

Conflict Resolution Toolkit for Project Leaders

This toolkit provides practical tools and frameworks to diagnose sources of conflict, choose appropriate resolution styles, and facilitate productive dialogue within project teams. It aligns with the six conflict-handling styles and techniques presented in Module 12.

Section 1: Conflict Style Quick Reference Card

Style	Use When...	Risk if Overused
Confronting	Issue is important and time allows for a deep solution	Can be time-consuming
Collaborating	High-stakes decisions with strong relationships	May delay resolution
Compromising	Moderate importance; quick resolution needed	Both sides may feel unsatisfied
Smoothing	Relationship matters more than issue	Underlying issues may fester
Forcing	Emergency, legal issue, or high authority is required	Can damage trust
Avoiding	Issue is trivial or emotions too hot	May signal apathy or leadership absence

Section 2: Conflict Assessment Worksheet

Use this worksheet to analyze a conflict and decide on the most effective resolution strategy.

1. What is the source of the conflict?

- ☐ Misaligned goals
- ☐ Personality clash
- ☐ Role confusion
- ☐ Communication breakdown
- ☐ Competing priorities

2. What is at stake?

- ☐ Timeline
- ☐ Budget
- ☐ Stakeholder trust
- ☐ Team morale
- ☐ Deliverable quality

3. Is it urgent?

- ☐ Yes – requires immediate resolution
- ☐ No – can be delayed to cool down

4. Relationship status between parties:

- ☐ Strong
- ☐ Neutral
- ☐ Strained

5. Recommended handling style based on above:

- ☐ Confronting
- ☐ Collaborating
- ☐ Compromising
- ☐ Smoothing
- ☐ Forcing
- ☐ Avoiding

Section 3: DESC Script Template

Use the DESC method to frame assertive but respectful conversations.

- D – Describe the behavior or situation:
“When deadlines are missed without updates...”
- E – Express how it affects you or the team:
“It causes delays for others and increases stress.”
- S – Specify what you want to happen:
“Please inform the team when something is at risk of slipping.”
- C – Consequences (positive or negative):
“That way we can adjust earlier and maintain trust with the client.”

Use this template in writing or during live conflict mediation sessions.

Section 4: Conflict Facilitation Guide for Leaders

Use these steps to lead a conflict resolution meeting between team members:

1. Set ground rules (respect, no interruptions, stay on topic)
2. Allow each party to speak uninterrupted (active listening)
3. Reframe the issue as a shared problem to solve
4. Use open-ended, neutral questions, like:
 - “What do you need to move forward?”
 - “How did that impact your work?”
 - “What would resolution look like to you?”
5. Summarize points of agreement and disagreement
6. Encourage joint problem-solving (collaborate or compromise)
7. Agree on follow-up actions and revisit date

Section 5: Plus/Delta Conflict Reflection Tool

Use this tool after a conflict to debrief and improve future interactions.

What Worked (Plus)	What Could Improve (Delta)
Clear expectations	Timely escalation
Respectful communication	Avoid assumptions about intent
Kept it task-focused	Clarify roles in the next meeting

Use during retrospectives or 1-on-1s.

Section 6: Team Conflict Readiness Checklist

- Have team norms and communication protocols been established?
- Do team members feel safe speaking up?
- Are there regular check-ins to surface early signs of tension?
- Is there clarity in roles and responsibilities?
- Is there a conflict resolution plan agreed upon in advance?