

Self-Teach Workbook

Mediation Skills

Resolving Conflict & Disagreement

***Mediation** - Watch the Self-Teach Video*

Durham University Leadership Programme

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How To Use This Workbook

This workbook is intended to support the 'Self-Teach' modules and will provide additional activities, explanations and resources you can use in your leadership role.

Work through the self-teach video and, where directed, or as you feel appropriate, pause the video and refer to the workbook. In the video there will be opportunities for you to take a '60 second thought capture,' (indicated by a 🕒 symbol). Feel free to use the space provided in this workbook to jot down your thoughts. Alternatively, you can pause the video at any point to allow more time to consider the questions.

Take away resources (i.e. those that you can use separately as a 'tool' or resource in your leadership role) will also be highlighted by a 📁 symbol. This will prompt you to copy the resource for later use if you wish.

What to expect from the Module (video and workbook)

- Models, Tools & Tips - 🔧
- Reflective Questions - 🕒
- Post-session Resources and Exercises 📁

How to Use the Self-Teach Module

- Block out the time (sufficient time to watch and complete the activities)
- Download the PDF workbook
- Complete the exercises
- Pause/ rewind/ revisit any time
- Complete the post session activities
- Drop into the Q&A sessions planned

Workbook Contents

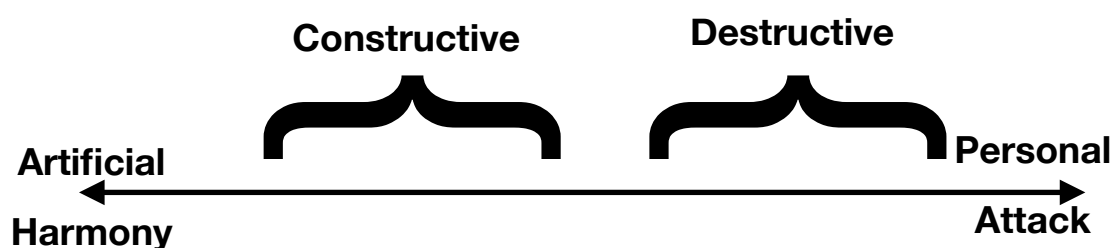
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Understanding Conflict

In this section, you will learn that conflict need not always be negative.

Conflict is in essence where two or more parties have some form of disagreement. These parties can come into conflict when engaging with one another over the matter(s) about which they disagree. There could be disagreement in opinion, over differing values or beliefs, or misunderstanding. The first question to consider is whether all conflict is negative.

Lencioni's Conflict Continuum (*1)



As we can see from the model, conflict can be destructive. However, maintaining an artificial sense of harmony can also be harmful to the team. Individuals may feel resentful towards others whom they feel are not having behaviour or performance issues addressed. Performance can deteriorate and over time, smaller conflicts can fester and grow.

Consider whether you tend to be more avoidant when it comes to confronting conflict. Do you work hard to foster 'artificial harmony' in a bid to keep the team running smoothly? What are or could be the consequences of that?

Understanding Conflict *(continued)*

Thought Capture Exercise



What are some of the causes of conflict becoming destructive or more volatile?

Take 60 seconds now to jot down your thoughts. Feel free to pause the video if you need longer than the 60 seconds provided

Jot down your thoughts here:

Recognise The Impact of Emotions

You may have identified a number of different factors ranging from misunderstanding to feeling unheard or dismissed. Consider this quote:

'At the root of every tantrum and power struggle are needs unmet'

Marshall Rosenberg, Non Violent Communication (*2)

Rosenburg's assertion is that the reason most communication moves into the destructive end of the continuum is because one or more parties involved have needs which remain unexpressed, unheard or dismissed. You may have identified that many of the causes you jotted down relate to this.

This provides you as a leader, a great opportunity to work towards resolution. This module will provide some tools to support you, however, keep in mind the underlying principle:

Park intellectual understanding until...

