

## Applying Conflict Resolution to the Homeless System

COOHIO Conference– April 2019



Cleveland Mediation Center  
A Program of FrontLine Service

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### Morning Agenda

- About Cleveland Mediation Center
- Introductions
- What is Conflict?
- Constructive Conflict Resolution
- Experience of Conflict
- Conflict Styles
- Listening
- Active Listening
- Conflict and Culture
- Empathetic Response

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Cleveland Mediation Center  
A Program of FrontLine Service

Cleveland Mediation Center (CMC) has been mediating disputes and providing conflict resolution and mediation training to the greater Cleveland area since 1981.

Cleveland Mediation Center promotes just and peaceful community in Northeast Ohio by honoring all people, building their capacity to act, and facilitating opportunities for them to engage in conflict constructively.

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## CMC Programs

- Community & Family Mediation
- Court Connected Mediation
- Shelter Discharge Mediation
- Shelter Diversion
- Training

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## Introductions

Pair off with someone else and ask each other the questions below to practice listening skills.

- Name
- Favorite activity this season
- Identify a time when you were effective in resolving a conflict
- What are you hoping to learn today?

Hola! Hello!  
Bog! Shalom!  
Marhaba!

Kon'nichiwa! Salut!  
Hujambo! Hallo!  
Ciao! Ahoj!

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## What is Conflict?

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## What is Conflict?

- Conflict is a struggle between at least two people who have different goals, where there are limited resources, and where there is interference from others in achieving their goals.

*-adapted from Wilmot & Hocker's definition*

- What type of conflict do you experience in your daily life?
- What type of conflict have you experienced at work?

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## What is Constructive Conflict Resolution?

Approaches that seek to achieve meaningful, lasting solutions and minimize the harm of **escalating tension**, or **avoidance**.

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## Constructive Conflict Resolution Approaches

- Mediation
- Facilitation
- Conciliation
- Conflict Coaching

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## Experience of Conflict

Think of a dispute, conflict, or unsettling encounter you were involved in.

- What did you experience?
  - Physically?
  - Emotionally?
- How did it affect your day?
- How did it affect your opinion of the other person?

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## Conflict Styles

Take a few moments to complete the conflict style assessment.

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## Strategies for Managing Conflict

- Avoidance
- Competition/Forcing
- Compromise
- Accommodation
- Collaboration

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## Dinner Example

When should we go out to dinner? You suggest 7:00 and I say 6:00.

- I **avoid** when I don't say when I want to go, or I just ask what you want, or we don't go out to dinner at all
- I **force** when I insist on 6:00 and make you (get you to) change your plans
- I **accommodate** when I say 6:00 at first and then say okay, let's go at 7:00
- I **compromise** when I say I want to eat at 6:00, you say 7:00, and we decide to eat at 6:30
- We **collaborate** when I say I want to eat at 6:00, you say 7:00, and we agree on 8:45, which works perfectly for both of us

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## Active Listening

- What are we trying to accomplish by listening?
- **Empathetic listening** is the intimate comprehension of another person's thoughts and feelings, without imposing our own judgment or expectation.  
(National Alliance on Mental Illness)

How does a deep understanding benefit clients?

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## Active Listening

How do you know someone is really listening to you?

What is the importance of being heard in conflict resolution?

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### Listening Skill Building

- Mental, Emotional Preparedness
  - What helps me prepare or get centered?
- Physical Preparedness:
  - R Relaxed
  - O Open
  - L Leaning towards the speaker
  - E Eye Contact
  - S Squared toward speaker

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### Verbal Active Listening Skills

- Reflecting
- Paraphrasing
- Questioning
- Crediting

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### Listening Exercise

Pair off with another person.

- Each person think about an unresolved interpersonal conflict you are experiencing in your personal life or at work
- The purpose is to have someone listen to you, not give you advice, but help you feel clearer or more confident about your situation
- Take a few minutes telling your story to the other, and then we will switch listener/speaker roles

**Important! Listeners: Do not offer opinions or give advice.**

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## Conflict and Culture

- When you were growing up, what messages did you receive about responses to conflict?
- Were these messages unique to your racial, socioeconomic, religious, or ethnic culture?
- Did your siblings receive different messages about responses to conflict?
- Do the messages you received still affect your response to conflict today?

