

CONFLICT COMMUNICATION SKILLS

This easy-to-use Leader's Guide is provided to assist in conducting a successful presentation. Featured are:

INTRODUCTION: A brief description of the program and the subject that it addresses.

PROGRAM OUTLINE: Summarizes the program content. If the program outline is discussed before the video is presented, the entire program will be more meaningful and successful.

PREPARING FOR AND CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION: These sections will help you set up the training environment, help you relate the program to cite specific incidents, and provide program objectives for focusing your presentation.

REVIEW QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS: Questions may be copied and given to participants to document how well they understood the information that was presented. Answers to the review questions are provided separately.

ATTENDANCE RECORD: Document the date of your presentation as well as identify the program participants. The attendance record may be copied as needed.

INTRODUCTION

At some point in your work history, you will encounter some form of hostility. Whether it be an upset co-worker or a dissatisfied customer, the response to the hostility can make the difference between a stressful or pleasant work environment. A small number of hostile situations have the potential for getting out of hand and becoming violent. By developing conflict communication skills, we can effectively defuse hostility.

This program illustrates the effective development of conflict communication skills needed to diffuse hostile situations in the workplace. The viewer will also learn what steps to take when hostility gets out of control.

PROGRAM OUTLINE

THE NATURE OF HOSTILITY

- Anger results when a situation makes an individual feel powerless and out of control. This frustration often builds up to the point at which the individual loses his temper.
- Retaliating angrily to someone who expresses hostility often increases that person's hostility level.
- By initially dealing with hostility effectively, any lasting damage to your organization should be avoided. Practicing conflict communication skills will help co-workers avoid repeated hostility from the same person.

USING CONFLICT COMMUNICATION SKILLS

- *Don't take hostility personally.* The hostile person is usually angry with the situation, not you.
- *Let the hostile person vent his feelings.* The person needs to get rid of all the built up frustration.

- **Listen.** Listening is often more important than talking. The hostile person will believe that you are taking them seriously.
- **Maintain eye contact.** Your attention will indicate you care about the hostile person's problems.
- **Use the person's name.** Avoid having to ask for the hostile person's name a second time. The person will think he is worthy of your attention and respect if you use his name and don't have to ask for it a second time.
- **Take notes and ask questions.** Be serious about obtaining all information needed to resolve the problem.
- **Apologize and mean it.** This may make the upset person feel better.
- **Take responsibility.** Instead of saying "It's not my job," say "I'm sorry; I don't know the answer to that."
- **Keep your promises and do your best to solve the problem.** If you don't keep the promises you make, it could make matters worse.

STEPS FOR DEFUSING HOSTILITY

- The key words designating the series of actions you can take to defuse this kind of hostility are reflect, restate and resolve.
- **Reflect** the feelings of the hostile person and wait for them to respond.
- **Restate** the hostile person's concerns in your own words.
- **Resolve** the problem, or at least start the resolving process by involving the hostile person in the problem-solving process. This gives back the control the person thought he had lost.
- Involve the hostile person in the problem-solving process and give back the control the hostile person thought that he had lost.

PEOPLE WHO RESPOND IRRATIONALLY

- Some people use hostility to get what they want or to stop you from doing your job.
- Remain calm when encountering an irrational person, but don't talk down to them.
- Never attempt to negotiate with anyone who verbally or physically threatens you. If you sense any danger at all, leave the area immediately.

PREPARE FOR THE SAFETY MEETING OR TRAINING SESSION

Review each section of this Leader's Guide as well as the videotape. Here are a few suggestions for using the program:

Make everyone aware of the importance the company places on security and safety and how each person must learn what conflict communication skills are and how they can be applied to defusing hostility and preventing violence.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline.

Copy the review questions included in this Leader's Guide and ask each participant to complete them.

Copy the attendance record as needed and have each participant sign the form. Maintain the attendance record and each participant's test paper as written documentation of the training performed.

Here are some suggestions for preparing your videotape equipment and the room or area you use:

Check the room or area for quietness, adequate ventilation and temperature, lighting and unobstructed access.

Check the seating arrangement and the audiovisual equipment to ensure that all participants will be able to see and hear the videotape program.

Place or secure extension cords to prevent them from becoming a tripping hazard.

CONDUCTING THE PRESENTATION

Begin the meeting by welcoming the participants. Introduce yourself and give each person the opportunity to become acquainted if there are new people joining the training session.

Explain that the primary purpose of the program is to explain how conflict communication skills can defuse hostility and prevent violence in the workplace.

Introduce the videotape program. Play the videotape without interruption. Review the program content by presenting the information in the program outline. Lead discussions that focus on how acts of violence that have occurred in the workplace may have been prevented and how future violent situations can be avoided.

After watching the videotape program, the viewer will be able to explain the following:

- The nature of hostility and how it affects those in the workplace;
- How conflict communication skills can be used to defuse hostility;
- How to deal with people who do not respond rationally.

**CONFLICT COMMUNICATION SKILLS
REVIEW QUESTIONS**

Name _____ Date _____

The following review questions are provided to determine how well you understand the information provided in this program.

1. What is the likelihood that you can expect hostility in your workplace?
 - a. inevitable
 - b. somewhat likely
 - c. unlikely

2. Hostility results from anger that occurs when a situation makes someone feel _____.
 - a. poor
 - b. depressed
 - c. powerless

3. The hostile person is usually angry with _____.
 - a. the way the organization is run
 - b. co-workers who make fun of him or her
 - c. the situation that caused the anger

4. To communicate attentiveness to the hostile person, _____.
 - a. nod continuously at every thing he says
 - b. maintain eye contact
 - c. let him have his way

5. The reason for asking a hostile person's name is to _____.
 - a. indicate you would like to be friends
 - b. calm the person down and forget the hostility
 - c. help the person believe he or she is important

6. The appropriate answer to give in response to a question about something you know nothing about is to _____.
 - a. tell the hostile person it's not part of your job to know
 - b. take responsibility for finding the answer
 - c. refer the person to someone else who may know

7. Actions to defuse a co-workers anger include _____.
 - a. reflect, restate and resolve
 - b. restate, negotiate and resolve
 - c. retaliate, dispute and report

8. To restore control the hostile person thinks was lost _____.
 - a. back down when they make their demands
 - b. reflect the person's feelings
 - c. involve them in the problem-solving process

ANSWERS TO THE REVIEW QUESTIONS

1. a

2. c

3. c

4. b

5. c

6. b

7. a

8. c