Managing Conflict in the Dispatch Center

Managing Conflict in the Dispatch Center prepares telecommunicators to recognize, understand, and respond effectively to interpersonal conflict in both professional and personal settings. The course examines the causes of conflict, the influence of personality and perception, personal interests and identity goals, communication and active listening skills, nonverbal communication, generational and individual differences, and strategies for achieving constructive conflict resolution. Learners apply these concepts to dispatch-center scenarios with the goal of maintaining professional relationships, protecting trust and respect, and working toward win-win outcomes.

Learning Objectives

Upon completion of this course, learners will be able to:

1. Define conflict and identify common causes of interpersonal conflict.
2. Analyze the central issue, individual interests, assumptions, and identity goals involved in a conflict.
3. Apply effective verbal, written, and active listening techniques to prevent or reduce conflict.
4. Interpret how body language, facial expressions, personality, and individual differences can influence communication.
5. Apply a structured conflict-management process in dispatch-center and interpersonal situations.
6. Develop professional, respectful, and mutually acceptable approaches to resolving conflict.

Module 1: What is Conflict?

This module introduces conflict as a recognizable struggle involving perceived incompatible differences in beliefs, values, goals, esteem, or control. Learners examine how personality differences and assumptions can create conflict even when people have positive intentions. Through dispatch-center and personal-life scenarios, learners explore how clarification, perspective-taking, and open communication can prevent misunderstandings from escalating.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Define conflict and describe how it can occur during everyday interactions.
2. Identify personality differences that can contribute to interpersonal conflict.
3. Explain how assumptions and perceptions can affect interpretations of another person's actions.
4. Analyze how positive intentions may still result in misunderstanding or conflict.
5. Explain how conflict can create opportunities for improved relationships, processes, and understanding.

Content/Activities

- Definition and Characteristics of Conflict
- Task-Oriented and People-Oriented Differences
- Personality Differences and Conflict
- Scenario 1: Susan and Jim in the Dispatch Center
- Scenario 2: Tammy and Joe Planning a Vacation
- Conflict as a Source for Change
- Scenario Reassessment and Intent Clarification

Module 2: Addressing Conflict

This module focuses on identifying the central issue that created a conflict rather than relying on assumptions about another person's intent. Learners explore how past experiences, perceptions, words, writing, and body language can influence interpretation. The module introduces a self-reflection model that encourages individuals to pause and deliberately select an appropriate response before reacting.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Identify the central issue involved in a conflict.
2. Distinguish confirmed information from assumptions about another person's intent.
3. Use paraphrasing and clarification to verify the meaning of a message.
4. Explain how early clarification can prevent conflict from escalating.
5. Apply self-reflection before selecting a response to a challenging situation.

Content/Activities

- Identifying the Central Issue
- Assumptions, Perceptions, and Past Experiences
- Clarifying Intent Through Paraphrasing
- Responding Instead of Reacting
- Five-Chair Response Model: Attack, Self-Doubt, Wait, Detect, and Connect
- Video: *Own Your Behaviors, Master Your Communication, Determine Your Success*
- Self-Reflection Activity

Module 3: Outcomes from Conflict

This module examines the personal factors that influence conflict, including individual interests, self-worth, and identity goals. Learners consider the questions “What do I want?” and “Why do I want it?” while examining how the desire to protect competence, authority, reputation, or other aspects of identity can affect behavior. The module concludes with a structured conflict-management approach.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Identify personal interests or “I wants” that influence behavior during conflict.
2. Explain how identity goals and self-worth affect conflict responses.
3. Analyze personal motives before judging another person’s intentions.
4. Recognize the interests and identity goals of other parties involved in a conflict.
5. Apply a structured process for preparing to address and resolve conflict.

Content/Activities

- Addressing the “I” in Conflict
- “What Do I Want?” and “Why Do I Want It?” Self-Assessment
- Susan and Jim Scenario Reexamination
- Identity Goals and Self-Worth
- Identity and Perception Self-Reflection Questions
- Six-Step Conflict Management Process
- Active Listening and Environmental Considerations

Module 4: Communication Skills

This module explores communication as a critical component of conflict management. Learners consider the challenges associated with written, telephone, virtual, and face-to-face communication and examine the effects of emotional labor. Emphasis is placed on clear, respectful communication, appropriate tone, professional email and text practices, and active listening.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain how poor communication can contribute to misunderstanding and conflict.
2. Apply clear, respectful, and professional communication techniques in verbal and written interactions.
3. Recognize how tone, pitch, word choice, and missing visual cues influence interpretation.
4. Apply professional practices when communicating through email and text messaging.
5. Demonstrate active listening techniques that support understanding and conflict resolution.

