

Managing Conflict Facilitation Guide

Length: 60 minutes, including optional recap

Overview

In this session, participants learn how to better understand and manage conflict in the workplace. Participants learn about their own instincts in conflict based on their DiSC[®] style and discuss how those instincts have served them in small groups. They then explore how conflict might play out differently with different people depending on their DiSC style. Finally, participants receive personalized insights about someone they manage and use those insights to complete an action plan for tackling conflict with that person.

Goals

- Understand what conflict is and what makes it challenging to navigate
- Learn about your own instincts in conflict
- Explore how you can better navigate conflict with colleagues using DiSC

Materials

- “Managing conflict” module on the Worksmart landing page of the Catalyst[™] platform
- Videoconferencing tool of choice (preferably with video and breakout room capabilities)

Peworkk

If participants are not familiar with the concepts covered in Fundamentals Module 1, direct them to review the following pages on the Catalyst platform before you begin your session:

- “The DiSC model” section of DiSC·ology, including the overview video
- “Your DiSC style”

Activity Prep

Virtual or in-person delivery

This facilitation guide assumes your session will be conducted virtually, but the content can be adapted for an in-person session. Participants should bring their devices to the classroom and view the module the same way they would virtually (laptops are preferable, but the content can also be viewed on mobile devices). Be sure to review the facilitation ahead of time to identify any necessary modifications to the script or your approach to accommodate in-person discussions, breakout groups, and so forth.

Whichever mode you choose, make sure participants know ahead of time that they'll need to access the Catalyst™ platform during the session.

Breakout session

This session includes one small group breakout discussion. If possible, prepare small groups of 3 ahead of time in your videoconferencing tool. Each small group should ideally include a mix of DiSC® styles from different quadrants.

Chats or polls

Page 3 of the Introduction section includes a question that participants respond to in the chat. As an alternative, you can set this question up as a poll ahead of time in your videoconferencing tool. This may be a good option if you have a large group or expect to be pressed for time. See the facilitation script and notes for the question and answer choices, and note that you'll need to adjust the lecture slightly if you use a poll.

Guiding learners

You'll need to guide learners through the module on the Catalyst platform by advising them when to advance the pages (using the NEXT button that appears in the lower right-hand corner of each screen). Page numbers and section titles are included on each screen in Catalyst to help with navigation. In addition, the lecture in the script below includes instructions for advancing through the module. You should also follow along on your own in Catalyst in your own organization.

You may occasionally want to share your screen to ensure everyone is on the correct page. Just keep in mind that because everyone sees personalized text based on their style, text and images will sometimes vary from one learner to the next, though page titles are generally consistent. (To protect people's privacy when sharing your screen, avoid looking up a specific colleague in the Make a Plan section of the module.)

Outline and timing

This facilitation takes approximately 60 minutes to complete. If you have a large group (15 or more participants) or want to include lengthy discussions, icebreakers, or additional content, plan on extending the length of your session.

Content	Estimated time
Defining conflict	16 minutes
Your instincts	13 minutes
You and others	18 minutes
Make a plan	13 minutes


Facilitation Script

The facilitation tables below contain both lecture intended to be read to participants and notes to help you deliver the session. The notes appear in lightface type in the gray-shaded sections; the lecture script appears in bold in the unshaded sections. Be sure to familiarize yourself with the content before your session.



Introduction

16 minutes: Large-group activity

Participants learn about what conflict is and what can make it challenging to navigate.

Key	Script/Notes
<p>Notes</p>	<p>Begin the session by introducing yourself and addressing session logistics such as how to participate via video, audio, chat, or any other features the videoconferencing tool includes. If you have an assistant helping you conduct the session, let participants know this person can help them should they run into technical issues.</p> <p>Instruct learners to log into Catalyst™ and navigate to the first page of the “Managing conflict” module on the Worksmart landing page. You can also copy and paste the link for the module into the chat, but remind people that they’ll need to first be logged in for the link to work.</p> <p>Let people know that they’ll need to manually advance the screen in Catalyst throughout the session based on your instructions. Point out that the page numbers appear at the bottom of each screen in Catalyst and that they can advance by clicking the NEXT button in the lower right-hand corner of their screen.</p> <p>Everyone should start on the first screen, page 1.</p>
<p>Page 1 Managing conflict</p>  <p>Large group</p>	<p>Everybody has to deal with conflict sometimes—in life and at work. We’ve all had to navigate disagreements before, and we know there isn’t one single foolproof method of dealing with those disagreements. What works sometimes may not work other times, and still other times, <i>nothing</i> seems to work. This can be stressful for anybody, but it’s especially stressful for</p>

