



COMMUNICATION AND CONFLICT

FACILITATOR GUIDE



Communication and Conflict

Introduction

The purpose of this session is to provide participants with techniques to respond to and resolve conflicts before they interfere with achieving the club and district missions.

Overview

In this training module, participants complete and interpret an assertiveness quiz. Then, participants learn how to communicate effectively during conflict. Next, participants are introduced to strategies to resolve conflict. Then, participants watch two video scenarios and complete an activity using conflict resolution strategies.

Objectives

After completing this session, participants will be able to do the following:

- Identify and adjust their personal level of communicative assertiveness
- Resolve interpersonal conflicts
- Engage in productive conflict to improve team decisions

By meeting these objectives, participants lay the foundation for a successful, efficient, and agreeable team.

Materials

- PowerPoint
 - The PowerPoint is available to download in an online or offline version. The online version will require an internet connection to play the conflict scenario videos. The offline version will require the latest version of QuickTime to be installed.
- Conflict Scenario Videos
 - Format: Videos are already inserted into the accompanying Power Point presentation
- Assertiveness Quiz

- Interactive PDF Available on [Toastmasters.org](https://www.toastmasters.org), paper version and score sheet available in materials

Setting

- Large room with ability to display the PowerPoint and videos

Time

- Approximately 90 minutes

Introduction

1. SHOW the Introduction slide as participants enter the room.



2. SHOW the Session Objectives slide.



3. PRESENT the session objectives:
 - After completing this session, you will be able to:
 - Identify and adjust your personal level of communicative assertiveness
 - Resolve interpersonal conflicts
 - Engage in productive conflict to improve team decisions

4. PRESENT

- Conflict is a common occurrence when working in teams.
- Managing conflict is an essential leadership skill.
- Mismanaged conflict can have an immediate impact as well as a long-lasting impact.
- As Toastmasters, we all share the same values: Integrity, Respect, Service, and Excellence. You can demonstrate these values by managing conflict well.

Four Steps to Effective Communication During Conflict

(40 minutes)

NOTE TO FACILITATOR

During this section, participants take a self-assessment quiz. If you use the interactive PDF posted on Toastmasters.org, the score will automatically calculate. If using the paper version of the quiz, plan for five extra minutes to help participants calculate their scores.

1. SHOW the Four Steps to Effective Communication During Conflict slide.



Four Steps to Effective Communication During Conflict

▶ How many of you are currently facing some kind of conflict related to your Toastmasters role?

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2. ASK

- How many of you are currently facing some kind of conflict related to your Toastmasters role?

3. PRESENT

- You may be involved directly, or perhaps you are helping to resolve a conflict between others.
- To handle conflict effectively, we need to be able to reflect on our own behavior.
- We will practice that skill now.



- INSTRUCT participants to spend five minutes completing the Assertiveness Quiz.

5 minutes



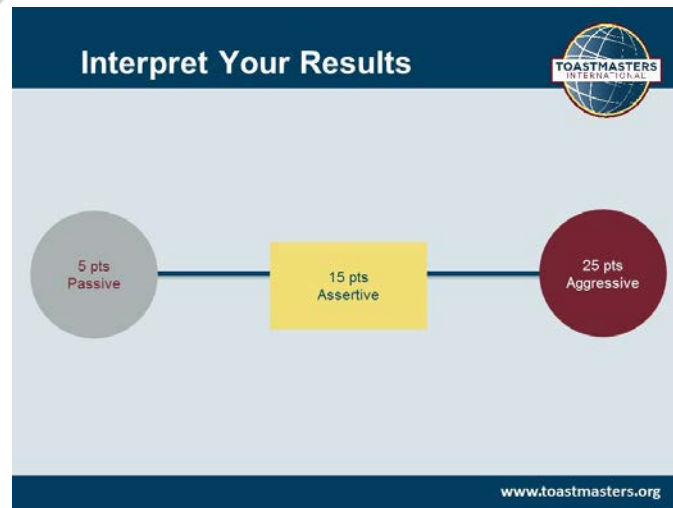
- TIME five minutes.

NOTE TO FACILITATOR

If participants are calculating their own results, distribute the score sheets and allow for five minutes before moving to the next slide.



- SHOW the Interpret Your Results slide.



