

Conflict Resolution Certificate Course

Based on over thirty years of training and developing appropriate programs for many different contexts, Conflict Resolution Network offers this course in conflict resolving skills for individuals and professionals. It is current with the latest developments in online adult education, including audios, videos, scored assessments and personalised application of the skills. Content has been designed by founder of the Conflict Resolution Network, Helena Cornelius (Psychologist). Helena is co-author of *Everyone Can Win* and author of *The Gentle Revolution*. Christine James, Fiona Hollier and Kerry Turnbull have joined the team to produce this online course.

Students take between 30 and 40 hours to engage fully with the materials and complete the course. Conflict Resolution Network assigns 30 Professional Development Hours upon successful completion of the course and noted on the Certificate of Achievement. Scored assignments have a pass mark of 80%.

Outline of topics and objectives

1. Win-win approach: Partners not opponents

Topic

This topic is about turning opponents into problem-solving partners, hence the term win-win. It's a way of thinking that implies co-creating with the others to produce better outcomes for both of you. The topic introduces the needs-based approach used throughout the course.

Objectives

- To become aware of your own oppositional reactions and bypass them
- To introduce a partnering approach and return to it if you notice a conversation has become adversarial
- To spot escalating conflict and take steps to address it early rather than late
- To recognise when initial positions are obscuring underlying needs and interests and know how to deepen the inquiry through the layers of conflict.

2. Creative response

Topic

The Creative response to conflict is about turning problems into possibilities. In this topic we consciously choose to see what can be done to create a better outcome, rather than staying with how terrible it all is. It is affirming that you will choose to extract the best from the situation and create better solutions.

Objectives

- To identify a conflict as an opportunity rather than as a threat
- To find ways to open the creative mind to explore multiple and varied options.



3. Empathy

Topic

Empathy is the connection and openness between people. When it is present, there is more trust, understanding and willingness to co-operate. When it is absent, people are less likely to consider each other's needs and feelings. This topic considers ways we behave that build empathy and ways that weaken it.

Objectives

- To develop a deeper understanding of empathy and the behaviours that encourage or impede it
- To develop conversational strategies that can make you a better listener
- To apply the skill of active listening under three different conditions that arise in conflict
- To identify behaviours that weaken the relationship itself and take corrective action to improve it.

4. Appropriate assertiveness

Topic

When we use the skill of appropriate assertiveness, we state our case in a conflict clearly, using language and attitudes that minimise the defensiveness in the other person. We aim to respond rather than to react. We state our case objectively and avoid inflaming and emotive language. This lesson focuses on how to construct an 'I' statement that has the potential to be well received.

Objectives

- To enhance your understanding of being appropriately assertive, distinguishing it from aggressive and passive behaviours
- To talk about what you need in a way that the other person will be prepared to consider
- To recognise the difference between proactive and reactive language.

5. Co-operative power

Topic

The relative power of each party can decide who seems to prevail in a conflict, short term. Alternatively, each participant's power can be used to pull together for a better, longer-lasting outcome. This is what we mean by co-operative power. We discuss how to steer a conflict so that power 'with' rather than 'over' each other directs the outcome.

Objectives

- To distinguish between manipulation and influence
- To apply appropriate tools to respond effectively to power tactics
- To identify behaviours used in power games
- To develop skills to use your own personal power co-operatively.



6. Managing emotions

Topic

Emotions are usually heightened in conflict. They may cloud our ability to respond and we may react instead. We can recognise them clearly using the self-examining technique of Focusing. Emotions bring us important messages, which can be used productively in communication flows.

Objectives

- To identify and understand more deeply your emotions in conflict using the discussed questions and goals
- To apply techniques to constructively manage other people's potentially damaging expression of their emotions.

7. Willingness to resolve

Topic

Sometimes a willingness to resolve is key to resolving a conflict. Sometimes building willingness can be extremely difficult. We consider what it takes to forgive. We look at the unconscious projections that may be fuelling the situation. The module also offers approaches for managing others' unwillingness to resolve and considers the appropriateness of apologies.

Objectives

- To assess your own willingness to resolve and identify your personal obstacles to this
- To develop approaches that promote a mutual willingness to resolve.

8. Mapping the conflict

Topic

Mapping is a graphic representation of the motivations of the people involved in a conflict. It charts the relevant needs and concerns of all the people who have a stake in the conflict. Once the motivations have become transparent and been validated, there is a strong basis for identifying options that address the primary needs and concerns of all those involved.

Objectives

- To analyse a conflict using a mapping process
- To create a process for people to explore and express their needs and concerns
- To use these insights to develop win/win options.

9. Designing options

Topic

This module gives you more knowledge and practice in generating and evaluating options for solving problems. It covers a number of methods to stimulate creativity as well as yardsticks to help final decision-making. It offers alternatives when agreement is difficult to achieve.

Objectives

- To take a more flexible approach to problem-solving and have a wide range of options to generate strategies
- To compare options, choose from amongst them and combine as appropriate to implement your chosen options more effectively.



10. Negotiation

Topic

The objective of a negotiation is to reach a balanced agreement that is fair to both parties. We consider three phases: Preparation, Interaction and Closing. We apply the skills we have been considering throughout the course to the negotiation context and add manoeuvres to overcome common obstacles and get a negotiation back on track.

Objectives

- To become familiar with the phases through which a negotiation proceeds
- To apply a range of responses when dealing with unfair tactics
- To develop tools to assess and fine tune agreements for better outcomes.

11. Introduction to mediation

Topic

We focus on the attitudes, skills and moves needed to mediate a conflict. Whether you are a professional or mediating informally, your purpose is to find an alternative to an outsider's formal ruling to resolve the dispute. Mediating keeps the power with the players. We consider the stages through which a mediator would steer a typical process. We will consider appropriate trouble-shooting interventions. As mediation requires considerable practice beyond the scope of online learning, this module serves as an introduction, supporting you to be constructive as an informal third-party helper.

Objectives

- To understand the role of a mediator and the skills required for mediation
- To make useful interventions, based on skills covered in this course, which assist people in conflict or in a dispute to constructively address their conflict and work towards resolving it
- To learn what is required when it becomes appropriate for you to intercede informally to assist family, friends or work colleagues in conflict.

12. Broadening perspectives

Topic

In this module we consider analysis tools to make sense of the complexity and the many contexts in which problems occur. We learn to see the interconnections between a wide range of processes and events. Using an objective observer approach and elements of social systems theory, the topic provides useful questions for shifting viewpoints on disputes and conflicts which won't resolve easily.

Objectives

- To consider if an attitude change will help and know how to achieve this
- To analyse the impact of a full range of factors affecting an issue
- To apply broader insights to practical situations where previously your view may have been more narrowly focused.

