



# Navigating Workplace Conflict: Tools for Productive Conversations

**Sydney Axelrod**  
**Associate Director of Workforce Development**

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# STAR<sup>2</sup> CENTER TEAM



**SUZANNE SPEER**

**Vice President of  
Workforce  
Development**

[sspeer@clinicians.org](mailto:sspeer@clinicians.org)



**DR. MICHELLE  
FERNÁNDEZ GABILONDO**

**DSW, MSW**

**Director of Workforce  
Development**

[mfernandez@clinicians.org](mailto:mfernandez@clinicians.org)



**MARIAH BLAKE**  
**MPA**

**Associate Director  
of Workforce  
Operations &  
Compliance**

[mblake@clinicians.org](mailto:mblake@clinicians.org)



**SYDNEY AXELROD**  
**MA**

**Associate Director of  
Workforce  
Development**

[saxelrod@clinicians.org](mailto:saxelrod@clinicians.org)

# WORKFORCE IS THE FUEL

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A health center with a **full tank** identifies workforce as an essential organizational issue, invests in appropriate operational and staffing resources.



## Pillars of Wellness





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## UNDERSTANDING THE ROOTS OF CONFLICT

What comes to  
mind when you  
hear the word  
*conflict*?





**CONFLICT IS NORMAL  
AND CAN BE AN  
OPPORTUNITY FOR GROWTH**

# WHAT'S AT STAKE?



**The underlying costs of poorly managed conflicts at work:**



Changes in productivity / efficiency

Increased stress in and out of work

Strains on relationships

Effects on other areas of life

Physical strain

Reduced innovation

# WHAT'S AT STAKE?

The benefits of productively engaging with conflict at work:



Better work outcomes

Opportunities to learn and grow

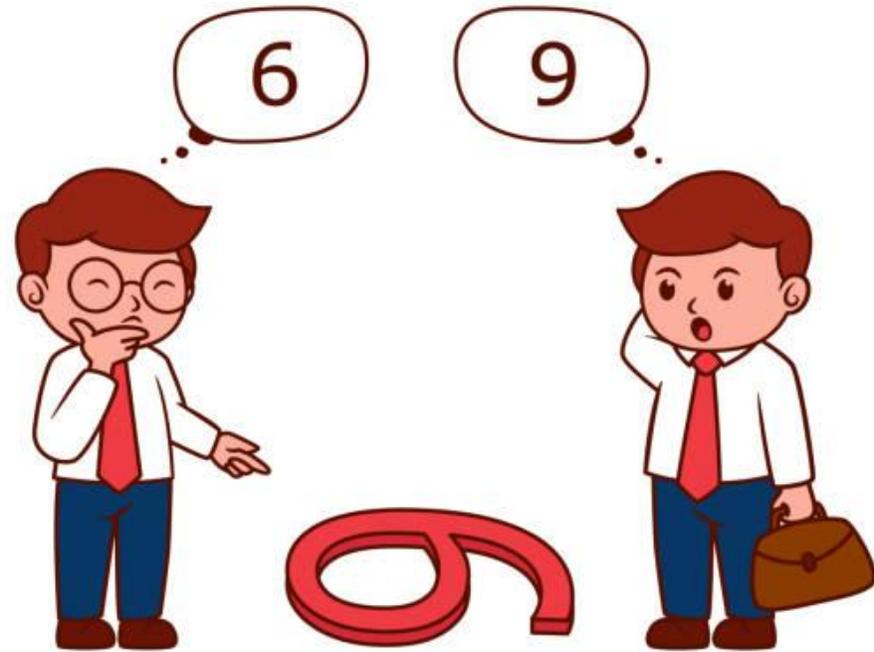
Improved relationships

Higher job satisfaction

Increased trust

Why does conflict  
happen at work?