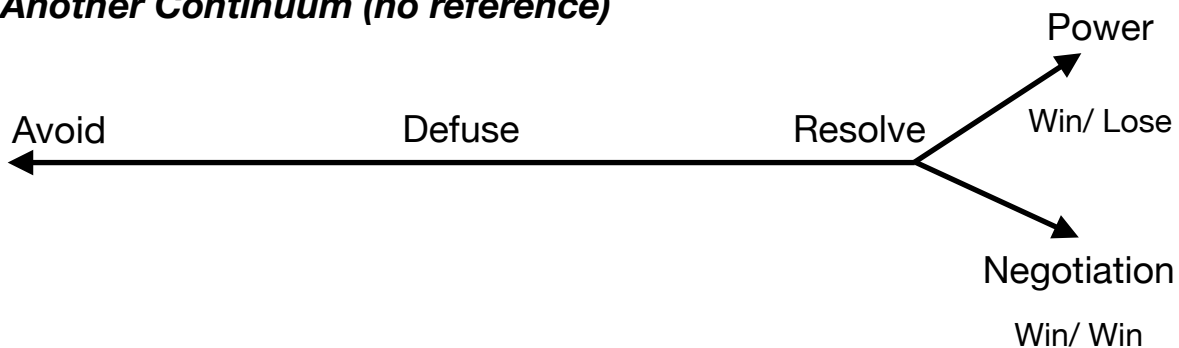
Feelings and emotions have been aired & acknowledged

So often we can focus on getting to a solution that we overlook the fundamental obstacle to satisfactory resolution - the feelings and emotions involved.

This is critical to effective resolution. When emotions are running high, resolution is generally not possible. We need to defuse the situation, allow the emotions to be aired, recognised and released before proceeding to resolution.

Recognise The Impact of Emotions (continued)

Another Continuum (no reference)



The above illustrates how, at one end of the continuum we can avoid the conflict (not confront or deal with it). There may be the odd occasion where this is the right thing to do.

Where emotions are high, it may be necessary to defuse them before considering how we can resolve the conflict itself. Ahead you will explore how to defuse volatile interactions.



Thought Capture Exercise

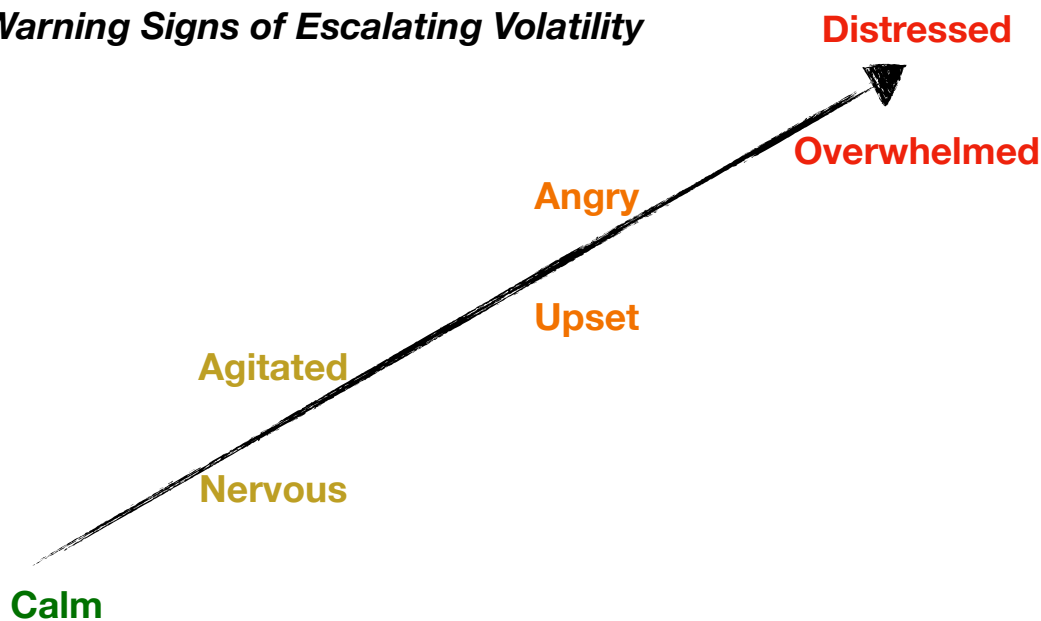
Think of a situation where it might be appropriate to 'Avoid' dealing with conflict or 'Defuse' rather than resolve, Take 60 seconds now to jot down our thought (don't stop the video - the exercise will time-out after 60 seconds)

