

Lesson II: Resolving Conflict

Outcomes – At the end of this lesson, participants will be better able to:

- define conflict
- use conflict resolution skills

Materials Needed

- Overhead transparency machine (optional)
- Easel pad and pens

Handouts

- Scenarios Worksheet

Transparency or Poster

- Ground rules
- Spiral of controversy

Preparing to Teach this Lesson

- Write up and post the lesson objectives
- Make copies of the Scenarios Worksheet
- Prepare transparency of the (1) ground rules (use grounds rules sheet from Lesson I) and (2) spiral of controversy or copy each onto a separate easel pad sheet

Community Resource People

- Not applicable to this lesson

Summary

At the end of each lesson is a debriefing or summary section. It is very important that the lesson be timed to allow sufficient debriefing with the employees. During this reflection period employees can discuss the information learned, clarify any concerns and analyze skills that they have practiced. This is a critical step in the learning process and should not be neglected.

Methods

Part 1: Review of ground rules (2 minutes, optional)

- Review ground rules, as needed.

Transparency or Easel Pad Paper

Ground Rules

1. One person speaks at a time.
2. Describe behaviors, not personalities.
3. Maintain confidentiality.
4. Share responsibility - speak up if something is not working for you.

Part 2: What is Conflict? (13 minutes)

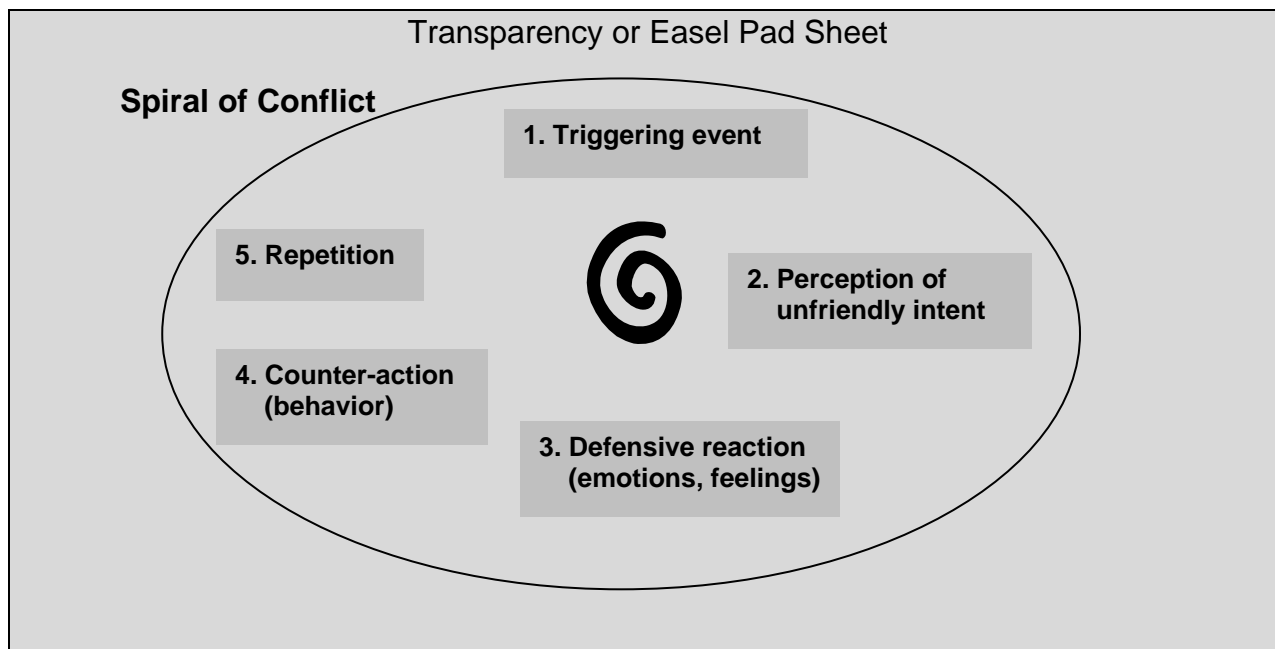
- Ask participants to take a sheet of paper and write down all the words they associate with “conflict.” Don’t think it over, just write them down. After about one minute, have participants go back and put a (+) sign next to all the terms they wrote down that were positive, (-) sign next to all terms that they would say are negative, and a (0) next to all terms that are neutral, neither positive nor negative.
- Ask the employees about some of the words they associated with conflict. Don’t take all the words, but get at least one word from each employee.
- Then ask whether they identified the words as positive, negative or neutral.
- Define conflict (*disagreement between people in which one or both persons feel a threat to his or her interests or needs*) and then explain that conflict is generally viewed as negative, but it can also be positive.
- Ask for examples how conflict can be positive:
 - learn something about yourself and the other person.
 - lead to a stronger relationship.
 - bring problems to light, give people the chance to see another side, and to create a solution.
- Explain that conflict can also be negative, depending how it is dealt with. If people get angry and escalate the situation, it may lead to violence. If conflict is ignored, the negative feelings and animosity can grow and the conflict can get larger. One of the negative consequences resulting from the conflict is low morale of staff and within the court system. Also, it can lead to poor service to court users, resulting in lower public trust and confidence in the courts.

