



Office of Informal Conflict Management

Conflict Coaching

Conflict coaching allows employees to work in close cooperation with a conflict management specialist (i.e., a coach) to develop their conflict management skills and find creative, effective and constructive ways to prevent and resolve conflicts on their own. This approach provides unique growth and learning opportunities for anyone who wants to:

- better understand how they act when faced with a conflict and reinforce their conflict resolution skills;
- analyze how they look at conflicts and the repercussions that this can have on themselves and on others;
- discover and understand the underlying factors that contribute to conflicts;
- identify their stakes in a conflict situation and acknowledge those of others;
- improve the way in which they react to conflicts by modifying their behaviour, including their words and actions;
- replace harmful reactions with productive ones;
- receive feedback regarding their behaviour and attitude in a conflict situation;
- prepare for a difficult conversation, or other informal conflict management process, such as mediation or facilitated conversation;
- prevent a dispute and stop it from escalating;
- resolve a conflict.

Rules

The conflict coaching rules are simple:

- participants participate willingly and in good faith;
- participants are ready to embark on a personal and introspective journey to fully take advantage of the benefits of coaching;
- to ensure the integrity of the informal conflict management process, the coach cannot participate in any other process in which his or her client is involved (e.g. mediation, facilitated conversation);
- participants are ready to talk about their situation and examine new perspectives;
- participants communicate in a frank and honest way and are receptive to comments;

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- participants allow the time and energy needed to fully participate in the process; the coach will provide the tools and identify the resources and references available to help participants;
- the coach will not give guidance, advice or professional opinion. He or she is not a substitute for medical or legal services;
- participants provide the coach with honest feedback if they believe the focus of the session should change;
- discussions are confidential and are not made public.

Process

Together, the coach and the participant will establish a coaching relationship by:

- setting up a specific number of coaching sessions, usually three or four, and agreeing on a date for each one. The sessions will last approximately one hour and may be held in person, by telephone or by videoconference;
- determining the objectives (what the participant would like to get out of the coaching sessions) and how these will be achieved;
- identifying the obstacles that keep the participant from improving his or her conflict management and communication skills;
- using the theories learned through practical exercises, such as role playing.

Conflict coaching is a voluntary process; the coach and the participant may, either individually or together, end the process at any time. The person who decides to end the process will have to provide a reason.

If, during the process, the coach has not heard from the participant in 30 days, the coaching relationship will be considered to have ended and the file will be closed.

For more information on conflict coaching, contact the Office of Informal Conflict Management at 1-866-382-7502 or send us an email at NC-OICM-BGIC-GD@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca