

The Conflict Management Skills Workbook

**Self-Assessments, Exercises
& Educational Handouts**

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The Conflict Management Skills Workbook

Self-Assessments, Exercises & Educational Handouts

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Printed in the United States of America

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1

Editorial Director: Carlene Sippola
Art Director: Joy Morgan Dey

Library of Congress Control Number: 2010926457
ISBN: 978-1-57025-239-6

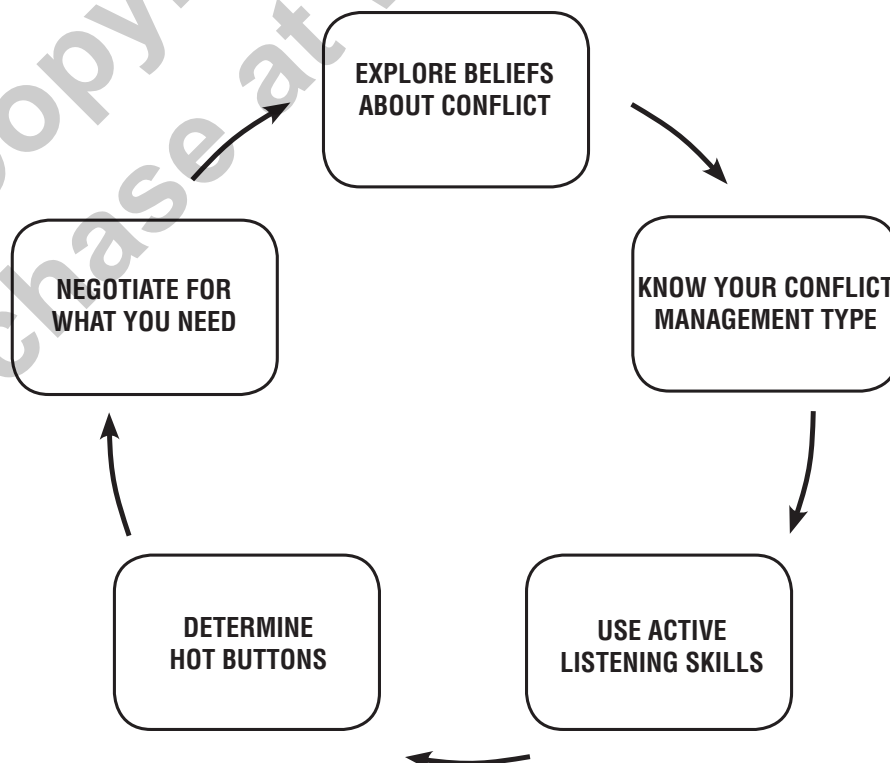
Using This Book *(For the professional)*

In many ways, conflict is a basic fact of life. We have all experienced conflict in our personal and professional lives. Because conflicts are disagreements resulting from people or groups having differences in attitudes, beliefs, values or needs, there will be times when conflict is inevitable. People experience differences in any relationship. That conflict exists is not a bad situation, as long as the conflict is managed effectively. Resolving conflicts can be beneficial and lead to growth and maturity. Outcomes of constructive conflict management will increase confidence in several aspects of life management:

- awareness that problems exist and need to be solved
- creative problem solving and decision making
- sense of well-being
- motivation and energy to take action
- implications / attitudes / responses of empathy and caring
- commitment to relationships
- impact of respect, trust and commitment

Any conflict has the potential to be incredibly destructive to a relationship. Managed in the wrong way, it can lead to extreme differences between people that can quickly spiral out of control. Each person will experience this Negotiations Model based on their point of view in a conflict as they use the following format to help them resolve their issues / problems:

NEGOTIATIONS MODEL



(Continued)

Using This Book *(For the professional, continued)*

The Conflict Management Skills Workbook contains five separate sections to help participants learn more about themselves and the skills they possess to manage conflicts that occur in their lives. Participants will learn new skills and their importance in preventing and resolving conflicts.

The sections are:

- 1) BELIEFS ABOUT CONFLICT SCALE** helps individuals to explore their beliefs about the process and outcomes of conflicts.
- 2) CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES SCALE** helps individuals identify their preferred style for managing conflict.
- 3) LISTENING FOR MEANING SCALE** helps individuals to examine the active listening skills they possess for preventing conflicts and then dealing with conflict situations.
- 4) HOT BUTTONS SCALE** helps individuals identify the situations that trigger conflict in their lives.
- 6) NEGOTIATION STYLE SCALE** helps individuals identify their negotiation style for what they want and need.