Jot down your thoughts here:

Managing Emotionally Volatile Interactions

You may have identified several reasons justifying avoiding the conflict or defusing it rather than attempting to resolve it. In the former, if there is risk of harm, then withdrawing safely and avoiding the conflict is likely to be the best option. When it comes to defusing a situation in which feelings are running high, it is important to be able to recognise the tell-tale signs.

Warning Signs of Escalating Volatility



Thought Capture Exercise

Consider each stage of escalation above. What are the signs indicating the emotional state?

Jot down your thoughts here:

Calm:

Agitated/ Nervous:

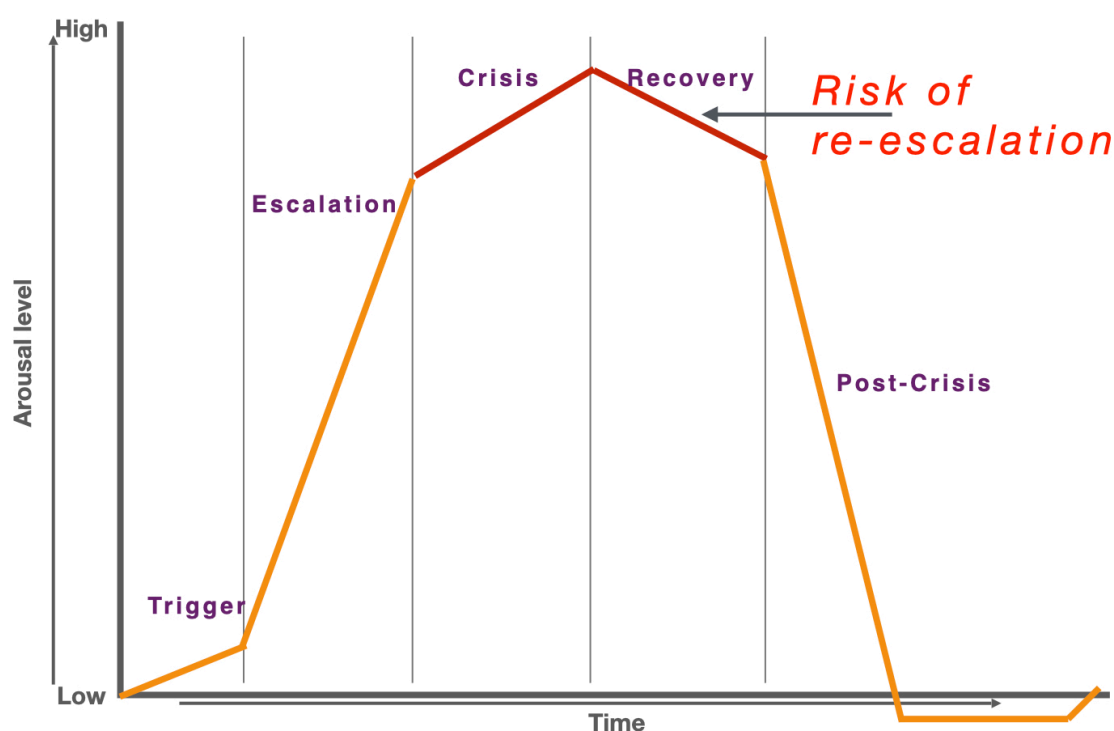
Angry/ Upset:

Distressed/ Overwhelmed:

Managing Emotionally Volatile Interactions (continued)

In addition to being able to recognise the warning signs of an emotionally volatile interaction, it is important to understand how this can impact upon our attempts to defuse the emotion and identify when attempting resolution is appropriate.