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## Empathetic Response

Empathetic listening is the ability and willingness to listen with empathy that improves mutual understanding and trust. (Beyond Intractability)




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## Afternoon Agenda

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|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| • Review                        | • Problem Solving           |
| • "I" Statements                | • Addressing Work Conflicts |
| • De-escalation / Anger Iceberg | • Self-Care                 |
| • Role Plays                    | • Key Takeaways             |

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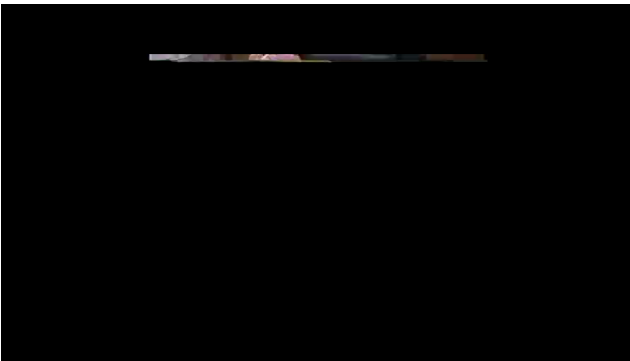
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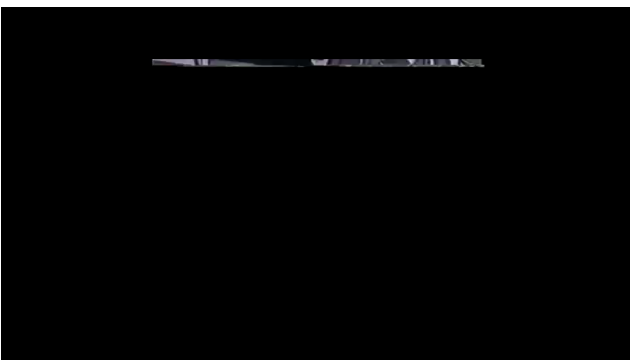
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## "I" Statements

- Communication style focusing on feelings or beliefs of the speaker rather than the thoughts and characteristics that the speaker attributes to the listener
- Focuses on Issues over blaming
- States need or want

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## "I" Statements vs. "You" Statements

- "You" statements
  - Close off communication and blaming
  - Example: You are a selfish person
- "I" statements
  - Open up communication
  - Example: I feel angry when I am interrupted while I am speaking because I feel I have something to say. What I want is to give my opinion without being interrupted.

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## How To Make An "I" Statement

- Be aware of your feelings, needs, and wants
- Be confident, clear and controlled
- Believe what you are saying, be firm
- You have the right to feel the way you do

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### Parts Of An “I” Statement

- I feel \_\_\_\_\_
  - State a feeling
- When \_\_\_\_\_
  - Specific behavior you are responding to
- Because \_\_\_\_\_
  - What need is not being met?
- What I need is \_\_\_\_\_
  - Describe exact behavior that would meet your need

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### Using “I” Statements

- I feel frustrated
- When I keep getting more work added to my caseload
- Because while I am working overtime, I can't catch up
- What I want is more guidance and help in prioritizing what needs to be done

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### Practice

- Break into groups of 4-5
- Think of a personal or work situation that has been on your mind
- Use the “I” Statement formula to prepare a response as a group

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### Will “I” Statements Always Work?

- No...
  - Can’t control other people’s responses
- However...
  - Assertive way to resolve conflict
  - You are able to advocate for your needs in a respectful manner

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### Saying No Using “I” Statements

- Acknowledge the other person’s request, explain your reason for declining it, say no, and can offer an alternative option if you wish
- Example: “I know that you would like to go out tonight (acknowledgement). I had a really long day and feel exhausted (explanation), so I won’t be able to make it. What if we get together another night this week? (alternative option)”

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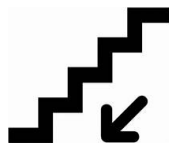
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### De-escalation

In conflict resolution, de-escalation can be used *to remove tension between two participants in a conflictual relationship or intervention.*




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## Anatomy of Anger

Anger Iceberg




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## De-escalation Strategies

- Remove the crowd
- Seek to understand
- Listen
- Clarify and stay issue focused
- Don't assume, be specific, and allow for the power of choice

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## Practice De-Escalation

- Pair off into groups of two
- Role play a conflict
- Switch roles
- Discuss as a group

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## Problem Solving

- It is difficult to discuss solutions when one or more people are upset
- Start by listening
- Instead of sitting across from the client and explaining the rules, sit with the client, helping them face the difficult challenge
- Make sure we understand the client's concerns and that they understand what we are asking
- Focus the conversation on client goals

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## Problem Solve Work Conflicts

- Small groups – discuss how to use what we learned in both of these trainings at work
- What strategies can be used to resolve conflict that...
  - Staff is involved in?
  - Helps clients resolve conflict
  - Help clients feel heard?

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## Self-Care and Workplace Support

- This kind of work can be challenging
- Self-care and seeking workplace support is key
- Identify co-workers who are especially helpful to you when you work with difficult situations with clients
- Think about what else you need

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### Key Takeaways

- People in crisis are often not at their best
- Everyone has different ways of handling conflict
- Regardless of whether the client was in the right, they deserve to be heard and understood
- Even when we can't help clients, make sure they feel heard and validated
- Active listening is an important tool in conflict resolution
- Remember physical and verbal active listening skills

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### Key Takeaways

- People in crisis are often not at their best
- Everyone handles conflict differently
- Try using I Statements to address an issue
- Remember de-escalation strategies
- Ask how can I keep decision-making with the client when possible?
- Self-care is important

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### Contact Information

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THANK YOU!

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