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COMPETENCY CORNER

In this issue we are focusing on **Conflict Management**:

The ability to manage and resolve concerns, disagreement, and conflict in a constructive manner; encourage creative tension and differences of opinions; and take steps to anticipate and prevent counter-productive confrontations.

Review these five descriptions to determine your proficiency level in Conflict Management:

- 1. Awareness:** You do not avoid or ignore conflict. You openly invite others to express their points of view.
- 2. Basic:** You express disagreements in a calm way that does not attack or disparage others.
- 3. Intermediate:** You help uncover underlying issues and information causing conflict. You stay focused on desired outcomes when managing conflict.
- 4. Advanced:** You negotiate win-win outcomes in efficient and effective ways that are consistent with organizational values and objectives.
- 5. Expert:** You resolve conflicts arising at senior levels due to competing objectives, limited resources, or differing perspectives. You model conflict management techniques for others.

READY TO BUILD YOUR SKILLS?

Opportunities include:

Awareness/Basic:

- Practical exercise: Think about a time when you experienced conflict in the workplace. How did it make you feel? How did you react? Is there anything about your behavior that you wish you'd done differently? Because conflict is so uncomfortable for most people, we have a natural desire to avoid conflict and forget about it once it's over. To manage conflict in the future, it's important to consider how past conflicts could have been resolved or better handled. The best place to start that analysis is with your own behavior.
- Hybrid working environments in which text communication often replaces face-to-face interaction can lead to misunderstandings and conflict. Review the infographic, [Combatting Commons Sources of Conflict on Virtual Teams](#), to learn potential pitfalls of virtual communication and how to mitigate them so that you're taking steps to help prevent conflict in the first place.

Intermediate:

- NEW this month:
 - The podcast, [Embracing Conflict in the Workplace](#), will help you understand how productive conflict helps generate new ideas and solutions, inspiring positive change.
 - Use the infographic, [Conflict Management Strategies](#), to learn 5 strategies for managing conflict in positive ways.

- Join the live webinar later this month, **Remaining Productive During Conflict**. See more details on page 3.

➤ Practical exercise: There is a famous quote attributed to Viktor Frankel, Austrian psychiatrist and Holocaust survivor: "Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and freedom." Commit to giving yourself that space in future conflicts. Before you respond out of hurt or anger, step back and do the following:

- Observe your reactions. This will help you separate your instinctive reactions and personal feelings from the actual events.
- Re-evaluate the situation. Don't assume you know the motivations of others during a conflict. Consider a more generous interpretation of their behavior.
- Monitor your stress. We are all more susceptible to emotional reactions when we're feeling pressured.
- Give it time. You don't want to ignore the conflict entirely but giving yourself some separation and time away from the problem can help.

Reflect upon issues you encountered this month where your commitment to "giving yourself space" helped avoid the potential escalation of a situation. Were there any lessons learned or ways you could have handled it even better?

Advanced/Expert:

➤ When you're leading or managing others, it's important to understand that conflict is inevitable. When people work together, they bring different perspectives, opinions, and motivations that can lead to conflict. Keep in mind that conflict

isn't always bad. In fact, many conflicts — when handled properly — inspire creativity and innovation. Encourage your team to respectfully question and argue ideas. Cultivating a team that recognizes productive conflict as a positive force can lead to more collaboration and creative problem solving.

➤ Practical exercise: Read the book *Getting Along: How to Work with Anyone (Even Difficult People)* to become more adept at recognizing what Harvard Business Review podcaster and author Amy Gallo refers to as archetypes — familiar types of "difficult" coworkers — and the characteristics they exhibit during workplace conflicts. Gallo provides strategies tailored to deal constructively with each one. Learning to manage different types of people and handling conflict with compassion and understanding can help make you a better leader and example for your team.

You can find more learning and development opportunities on the [Conflict Management competency page](#) of the Career Compass Resource Center (CCRC), and in the [Career Compass Catalog](#).



Dear Navi,

Navi is your trustworthy confidant with sound advice on matters related to workforce development. As always, please consult with your local HR/LER/EEO/IG as appropriate on workplace issues.

Dear Navi,

I feel like I got off on the wrong foot with a new coworker. They arrived at a time when I was up against a deadline on a major project, and when they asked me for help on something I considered relatively minor, I put them off. Our relationship has been strained ever since, and often when I need something from them, I feel like they deny or ignore me out of spite. I feel badly that I didn't explain myself better in the beginning, but I'm hesitant to bring the subject up, especially since we both telework, and I mostly only interact with them via chat and email. The longer I wait, the more awkward it feels to say something. Do you have any advice?