# TYPES OF CONFLICT



## Identity Based

**Source: Needs and Values**

**Characteristics: Intangible**

**Effective approaches to engaging: Interactive**

## Resource Based

**Source: Resources**

**Characteristics: Tangible**

**Effective approaches to engaging: Transactive**

# TYPES OF CONFLICT AT WORK



## Task

Misalignment of goals

## Process

Disagreement over the *how*

## Status

Unclear division of decision-making rights

## Relationship

Differences in personal styles

# UNDERSTANDING CONFLICT



**WHAT NEEDS ARE NOT BEING MET THAT  
HAVE LED TO THIS CONFLICT?**

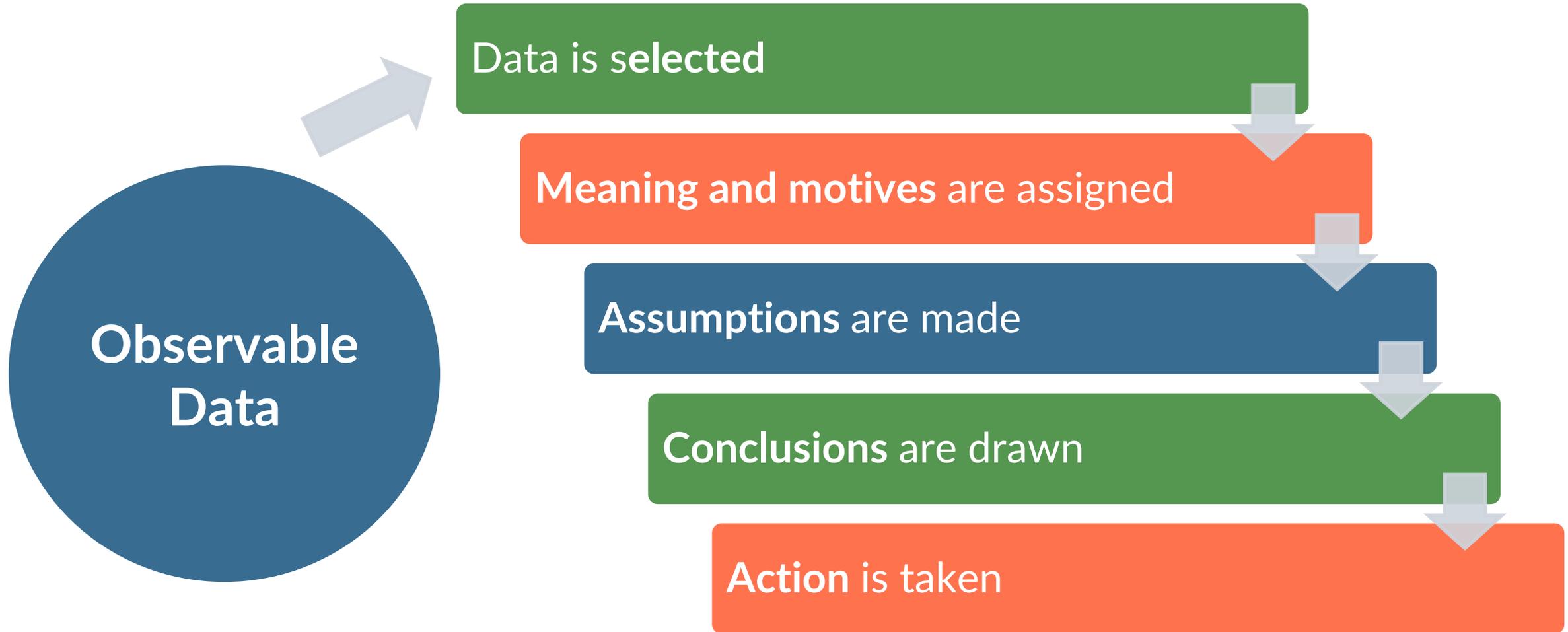


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## **BUILDING SKILLS TO MANAGE CONFLICT**

# BRIDGING THE DIVIDE

What Informs Our Beliefs?



