

Module 7: Creating a Workplace Conflict Resolution Plan

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A conflict resolution plan for a productive and well run workplace is essential. The economic and productivity implications are at stake when the conflict is not addressed and solved. “The costs of conflict include not only attorneys fees and human resources salaries, but the amount of time people spend getting upset, distracted, and sick; the time dissipated in gossiping... alienation of customers and valuable employees; and the training and learning costs of replacing employees” (Cloak, 318). The actual costs also affects the overall productivity of the workplace, including employee morale, loss of interest, and increased dysfunctional relationships within management and employees. Having a strong collective resolution plan will provide the platform and stable arena for a culture of trusting, skillful communication and support.

I would emphasize to my assistant chiefs the importance of having collaborative negotiation with strong team building and peer mediators as vital steps to a healthier functioning department. As Professor Begovich explained in his podcast, the structure of police management is one of a “hierarchical, autocratic, bureaucratic, militaristic type of an organizational environment” (Podcast 7.1). The police management culture for the most part has been engrained for a trickle down format of decision making; whereas the role of managers are expected to be the problem solver. The new leadership has to break this mold in order to expand its collaborative negotiation effort. “The role of leadership is not to solve problems, but to increase the ability of employees to solve them collaboratively” (Cloke, 175). By transitioning to this view, managers will be encouraged to provide team meetings for their employees, encouraging strong engagement and valid input. This in turn can assist in transitioning

to tackle conflicts from an adversarial one to a collaborative effort. A strong example of this technique can be seen with the US Air Force completing its construction project 144 days ahead of schedule and \$12 million under budget due to its collaborative effort (Cloke, 310).

“Team building is the process of turning a group of individual contributing employees into a cohesive team” (Heathfield). That team can in turn run more efficiently and productively. For successful team building, we as leaders must ensure that, “Learning takes place, there is active criticism and honest disagreement, and opinions are heard and openly discussed” (Cloke, 235). It’s crucial to steer disruptive behavior or passion and anger that can disrupt the success of the meeting. We must learn to transition this behavior to one that can focus and work within the group. Proper team building encourages collaboration without fear of retribution.

The Peer Mediator allows the parties to effectively work together in search of “collaboratively implementing solutions” (Cloke, 302). The purpose of mediation is to “allow the current situation to be resolved and to deal with future conflict resolutions” (Cutolo). The non-binding intervention provides a high number of successful resolutions based on the mediators skill set. Moreover, the mediators communication skills and informal problem solving in mediation produces a success rate of 80 to 95% (Cloke, 302).

Reference:

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Cutolo, F. (1996). *Teaching Mediation as a Conflict Resolution Process: A New Agenda for Responding*.

Heathfield, S. M. (2019, November 20). *Essential tips and ideas for building a successful work team*. The Balance Careers.