

My Conflict

Introduction

CONFLICT

An important element in the approach to conflicts is the acceptance of the hypothesis that conflicts, which are an integral part of our life and cannot be avoided, constitute a unique opportunity for learning and development. For many people, differences and disputes can become the beginning of constructive changes in the areas of better self-insight and understanding of others, expanding self-awareness, causative agency in solving problems and deciding about one's own matters. While not every conflict can end in resolution, each one can be an opportunity for reflective learning and making changes. And change is the engine of progress.

EXERCISE

Goal

Becoming aware of your personal conflict resolution capabilities and getting to the heart of the conflict situation in which the volunteer participated.

15-20 MIN

A word of advice

Exercises based on conflict management can be carried out alone; these exercises can also be performed as part of workshops (e.g. working in pairs).

INDIVIDUAL WORK

Author/Inspiration

Exercise developed as part of a project conducted by the Association School for Leaders on behalf of the Information Society Development Foundation.

Recommended reading

Fisher R., Ury U., Patton B., Getting to Yes: Negotiating Agreement Without Giving In, Penguin Books 2001

Instructions

Recall your private conflict, a situation that you feel has not been resolved at all or could have been resolved better. Ideally, it should be a conflict related to your work/school or peer group activity.

1. Describe the situation, trying to be objective and giving pure facts.

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2. Your needs.

Write down all your needs that relate to or were related to this situation. Try not to "self-censor", even writing down negative needs that you would have a hard time admitting to the other party.

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3. Your behaviour.

Recall and list your specific actions and behaviours in that situation. Do it without self-censorship, that is, write down both those that you evaluate positively and those that you assess negatively. What was your goal then: to resolve the conflict, to teach the other party a lesson, to win?

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4. Needs of the other party.

Now take a second look at this situation. Review the other party's behaviour and think about what the other party wanted to achieve and what needs he/she might have had in that situation. Formulate them positively - be empathetic.

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5. *Observer's perspective.*

Now take the role of a well-wishing, kind observer and re-write the situation. What can you see?

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Summary

Look at yourself again now. Answer the questions:

- 1. How do you perceive this situation?*
- 2. What was an opportunity and what was a threat?*
- 3. What did you learn about yourself and the other party?*

For consideration

Now look at your actions and behaviour in this situation. What could you have done differently? How would you approach conflict resolution now? Is there still a chance to do this and solve this old case?

Shields of Personal Resilience

Fundamentals

Working with disadvantaged children requires empathy, attention and support from the volunteer. When he/she does not have the strength and feels overwhelmed by stress, he/she cannot offer his/her maximum commitment and potential. Regardless of their level of experience, any stressed person can reach a tipping point beyond which their defence mechanism fails. You cannot take your current stress resistance for granted and always working well. Therefore, building personal resilience should be a regular practice. If you notice your own exhaustion too late, you may overlook the damage that has already happened - maybe the dynamics of the team has been weakened, maybe you have not been able to help people relying on your support as expected ...

The basis for building personal resilience is to be as clear as possible about your motivation, the benefits you get from your job, and the price you pay for it. Therefore, find out why you are where you are, what you expect from what you are doing. People who have decided what they want to achieve and who can see the meaning of their actions are much less prone to the harmful effects of stress. On the other hand, when we deny or do not understand our deeper motives, we tend to disconnect from work and our environment, making ourselves highly vulnerable to stressors.

Knowing what your motives are is the fundamental to working towards strengthening your resilience.

Goal

Resilience is a person's ability to adapt to and deal with adversity, tragedy, danger, or other sources of stress. It is not a trait that someone has or misses. It's a whole set of behaviours, attitudes, and feelings that can be learned, cultivated, and developed.

A word of advice

The exercises are intended for individual work, but the first one is worth doing during a session with a coach.

Author/ Inspiration

Inspired by the guide for UNHCR employees and volunteers working with refugees.

Practice 1 – Identify the motives

The answers to the following questions will help you identify your own motives. While working on your own, write them down on a piece of paper. When working with a coach, trust in the process conducted by him (her). Take time to think about your answers in a quiet environment and have the courage to be honest with yourself.

Note that responses can be complex and are often inconsistent or incoherent. What you write may sometimes seem contradictory. Such contradictions are less of a problem when we analyse them.

- Why are you working in this organisation?
- What did you realistically expect from this particular task?
- What did you count on?
- What is your situation today in light of your answers to these questions?

It's also important to understand how you value yourself and that what you do. This knowledge helps you to cope with others who are trying to judge you and any dissatisfaction you may feel because the job is not being done properly. Once again, your answers may not be consistent; be honest and carefully consider what you say.

- What are the personal costs and benefits of your job?
- How do you measure success in your work?
- What can you control in your work?
- What have you achieved (or are going to achieve) today?

Return to these questions from time to time. When you have problems, it may be helpful to recall the "bigger picture".

Don't assume you know the answers. Write down what you think and look at what you stated.

When you work with a coach, you will have the opportunity to talk about your answers, doubts, contradictions and frustrations, which will allow you to better understand the whole situation.