The Phases of Escalation (*3)



Recognising the speed at which a 'trigger' (something said or done) can lead to escalation is important as can motivate us to prepare for an interaction and consider what not to say. It is important, however, that we don't put too much pressure on ourselves avoid triggering behaviour - we may end up avoiding rather than engaging in positive resolution if we do. The key point from the illustration above is to recognise the risk of re-escalation which can remain high for some time. Allowing more time to pass to enable all parties to recover their former calm state is critical before considering resolution.

Conflict resolution tools/ tips



Thought Capture Exercise

What could you do to defuse an emotionally tense or volatile situation? Take 60 seconds now to jot down your thoughts. Feel free to pause the video if you need longer than the 60 seconds provided

Jot down your thoughts here:

Overleaf are some tips - watch the video self-teach for further explanation

Conflict resolution tools/ tips (continued)

De-escalation Tips and tools

- *Risk Assess - 10 second Risk Assessment - what can you hear, see, feel, sense?*
- *Allow them to vent - don't accept violent, aggressive or abusive behaviour*
- *Manage yourself - stay CALM (Composed, Assertive, Look Confident, Measured tone - check out the 'Conflict Resolution' Self Teach Module*
- *Actively Listen - listen, observe and be present check out the 'Listening Skills' self-teach module*
- *Use open body language - open handed gestures, relaxed open posture*
- *Apologise - a genuine apology where warranted can be powerful*
- *Acknowledge their feelings (LEAPS) - check out the 'Listening Skills' self-teach module*
- *Rehearse responses - I don't see it that way, tell me what...*
- *Know your environment - open, non-threatening*
- *Allow them to save face - agree where appropriate, allow them to back down.*



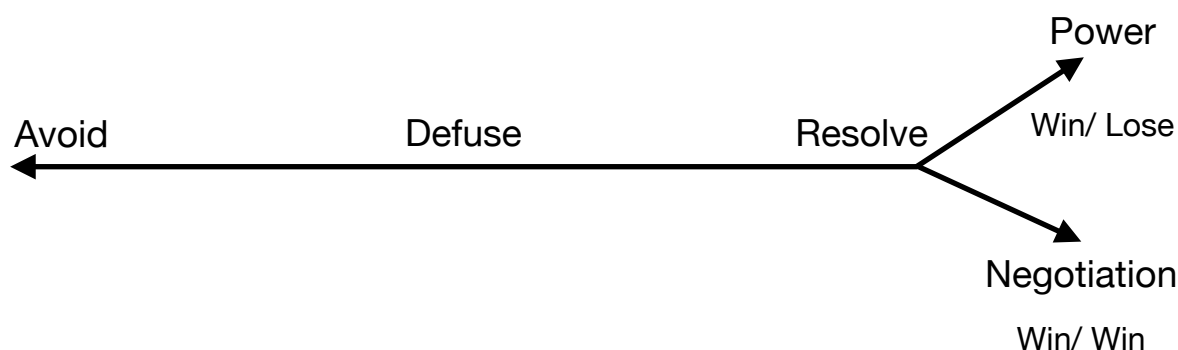
Thought Capture Exercise

What tip or tactic could you practice? Take 60 seconds now to jot down your thoughts.

Jot down your thoughts here:

General Mediation Tips

Having de-escalated a situation, we have a choice:



Do we approach our attempts to resolve the conflict, complaint or disagreement using ‘power’ or ‘negotiation.’ It is likely that your role as a leader relies heavily upon the consent of your team, the association and the stakeholders, therefore the ‘power’ option is usually not appropriate (however refer to the ‘conflict resolution’ module for tips and tools where this may be the exception). This is actually a good thing, since irrespective of the power your position holds, resorting to this as an option can have medium to longer term consequences. In the short-term you may gain compliance, however, over time you may find resentments build, and the original basis for the conflict which is likely to have remained unresolved, will re-surface having grown and festered.

