

# Conflict Intelligence

*Turning Tensions into Opportunities*

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**ALL IN ALWAYS.  
POWER IN  
UNITY**

# Session Objectives

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- Understand what Conflict Intelligence (CQ) is
- Recognize common sources of workplace conflict
- Learn practical strategies to respond instead of react
- Apply conflict resolution skills with staff, families, and colleagues

# What is Conflict Intelligence?

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**Conflict Intelligence (CQ) is the ability to:**



**Recognize conflict early**



**Understand emotional triggers**



**Respond thoughtfully instead of reacting**



**Use conflict to strengthen relationships and teamwork**

# Why Conflict Intelligence Matters



**In human services environments conflict may arise from:**



**Stress and burnout**



**Communication breakdowns**



**Different values or expectations**



**High-stakes situations involving individuals we support**

# Leadership Impact



Leaders set the tone for how conflict is handled.



Positive leadership approaches:



Model respectful communication



Encourage problem solving



Create psychological safety



Prevent conflict escalation

# Common Sources of Conflict in Our Field

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Staff scheduling  
and coverage

Differences in  
care approaches

Communication  
with families

Role confusion  
between  
departments

Stressful  
behavioral  
situations

# Conflict Triggers

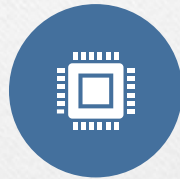
- Common triggers include:
- Feeling disrespected
- Lack of recognition
- Miscommunication
- Feeling unheard
- Workload pressures

# The Conflict Escalation Path

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1. FRUSTRATION



2. MISINTERPRETATION



3. EMOTIONAL REACTION



4. PERSONALIZATION



5. BREAKDOWN IN COLLABORATION

# Leader Self-Awareness

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- Strong conflict intelligence starts with self-awareness.
- Ask yourself:
  - *What situations trigger me?*
  - *How do I respond under stress?*
  - *Do I listen to understand or to respond?*



# Pause Before Responding



Simple leadership technique:



**Pause**



**Breathe**



**Clarify what is happening**



**Respond with intention**



# Active Listening Skills



Maintain *Maintain eye contact*

Avoid *Avoid interrupting*

Reflect *Reflect what you hear*

Ask *Ask open-ended questions*

Validate *Validate feelings without agreeing with behavior*



## Helpful phrases:



*'Help me understand what happened.'*



*'What do you think would help solve this?'*



*'Let's focus on the solution.'*



*'What support do you need right now?'*



# Communication Tools for Leaders



# Supporting Staff Through Conflict



## Leaders can:



Facilitate calm discussions



Reinforce respectful expectations



Focus on shared goals



Provide coaching instead of blame

# Conflict with Families

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- Families may experience fear, stress, or frustration.
- Leadership approach:
- *Acknowledge emotions*
- *Provide clear information*
- *Reinforce partnership*
- *Focus on the individual's well-being*



## Creating a Conflict-Smart Culture



Organizations can encourage:



Open communication



Early problem solving



Respectful feedback



Psychological safety

# Scenario Discussion

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Scenario:

Two staff disagree about how to support an individual with challenging behaviors.

Discussion Questions:

What might be the underlying concerns?

How could a leader respond?

What solution-focused approach could help?

# Leader Reflection Activity



**Reflect on a recent  
workplace conflict.**



**What triggered the  
situation?**



**How did you respond?**



**What might you do  
differently next time?**

# Key Takeaways

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Conflict is normal  
in human services



Leaders influence  
how conflict is  
managed



Listening and  
emotional  
regulation are key



Conflict  
intelligence  
strengthens teams

# Closing Thought



Strong leaders do not  
avoid conflict.

They guide it toward  
understanding, respect,  
and better outcomes for  
the people we support.



Thank You for all that you do!

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