- PRESENT

- On the screen, you can see the range in behavior reflected by your quiz score.
- Assertiveness is the ability to be self-assured and confident without being aggressive. It is an important skill when dealing with conflict.
- Passivity is displayed by refraining from expressing your thoughts or advocating for your needs.
- Aggressiveness is characterized by standing up for your thoughts and feelings in a way that is inappropriate and may violate the rights of the other person.
- Generally, we want to be toward the center of the range from passive to assertive to aggressive.
- There are some situations that call for more passive or more aggressive behavior.
- Culture can impact the way we interpret assertiveness.

- Let's examine a four step model, known as DESC, to help us move toward the center of our assertiveness range.

8. SHOW the DESC Slide.



DESC

- 1) Describe
- 2) Express
- 3) Specify
- 4) Consequences

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9. ASK

- As Toastmasters, we routinely give feedback to club members during evaluations. Evaluations require a balance of constructive criticism and encouragement. Have you ever seen an evaluation that was too critical?
- What strategies do you use to stay balanced when giving evaluations?
 - Stay positive.
 - Use the compliment-constructive criticism-compliment method.

NOTE TO FACILITATOR

Ask two or three people to share, depending on time and quality of discussion.

10. PRESENT

- Using the four steps of DESC, you can improve your assertiveness skills when addressing problems.
- D stands for Describe. In this step, praise first and then describe the problem. Use "I" statements rather than "you" statements.
 - During an evaluation, you might say "I wasn't clear on what the purpose of the speech was" versus "Your speech had no purpose."

- For example, “This was a great first draft. I have some suggestions for improvements” versus “You need to fix a lot of things in this document.”
- E stands for Express. In this step, express how you think and feel. Formulate statements from your perspective. Start sentences with “I believe,” “I feel,” or “I disagree.”
 - For example, “I feel frustrated when my emails don’t get a response for two to three weeks” versus “Are you too lazy to bother responding to me?”
- S stands for Specify. In this step, identify the behavior you think should replace the bothersome behavior. The request should be concrete, not vague.
 - For example, “I would appreciate it if you let me know at least a week in advance when you’re going on vacation” versus “It would be good to know when you will be unavailable.”
- C stands for Consequences. In this step, explain the positive consequences of changing behavior. The emphasis should be on rewards, not punishment.
 - For example, “Thank you for passing these along. In the future, if you need me to review materials, I’d like two days to do so. This allows me to schedule my time so that I can give the materials my full attention” versus “You never give me enough time to review things.”


Activity: Scenario

1. PRESENT

- Now we will put all the steps together using an example.

2. SHOW the Scenario slide.

Scenario



- ▶ Evonne, an area director, is frustrated with Jin, her division director, because he schedules meetings at the last minute.
- ▶ She has work and family commitments, and hasn't been able to attend the last two meetings. After both meetings, Jin sent her emails about the importance of attending the meetings.
- ▶ What exactly could Evonne say to Jin to address the problem using DESC?
 - Describe, Express, Specify, Consequences

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3. PRESENT

- Scenario: Evonne, an area director, is frustrated with Jin, her division's director, because he schedules meetings at the last minute. She has work and family commitments, and hasn't been able to attend the last two meetings. After both meetings, Jin sent her emails about the importance of attending the meetings.

4. INSTRUCT participants to spend three minutes writing down exactly what Evonne could say to Jin to express herself using the DESC steps.

5. TIME three minutes.



6. INSTRUCT participants to spend five minutes discussing responses with a partner.



7. TIME five minutes.



8. INSTRUCT two to three people to share their DESC steps with the group.

9. DISCUSS the responses.

10. PRESENT

- Using the four steps may seem awkward at first, but practicing them can help you clarify your perspective and needs during conflict.