Given this, approaching the conflict with an intention to resolve by seeking a ‘win/win’ for all parties is the ideal. The CUDSA mediation tool can be really useful in helping you prepare for and navigate your way through these challenging conversations.

C - Confront: the issue (don’t avoid and after defusing always deal with the issue)

U - Understand: question and gather as much information as you can

D - Define the problem: don’t assume you have a clear understanding

S - Search for solutions: Collaborate - identify solutions/manage expectations

A - Agree action: agree or ‘agree to disagree’ - but do agree what you will do next, - then follow-up

General Mediation Tips (continued)



CUDSA - Resource

Use this sheet to help you both prepare for a resolution conversation and as a means of navigating your way through the conversation.

Confront

What is the nature of the conflict, disagreement or complaint as you perceive it?

Understand

What questions could you ask to understand fully? Who, Where, What, When, How, Tell me more, Could you expand on?...

Define

How can you articulate your understanding? 'Ok, so here's what i understand is...' 'is that correct?'

Solutions?

How can you encourage generation of ideas and solutions? What do you need to consider when managing expectations?

Action Agreed

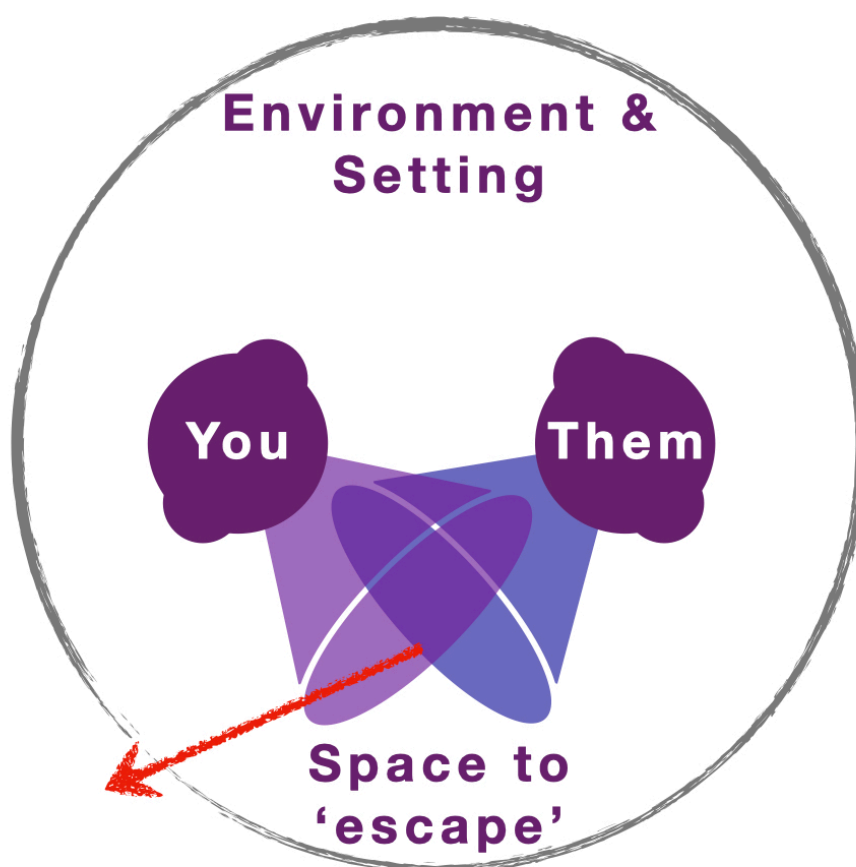
Are they clear? Specific? Who is going to carry them out? By what date?

Review date? _____

General Mediation Tips (continued)

Using CUDSA 1:1

Watch the self-teach video for tips and advice on how to employ the CUDSA model when interacting with one person with whom you may have a disagreement or complaint.