Follow-Up Guide to
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An On-Line Course

- Ask why there are conflicts.
 - Generally they are caused by disagreements over resources, needs, or values.
 - i. Resources: time, money, or property.
 - ii. Not getting basic needs met.
 - iii. Different values: reflect differences in culture.
 - Focus today on differences in culture that may cause conflict. Point out healthy ways to resolve those conflicts.
- Ask participants to think of a conflict they have experience based on cultural differences. How did they handle it? How did their gender, family background or cultural identity affect how they handled it? People don't have to share, but may choose to.

Part 3: Spiral of Conflict (25 minutes)

- Review spiral of conflict transparency or easel pad sheet, which employees will have seen in the on-line course. Ask participants to think about a conflict that they have witnessed or experienced that was caused or made worse by cultural differences. Invite employees to describe such a conflict.



- Use an example to work through the spiral of conflict.
- Explore how the spiral of conflict can be broken at the level of perceiving negative intent and then pausing to reconsider the intent.

Handout of Scenarios
Scenarios Worksheet

Spiral of Conflict

1. Triggering event

2. Perception of unfriendly intent

3. Defensive reaction (emotions, feelings)

4. Counter-action (behavior)

5. Repetition

Directions: Read over these scenarios and analyze how pausing to reconsider the perceived negative intent could stop the spiral of conflict.

Case No. 1:

1. Triggering event: A man comes into the court with dirty clothes and asks in a demanding voice where the courtroom is for his case.
2. Perception of unfriendly intent: This man is a criminal and does not have respect for me or the court.
3. Defensive reaction: I feel insulted.
4. Counter-action: I therefore speak to him in clipped tones and tell him the criminal court is in a different building without giving directions.
5. Repetition: He does not know which building you mean, so he escalates his demands in an angry tone.

Question: How could you have reconsidered your original perception of his unfriendly intent so that you break the spiral of conflict?

Case No. 2:

1. Triggering event: A co-worker takes a call from a defendant. The defendant had called immediately before and spoken to you, but had hung up when he heard your Russian accent. The defendant told your co-worker on the phone that he did not want to speak with anyone who could not speak English. The co-worker then reported to other workers that all customers had problems understanding you.

2. Perception of unfriendly intent:

3. Defensive reaction:

4. Counter-action:

5. Repetition:

Question: How could you have reconsidered your original perception of your co-worker's unfriendly intent so that you break the spiral of conflict?

Case No 3:

Draft your own scenario regarding either a co-worker or a court user.

1. Triggering event:

2. Perception of unfriendly intent:

3. Defensive reaction:

4. Counter-action:

5. Repetition:

Question: How could you have reconsidered your original perception of his or her unfriendly intent so that you break the spiral of conflict?