Review: Four Steps to Effective Communication During Conflict

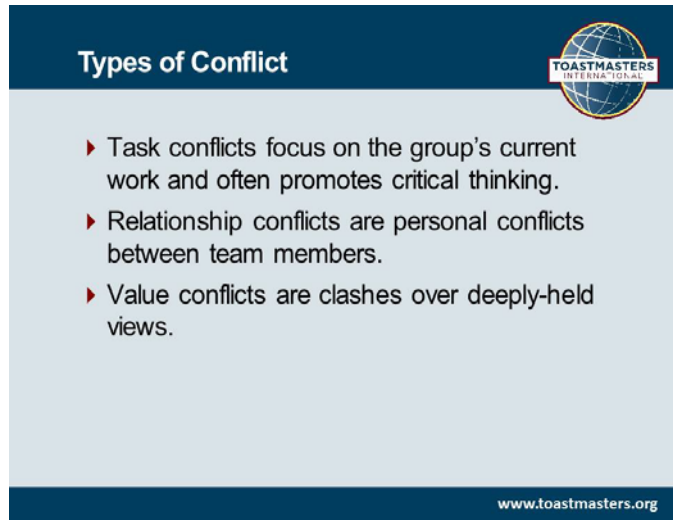
1. PRESENT

- The four steps to effective communication during conflict are:
 - Describe the problem.
 - Express your thoughts, beliefs, and/or needs.
 - Specify the behavior change you are requesting.
 - Explain the positive consequences of the change.
- These steps can help you better express yourself and avoid defensiveness, which often escalates conflict.
- In the next section, we will discuss how to resolve conflict when it occurs.

Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict

(40 minutes)

1. SHOW the Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict slide.



Types of Conflict

- ▶ Task conflicts focus on the group's current work and often promotes critical thinking.
- ▶ Relationship conflicts are personal conflicts between team members.
- ▶ Value conflicts are clashes over deeply-held views.

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2. PRESENT

- Moderate amounts of conflict in groups can be constructive.
- It is essential that the conflict is managed well.
- There are three types of conflict: task, relationship, or value.
 - Task conflicts focus on the group's current work and often promote critical thinking.
 - Relationship conflicts are personal conflicts between team members. Task conflicts can escalate into relationship conflicts if team members use poor communication techniques, such as criticism, contempt, or sarcasm.
 - Value conflicts are clashes over deeply held views of right versus wrong. These conflicts are difficult to resolve and often result in an "agree to disagree" truce.



3. ASK

- If you have a disagreement with another stakeholder about the budget for an event, what type of conflict is it?
 - Task
- If a team member says “I just don’t like Debbie. I won’t work with her,” what type of conflict is it?
 - Relationship



4. SHOW the Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict: Strategy 1 slide.

Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict

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► Strategy 1:

- Separate the people from the problem

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5. PRESENT

- To manage conflict well, distinguish between the three types of conflict and address each one appropriately. You can accomplish this through the four strategies in the Principled Negotiation technique.
 - Strategy 1: Separate people from the problem
 - Strategy 2: Separate interests from positions
 - Strategy 3: Generate options
 - Strategy 4: Establish objective criteria

Strategy 1: Separate People from the Problem

1. PRESENT

- Separating the people from the problem helps diminish relationship conflicts during negotiations.

- Keep communication focused on the task and discourage personal attacks.
- Managing conflicting personalities can be frustrating for all parties involved.

2. ASK

- What strategies do you use to manage your or another person's frustration during a heated discussion?
 - Take a time out.
 - Distract myself.

3. PRESENT

- Manage your own frustration by deliberately calming yourself, listening nondefensively, and having a positive mindset.
- Listening nondefensively is difficult but important. You may learn about something you didn't realize was a problem.
- Remind yourself that the conflict can be resolved, and remember the Toastmasters values that brought you together.
- Manage another team member's frustration by:
 - Responding calmly but firmly to any outbursts.
 - For example, if a team member rolls her eyes and makes a sarcastic comment, it might be easy to make one back or ignore it. Instead, respond calmly and rationally. For example, you might say, "I can see you are unhappy. Would you like to share your point of view with us?"
 - Validating something the other person has said even if you don't agree with the perspective.
 - For example, "I can see that you're frustrated" or "I understand why you are upset" can be powerful statements, even if you don't agree with the team member's point of view.
 - Asking questions.
 - By seeking information, you can shift the situation from emotionally-driven to rationally-driven.
 - For example, "Can you explain this to me calmly so I can understand your point of view?"
 - Focusing on the problem.



- Rather than retaliating, keep the conversation focused on the issues at hand. Respect is a Toastmasters value, and taking the high road is a great way to demonstrate it.
- For example, ask a question such as, “What would you like to see happen?”
- If team members are engaged in an ongoing relationship conflict, it may be beneficial to speak to them individually before the next group meeting and ask them to stay task-focused.



4. ASK

- What are the benefits of this strategy?
 - It keeps personal conflict to a minimum.
 - It helps the group stay focused on the task at hand.
 - You can practice active listening skills.



