

½ day: explore the nature of conflict The Win/Win Approach, and one of the interaction skills, such as Assertiveness or Empathy.
E. How to use the Conflict Resolution Manual – 12 Skills

Finding Content

Table of Contents: chapter titles.

Index: details of chapters including activities and handouts

Chapter Title Pages: objectives, essential background, session times, details of sections within the core material, activities and handouts.

Chapter Numbers

Chapters are identified, both with a written title and a number. Two number systems are used:

Standard Numerals: 1–12

Two Roman Numerals: I, II...

The standard numerals are to identify the chapters that cover the twelve skills of conflict resolution, and correspond to the order of presentation in some other materials produced by The Conflict Resolution Network.

The Roman numerals identify all other chapters. This chapter is the only chapter which does not contain training material.

Components of Each Chapter

In Chapters 1–12, there are three components:

Core material: this includes the key concepts of each skill, presented in a way that facilitates interaction between and amongst the participants and the trainer. It also includes activities which either:

- are simple to explain and do not interrupt the flow and sense of the main material; and/or,
- are considered as essential to train participants in the core material.

Activities: this includes role plays, simulations, guided reflections, handouts and small group discussions. Within the core material, trainers are directed to the activity section, as in the example below:

Handling Another Person’s Inflammation: a role play in which participants practise active listening skills (see Managing Emotions Activities A.6.6). (20 minutes)
The activities are placed in the order that correspond to the order in which they arise in the core material.

**Handouts:** this includes all the handouts which are referred to in the core material and in the activities.

Instructions to distribute a handout appear in the text as in the example below:

Give out the handout: "Discovery Circle"

The handouts are placed in the same order as they appear in the core material and in the activities.

**Timing**

Timing for sessions will vary depending on the emphasis a trainer wishes to give to the material, and on the participants' needs and interests.

As a guide, approximate times are given throughout the manual.

**On the title page of each chapter**, session times are given. These include the time it would take to run each section including its accompanying activities.

**Throughout the chapter**, times for running a whole section are given in bold as in the example below:

**E. Discovery Circle**

(1hour)

The (1 hour) includes the time it would take to cover the core material plus run the accompanying activity. Within each section the time it would take to run the activity component is also specified not bolded. So in **Section E. Discovery Circle**, the activity is listed as follows:

*Power Game Triangle & Discovery Circle Game: Part 2:*

participants do...etc

(45 minutes)

At the beginning of each activity in the shaded area headed Trainers' Information Only, the time it will take to run that activity is also listed.

**Page Numbering**

Activities and Handouts have their page numbers prefixed by "A" and "H" respectively.

So, for example, within Chapter 1. The Win/Win Approach, pages appear as

- Core material: 1.1, 1.2, 1.3 etc
- Activities: A.1.1, A.1.2, A.1.3 etc
- Handouts: H.1.1, H.1.2, H.1.3 etc.
Typefaces within the Text

**Bold:** a key point and/or needs special care with expression – perhaps say it verbatim. Questions to be posed by the trainer to the group are also written in bold

*Italics:* an instruction to trainers (not to be said directly to participants).

Section Separators

Trainers printing out the whole manual may choose to use two different colour papers for activities and handouts.

If you choose to buy a hard copy of the manual (see Resources on the website: www.crnhq.org) the various sections are printed on different papers with a plastic sleeve o handout masters for photocopying for participants is stowed at the back of the manual.
F. Acknowledging The Conflict Resolution Network

The materials in this manual are the copyright of The Conflict Resolution Network. You may reproduce sections in your own training material provided our copyright notice appears. The document is available for download from our website in Microsoft Word to facilitate this process.

Any handout may be reproduced if the acknowledgement notice in the bottom border appears.

If a new handout is developed for a specific purpose, which is based substantially on a Conflict Resolution Network handout, these words should appear on the new handout:

Adapted from materials of The Conflict Resolution Network, PO Box 1016, Chatswood NSW 2057, Australia www.cmhq.org

As well, anyone who wishes to indicate their association with The Conflict Resolution Network and its teaching materials may do so by including the following acknowledgement in their written or spoken material:

This program includes content developed by The Conflict Resolution Network, a network of people with a common commitment to Conflict Resolution, co-operative communication strategies and related skills.
G. A Practical Guide to Becoming a Trainer in Conflict Resolution Skills

The Conflict Resolution Network receives many phone calls from people interested in becoming consultants and trainers in Conflict Resolution Skills. People are often uncertain how to go about it. Here is a step-by-step guide.