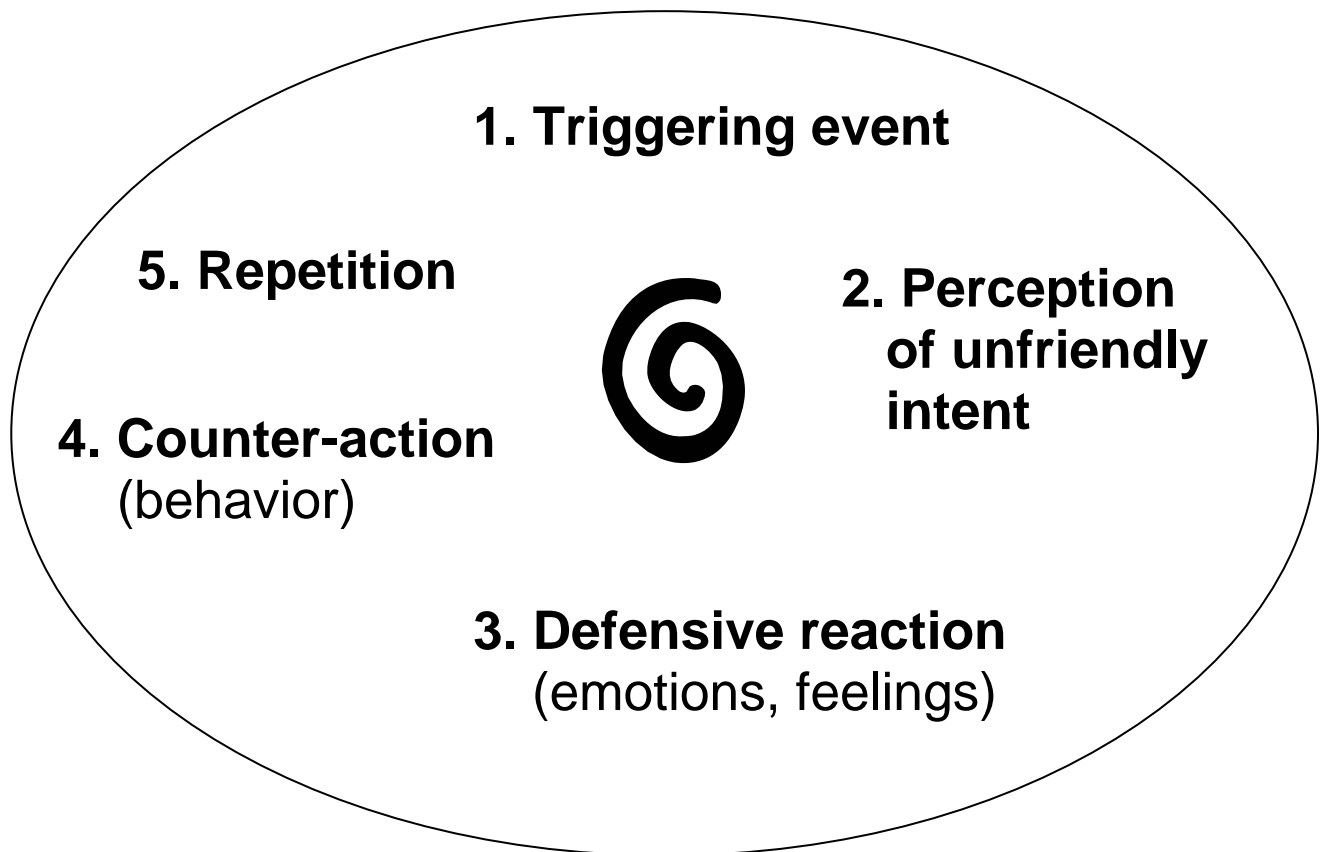
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- Ask participants to pair up and work through the scenarios worksheet.
- After working through scenarios, ask group to report back.
- Ask the pairs to listen to each other and see how the spiral of conflict was broken, by reconsidering the intent.

Part 4: Summary (5 minutes)

- Conclude with summary of issues about conflict and skills for identifying and reconsidering negative intent when the cause of the conflict is cultural difference.
- Have each employee think about one thing he or she learned during the session. Ask them to write that down or share with a partner. After a few minutes, ask a few volunteers to share their ideas with the rest of the group.

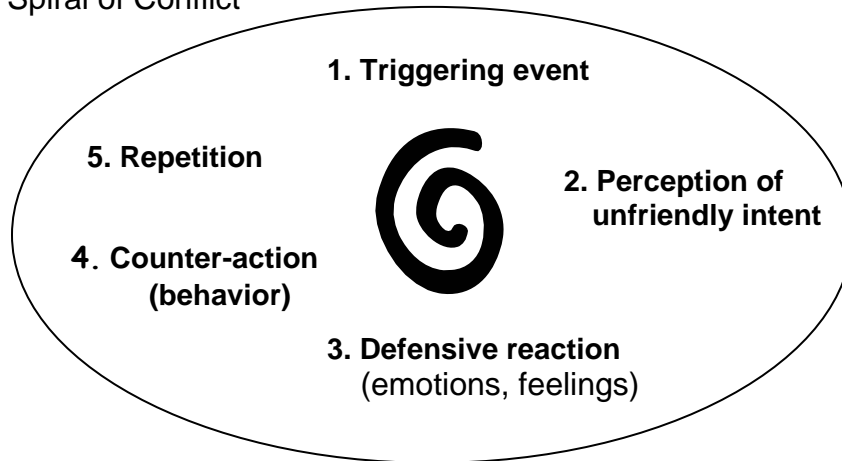
Spiral of Conflict



Handout of Scenarios
Lesson II: Resolving Conflict

Scenarios Worksheet

Spiral of Conflict



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