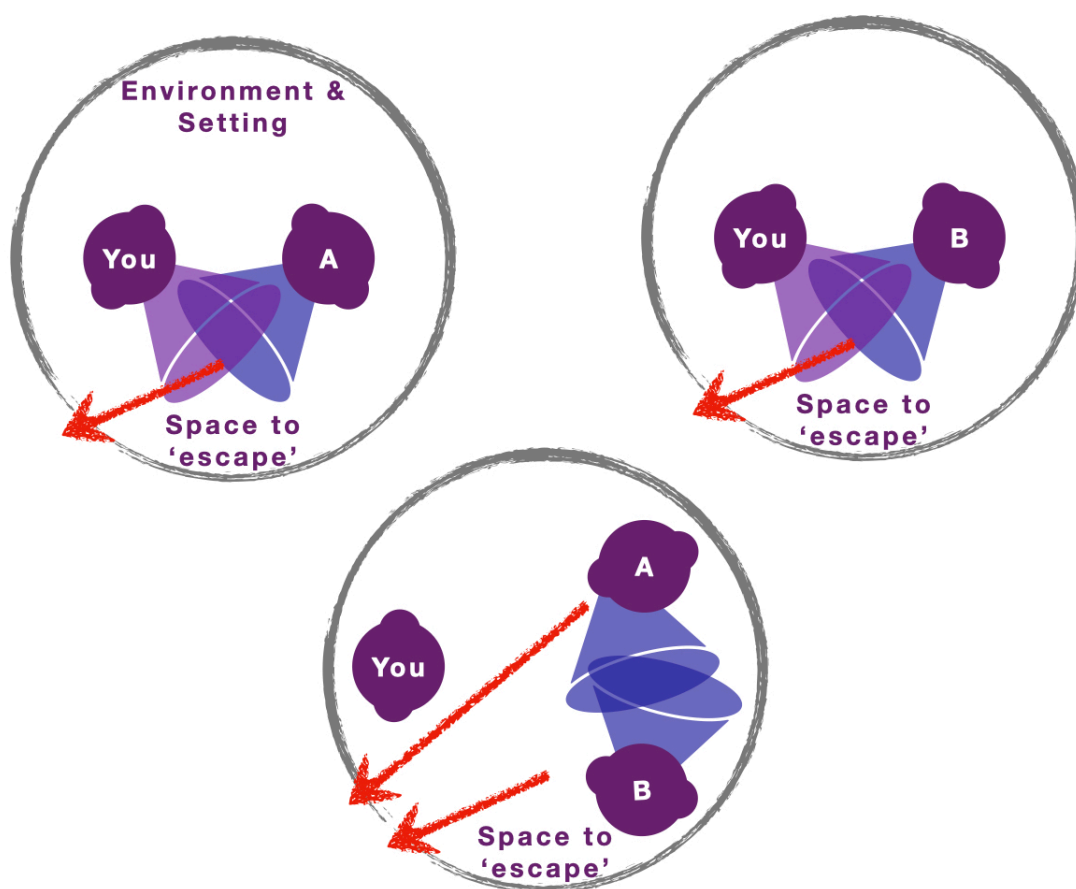


The environment in which you meet to discuss the issues leading to the disagreement needs to feel safe, private (affording confidentiality, but open and possibly public) and clearly allow safe exit. If emotions rise a need for personal space becomes important for all parties and that space will expand. Slow down, take your time, take breaks, and be prepared to move away from resolution and engage in defusing techniques if need be.

General Mediation Tips (continued)

Using CUDSA 1 to 2 or more

Again watch the self-teach video for tips and advice. When mediating between parties, the risk of escalation increases, as does the potential complexity for you, so consider seeking advice and support before attempting this. Unless you are a trained and experienced mediator, then only consider using this approach for the lower level issues.



Before getting the parties in dispute into the same room for mediation, conduct a CUDSA meeting with each party one-to-one. This may lead to resolution without formal 'in the room' mediation. It is also essential to secure genuine agreement by all parties to engage in the process. This is a voluntary process.

