

Understanding Positions: Moving to Interests (1 day)

In conflict situations, individuals often have clear positions or outcomes that they want to achieve, and each offers solutions based on those positions. When those positions differ, conflict intensifies. Develop skills to explore interests that underlie positions. By uncovering these interests, opportunities emerge to find common ground and win-win solutions.

Harassment, Crisis or Conflict (1 day)

Understanding when someone's human rights have been violated will be the focus of this course. Participants will learn the difference between a rights-based and interested-based approach to workplace issues, a critical distinction when determining which process to use to address workplace concerns.

Getting Ready for the Assessment:**Managing Conflict: Practice Sessions** (3 sessions)

An opportunity to practice and hone the skills learned in the Managing Conflict in the Workplace Certificate (MCWC) courses. Each session is coached. Practice sessions are not included in the certificate price but are recommended for additional practice.

Plus the Assessment:**Skills Assessment for Certification**

The assessment is required only for those seeking the Certificate. To be eligible for the assessment, students must have successfully completed 70 hours of coursework prior to undertaking the assessment. Assessment sessions will be scheduled based on demand.

The assessment for Managing Conflict in the Workplace is done on an individual basis, and will entail a written assignment and a demonstration of skills. The written assignment will cover the content of the course material. A workplace case study will be used to assess the student's theoretical learning. Students will also demonstrate their skill development in a role play situation by using a negotiation model.

Students who are seeking certification will be offered a one-hour group orientation session to obtain information regarding the assessment process and expectations. The assessment criteria and material will be reviewed and students will have an opportunity to ask questions and seek support.

Program Admission and Prerequisites

There are no prerequisites for the program, and there is no admission process for the program. Essential Communication Skills in Conflict is required as the prerequisite for all other courses.

Course Delivery Format

Students must be prepared to participate in an interactive learning environment. The classroom learning will consist of lectures, group discussion, case studies, and simulated roleplays. Students will develop self-reflection skills and receive constructive feedback to enhance their learning. There will also be required reading and homework. Prior training in the field of conflict resolution is not necessary.

Program Fees

Fees are paid for each course when you register, individual course fees vary per course. Textbooks are required for some courses and are extra and may be purchased through the Vancouver Island University Bookstore.

How to Register

There is no admission process for this program. You simply register for the course(s) you wish to take each semester. When you have completed the required 70 hours of coursework, you will be eligible for the assessment to qualify for the Certificate. Note that the first course, Essential Communication Skills In Conflict, is required as the pre-requisite for all other courses. There are no other pre-requisites or admission requirements for the program.

**About Vancouver Island University**

Vancouver Island University is a comprehensive post-secondary institution located on beautiful Vancouver Island in British Columbia. Our main campus is located in Nanaimo and we have regional campuses in Duncan and Powell River, and a campus centre in Parksville. More than 14,000 full-time and part-time students are enrolled in academic, applied, career/technical, vocational, trades and developmental programs leading to certificates, diplomas and degrees.

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The information contained in this guide is accurate at the time of printing. Vancouver Island University reserves the right to make such changes as necessary, including cancellation and adjustment of courses.

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**Managing Conflict
In The Workplace**

Part-time Non-credit Certificate Program



Program Overview

This program helps you discover constructive ways to resolve disputes in your work environment by developing skills for effective communication. A common cause of conflict in the workplace results when expectations are not communicated. The program will focus on an interest-based conflict resolution process. The benefits of gaining a better understanding of conflict theory and practical skills will assist you to intervene in conflict situations. This Certificate Program is designed for anyone who would like to improve workplace relationships, as a coworker, supervisor or manager, as well as in dealing with clients and customers.

Career Opportunities

With the demands of downsizing and change that are happening in the workplace today, learning new ways to manage the dynamics of conflict can greatly improve your career advancement. There is an increased demand for managers and supervisors to understand and address conflicts that can seriously affect the work environment. Increased skills to assist yourself and others to resolve conflict issues constructively will greatly improve your chances for job advancement as an employee, supervisor or manager. These skills will also be of value to union representatives.

Program Objectives

The overall goal of the program is to develop skills and tools to effectively resolve conflicts in the workplace. More specifically, on completion of the program, students will be able to:

- Understand the major principles and theories of conflict resolution.
- Explore beliefs, values, and attitudes present in conflict.
- Describe your own conflict style.
- Demonstrate cooperative communication skills.
- Create a positive climate to resolve conflicts.
- Identify the dynamics of anger.
- Defuse defensive behaviours.
- Develop and maintain constructive working relationships.
- Understand the difference between interests and positions.
- Distinguish between negotiation and mediation.
- Demonstrate effective negotiation and mediation skills.

- Understand conflict resolution models.
- Design a conflict management system.
- Provide closure and write agreements for different types of disputes.