Key	Script/Notes
	<p>managers, who have a responsibility for the health and wellbeing of their team.</p> <p>Today, we're going to use DiSC® to better understand our own and other people's instincts in conflict. We'll explore how different styles feel about and react to disagreement, and we'll talk about how you as a manager can decide how to tackle different conflicts to get the best results.</p>
Note	<p>This next page is a refresher on basic DiSC principles. If learners are familiar with the model or have recently done a DiSC training, you can skip over this section and have learners advance to page 3 of the Introduction.</p>
<p>Page 2 DiSC overview <i>Each learner will see their own dot location and style in Catalyst™.</i></p>	<p>Before we dive in, let's get a quick overview of the DiSC model.</p> <p>Go ahead and advance to the next screen, page 2.</p> <p>The DiSC model consists of four main styles: D, i, S, and C.</p> <p>People with the D style tend to be direct and firm.</p> <p>People with the i style are usually outgoing and enthusiastic.</p> <p>People with the S style tend to be even-tempered and accommodating.</p> <p>And people with the C style tend to be analytical and reserved.</p> <p>You can also have a blend of two styles, maybe CD, for example, or iS.</p> <p>Your dot or image on the map tells you what your style is.</p> <p>Let's see what styles we have in this group. Go ahead and type your style into the chat.</p>
Notes	<p>Briefly comment on the results.</p>

Key	Script/Notes
 <p>Ask</p>	<p>Of course, not everyone with the C style is the same just like not everyone with the i style is the same. The DiSC® model just gives us a framework to understand some important patterns across our personalities.</p> <p>Does anyone have any questions before we continue?</p>
<p>Notes</p>	<p>Address any questions.</p> <p>If timing is an issue (e.g., for a large group or if you have additional material you wish to include), you might consider setting the next activity up as a poll ahead of time in your videoconferencing tool. If you do so, offer the following options from page 3:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stressed • Scared • Angry • Nervous • Excited • Amped up • Defensive • Sad • Intrigued • Adrenalized
<p>Page 3</p> <p>What's your gut reaction to conflict?</p>  <p>Ask</p>	<p>Please advance to the next screen, page 3.</p> <p>When you hear the word “conflict”, what’s your gut reaction? Do you feel apprehensive, put off, stressed out? Do you get revved up and defensive—or are you ready to dive in?</p> <p>Go ahead and drop a quick response in the chat.</p>
<p>Notes</p>	<p>Give participants a few moments to respond via chat or poll, highlighting some of the responses and any common themes.</p>

Key	Script/Notes
	<p>Would anybody be willing to share how you think your gut reaction impacts the way you behave in conflict?</p>
<p>Notes</p>	<p>By chat or audio, give space for one or two people to briefly respond. Try to elicit comments on the different responses people endorsed to get a variety of perspectives.</p>
<p>Page 4 What is conflict?</p>	<p>Please advance to the next screen, page 4.</p> <p>We all have preconceived ideas about what conflict is and how it feels.</p> <p>But for our purposes today, let's define conflict as a difference of opinion that requires resolution. It's caused when two or more people have different ideas, interpretations, wishes, or directives.</p> <p>Some conflicts are small; others are pretty big. But ultimately, all conflicts are about people struggling to resolve differences. And that means conflict is inevitable. Because difference is inevitable—in life and at work. People are always going to have competing needs and desires, and they're often going to feel pretty strongly about them.</p> <p>In conflict, everybody involved wants something that they're worried they won't get—and as a result, conflict tends to be emotional.</p>
<p>Page 5 Conflict is emotional</p>	<p>Please advance to the next screen, page 5.</p> <p>If we were all capable of being completely objective all the time, conflict might be a little easier to deal with.</p> <p>But we're not. We get emotionally invested in our side of an argument. And when we're emotionally invested, we tend to show it—we take things personally, dig our heels in, retreat to avoid discomfort, or lash out.</p> <p>That's a big part of what makes conflict so challenging. Not only do you have to solve an actual practical problem, but you</p>

Key	Script/Notes
	<p>have to do so while navigating heightened emotions and the behaviors those emotions can provoke.</p> <p>A couple minutes ago, we talked about having a gut reaction to conflict and how that reaction can impact what you do when conflicts arise.</p> <p>We all have different responses to conflict.</p> <p>Some of those responses are based on our previous experiences: people we've known and their behaviors, disagreements we've had, good and bad outcomes we've had to deal with. We form an idea of what conflict looks like and how we need to respond to it based on what's happened in the past.</p> <p>But some of our responses are natural and instinctive and based on the same preferences and tendencies that determine our DiSC® style. When confronted with conflict, your instincts are often driven by a desire to feel safe, to feel in control, and to protect yourself. And that looks different for different people.</p> <p>Let's use the DiSC map to get to know those instincts.</p>




Your instincts

13 minutes: Individual and large-group activities

Participants learn about what kinds of instincts people around the DiSC® circle have in conflict, then read about and discuss their own tendencies in conflict.

