



Your Cortex Culture Kit

Part 1: Mastering Healthy Conflict for Stronger Working Relationships

Pre-work:

1. Take the [Cortex Conflict Assessment](#) that was sent to you.
2. Print this handout and bring to session.

The 10 Rules of Inclusion

Pair-Up Exercise 1 - Review & Reflect

Pair-Up Exercise 2 - The 10 Techniques of Healthy Conflict

Final Round - Key Takeaways

10 Rules of Inclusion

1. **We keep in mind our desired outcome.**
2. **We assume good intention from others.**
3. **We turn off all notifications and any distractions from all view to show respect for one another by being fully present.**
4. **We use timed rounding at beginning and end of meeting to be sure all are heard and take breaks for questions and comments.**
5. **Each person sticks to "I" statements.**
6. **We remain curious, especially when we do not agree with someone.**
7. **We strive to appreciate others' strengths and ability to contribute.**
8. **We say it now, with kindness and respect, rather than waiting until later.**
9. **The person leading or in authority of the session honors agreed upon start and stop meeting times.**
10. **We leave the meeting with clearly defined next steps that each person can take action on right away.**

 **by Cortex Leadership Consulting**



Pair-up Exercise 1

Review your Conflict Mastery Results and Scorecard and discuss the results within your small group.

- Reflect on a recent conflict.

- Is there one thing, from reading your results, you could see doing differently that may have helped you resolve or prevent that conflict if you stayed in the Empowerment Dynamic Mindset (creator, challenger, coach?)

Pair-up Exercise 2

Review the 10 Effective Techniques of Healthy Conflict

1. Which of the 10 techniques are you strongest at?

2. Which technique are you weakest at?

3. What would you like to do differently to have healthier conflict?

Final Round:

What was your biggest takeaway from the session?

What will you do differently because of it?



10 Effective Techniques of Healthy Conflict

1. Active Listening

- a. Truly listen to the other person without interrupting.
- b. Show you're listening: nod, paraphrase what they said, ask clarifying questions.
- c. Example: "What I hear you saying is... Is that right?"

2. Stay Calm & Emotionally Regulated

- a. Manage your own emotions before responding.
- b. Take a pause or deep breath if needed.
- c. Avoid escalating with reactive language or tone.

3. Focus on Interests, Not Positions

- a. Dig into why someone feels a certain way, not just what they want.
- b. Example: Instead of "I need Fridays off," explore the reason—maybe it's childcare or burnout.

4. Use "I" Statements

- a. Express how you feel without blaming.
- b. Example: "I feel concerned when deadlines are missed because it impacts the whole team."

5. Find Common Ground

- a. Identify shared goals or values.
- b. Start with agreement: "We both care about delivering quality work."

6. Collaborate on Solutions

- a. Co-create options rather than imposing your own.
- b. Use brainstorming or "What if..." conversations to explore possibilities.

7. Establish Ground Rules for Discussions

- a. Agree on respectful communication (e.g., no interrupting, no name-calling).
- b. Stick to one issue at a time.

8. Know When to Bring in a Mediator

- a. For complex or emotionally charged conflicts, a neutral third party (manager, coach, HR) can help.

9. Set Clear Follow-Up

- a. Confirm any agreements in writing or in a recap.
- b. Set a time to check back in: "Let's revisit how this is going in two weeks."

10. Build a Culture of Feedback

- a. Normalize open communication and early conflict resolution.
- b. Encourage people to speak up before issues escalate.