Practice 2 – Maintaining a healthy state of mind

The following practices are helpful in maintaining a healthy state of mind (and in eating healthy, sleeping well, staying away from various stimulants):

1. Think regularly about things other than work: this advice is common to all methods of building resilience.
2. Avoid talking to colleagues about work after work. Don't become your job.
3. Maintain regular contact with friends. They won't let you forget that there is a world outside of your volunteering work too.
4. Find a soul mate in your organisation who understands your work dilemmas and talk to this person about what's important (emotions, meaning, life choices).

5. *Record your thoughts each evening in the form of a stream of consciousness. This technique has been proved to improve sleep quality and reduce the effects of cumulative stress.*

Stream of consciousness - instruction for daily practice

Set the alarm clock for 15 minutes so you don't have to watch the time. Have a notebook or enough sheets of paper handy. Promise yourself not to show anyone what you write. Start writing whatever comes to your mind and keep writing for 15 minutes (until the alarm goes off). Do not try to write logically, correctly or in whole sentences. If you don't know what to write, write that thought down.

Do this exercise regularly every evening.

Practice 3 – Breathing exercises

They are an alternative to the exercise on stream of consciousness. By practicing in the evening you will gain better sleep quality, while morning exercises improve attention, emotional management and mind control.

Instructions

Set the alarm clock for 15 minutes so you don't have to watch the time. Sit comfortably in a chair with your back straight, legs parallel and hands in your knees. Take slow, deep breaths. Let the exhale be a little longer than the inhale. Concentrate your mind on airflow and abdominal movement. When your thoughts get distracted, concentrate on breathing... let the thoughts come and go. Breathe 100 times as needed. Do this exercise regularly every morning. Don't give up, even if you initially fail to complete two consecutive breaths without racing thoughts. Most people also experience this at first.

This is an exercise in focusing on the will, very helpful in situations where there is a lot of chaos and confusion, especially in cases requiring emergency intervention.

Practice 4 – Physical exercises

Do exercise or yoga. They will allow you to restore the hormonal balance and promote the removal of toxins from the body. Find the most suitable activities in your area or do stress relief exercises yourself, for example using this website:

<https://vimeo.com/66721877>

Self-Test on Burnout

Are you at risk of burnout?

PROFESSIONAL
BURNOUT

Burnout can affect anyone who is committed to his/her job and willing to make sacrifices. At some point, tiredness of compassion, disappointment, lack of strength and a sense of no real agency may develop, and previous enthusiasm and joy disappear. The state of burnout occurs when the number of tasks that a volunteer is passionate and enthusiastic about and has real influence on decreases, and the number of tasks that are unpleasant or boring is increasing.

Goal

TEST

Burnout rarely hits us suddenly. Generally, it is a progressive process, the signals of which can be noticed.

This tool will help you find out if you are at risk of burnout. The result of this test will also give you an insight into how satisfying your volunteering work still is and whether your motivation is still well grounded.

A word of advice

10 MIN

You can perform the self-test yourself. Its results, especially if they are disturbing, should be discussed with a trainer, coordinator or coach.

Source

https://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newTCS_08.htm

SELF-TEST

Instructions

For each question, select only one answer by ticking the x in the appropriate column.

Question	not at all	rarely	sometimes	often	very often
<i>Are you feeling exhausted and lacking physical or emotional energy?</i>					
<i>Do you think you have a tendency to think negatively about your work as a volunteer?</i>					
<i>Do you feel that you are a person more difficult and less kind to people than they perhaps deserve?</i>					
<i>Does minor problems, colleagues, pupils or the team easily irritate you?</i>					
<i>Do you feel a lack of understanding and underestimation by your colleagues in the organisation?</i>					
<i>Do you feel you have no one to talk to in the organisation?</i>					
<i>Do you feel that you are achieving less than you should?</i>					
<i>Do you feel unpleasant pressure to be successful?</i>					
<i>Do you think you are not getting what you want in your job?</i>					
<i>Do you feel that you are working in the wrong organisation or in an organisation with an inappropriate profile for you (e.g. you want to volunteer but not cover the area of support you are working on now)?</i>					
<i>Do you feel frustrated with some parts of your work?</i>					
<i>Do you think organisational policies or bureaucracy prevent you from doing a good job?</i>					
<i>Do you feel there is more work to be done than you can actually do?</i>					
<i>Do you feel like you don't have time to do many important things?</i>					
<i>Do you feel you don't have the time to plan and strategize as much as you would like?</i>					
Total points					

Score scale from 1 to 5 points: for the answer "not at all", assign 1 point, up to 5 points for the answer "very often". Add up the sum of all points.

Scores:

NUMBER OF POINTS	EXPLANATION:
15-18	- No signs of burnout.
19-32	- Slight signs of burnout unless a factor is particularly severe.
33-49	- Be careful. You can be at risk of burnout, especially if your score is high due to few questions.
50-59	- You are at serious risk of burnout. Start acting.
60-75	- Well ... You are in for a very serious burnout - do something urgently. Perhaps you need professional support.

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