- Gain a thorough understanding of CR skills.
- Read the book *Everyone Can Win* (preferably the 2nd edition which is significantly updated) and the CRN Trainers’ Manual.
- Master the participative and interactive methods used to teach CR, keeping lecture material short.
- Make the skills part of your own everyday language.
- Choose where you will first market yourself. If you have never taught before, one of the best ways of getting started is to form a small study group in your own home or workplace. Find around six people to come along each week to do study sessions together. Prepare well for each session. New trainers might put around eight hours of preparation into a two hour session. Try to do the preparation week by week. Starting with a concentrated two day workshop may require you to absorb too much material all at once.
- Evening colleges, university extension courses and Adult Education centres are also good starting places. Change the title of your course if other courses on the catalogue sound similar e.g. change to Psychology of Creative Communication, Assertiveness Training, or Communication Skills. (See also suggestions in Section D of this chapter.)
- Having your course listed does not guarantee an audience. Advertise with letterbox drops, notices at the local library, newsagents and local cafes. This will be greatly appreciated by the organisers.
- Once you have taught your first CR course, your confidence should grow. Participants usually give positive feedback, and the opportunities for in-depth discussions that arise from studying the materials can be extremely fulfilling. Negative feedback is a great opportunity for improving your skills.
- Promote a CR course in your areas of expertise e.g. computer training, education, or management. Make CR training an extra string to your bow.
- Design the course to meet the specific needs of your group. (See Section D of this chapter) For assistance contact:
  
  CRN Information Centre Tel: 61 2 9419 8500.
  Email: crn@crnhq.org
• Work with another trainer, if possible, when you first start. There is a lot to plan and two heads are always better than one. Perhaps you plan to teach a CR course in your own organisation and would like to have an experienced CR trainer co-facilitate. Contact CRN.

• Join or create a training support group to network with other trainers.

CRN is very supportive of trainers moving into the field, but cannot find you the work. That's your task and, indeed, not one to be underestimated. A lot of your time will go into this.

Send us an email. CRN loves to hear about your successes and the challenges you face.
H. Bibliography, Recommended Reading and DVDs/Videos

Books and other materials are listed in the skill area for which they are most appropriate. Many are also relevant in other skills areas.

Accompanying Text


*Throughout the manual this appears as Everyone Can Win.*

Wherever a substantial CR course is covered, consider supplying all participants with a copy of the text, for long term recall and passing on skills to others. Available through CRN's website: [www.crnhq.org](http://www.crnhq.org)

Advanced Reading


This book explores clashes of values. Although relevant to all value clashes, it focuses on conflicts arising from differences in masculine and feminine perspectives. Many commonly found workplace values conflicts are dealt with. Available through CRN'S website: [www.crnhq.org](http://www.crnhq.org)

General


CRN *Conflict Kit* (Australia: CRN, 1992)

CRN *Conflict-Resolving Media Broadsheet* (Australia: CRN, 1992)


CRN *CR Essentials Training Video/DVD* (Australia: CRN, 1992)

All CRN resources are available through its website: [www.crnhq.org](http://www.crnhq.org)
Win/Win Approach


Weinstein, Matt & Goodman, Joel Playfair (California USA: Impact Publishers, 1980)

Creative Response

De Bono, Edward The Five Day Course in Thinking (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968)

Gawain, Shakti Creative Visualisation (Toronto: Bantam, 1979)


Empathy
Bolton, Robert People Skills (Sydney: Simon & Schuster, 1988)

Egan, Gerard The Skilled Helper (California: Books/cola, 1975)

Festinger, Leon A Theory of Cognitive Dissonance (USA: Tavistock Publications, 1959)

Mackay, Hugh Why Don’t People Listen? (Australia: William Morrow, 1994)


Appropriate Assertiveness
Back, Ken and Kate Assertiveness at Work (USA: McGraw-Hill,1982)

Bolton, Robert People Skills (Australia: Simon and Schuster, 1986)

Forgas, Joseph P Interpersonal Communication (Sydney: Pergamon Press, 1985)

Phelps, Stanlee *The Assertive Woman* (USA: Impact, 1987)


**Co-operative Power**


Harris, Thomas A *I'm OK, You're OK* (New York: Avon, 1973)

James, Muriel and Jongeward, Dorothy *Born to Win* (USA: Addison-Wesley, 1996)


Schulz, Will *The Truth Option* (USA: Ten Speed Press, 1984)

**Managing Emotions**

Biddulph, Shaaron & Steve *The Making of Love* (Sydney: Doubleday, 1988)


Gendlin, Eugene *Focusing: How to Open up your Deeper Feelings and Intuition* (USA: Rider & Co, 2003).