INTENTION



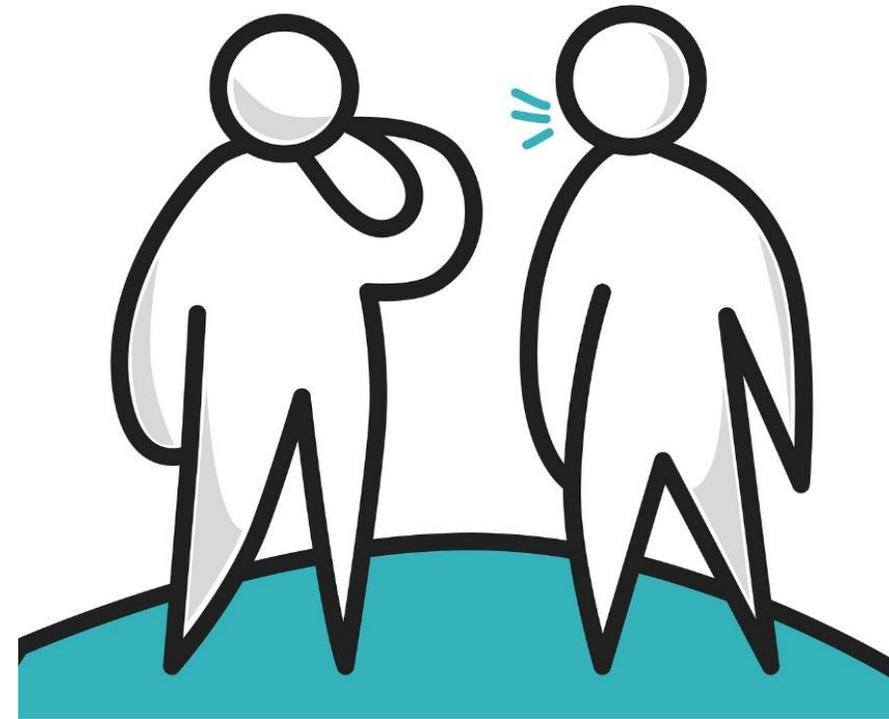
IMPACT

# THE HABIT OF ASSUMING GOOD INTENT

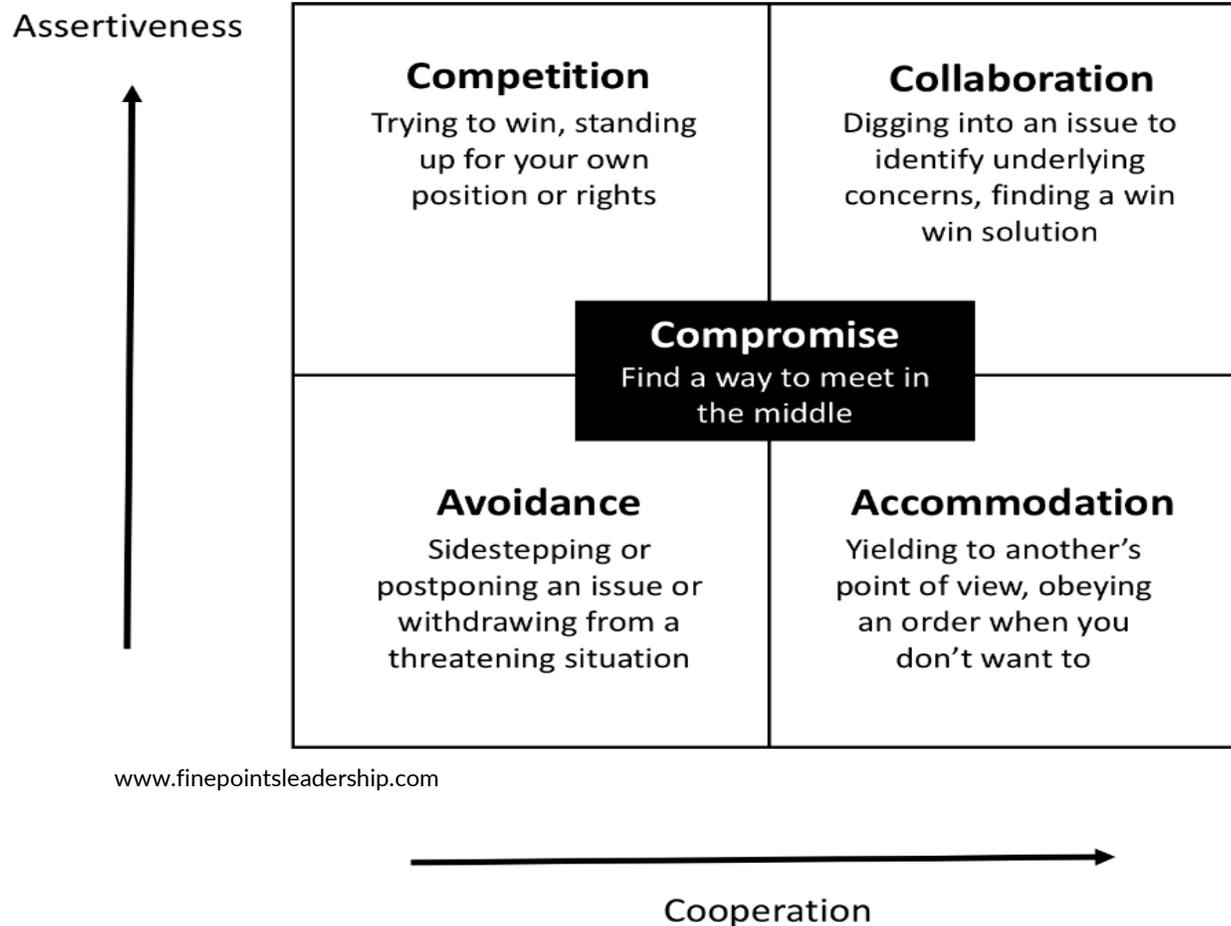


Your teammates have their own challenges.

- **Reflect** on how your work and actions affect theirs.
- Use **active listening** and **paraphrasing** as tools for a better conversation.
- If you feel “challenged”, before assuming intent was aimed at you, **inquire to learn**.
- **Ask questions** to learn more about the “why.”



# CONFLICT STYLES



**WE ALL REACT TO  
CONFLICT IN  
DIFFERENT WAYS**

**UNDERSTANDING OUR  
OWN TENDENCIES CAN  
ENABLE US TO MAKE  
BETTER CHOICES AND  
TO BUILD MORE  
EMPATHY FOR HOW  
OTHERS SHOW UP**

# SKILLS FOR HAVING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



Paraphrasing

Inquiring

Reframing

# HAVING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS



## Words and Phrases to Avoid:

“Always”

