

Conflict Resolution Exercise

Each party to the conflict writes down word-for-word (as much as they can remember) what was said/done (facial expressions, body language etc) in column A.

In column B, each writes down **their** thoughts as to what was said – what **they** thinking.

In column C, each writes down what they think the other person was thinking when it was said.

Leave the last column blank for now.

Make a copy for each person involved in the conflict and one for the mediator (if there is one).

Meet and exchange the papers. Give each person time to read over the other person(s) papers carefully.

Discuss the exchange line-by-line.

Did what **you** said/body language match what **you** were thinking? Were **you** transparent?

Did **you** share all necessary information?

Did **you** use phrases for miscommunication? Preaching, threatening, judging blaming, personalizing or categorizing etc...?

How does what you think the other person was thinking compare with what they wrote they were thinking? Did **you** make assumptions?

After discussing, take time to write what you could have done differently in the conversation.

Scenario: Abby, a manager notices that Bella, a case manager, checked out at 12:10 for her 30 minute lunch but arrived back at 12:50. Abby has just been to an HR training where they discussed that union employees cannot add their breaks to their lunch. She wants to make sure Bella is not breaking this rule. Bella, a case manager, did work through her break but did not add 10 minutes on to the break time but was stopped by a customer on the way out. Knowing customer service is important part of their mission, she stopped and answered her questions since the front desk was really busy and the customer seemed like she was in a big hurry.

Bella's Chart

A	B	C	D
What was said...	What was I thinking?	What did I think the other person was thinking?	What could I have done differently?
Abby: Do you have a sec?			
Bella: Sure, what do you want?	B: Not really, what does she want now? Nothing is ever a "sec" with her, she always takes up our time. I need to get this court prep done.		
Abby: I noticed you took 40 minutes for lunch today and did not check in with your supervisor. You know in this unit we stick to our schedules or ask the supervisor. I need to be fair to everyone and if I allow you to do it, then everyone will want to do it. How will that look?	B: Really? I worked through breaks to get what she needed done and now I get this attitude? And I was stopped by a customer as I was walking out the door and answered her question because the front desk was busy. She never seems to know when I do something right but always seems to be there if she thinks something is wrong. Here she goes again.	B. Bella is messing up again.	
Bella: Okay, whatever – I hear you. I was helping a customer in the lobby.	B. I noticed you did not come back yesterday on time either. A lot of nerve.		

<p>Abby: I don't think you do. I am a manager here and it is my job to make sure people are doing what they are supposed to do. Your attitude about this is not good. You seem to think you are above the rules. The receptionist can help the customers, that is their job not yours.</p>	<p>Abby: Must be nice. Not like she is here at exactly 30 minutes. Maybe she should pay attention to Ralph, he is late constantly but no one says anything to him, but then again that is her friend. Fine, I won't help the customer again.</p>	<p>Bella: I need to make sure she knows who the manager is. She is getting unnecessarily involved in reception and not following direction.</p>	
<p>Bella: I get it. I know the org chart. Anything else?</p>	<p>Bella: See If I help her out again when she needs it. I am union, I will stick to my breaks and lunch for now on and see how she likes it.</p>		

Abby's Chart

A	B	C	D
What was said...	What was I thinking?	What did I think the other person was thinking?	What could I have done differently?
Abby: Do you have a sec?	Abby: I want to handle this now while it is fresh in my mind and not make a big deal of it. But given what I just learned at HR, I have to handle it.		
Bella: Sure, what do you want?	Abby: she has time		
Abby: I noticed you took 40 minutes for lunch today and did not check in with your supervisor. You know in this unit we stick to our schedules or ask the supervisor. I need to be fair to everyone and if I allow you to do it, then everyone will want to do it. How will that look?	Abby: It is important that I make sure I say something because I just dealt with this a couple of weeks ago with Cyndi....but I can't tell her this.		
Bella: Okay, whatever – I hear you. I was helping a customer in the lobby.	Abby: Well that was rude! It is not her job to help people in the reception area – that is Legal's job. She can't decide to just change her lunch time. I cannot handle people just making their own lunch time, I have to deal with 10 people's schedules!		
Abby: I don't think you do. I am a			

<p>manager here and it is my job to make sure people are doing what they are supposed to do. Your attitude about this is not good. You seem to think you are above the rules. The receptionist can help the customers, that is their job not yours.</p>			
<p>Bella: I get it. I see the org chart. Anything else?</p>	<p>Abby: She is intentionally being disrespectful.</p>		

Conversation redo...

Abby: Hi Bella. I need about 10 minutes of your time. I have time between now and 3:00 p.m. Is there a time that works best for you?

Bella: I have time right now if it will be 10 minutes, I have to finish prepping for court. In your office?

Abby: We will keep it to 10 minutes, promise. Yes, in my office.

Abby: I noticed that you checked out at 12:10 today for lunch but did not come back until 12:55, 15 minutes past your 30 minute break time. I don't want to assume anything. Is the in and out board accurate?

Bella: Well, I checked out at 12:10 and was leaving but a customer stopped me in the reception area and asked questions and it took 10 minutes or so. Plus, I did not take a break this morning because I was helping you, remember?

Abby: I appreciate you stopping to help a customer but that is reception's job. It is important that everyone sticks to their time in order to have appropriate coverage. Was there a reason why you had to help?

Bella: I understand. Reception was really busy and the customer seemed like she was stressed and in a real hurry. It rarely happens like that and I wanted to give good customer service like our mission states. Is that okay or what should I have done in that case?

Abby: Yes, I understand now. Thank you for being so customer service conscience. If you find yourself in that position again and it is more than a couple of minutes, feel free to call me or another supervisor to help. Okay? That way others lunch is not impacted. Also you might want to just let your supervisor know if it looks like you were late so there is not a misunderstanding. Does that work for you?

Bella: Yes, thanks. I will do that next time.

Abby: I appreciate you helping me this morning and I did not realize you did not get a break. Be sure to speak up, you are entitled to a break. Also, you mentioned that at the same time as why you were 15 minutes over. I know you were helping a customer in this case. However, I just went to a HR training where it was stressed that we have to give you the breaks and they cannot be added to lunch per the union rules – so it is important we are more careful next time to give you your break, okay?

Bella: yes, thanks.