— Repairing the Relationship

Dear Repairing the Relationship,

It's never easy to approach a coworker knowing that a conflict exists, but it's also difficult to remain productive if you can't collaborate. I applaud you for wanting to resolve the issue and admitting you didn't respond to the initial request as well as you could have. If you're serious about repairing your relationship with your coworker, it's essential that you acknowledge your own part in creating this dynamic.

Before you approach your coworker, consider how you might be misperceiving the situation. You say that they are acting out of spite, but you don't really know that. They may have taken that first interaction as a signal that you prefer to work independently. Or perhaps they're simply averse to conflict (most of us are) and are unsure how to bring up the subject themselves. If you look at it through this more positive lens, as discussed in the earlier practical exercise, you may be less hesitant and more likely to enter the conversation with greater compassion and understanding.

Since workplace conflict can be exacerbated in a hybrid work environment with limited in-person engagement, leverage the virtual collaboration tools you have available to you, such as Microsoft Teams. Set up a Teams meeting so that you can talk through the issue face-to-face. Make sure you are both on camera since both verbal and nonverbal cues are important, especially in difficult conversations. The on-demand webinar, [Addressing Team Conflict in a Virtual Environment](#), will provide you with helpful information about communication challenges for virtual teams and how to address them.

When you do talk to your coworker, it's best to admit your own fault in the situation and apologize. Explain the pressure you were under at the time and that you didn't mean to be rude or snub them. Knowing that you missed the initial opportunity to help them acculturate into a new

work environment, offer to help them now. The [NAVFAC Acculturation Program website](#) offers a number of helpful resources for new employees looking to learn more about the Navy and the NAVFAC mission. Providing your coworker with help in finding and using that information is a great place to start rebuilding your relationship with them.

Keep in mind that re-establishing that relationship will take more than just one conversation. Building trust with your coworkers requires ongoing communication and social interaction, which doesn't come as naturally in a virtual environment as it does in a shared physical space. The on-demand webinar, [Virtual Collaboration for Employees](#), will help you better understand how to communicate and foster trust virtually.

If you're unaccustomed to having these kinds of conversations in the workplace, it can feel very awkward at first, but it's worth it to restore a healthy and productive working relationship. The podcast, [Interpersonal Communications](#), can help you understand the nuances that make communication between two people challenging and provide you with best practices to enhance your ability to communicate with your coworkers and enrich your relationships.

Finally, don't get discouraged if your efforts aren't immediately rewarded. Restoring any relationship after a conflict may take some time. Remember that you can't change how a colleague behaves, but you can control how you interpret and respond to their behavior. Focus on what you can control.

The good news is that it's always possible to turn a relationship around, and the quicker you start, the easier it will be. Good luck!

-Navi

Do you have a question for Navi? Send your questions to NAVFACHQDearNavi@us.navy.mil, and you may be featured in an upcoming column of *Dear Navi*. All questions will remain anonymous.



IN CASE YOU MISSED IT...

The webinar, *Advance with Integrity*, will soon be available on the CCRC! In this webinar, you'll learn the values and components that collectively showcase integrity, and how these elements play a role in your professional behavior and career advancement. Look for the on-demand webinar in mid-February. You can find it and the accompanying workbook in the webinar section of the [Integrity competency page](#) on the CCRC.



CAREER COMPASS SPOTLIGHT

Live Webinar Coming This Month: Remaining Productive During Conflict

In this webinar, you'll understand how to maintain productivity during conflict and explore strategies for navigating conflict using a phased approach.

Two options are available:

- Tue, 21 Feb: 1000-1100 ET
- Thu, 23 Feb: 1500-1600 ET



Proficiency Level: Intermediate

No need to register – mark your calendar and look for the emails from your local Civilian Training Advocate (BD17) for more details.

SYSCOM TRAINING SUMMARY

Below is a list of all SYSCOM trainings being held in February and trainings in March that are now open for registration. Find more details and registration links on the [CCRC Event Calendar](#).



FEBRUARY TRAININGS

START DATE	EVENT
Mon, 06 Feb	Basic HR for Supervisors (East)
Mon, 06 Feb	Current Supervisor Training I (East)
Wed, 08 Feb	GLP: Navigating Conflict Management (Group 1)
Thu, 09 Feb	GLP: Navigating Conflict Management (Group 2)
Tue, 21 Feb	Live Webinar: Remaining Productive During Conflict
Tue, 21 Feb	Basic HR for Supervisors (East)
Thu, 23 Feb	Live Webinar: Remaining Productive During Conflict
Mon, 27 Feb	Basic HR for Supervisors (East)
Mon, 27 Feb	Current Supervisor Training II (West)

MARCH TRAININGS OPEN FOR REGISTRATION

START DATE	EVENT
Mon, 20 Mar	New Supervisor Workshop (West)

Stay tuned for details on additional SYSCOM offerings.

