

# Diagnosing and Managing Conflict in the Workplace

## Fall Term 2014

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### Course Description

This course is designed to give students the concepts and skills needed to effectively diagnose and manage the various types of conflict that arise in the workplace. Students will be introduced to eight different models for diagnosing workplace conflict. They will be required to apply those models in specific workplace conflict situations both for purposes of identifying the underlying causes of the conflict and for developing effective strategies for resolution. Students will be taught how to effectively use negotiation and mediation as the primary methods for resolving workplace conflicts. Through lecture, discussion, video instruction, and extensive interactive exercises and role plays, students will gain a deeper understanding how proven conflict resolution techniques can be effectively used to manage and resolve conflict in the workplace and build healthier and more productive working relationships with managers, co-workers and subordinates.

### Key Learning Objectives

### How Objectives Will Be Measured

Given specific workplace conflict scenarios, students will be able to effectively diagnose the underlying causes or “drivers” of the conflict	Students will demonstrate proficiency in diagnosing the causes or “drivers” of conflict in the workplace by learning the <i>Circle of Conflict Model</i> and effectively applying it in written exercises, role plays, class discussions and a final exam.
Given specific workplace conflict scenarios, students will be able to identify the key “interests” of the parties involved and work with those	Students will demonstrate their ability to identify party interests and use those interests to resolve conflicts and build stronger working relationships

<p>interests to establish a foundation for building stronger and more productive working relationships</p>	<p>by engaging in exercises that require active listening, questions of inquiry, reframing and joint problem solving. Students will learn how the <i>Triangle of Satisfaction</i> Model can be used to identify party interests. Proficiency at these concepts and skills will be demonstrated in oral and written exercises, class discussions, role plays and a final exam.</p>
<p>Given specific workplace conflict scenarios, students will be able to identify where problems exist with respect to appropriate “boundaries” and how a lack of understanding concerning boundaries can create unnecessary conflict.</p>	<p>Using the <i>Boundary Model</i>, Students will demonstrate their knowledge of how issues concerning “boundaries” have resulted in conflict in a hypothetical workplace scenario by creating a written matrix of (1) how broken or unclear boundaries have resulted in conflict and (2) how new boundaries need to be established in order to avoid future conflict. These will then be the subject of class discussion.</p>
<p>Students will be able to identify the various forms of conflict resolution commonly used by parties in the workplace and be able to describe the risks and benefits of each form.</p>	<p>Using the <i>IRP Model</i>, Students will demonstrate their knowledge of the different forms of dispute resolution commonly used in the workplace, and the pros and cons of each, by successfully passing a short exam.</p>
<p>Students will be able to diagnose situations in the workplace involving a lack of trust among co-workers and be able to develop specific action plans for re-building the trust needed for productive working relationships.</p>	<p>Using the <i>Dynamics of Trust Model</i>, Students will demonstrate their knowledge of how broken trust can create conflict and impede productivity. Students will demonstrate mastery of these concepts by devising specific strategies for rebuilding trusting relationships in the workplace. These will be manifested by successful performance in written and oral exercises, role plays, and a final exam.</p>
<p>Students will be able to define the Six Step Model of Mediation and apply it to mediating workplace disputes</p>	<p>Students will demonstrate their understanding of mediation and how it can best be used in the workplace by mediating simulated workplace disputes. Mediation concepts will also be covered on the final exam. A Mock Mediation involving actual employment attorneys will also be used to judge students’ proficiency.</p>

Students will learn the concepts and skills needed to effectively conduct <u>team</u> mediations in the workplace.	Students will demonstrate their knowledge of how to conduct <u>team</u> mediations in the workplace by preparing a written planning instrument and managing simulated team mediations. Knowledge of key concepts will also be demonstrated through class discussions.
Students will learn how to conduct an arbitration involving an alleged breach of a union labor agreement.	Students will demonstrate their knowledge of how arbitration can be used to resolve workplace grievances by their participation in written and oral exercises and a Mock Arbitration.

### **Class Days and Times**

Friday, Sept. 5th, 4:00pm – 9:00pm

Saturday, Sept. 6th, 8:30am – 5:30pm

Sunday, Sept. 7th, 8:30 – 5:30pm

Friday, Sept. 12, 4:00pm – 9:00pm

Saturday, Sept. 13, 8:30am – 5:30pm

Sunday, Sept. 14, 8:30 – 5:30pm

### **Required Books and Materials**

1. Furlong, *The Conflict Resolution Toolbox – Models & Maps for Analyzing, Diagnosing and Resolving Conflict* (Wiley/ 2005)
2. Doherty and Guyler, *The Essential Guide to Workplace Mediation and Conflict Resolution –Rebuilding Working Relationships* (Kogen Page/2008)

### **Grading**

Class Participation - 25% (the class participation grade consists of attendance, contribution to class discussion and productive participation in role plays).