Content/Activities

- Communication as a Conflict-Management Skill
- Video: *A Video Conference Call in Real Life*
- Emotional Labor in Emergency Communications
- Improving Verbal and Written Communication
- Email and Text Messaging Guidelines
- Active Listening and Paraphrasing
- Video: *Work Scenarios with Coworkers*
- Workplace Communication Scenarios

Module 5: Interpreting People

This module examines how emotions, facial expressions, eye contact, posture, movement, and other nonverbal behaviors influence communication. Learners also explore how different life experiences and generational perspectives can contribute to conflicting beliefs. The module concludes with an examination of aggressive, avoidant, direct, and indirect responses to conflict.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Identify nonverbal behaviors that may communicate emotion, interest, or disengagement.
2. Explain how body language can affect the interpretation of spoken messages.
3. Recognize how differences in background and life experience may influence workplace perspectives.
4. Describe how generational differences can contribute to misunderstanding while also providing organizational strengths.
5. Differentiate among aggressive, avoidant, direct, and indirect approaches to conflict.

Content/Activities

- Facial Expressions and Emotional Cues
- Body Language and Nonverbal Communication
- Active Listening Through Facial and Head Movements
- Behaviors That May Signal Disinterest or Disrespect
- Generational Perspectives in the Workplace
- Working Together Across Differences
- Aggressive, Avoidant, Direct, and Indirect Conflict Responses

Module 6: Conflict Resolution

This module focuses on resolving conflict and restoring productive working relationships. Learners examine what should happen after a conflict, when it may be appropriate to allow time for emotions to settle, and why unresolved issues should still be revisited promptly. The module emphasizes developing win-win solutions and applying professional conflict-resolution strategies within the unique environment of the dispatch center.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Explain the importance of restoring productive working relationships after conflict.
2. Determine when a brief cooling-off period may support productive discussion.
3. Apply a collaborative process for developing mutually acceptable, win-win solutions.
4. Analyze personal motives before responding to conflict in the dispatch center.
5. Demonstrate professional conflict-resolution practices that preserve trust, respect, and individual reputations.

Content/Activities

- After the Conflict
- Timing and Emotional Readiness
- Creating a Win-Win Situation
- Workplace Project Conflict Strategies
- Interpersonal Conflict Strategies
- Conflicts in the Dispatch Center
- Self-Assessment: “What Story Am I Telling Myself?”
- Protecting Trust, Respect, and Professional Reputation

Module 7: Knowledge Check 1

This module evaluates the learner's understanding of the primary conflict-management concepts presented throughout the course. Questions address the definition of conflict, positive outcomes from conflict, central issues, personal interests, identity goals, appropriate environments for conflict discussions, active listening, body language, and win-win solutions.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Demonstrate understanding of the characteristics and potential outcomes of conflict.
2. Identify the central issue, interests, and identity goals involved in conflict situations.
3. Select appropriate communication and active listening strategies for resolving conflict.
4. Recognize effective body-language and environmental considerations during difficult conversations.
5. Identify approaches that support constructive and mutually beneficial conflict resolution.

Content/Activities

- Knowledge Check: Characteristics of Conflict
- Knowledge Check: Conflict as an Opportunity for Change
- Knowledge Check: Central Issues, Interests, and Identity Goals
- Knowledge Check: Addressing the "I" in Conflict
- Knowledge Check: Conflict-Management Environment
- Knowledge Check: Active Listening
- Knowledge Check: Body Language
- Knowledge Check: Win-Win Conflict Outcomes

Module 8: Congratulations / Course Completion

This final module concludes the course and reinforces the expectation that learners transfer conflict-management and communication skills into their work in the dispatch center and their interactions with others. Learners are encouraged to apply self-awareness, active listening, respectful communication, and collaborative problem solving when future conflicts arise.

Module Objectives

Upon completion of this module, learners will be able to:

1. Summarize the major principles of effective conflict management presented in the course.
2. Recognize opportunities to use communication skills to prevent conflict before it escalates.
3. Apply self-awareness and perspective-taking when responding to interpersonal challenges.
4. Use respectful communication and active listening to support healthy professional relationships.
5. Apply conflict-resolution strategies to future situations in the dispatch center and personal interactions.

Content/Activities

- Course Completion
- Review of Key Conflict-Management Principles
- Application to the Dispatch Center
- Personal Application of Communication Strategies
- Commitment to Professional and Respectful Conflict Resolution

Course Completion Criteria

To successfully complete this course and earn continuing education hours, learners must achieve a minimum score of 75%. The quiz must be completed within 30 minutes.

- CE hours awarded: 1
- Certificate duration: 12 Months

Technical Requirements

- Desktop, laptop, or mobile device
- Speakers or headphones
- High-speed Internet access
- A current web browser