Key	Script/Notes
<p>Page 6</p> <p>Instincts in conflict</p>	<p>Go ahead and advance to the next screen, page 6.</p> <p>Let's take a look at the DiSC circle here, starting with the D quadrant.</p> <p>People in the D quadrant tend to be decisive and authoritative. Although they probably aren't scared of conflict, they may</p>

Key	Script/Notes
	<p>instinctively feel like they need to control contentious situations. This can make it difficult for them to stay open to other perspectives rather than essentially laying down the law.</p> <p>People in the i quadrant tend to be social and outgoing. They may instinctively want to process big emotions out loud and seek affirmation about their feelings. And in conflict, their desire to express themselves means they may let their emotions drive them even to the point of talking over others.</p> <p>People in the S quadrant value stability and peace. That means they're reluctant to initiate conflict, even when unhappy, because the prospect of navigating disagreement can feel so overwhelming. And even when conflict is unavoidable, they're more likely than other styles to give in to keep the peace—which can cause big problems in the long run.</p> <p>Finally, people in the C quadrant tend to be careful and analytical, and they may pride themselves on being objective and rational. In conflict, that means they work to bolster their side of an argument with facts and logic, using them to create what they see as airtight narratives—even when the situation is actually more nuanced than they're acknowledging.</p> <p>Each DiSC® style's instinct is how they're <i>most likely</i> to respond to conflict in a vacuum.</p> <p>That doesn't mean someone in the C quadrant, for example, doesn't also feel driven to express themselves; or that someone with the D style doesn't care about maintaining the peace. Most people will exhibit most of these behaviors some of the time. But your instinctive responses—the stuff you do without really thinking about it, especially under pressure—is most likely to fall inside your quadrant.</p>
<p>Page 7 Your instincts in conflict</p>	<p>Let's go to the next screen, page 7, to read some more about your specific instincts in conflict.</p>


Key	Script/Notes
<p><i>On-screen text and image in Catalyst™ will vary depending on each learner's style</i></p>  <p>Individual</p>	<p>Take a couple of minutes to read about your instincts in conflict and make notes on anything that resonates for you.</p>
<p>Notes</p>	<p>Give participants 3 minutes to read and take notes.</p>
 <p>Large group</p> <p>Page 8 Group discussion</p>	<p>Please advance to the next screen, page 8.</p>
 <p>Ask</p>	<p>Hopefully what you just read has given you some new insights about your own instincts in conflict.</p> <p>Would anyone be willing to share something that rang true for them? Have your conflict instincts ever helped you in the past—or have they ever caused problems for you?</p>
<p>Note</p>	<p>Take a few responses. Encourage learners to share their style and, after 1 or 2 people have responded, solicit responses from the rest of the styles—e.g. “We’ve heard from people with the D and i styles, would anyone with the S or C style be willing to share?”</p>




You and others

16 minutes: Individual, large-group, and small-group activities

Participants identify the DiSC® style of one of their team members. They then learn what conflict might look like with that person and discuss in small groups.

Key	Script/Notes
<p>Page 9</p> <p>Different instincts = different conflicts</p>	<p>Go ahead and advance to the next screen, page 9.</p> <p>There are always at least two people in conflict.</p> <p>That means at least two sets of instincts, tendencies, preferences, and experiences.</p> <p>That's why not all conflicts look alike—because even if you always leaned into your instincts and behaved the exact same way in every conflict, different people would still <i>respond</i> differently. Where one person may respond well to your instinctive approach, another may find it frustrating. And even someone who responds well to a certain approach in one situation may not find it helpful another time.</p> <p>You can use DiSC® to help anticipate and better understand how your instincts and other people's instincts might interact. And once you know what's driving you and others in conflict, you're better equipped to make conscious decisions about how to engage in order to get the best results with different people.</p> <p>We're going to take some time now to think about what conflict might look like between you and a colleague.</p>
<p>Page 10</p> <p>Think of a colleague.</p> <p>What's their DiSC style?</p>	<p>Please advance to the next screen, page 10.</p> <p>First, I'd like you to think about someone you work with or just need to navigate conflict with regularly whose conflict behaviors you want to understand better. If you know their style, great. If not, try to guess it by answering two questions:</p> <p>First, are they more fast-paced or cautious?</p> <p>People who are fast-paced and outspoken are usually at the top half of the DiSC circle, while those who are cautious and reflective are in the bottom half.</p> <p>Next, are they more questioning or accepting?</p> <p>People who are more questioning and skeptical tend to be on the left side of the DiSC circle, while those who are more accepting and warm are on the right half.</p>