Program Format

This program is offered on a part-time basis over two semesters. It consists of a total of 70 hours of instruction delivered in a workshop format, plus an assessment for those wishing to obtain the Certificate. Workshops are also open on an individual basis for those interested in specific skills and topics (pre-requisites must be met).

Program Outline

Students who successfully complete 70 hours of coursework and the assessment will be awarded a Certificate. The program is comprised of four required core courses (totaling 49 core course hours), plus a selection of elective courses (total of 21 elective hours required), plus the assessment.

Note that courses are open to anyone, and may be taken individually, for those not seeking the full certificate. (Note that the first course is the pre-requisite for all other courses.)

The four required core courses are:

Essential Communication Skills in Conflict (2 days)

This course is the prerequisite for all other courses.

This introductory course explores how we give and receive messages that can create conflict. We'll discuss the dynamics of anger in conflict. Students will examine their own listening habits in conflict situations, and discover the difference between collaborative, judgmental and defensive responses. Through demonstrations and practice situations, students will develop essential communication skills of acknowledging, probing, asserting, and balancing assertiveness with understanding and empathy.

Interest-based Negotiation Skills (2 days)

This course will clarify the difference between interest-based exploration and position-based conflict management. Participants will learn how to be effective negotiators, able to gain win-win results; to develop a neutral agenda of conflict issues; to discover what conflict issues need to be addressed; to understand the basic pitfalls of conflict and shift away from warrior stances ('I'm right and you're wrong'); and to learn how to deal with aggressive and competitive negotiators. Power is an important aspect in conflict and participants will be taught

how to understand and assess this dynamic. Using objective criteria, participants will learn how to write agreements that stick and how to follow up on the agreement.

Mediation Skills (2 days)

In mediation, the skill set is the same as negotiation yet the intentions are quite different. Mediation offers a unique process involving the mediator as a neutral or fair witness in the proceedings. Mediators must respect two diverging positions without taking sides and assist two or more people to reach a mutually agreed upon outcome. This role includes communication skills as well as an ability to provide a process that is fair and equitable for all parties. In this course, we'll explore different mediation styles and approaches, ways to manage emotional issues and climates, develop self-awareness; assist people to reach their own solutions; and write successful agreements.

Putting It Together: Coaching and Skill Practice (1 day)

This day of applying skills will integrate the theories and practice learned in previous courses. Using role-playing scenarios, participants will work in small groups with a coach. Participants will have an allotted time to demonstrate their skills by role-playing a case study, then receiving constructive feedback from the coach and classmates. This is an opportunity for participants to reflect on which skills need further practice and development. This course should be taken last.

Plus a choice of elective courses totaling 21 hours, which may include:

Conciliation: Informal 3rd Party Intervention (1 day)

Conciliation involves a neutral third-party who usually knows the people involved in the conflict and understands the dynamics of the issues. Often, the third party is an observer and the conflicting parties try to commandeer the observer to take sides in the conflict. Unlike mediation, the conciliator does not organize a meeting for the two or more parties in the conflict to meet face-to-face to resolve the issues. The discussions often happen separately in the lunchroom or around the photocopier. The conciliator plays a unique role as coach or listener for one or more parties. This course will discuss how the intent and process of conciliation varies from negotiation and mediation, and what pitfalls may be encountered in this role.

Defensiveness (1 day)

Most conflicts involve defensive behaviours. When people feel judged, attacked or falsely accused, barriers usually go up which can derail constructive communication. When people are defending their self-image, listening and understanding become confused, and conflict results if these behaviours are left unaddressed. This course will explore the many faces of defensiveness and how to adopt a curious attitude to understand the root of defensive behaviours. Theories of defensiveness will be discussed, and integrated with skills learned in previous classes to manage defensive behaviours and resolve conflict.

Reframing: An Alternate Appraisal (1 day)

The art of reframing is an agent of change involving the perception and climate of the conflict. Reframing is a powerful skill to assist you or others shift from a negative to a positive perspective. Interest-based conflict resolution involves looking at what is desired as an outcome, instead of what is not desired. Most people focus on the solution in a conflict that reflects their position. This one-day skill-building course will teach participants how to identify negative frames and practice reframing to move the conflict forward.

Designing Conflict Resolution Processes (1 day)

Conflict in the workplace creates many additional costs if left unresolved. These costs can vary from sick time, low morale, low productivity, grievances, arbitrations, physical and emotional injuries, and expensive legal bills, to name a few. Developing procedures to resolve disputes more effectively and at a lower cost is the essence of this course. Students will learn how to design a process that can be implemented in a workplace setting. This process will include a step-by-step framework to diagnose the existing system, explore what is needed, and motivate all involved to implement new systems to resolve disputes at a low cost.

Get Curious: Effective Questioning (1 day)

Asking effective, intentional questions can be extremely helpful in resolving conflict - "getting curious" rather than forming judgments and assumptions. Explore different kinds of questions, and use open and closed questions to gather information, explore interests, uncover feelings, create solutions, and reach agreements. Students will develop effective questioning skills.