General Mediation Tips (continued)

Watch the self-teach video for more on the following tips:

- *Risk Assess* - Consider the complexity and nature of the disagreement or complaint. Is this appropriate for you to deal with? Where and when would be best to conduct the meeting? What are the warning signs of escalation you need to be alert to? Any other information that might indicate a meeting is not appropriate.
- *Set ground rules - it's ok to/ not to* - Agree beforehand how you will each communicate, what you will do if emotions or tempers become raised and identify what you are both seeking from the interaction (generally - a satisfactory resolution)
- *Slow things down* - Don't rush. Allow emotions to be aired and released
- *Take breaks if needed* - a break may be the best thing
- *Respect at all times* - Familiarise yourself with the University expectations and consider how you can demonstrate this in the interaction.
- *Avoid personalising* - Stick to the thing said or done, avoid making it personal or labelling each other. Check out the 'Conflict Resolution' self-teach for more.
- *Agree to disagree?* It's ok - but what can you agree in terms of the way forward?
- *Seek solutions collaboratively* - Manage expectations but do genuinely seek contributions and suggestions in addition to your own ideas.
- *Seek advice/ support if unsure* - Consider speaking to a mentor or support from within the Leadership Academy

Case Study *(continued)*

Work through the following case study and answer the reflective questions. Feel free to review the workbook material or revisit the video self-teach to refresh when considering your answers.

Throughout the rehearsals of a theatre production, the lead actor hasn't got on well with the rest of the cast. The lead actor finds it hard to cooperate and collaborate with the cast and director, instead stubbornly believing their ideas and decisions on the acting and directing of the play are always better than those of the team members. However, in the spirit of wanting the play to be successful, the cast learn to work around these issues.

During the dress rehearsal, the night before the opening performance, the lead actor leaves the theatre after tensions build to an unbearable height when they refuse to take on board a suggestion from the Director. They refuse to return to the rehearsal, and the cast are left with a difficult situation. The cast's only options now are to try and resolve the conflict with the lead actor and get them back into the production; find a new lead actor last minute; or pull the show altogether.

Part 1 - The Director meets with the actor

At the first meeting, the director detects the actor is still angry and upset. They display signs such as avoiding eye contact, fixed jaw, speaking in short clipped tones and holding themselves very still and stiff.

- ***What could the director do to defuse the emotions before attempting to resolve the issue***

Jot down your thoughts here:

Case Study

Further information

The Director is keen to adopt a win/win approach to this conflict.

What skills would be helpful to them in analysing the conflict? What attitudes might assist them? Explore some options the Director could consider, to move towards a win/win outcome. Identify the major issues, the steps they could take and the skills they would need.

What can they do to prepare for the next interaction?

Jot down your thoughts here:

Action Planning

Now take some time to identify what you:

- 1. Need to develop in terms of your own mediation skills. What one thing can you focus on now?*
- 2. Where can you learn more or find opportunities to safely try out the tips and techniques?*
- 3. What one tool could you apply now?*

Consider dropping into one of the planned online (or in-person) Q&A sessions where you will have the opportunity to explore specific questions or issues.

Jot down your thoughts here:

References

1. Lencioni, Patrick M.; Okabayashi, Kensuke. (2012). The Five Dysfunctions of a Team. Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
2. Rosenberg, M. B. (1999). Nonviolent communication: A language of compassion. Del Mar, CA: PuddleDancer Press.
3. Burgan, Kimberly V. and Hebenstreit, Samantha J., "Doing the Verbal De-Escalation Dance" (2014). Georgia Association for Positive Behavior Support Conference. 73.

Further resources

Consider the following self-teach modules to support your development:

- Conflict Resolution
- Listening Skills
- Time Management - Delegation and Manager as Coach

Check out these videos:

- Lencioni's Five Dysfunctions of a Team: <https://tinyurl.com/yz7c3lkp>
- Why is conflict so important? <https://tinyurl.com/yjwqh88s>