Key	Script/Notes
<p>Page 11 You & other people <i>On-screen text and image in Catalyst™ will vary depending on each learner's style.</i></p>	<p>When you combine the answer to those two questions, it can tell you what style the person is likely to have.</p> <p>If the person is fast-paced and questioning, they likely have a D style.</p> <p>If the person is fast-paced and accepting, they likely have an i style.</p> <p>If the person is cautious and accepting, they likely have an S style.</p> <p>If the person is cautious and questioning, they likely have a C style.</p> <p>Once you've guessed your report's style, please advance to the next screen, page 11.</p>
	<p>Assist anyone who needs help. Note that if any learners know they have reports with blended styles, encourage them to focus on the dominant style (e.g., "C" for "CD" style).</p>
 Individual	<p>Select the tab of the style you just chose to learn more about what conflict with your colleague might look like and why. As you read, make notes on anything that resonates for you or that you want to remember going forward.</p>
<p>Note</p>	<p>Give participants 3 minutes to read and take notes.</p> <p>While they do this, set up breakout rooms for the upcoming small group discussion. Ideally, groups will have three people and include a mix of DiSC® styles from different quadrants.</p>
	<p>We're going to take a few minutes to dive deeper in small groups.</p>

Key	Script/Notes
<p>Page 12 Group discussion</p>  <p>Small group</p>	<p>Click through to page 12.</p> <p>In your small groups, choose a few of the questions on screen right now to discuss.</p> <p>You don't need to answer every question—but make sure everyone in your small group has a chance to share.</p>
<p>Note</p>	<p>Answer any questions and then divide participants into breakout rooms in small groups of 3, preferably with a mix of DiSC® styles from different quadrants. Copy the discussion questions into the breakout rooms.</p> <p>(If you are not using breakout rooms, conduct the discussion as a large group.)</p> <p>Give participants about 8 minutes to discuss in their groups. You may want to provide a time check midway through and a reminder to make sure everyone has a chance to share.</p> <p>Move periodically between breakout rooms to help facilitate conversation.</p> <p>At the end of the discussion time, bring participants out of their breakout rooms.</p>
 <p>Ask</p>  <p>Large group</p>	<p>Would anyone be willing to share something they heard in their small groups that gave them a new idea about how to approach conflict in future?</p>
<p>Note</p>	<p>Take a couple of volunteers.</p>
<p>Page 13 What should you do with your instincts?</p>	<p>Please advance to the next screen, page 13.</p>

Key	Script/Notes
	<p>There's nothing inherently wrong with any of the four conflict instincts. We all need to express ourselves, assert ourselves, defend ourselves, or prioritize harmony sometimes.</p> <p>But we can't always act on instinct. If you're not in control of your behaviors in conflict—if you're only acting instinctively, <i>only</i> asserting yourself or <i>only</i> harmonizing—you'll end up in the same kinds of unhealthy conflict over and over and over again. Because in order for conflict to be productive, you need to be in control—not of the situation, but of yourself. You need to know how you're feeling and why, how you want to react and what kind of reaction actually makes sense given who you're in conflict with.</p> <p>And this is especially important when you're a manager.</p> <p>As a manager, you have to navigate a lot of different types of conflict: conflict with people you report to, conflict with peers, and conflict with people who report to you.</p> <p>And conflict with direct reports can be especially tricky to navigate because, to put it simplistically, you're in charge. If you choose to indulge your instincts—to shoot someone down without listening to them, get overly emotional, run from a problem, refuse to compromise—your direct report may not really have any recourse. Because you're the manager, you get to set the tone—and they have to deal with it.</p> <p>So how <i>can</i> you make conflict productive, knowing what you do now about your instincts?</p> <p>The easiest way to get better at handling conflict, meaning, better outcomes for you and the people you manage, is to practice recognizing when your instincts are kicking in and actively deciding whether they're helpful or not in the specific conflict with the specific person you're disagreeing with.</p> <p>Sometimes, your instincts can be your biggest asset. If your instinct is to harmonize and a situation is getting way too emotional it makes sense to try and help everyone involved calm down. When your instincts are helpful, <i>leverage</i> them!</p>