Final Exam - 75%

## **Class Policies**

***Class Attendance:*** Regular and punctual attendance is required. Missed classes will affect a student's participation grade. Missing more than one class may result in an incomplete or significant reduction in a student's grade. The instructor should be advised by e-mail in advance of any missed class or if the student anticipates the need to be late for class.

***Questions outside of class:*** Questions are welcomed before and after class, as well as by e-mail or telephone.

***Religious Observance:*** Students who must miss a class because of their religious observance must notify the instructor at least 24 hours in advance of such class.

***Disability Accommodations:*** Students needing academic accommodations for a disability must first contact Services for Students with Disabilities (214-768-4557) to verify the disability and establish eligibility for accommodations. They should then schedule an appointment with the professor to make appropriate arrangements.

***Class Decorum:*** Turn off all cell phones or pagers. Do not read newspapers, books for other classes, or other outside reading material during class. Laptops are to be used solely for classroom purposes. E-mailing or using the internet is rarely related to a legitimate classroom purpose. Arriving late or leaving early should occur on rare occurrences. If necessary, please do so with a minimum of disturbance to other students. Please notify the instructor in advance of there is a need to leave early.

***Honor Code:*** Students are reminded of the SMU Honor Code as referenced in the *Student Handbook*. Intellectual integrity and academic honesty are both the foundation and the goals for this program. Please reference and review the university policies on the responsibilities, policies and penalties regarding academic honesty. For a full text of the policy, see the following link:

[http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL\\_05\\_HC.asp](http://www.smu.edu/studentlife/PCL_05_HC.asp)

## Class Schedule

### **Friday, September 5th**

Topic: Introduction to Conflict in the Workplace; Understanding the need to effectively diagnose the sources of conflict; Overview of the *Circle of Conflict Model*

Reading: Conflict Resolution Toolbox, Chapters 1, 3 and 4; pgs 1-18 and 26-60

### **Saturday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, Morning**

Topic: Diagnosing workplace conflict and developing strategies for management and resolution using the *Triangle of Satisfaction Model* and the *Boundary Model*

Reading: Conflict Resolution Toolbox, Chapters 5 and 6; pgs 61-108

### **Saturday, September 6<sup>th</sup>, Afternoon**

Topic: Diagnosing workplace conflict and developing strategies for management and resolution using the *Interests, Rights and Power Model* and the *Dynamics of Trust Model*.

Reading: Conflict Resolution Toolbox, Chapters 7 and 8; pgs 109-166

## **Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, Morning**

Topic: Diagnosing workplace conflict and developing strategies for management and resolution using the *Dimensions of Conflict Model*, the *Social Style Model*, and the *Moving Beyond Conflict Model*.

Reading: Conflict Resolution Toolbox, Chapters 9, 10 and 11; pgs 167-253.

## **Sunday, September 7<sup>th</sup>, Afternoon**

Topic: Introduction to the concept of Workplace Mediation; Understanding the Six Step Model of workplace mediation; Overview of how mediation can be used with organizational disputes.

Reading: The Essential Guide to Workplace Mediation, Chapters 1-5, pgs 1-65

## **Friday, September 12<sup>th</sup>**

Topic: Understanding how to use Mediation to resolve team conflict.

Reading: The Essential Guide to Workplace Mediation, Chapters 6 and 7, pgs 66-100

## **Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, Morning**

Topic: How to make Mediation an integral part of an organization's culture, review of actual cases.

Reading: The Essential Guide to Workplace Mediation,  
Chapters 8-11, pgs 100-137

**Saturday, September 13<sup>th</sup>, Afternoon**

Topic: The philosophy and processes of mediation.

Reading: The Essential Guide to Workplace Mediation,  
Chapters 12 -15, pgs 137-184

**Sunday, September 14<sup>th</sup>, Morning**

Topic: Using Arbitration to Resolve Employee  
Grievances

Reading: TBD – Handouts will be given.

**Sunday, September 15<sup>th</sup>, Afternoon – Final Exam**