Each section serves as an avenue for individual self-reflection, as well as for group experiences revolving around identified topics of importance. Each assessment includes directions for easy administration, scoring and interpretation. Also included are exploratory activities, reflective journaling activities and educational handouts to help participants discover their habitual effective and ineffective conflict management skills. Finally, instruction is provided for enhancing participants most critical weaknesses when attempting to prevent or resolve real-life conflicts.

The art of self-reflection goes back many centuries and is rooted in many of the world's greatest spiritual and philosophical traditions. Socrates, the ancient Greek philosopher, was known to walk the streets engaging the people he met in philosophical reflection and dialogue. He felt that this type of activity was so important in life that he went so far as to proclaim, "The unexamined life is not worth living!" The unexamined life is one in which the same routine is continually repeated without ever thinking about its meaning to one's life and how one's life really could be lived. However, a structured reflection and examination of beliefs, assumptions, characteristics and patterns can provide a better understanding, which can lead to a more satisfying life. A greater level of self-understanding about important life skills is often necessary to make positive, self-directed changes in the negative patterns that keep repeating. The assessments and exercises in this book can help promote this self-understanding. Through involvement in the in-depth activities, participants claim ownership in the development of positive patterns.

(Continued)

Using This Book *(For the professional, continued)*

Journaling is an extremely powerful tool for enhancing self-discovery, learning, transcending traditional problems, breaking ineffective life habits, and helping to heal from psychological traumas of the past. From a physical point of view, writing reduces stress and lowers muscle tension, blood pressure and heart rate levels. Psychologically, writing reduces sadness, depression and general anxiety, and leads to a greater level of life satisfaction and optimism. Behaviorally, writing leads to enhanced social skills, emotional intelligence and creativity. It also leads to improved relationships through being able to effectively manage conflicts that occur in professional and personal relationships.

By combining reflective assessment and journaling, participants will be exposed to a powerful method of combining verbalizing and writing to reflect on and solve problems. Participants will become more aware of the strength and weaknesses of their specific conflict management and negotiation skills.

Preparation for using the assessments and activities in this book is important. The authors suggest that prior to administering any of the assessments in this book, you complete them yourself. This will familiarize you with the format of the assessments, the scoring directions, the interpretation guides and the journaling activities. Although the assessments are designed to be self-administered, scored and interpreted, this familiarity will help prepare facilitators to answer questions about the assessments for participants.

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The Assessments, Journaling Activities, and Educational Handouts

The Assessments, Journaling Activities, and Educational Handouts in *The Conflict Management Skills Workbook* are reproducible and ready to be photocopied for participants' use. Assessments contained in this book focus on self-reported data and are similar to ones used by psychologists, counselors, and therapists. The accuracy and usefulness of the information provided is dependent on the truthful information that each participant provides through self-examination. By being honest, participants help themselves to learn about their hot buttons that cause conflicts with other people, their style of handling conflicts, and the skills needed to effectively handle, or even prevent, conflicts.

An assessment instrument can provide participants with valuable information about themselves; however, it cannot measure or identify everything about them. The purposes of the assessments are not to pigeon-hole certain characteristics, but rather to allow participants to explore all of their characteristics. This book contains self-assessments, not tests. Tests measure knowledge or whether something is right or wrong. For the assessments in this book, there are no right or wrong answers. These assessments ask for personal opinions or attitudes about a topic of importance in the participant's life.

When administering the assessments in this workbook, remember that although the items are generically written so that they will be applicable to a wide variety of people, they will not account for every possible variable for every person. Use the assessments to help participants identify possible negative themes in their lives and find ways to break the hold of these patterns and their effects.

Advise the participants taking the assessments that they should not spend too much time trying to analyze the content of the questions; their initial response will most likely be true. Regardless of individual scores, encourage participants to talk about their findings and their feelings pertaining to what they have discovered about themselves. Talking about health, wellness, and overall well-being as it relates to conflict can enhance the life of participants. These wellness exercises can be used by group facilitators working with any populations who want to strengthen their overall wellness.

A particular score on any assessment does not guarantee a participant's level of conflict management skill. Use discretion when using any of the information or feedback provided in this workbook. The use of these assessments should not be substituted for consultation and/or counseling from a psychological or medical professional.

Thanks to the following professionals whose input in this book has been invaluable!

Kathy Khalsa, MAJS, OTR/L

Jay Leutenberg

Kathy Liptak, Ed.D.