4. SHOW the Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict: Strategy 2 slide.

Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict 

► Strategy 2:

- Separate interests from positions

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Strategy 2: Separate Interests from Positions

1. PRESENT

- Positions are concrete things you want in a negotiation.
- Interests are why you want them.
- For example, District K is selecting a conference date. Mary suggests the first weekend in November. Juan adamantly opposes

- and argues that it will be a disaster if the conference is held on the proposed date.
- After asking questions, it is discovered that Juan opposes this date because it was held the same weekend last year with very poor attendance.
 - Juan's position is that the first weekend of November is not an acceptable date for the conference.
 - Juan's interest is to draw members and guests to the conference.
 - It is critical to negotiate interests rather than argue positions. As you can see in our District K example, once we understand Juan's interest, we can see many options.
 - For example, maybe the conference was poorly attended last year due to marketing tactics rather than the date.
 - Mary and Juan's interests are likely aligned, if not the same, during this discussion.
 - Both Juan and Mary value the district and want to achieve the district mission. Locating this common ground helps to move to the next strategy.

2. ASK

- What are the benefits of this strategy?
 - By focusing on interests, it helps to keep the conflict constructive.
 - It helps to locate common ground.
 - It makes both parties feel understood.





3. SHOW the Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict: Strategy 3 slide.

The slide is titled "Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict" and features the Toastmasters International logo in the top right corner. The main content area is light blue and contains the following text:

- ▶ Strategy 3:
 - Generate options

The website address www.toastmasters.org is visible in the bottom right corner of the slide.

Strategy 3: Generate Options

1. PRESENT

- Brainstorm options to solve the problem or challenge.
- Stay open-minded while brainstorming.
- Consider using a mind-mapping technique. There are many websites, smart phone applications, and tablet applications that you can use for this purpose.



2. ASK

- What are the benefits of this strategy?
 - Brainstorming can lead to better decisions.
 - Generating multiple options allows you to choose the best one.

3. SHOW the Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict: Strategy 4 slide.



Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict

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► Strategy 4:

- Establish objective criteria

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Strategy 4: Establish Objective Criteria

1. PRESENT

- Set objective criteria to evaluate the solution or decision.
- This will keep conflict focused on the task rather than any relationship conflict.
- Consider using the Standard Agenda technique to generate options and establish objective criteria to evaluate the options.
- Learn more about the Standard Agenda in the session posted on Toastmasters.org

2. ASK

- What are the benefits of this strategy?
 - It keeps the discussion focused on the task.
 - It helps to minimize relationship conflicts.
 - It provides an objective route to selecting the solution.

3. PRESENT

- In the next activity, we will practice these strategies as we watch the new reality show, Toastmasters in Action.





Activity: Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict

NOTE TO FACILITATOR

In this activity, participants spend a few minutes working alone, then share their work with a partner, and finally discuss responses in the large group. This technique is called Think-Pair-Share and is effective for both extroverts and introverts. The two videos for this activity are embedded into the PowerPoint and should play without issue. Make sure the sound is turned up to display them.



1. SHOW the first video clip.



2. INSTRUCT participants to spend five minutes writing down the answer to the following question: Using the four strategies, how would you respond to the conflict between Division Director Erica and Area Director Ann?

3 minutes



3. TIME five minutes.

4. SHOW the second video clip.



5. INSTRUCT participants to spend five minutes writing down the answer to the following question: Using the four strategies, how would you respond to the conflict new clubs team members Jennifer and John?

6. TIME five minutes.

7. SHOW the Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict Discussion slide.

The slide is titled 'Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict Discussion' and features the Toastmasters International logo. It lists four strategies:

- ▶ Strategy 1:
 - Separate the people from the problem
- ▶ Strategy 2:
 - Separate interests from positions
- ▶ Strategy 3:
 - Generate options
- ▶ Strategy 4:
 - Establish objective criteria

The URL 'www.toastmasters.org' is at the bottom.

8. PRESENT

- We see a conflict building between Division Director Erica and Area Director Ann.
- Another conflict has developed between John and Jennifer over the club growth strategy in a new clubs team meeting.