Henderson, Julie *The Lover Within* (USA: Barrytown, 1999)

Henderson, Julie *How to Feel as Good as You Can in Spite of Everything* (USA: 1995)

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Running Conflict Resolution Courses I. 16
Willingness to Resolve
Dowrick, Stephanie *Forgiveness and Other Acts of Love* (Australia: Viking, 1997)
O'Connor, Peter *Understanding Jung* (Melbourne: Mandarin, 1985)

Mapping the Conflict
Acland, Andrew Floyer *Resolving Disputes Without Going To Court* (Great Britain: Century, 1995)
Acland, Andrew Floyer *A Sudden Outbreak of Common Sense* (UK: Hutchinson, 1990)

Designing Options
de Bono, Edward *Lateral Thinking for Management* (UK: Pelican, 1982)
de Bono, Edward *Serious Creativity* (UK: Harper Collins, 1992)
de Bono, Edward *Six Thinking Hats* (USA: First Back Bay, 1999)

Negotiation
Frank, Milo O. *How to Get Your Point Across In 30 Seconds – or Less* (UK: Corgi Books, 1987)
Parker, Alan The Negotiator’s Toolkit A Practical Guide to Success in the Home, Office, Factory and Boardroom (Peak Performance Development, Sydney)

Stone, Douglas; Patten, Bruce; Heen, Sheila; and Fisher, Roger Difficult Conversations: How To Discuss What Matters Most (USA: Penguin, 1999)


Mediation

Acland, Andrew Floyer A Sudden Outbreak of Common Sense (London: Hutchinson, 1990)

Acland, Andrew Floyer Resolving Disputes Without Going To Court (Great Britain: Century, 1995)


Avery, M et al. Building United Judgement (USA: Center for Conflict Resolution, 1981)


Haynes, John M. Mediating Divorce (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 1989)


Fighting Fair Poster (Sydney: CRN, 1988. See www.crnhq.org)

Meetings Procedures (Sydney: CRN, 1989. See www.crnhq.org)

Doyle: Michael & Straus, David How to Make Meetings Work (USA: Jove Books, 1976)


CR Essentials Training DVD/video (Sydney: CRN, 1992)

Broadening Perspectives

Curle, Adam Mystics & Militants (UK: Tavistock, 1972)
Heifetz, Ronald A. Leadership Without Easy Answers (Massachusetts, Belknap Press, 1994)
Schindler, Craig & Lapid, Gary The Great Turning (USA: Bear & Co, 1989)

Aikido

Crum, Thomas F Aiki Energiser Video (USA: Thomas F Crum)
Crum, Thomas F The Creative Resolution of Conflict (USA: Thomas F Crum, 1985)
Crum, Thomas F The Magic of Conflict (USA: Touchstone, 1987)
Hyams, Joe Zen in the Martial Arts (USA: Bantam Books, 1979)
Tohei, Koichi Ki in Daily Life (Japan: Ki No Kenkyu Kai, 2001)

Bioenergetics

Lowen, Alexander MD Bioenergetics (New York: Coward, McCann and Geoghegan, 1975)
Course Evaluation

1. My major aims or outcomes for doing this course were: ____________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

2. In what ways did the course meet these? _______________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

3. In what ways did the course not meet these? ___________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

4. Things I consider the leader/s did well were: ___________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

5. What things would you have preferred to be done differently regarding the course and course leader? _________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

6. Other comments and suggestions: _________________________________
__________________________________________________________________
__________________________________________________________________

7. How would you rate the course overall?
(Tick one)

□ Excellent          □ Very good          □ Good
□ Satisfactory       □ Unsatisfactory

Name (optional): ____________________________________________________

Thank you.