Key	Script/Notes
	<p>But other times, you might need to set your instincts aside and decide to approach a situation differently. For example, if you have the D style and you're trying to get on the same page with someone who has the S style and finds your forthrightness overwhelming, you may need to adopt a milder demeanor, focus on feelings, and work to help them feel comfortable before you can solve your problems.</p> <p>In situations where your instincts aren't serving you, <i>adapt</i>. Consider the person you're in conflict with and what <i>they</i> need in order to feel safe and have an honest conversation.</p>
<p>Page 14 Make a plan for conflict</p>	<p>Click through to the next screen, page 14.</p>



Make a plan

13 minutes: Individual and large-group activities

Participants get insights and tips for navigating conflict with a specific report, which they use to make an action plan.

Key	Script/Notes
	<p>Your team members are all different. They all need different approaches and they tackle conflict in their own ways. When you're considering whether to lean on your instincts or try a different tack, your answer will depend on who you're interacting with.</p>
<p>Page 15 Step 1: Choose a colleague</p>	<p>Right now, you're going to make a plan for how to tackle conflict with a specific team member.</p> <p>Go ahead and advance to the next screen, page 15.</p>
	<p>For this next section, participants can either look up a specific person on Catalyst™ or guess a person's style by answering a few questions. They will then work on their own to read insights and</p>

Key	Script/Notes
	<p>tactics for navigating conflict with this teammate and create a simple action plan.</p> <p>If you choose to share your screen at this point to help orient learners, make sure you use the style guesser. Don't enter a colleague's name to protect the privacy of others.</p>
	<p>Earlier, you chose someone you work with and learned about how conflict between the two of you might generally play out.</p> <p>Now, you can stay focused on that same report or think of a different person to learn about.</p> <p>If the person is in your organization and on Catalyst™, you can enter their name and the tool will take you to information on that person.</p> <p>Otherwise, you can again answer a few questions to guess your report's style and get information that way.</p> <p>Keep in mind that this tool can only help you guess someone's style based on your own observations—and we don't always understand people perfectly from the outside. The best way to know someone's style for sure is to have them take the DiSC® assessment and create a Catalyst profile as well.</p> <p>Once you search for the person or guess their style, you'll be taken through several screens where you get insights and tactics for navigating conflict with the person you chose. You'll also have a chance to make some notes on how you'll apply these tactics.</p> <p>So, before we get started, does anyone have any questions?</p>
Notes	Address any questions.
Pages 15–18	You'll have about 6 minutes to read and work on your plan now. Go ahead and get started.

Key	Script/Notes
 Individual	<p>Give participants 6 minutes to work on their plans and then bring them back together. You may want to give them a warning at the 5-minute mark so they know to wrap up their work.</p>
<p>Page 19 Step 5: Put your plan into action</p>	<p>Wrap up your work and join me on page 19.</p> <p>So, you have an action plan to get started with now. You can always come back to this platform and make another—both for the same teammate (you might want to try some different tips!) and for your other colleagues as well.</p> <p>The plan you made will be saved on the Catalyst™ platform. I'll show you later how to come back to it, and how to access the action-planning tool to create plans for your other team members as well.</p>
<p>Page 20 One last question</p>  Large group	<p>Please advance to the next screen, page 20.</p> <p>Think back to the conversations you had in your large and small group discussions today, along with what you read about your own and other people's instincts in conflict.</p> <p>What's one thing you learned today that makes you better understand conflicts you've seen or had in the past?</p>
Note	Take a couple of volunteers.
<p>Page 21 Don't forget</p>	<p>As you tackle disagreements going forward, remember that everyone, including you, has different instincts in conflict. The better you understand your own and other people's instincts, the easier it will be to decide how to act in order to defuse tense situations and find solutions everyone can live with.</p>

Key	Script/Notes
	<p>And you can build that understanding by coming back to this tool on the platform you've been using. You can get tips and make a plan for any of your reports as often as you need to.</p> <p>The action plan you created today will be saved on the Catalyst™ platform. You can come back to it whenever you want, and you can create additional plans for other teammates.</p>
Note	<p>Show people how to access their saved action plans and create new ones on the Worksmart landing page. Clicking Save & Exit on the last page of the module should bring you directly to the landing page. The action-planning section there has a link for retrieving saved action plans as well as an option for creating new ones.</p> <p>Thank people and conclude the session.</p>

For more ideas and assistance, contact Amy Pearl at Work Ignited at amy@workignited.com.