5 minutes





9. INSTRUCT participants to arrange themselves in pairs and spend five minutes discussing their responses.



5 minutes

10. TIME five minutes.

11. INSTRUCT two to three participants to share their responses with the group.

12. DISCUSS the responses as time permits.



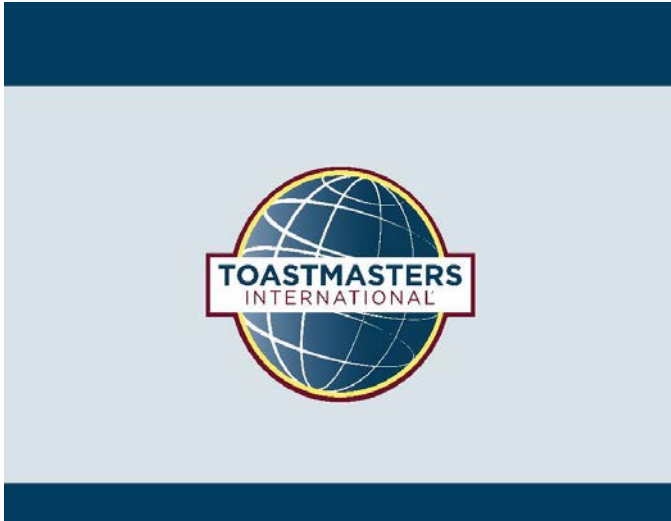
Review: Four Strategies to Resolve Conflict

1. PRESENT

- Conflicts can be categorized as task, value, or relationship.
- The four strategies to resolve conflict are:
 - Strategy 1: Separate people from the problem
 - Strategy 2: Separate interests from positions
 - Strategy 3: Generate options
 - Strategy 4: Establish objective criteria
- Use these strategies to keep conflict focused on the task rather than on relationship or value issues.
- Task-related conflict has been shown to increase critical thinking capabilities and lead to better decisions in groups.

Conclusion

1. SHOW the Conclusion slide.



2. PRESENT

- Managing conflict starts with understanding ourselves and our tendencies.
- Think back to your assertiveness quiz results. The steps and strategies presented today can help you increase your assertive behavior.
- Work on one step or strategy at a time.
- Remember that conflict is a normal part of group work. Well-managed conflict is an asset to the team, not an obstacle.
- Demonstrate the Toastmasters values of Integrity, Respect, Service, and Excellence by dealing proactively with conflict.





Assertiveness Quiz

1. Imagine you're in a restaurant and the waiter brings your food. You notice it is cooked differently than you requested. You are most likely to:

- Wave the waiter over and ask for the error to be corrected.
- Complain to your dining companion but eat the food anyway.
- Ask to speak to the manager about the bad customer service you have received.

2. You're waiting in line at the bank. Someone arrives and steps in front of you. You are most likely to:

- Roll your eyes but say nothing.
- Smile and explain firmly where the line starts.
- Raise your voice and demand the person move to the back of the line.

3. A friend drops by your office to chat while you are working on an important project. You are most likely to:

- Wave your friend away with a curt phrase such as "later."
- Stop working on your project and speak with your friend until she leaves.
- Explain to your friend that you are in the middle of a project and suggest another time to chat.

4. Sarah, the administration manager for your district, has not sent out minutes from the last meeting despite several requests. You are most likely to:

- Email Sarah again requesting that she send them out when she has a free moment.
- Send them out yourself along with a note that says something like, "Sending these out since Sarah apparently doesn't have time."
- Call Sarah and talk to her about why the minutes haven't gone out yet. Offer to help her.

5. You can tell that a colleague is annoyed with you and you aren't sure why. You are most likely to:

- Act hostile toward your colleague until things blow up.
- Approach your colleague and initiate a conversation about the tension.
- Ignore it and hope it goes away after some time.

TOTAL: _____



Score Sheet

1. Imagine you're in a restaurant and the waiter brings your food. You notice it is cooked differently than you requested. You are most likely to:

- a. 3 points
- b. 1 point
- c. 5 points

2. You're waiting in line at the bank. Someone arrives and steps in front of you. You are most likely to:

- a. 1 point
- b. 3 point
- c. 5 points

3. A friend drops by your office to chat while you are working on an important project. You are most likely to:

- a. 5 points
- b. 1 point
- c. 3 points

4. Sarah, the administration manager for your district, has not sent out minutes from the last meeting despite several requests. You are most likely to:

- a. 1 point
- b. 5 points
- c. 3 points

5. You can tell that a colleague is annoyed with you and you aren't sure why. You are most likely to:

- a. 5 points
- b. 1 point
- c. 3 points

TOTAL: _____