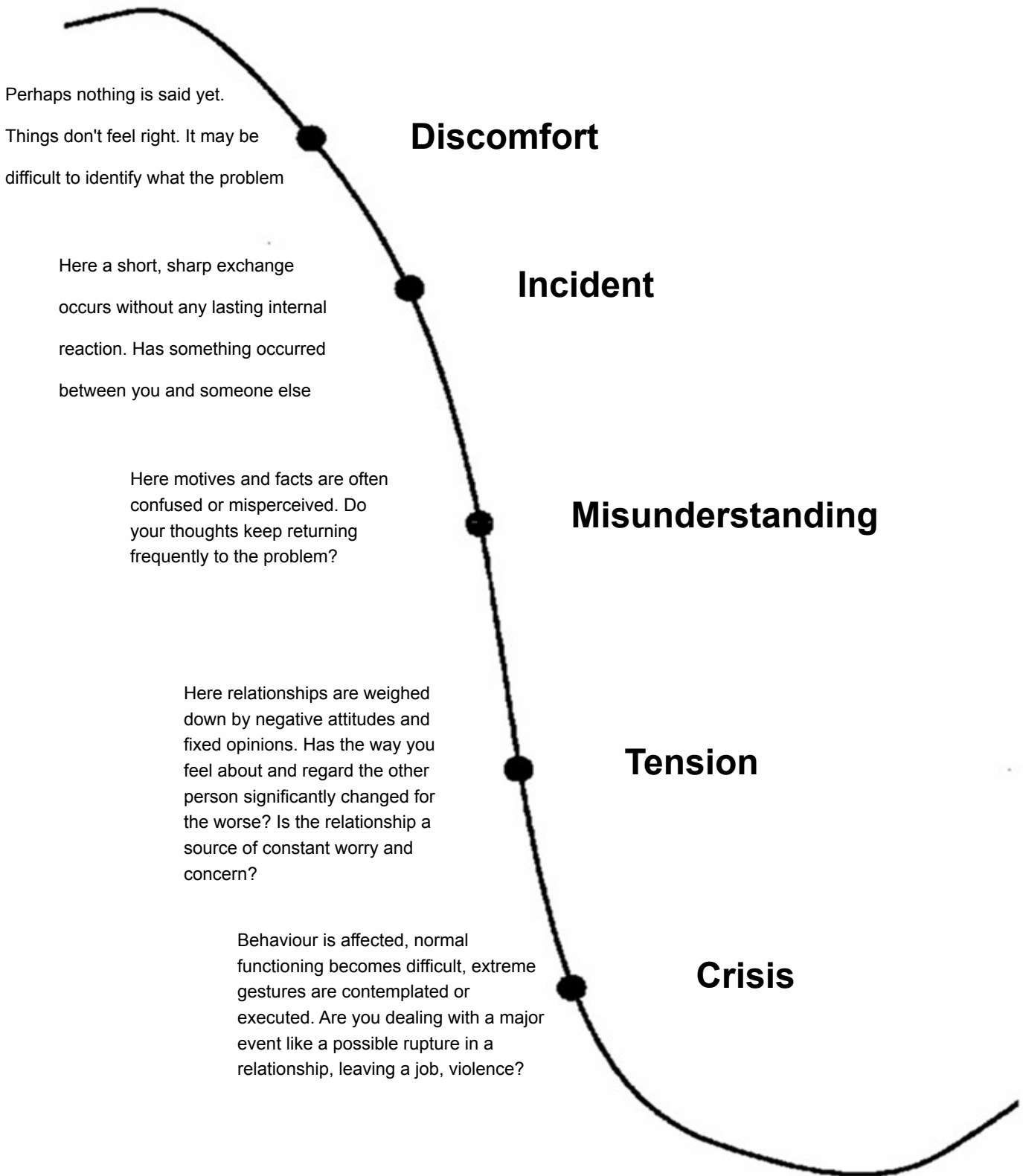


Levels of Conflict



PRACTICE:

CONFLICT CLUES: Levels of conflict

1. Look around at conflicts you see or hear about, and try to gauge what level the conflict has reached. Would you describe it as Discomfort, Incident, Misunderstanding, Tension or Crisis?
2. Start small.

For the next week, make it a particular focus to look for early conflict clues. Is there a discomfort or incident you could handle? (Perhaps it's something you might otherwise have pushed aside.)

3. Start catching yourself reacting: does a situation come up that triggers fight, flight or freeze for you? As soon as you notice the reaction, try to move to a more resourceful response state:
 - Take a deep breath. Find your centre in your belly.
 - Consciously engage your win-win approach. How can you treat the other person as your partner in problem-solving rather than your opponent?
 - Drop your oppositional approach. Each time you want to object, hold back on your 'but...'. Try 'and...' instead.

4. Conflict Resolution Network focuses on a toolkit of skills for good conflict resolution. Here's a brief run-down and the questions to ask yourself so that you engage with the skill:

Skill 1. Win-win - makes us Partners not Opponents: What needs underlie our positions on this issue? How can we solve this as partners not opponents?

Skill 2. Creative Response to conflict: What must I do to respond, not react? And what opportunities can this situation bring?

Skill 3. Empathy: How can I open up the communication? What are they trying to say? How can I get past my reactions to allow for their personal style or their differing values? (There are two audios on this skill.)

Skill 4. Appropriate Assertiveness: How can I express myself so that I'll be really heard and understood?

Skill 5. Co-operative Power: What steers us to use power 'with' each other rather than power over each other? How do we move beyond disempowering relationships and behaviours?

Skill 6. Managing Emotions: What message is my feeling is delivering to me? How can I use it as my fire for positive change? How will I best manage my own and other people's strong emotions?

Skill 7. Willingness to Resolve: Am I ready to move beyond personal issues towards forgiveness? What feelings or personal problems do I need to release?

Skill 8. Mapping the Conflict: Make a map of the situation to give you greater clarity and to point the way.

Skill 9. Designing Options: Develop creative options together.

Skill 10. Negotiation: Be hard on the problem and yet soft on each other at the same time.

Skill 11. Introduction to Mediation: When other people are in conflict, how I can be helpful and skilful while still staying neutral?

(While there are two audios on this skill, it is an introduction only, as mediation is its own professional field. But even as non-professionals, we'll often be called on to help others in conflict. These are the skills we need to do that well.)

Skill 12. Broadening Perspectives: Put the issue into perspective. How does it fit in the wider world? Am I including my 'heart' as well as my head?