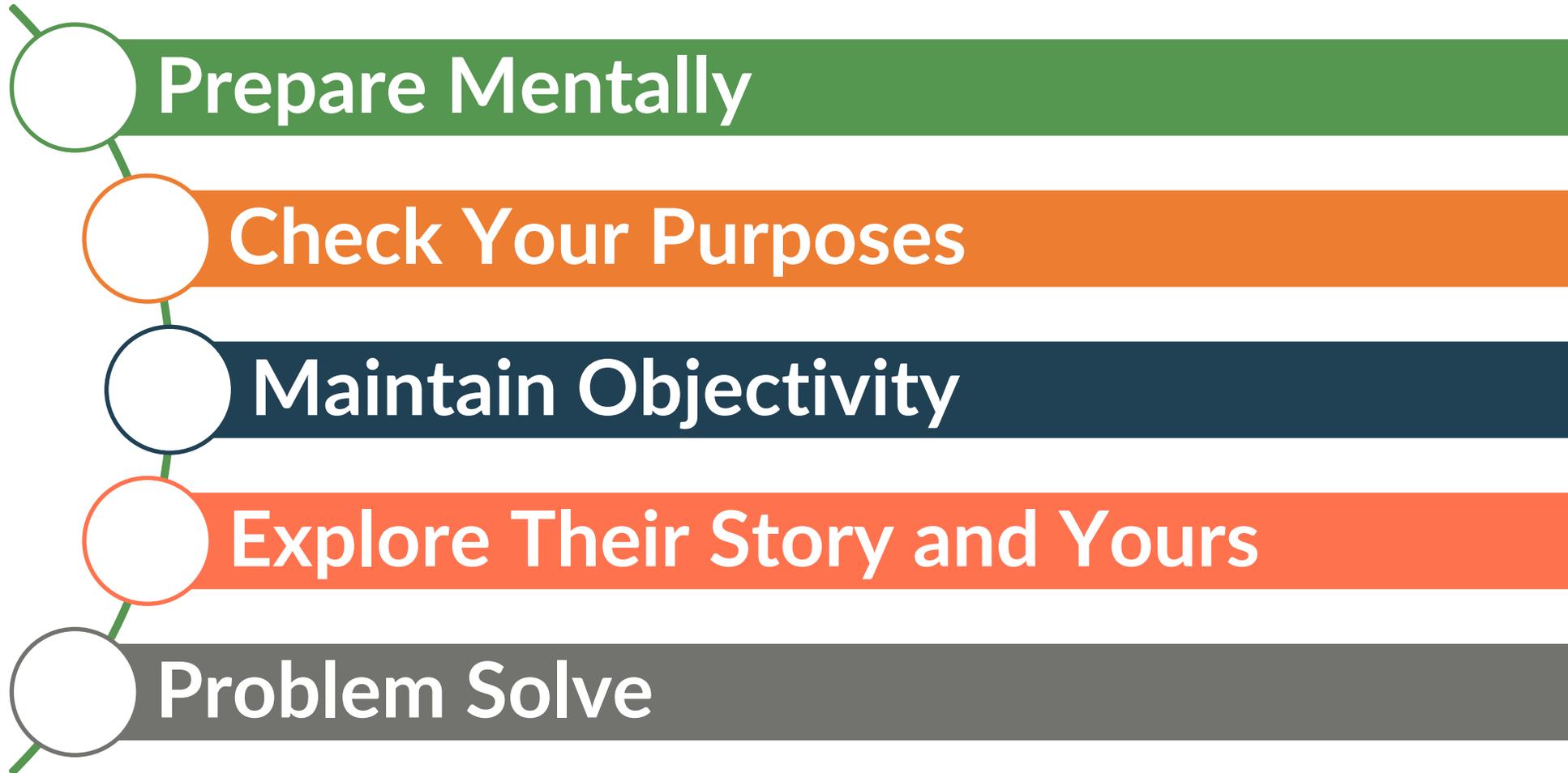
“Never”

“The  
truth”

“But”

“Wouldn’t  
you  
agree?”

# HAVING DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS





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## INVESTING IN ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEMS AND STRATEGIES

# THIRD-PARTY INTERVENTION



Sometimes a third-party is necessary to work through a complex or emotional interpersonal conflict

Things to consider:

- Do we need a third-party intervener? Have we tried to work this out ourselves?
- Will a third-party help or make matters worse?
- Do we both agree that a third-party may be helpful?
- Do we want formal or informal intervention?
- Who may be most appropriate and useful to us in this situation?
- What method of intervention is most appropriate?



# THE ROLE OF LEADERSHIP



57% of managers say they are fully responsible for managing and resolving team conflicts



# CORE COMPETENCIES FOR LEADERSHIP



Self-awareness and self-regulation

Strong social-conflict skills

Situational adaptivity

Systemic wisdom



Source: [The Conflict-Intelligent Leader](#)

# IMPACTFUL LEADERSHIP



Empathy



Humility



Vulnerability

Leadership needs to  
**reflect** the  
organization's values in  
its day-to-day actions

Alignment of a health  
center's mission with  
the beliefs and values  
of its workforce is  
**critical**



# INVESTING IN STRONG ORGANIZATIONS



Individual  
Skill  
Building



Codified  
Systems,  
Channels, and  
Organizational  
Norms





**How do people  
engage with  
conflict at your  
organization?**

**Do you know who  
to reach out to for  
support navigating  
a conflict?**

# INVESTING IN SYSTEMS FOR HEALTHY CONFLICT



“By embedding conflict resolution skills throughout the ranks, leaders can ensure that their organizations thrive even in the face of internal tensions. That means moving beyond seeing conflict as something to be avoided and framing it as a potential source of energy, innovation, and growth. That shift begins with creating safe, facilitated spaces for difficult conversations about sensitive issues in order to normalize the idea that conflict, when handled well, drives improvement rather than destruction.”

Source: [The Conflict-Intelligent Leader](#)

# QUESTIONS



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