WHAT THE EXPERTS SAY...

Productive Conflict Isn't a Bad Thing

According to leadership coach and executive Shonna Waters, not all workplace conflict is bad. In fact, sometimes conflict is necessary to make significant progress as a team. Productive conflict is a type of healthy confrontation during which team members express their different opinions to reach a common solution. Team members may still disagree, but everyone's ideas are heard and respected. Unlike other forms of conflict, productive conflict contributes to the growth and success of the whole team. Here's how:

1

It encourages healthy debate, which in turn helps teams come up with the best solution.

2

It encourages team members to listen to each other and creates an environment of learning.

3

It empowers team members to work toward their goals and opens them up to new ideas.

4

It clarifies doubts and questions that some team members might be hesitant to voice.

Read the full article [here](#).



If you are unable to access the links on pages 1–3, copy and paste the full links below into the URL bar of a new browser window to view the content.

Competency Corner

Combating Common Sources of Conflict on Virtual Teams (On-Demand Webinar) – [https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Portals/68/NAVFAC/Careers/CC%20\(WFD\)/CCRC/CDC/Conflict%20Management/Infographics/Combating-Common-Sources-Conflict-Infographic.pdf](https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Portals/68/NAVFAC/Careers/CC%20(WFD)/CCRC/CDC/Conflict%20Management/Infographics/Combating-Common-Sources-Conflict-Infographic.pdf)

Embracing Conflict in the Workplace (Podcast) – [https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Portals/68/NAVFAC/Careers/CC%20\(WFD\)/CCRC/CDC/Conflict%20Management/Podcasts/Embracing Conflict in the Workplace-Podcast-FINAL.mp3](https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Portals/68/NAVFAC/Careers/CC%20(WFD)/CCRC/CDC/Conflict%20Management/Podcasts/Embracing Conflict in the Workplace-Podcast-FINAL.mp3)

Conflict Management Strategies (Infographic) – [https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Portals/68/NAVFAC/Careers/CC%20\(WFD\)/CCRC/CDC/Conflict%20Management/Infographics/Conflict Management Strategies-Infographic-FINAL.pdf](https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Portals/68/NAVFAC/Careers/CC%20(WFD)/CCRC/CDC/Conflict%20Management/Infographics/Conflict Management Strategies-Infographic-FINAL.pdf)

Conflict Management Competency Page – <https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Careers/Career-Compass-Workforce-Development/Career-Compass-Resource-Center/Competency-Development-Content/Conflict-Management/>

Career Compass Catalog – <https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Careers/Career-Compass-Workforce-Development/Career-Compass-Resource-Center/Career-Compass-Catalog/>

Dear Navi

Addressing Team Conflict in a Virtual Environment (On-Demand Webinar – Conflict Management) – <https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Careers/Career-Compass-Workforce-Development/Career-Compass-Resource-Center/Competency-Development-Content/Conflict-Management/>

Virtual Collaboration for Employees (On-Demand Webinar – Communicating for Results) – <https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Careers/Career-Compass-Workforce-Development/Career-Compass-Resource-Center/Competency-Development-Content/Communicating-for-Results/>

Interpersonal Communications (Podcast – Communicating for Results) – [https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Portals/68/NAVFAC/Careers/CC%20\(WFD\)/CCRC/CDC/Communicating%20for%20Results/Podcasts/Interpersonal%20Communications 20201027 v2.0.mp3](https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Portals/68/NAVFAC/Careers/CC%20(WFD)/CCRC/CDC/Communicating%20for%20Results/Podcasts/Interpersonal%20Communications 20201027 v2.0.mp3)

What the Experts Say

Read the full article – <https://www.betterup.com/blog/productive-conflict>

In Case You Missed It

Integrity competency page – <https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Careers/Career-Compass-Workforce-Development/Career-Compass-Resource-Center/Competency-Development-Content/Integrity/>

SYSCOM Training Summary

CCRC Event Calendar – <https://www.navfac.navy.mil/Careers/Career-Compass-Workforce-Development/Career-Compass-Resource-Center/Event-Calendar/>

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<https://navfac.navy.mil/Careers/Career-Compass-Workforce-Development/Career-Compass-Resource-Center>