Eileen Regen, M.Ed., CJE

Lucy Ritzic, OTR/L

Betty Welch, Ph.D.

Layout of the Book

This book includes the following reproducibles in all 5 sections:

- **Assessment Instruments** – Self-assessment inventories with scoring directions and interpretation materials. Group facilitators can choose one or more of the activities relevant to their participants.
- **Activity Handouts** – Practical questions and activities that prompt self-reflection and promote self-understanding. These questions and activities foster introspection and promote pro-social behaviors.
- **Reflective Questions for Journaling** – Self-exploration activities and journaling exercises specific to each assessment to enhance self-discovery, learning, and healing.
- **Educational Handouts** – Handouts designed to supplement instruction can be used individually or in groups. They can be distributed, converted into masters for overheads or transparencies, scanned or transferred to PowerPoint slides for use with LCD projectors, or written on a display for discussion.

Who should use this program?

This book has been designed as a practical tool for helping professional therapists, counselors, marriage and family therapists, psychologists, teachers, group leaders, etc. Depending on the role of the professional using *The Conflict Management Skills Workbook* and the specific group's needs, these sections can be used individually, combined, or implemented as part of an integrated curriculum for a more comprehensive approach.

Why use self-assessments?

Self-assessments are important in teaching various life skills. Participants will . . .

- Become aware of the primary motivators that guide behavior.
- Explore and learn to identify potentially harmful situations.
- Explore the effects of messages received in childhood.
- Gain insight that will guide behavioral change.
- Focus thinking on behavioral goals for change.
- Uncover resources that can help to cope with problems and difficulties.
- Explore personal characteristics without judgment.
- Develop full awareness of personal strengths and weaknesses.

Because the assessments are presented in a straightforward and easy-to-use format, individuals can self-administer, score, and interpret each assessment independently.

Introduction for the Participant

This workbook will help you develop and polish the skills you need to maintain healthy relationships through effective conflict management. Conflict can be defined as a disagreement in which two or more parties perceive a threat to their interests, needs or concerns. Conflicts can be disagreements about small or very large matters, reactions to and/or a build-up of annoyances. You may encounter many types of conflict in your lifetime. Some of these conflicts revolve around relationships you have and can occur for a variety of reasons including competition over things you want or need (money, time, physical resources), the way things should operate or run (a household), or psychological issues (your perception of trust, cooperation, fairness, and respect). Regardless of the types of conflict that you are encountering, you need to be prepared to manage effectively in the conflict situations that will arise.

In every one of your relationships, you need to know how to manage conflicts that arise. Conflict management skills are probably the hardest interpersonal skills to master constructively. In conflict resolution, you must learn to work to achieve your goals, keep your cool while compromising, and work to maintain effective relationships. Conflicts often lead to a negotiating process between you and other people. You will be successful in relationships when you are able to effectively resolve conflicts in situations in which you and another person share a common interest but differ on how to achieve an outcome in which both of you get what you want.

You will be encouraged throughout this workbook to complete assessments, journaling activities and exercises. Because active involvement and doing is as important as talking about theories, it is critical that you take the time to complete all of the skill-building exercises.

The Conflict Management Skills Workbook is designed to help you learn more about yourself, identify the primary reasons you get into conflicts, and find better ways to use your newfound conflict management skills to develop and maintain happy, healthy, casual, personal, intimate and business relationships.

The Conflict Management Skills Workbook

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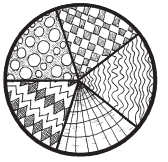
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Compromising – Profile Interpretation

People with a Compromising Conflict Management Style try to find a solution that will partially satisfy everyone. This is often called the middle-ground approach because participants are willing to negotiate and come up with a compromise in the situation in which both people feel satisfied. They may also be willing to sacrifice the compatibility of their relationship with others in order to reach an agreement. They give a little to get a little, and they believe that both sides should make concessions in order to reach a resolution. They have discovered that it is important to back off from some issues in order to gain on other issues.

What I like about this style:

What I don't like about this style:

When does this style work, or not work?

The Compromising Style Can Serve in a Variety of Situations

The Compromising Style can be used when there are important or complex issues that have no clear or simple solutions. For you, what would these situations include?

The Compromising Style can be used when all people have strong interests in different solutions. For you, what would these situations include?

The Compromising Style can be used when there are no time constraints. For you, what would these situations include?

In which situations in your life would you use the Compromising Style?
