

Transforming Workplace and Organizational Conflicts: A Guide for Intermediaries

Beyond Intractability checklists offer users involved in various conflict situations lists of things to think about, along with links to sections of Beyond Intractability that relate to each item. Intermediaries working on workplace and organizational conflicts might want to consider the following questions.

- **Identify Stakeholders**
Have you identified all the stakeholders (or potential stakeholders) involved in this conflict?
- **Clarify Goals**
Are you clear about the parties' underlying goals and interests?
- **Determine the Conflict Stage**
Is the conflict latent, developing, or fully escalated? Has it become intractable? Is the conflict ripe for resolution or do the parties involved feel it is in their best interest to continue with the status quo or even escalate the conflict?
- **History**
Do you understand the history of this conflict including the underlying issues that led to it?
- **Unrightable Wrongs**
Does the conflict involve a history of unrightable wrongs? Are you aware of options for transforming such conflicts?
- **Misunderstandings**
Do you know how much of the conflict might be attributable to misunderstandings? If not, do you know how to setup a communication process that might be able to answer this question? And, do you know how to setup a communication process that might limit these misunderstandings?
- **Emotional and Psychological Dimensions**
Do you know to what extent the parties' responses are due to emotional and psychological dimensions such as anger, fear or prejudice? Do you know what is causing these reactions and how to defuse them?
- **Fact-Finding**
Do you know how much of the conflict is attributable to disagreements regarding the basic facts? If not, do you know how to setup communication processes that might be able to answer this question? And, do you know how to setup joint fact-finding processes that might limit factual disagreements?
- **Escalation**
Do you know how much of the conflict is attributable to escalation and polarization? Have you developed and implemented effective steps to limit or reverse this effect?
- **Coalition Building / Conflict Minimization**
For each of the various stakeholders likely to be involved in the conflict, have you considered ways of reducing opposition to their efforts while simultaneously strengthening their networks of allies and supporters?
- **Intervention Options**
Are you familiar with the different options for intervening in an interpersonal conflict?
- **Culture and Conflict**
Are cultural misunderstandings contributing to the conflict? Are there differences between the parties in things like nationality, language, gender or age? Do you know some strategies for overcoming cultural differences?

- **Persuasion**
Do you have a strategy for explaining the stakeholders' goals and actions to each other? For persuading them that the other stakeholders' goals are reasonable and equitable?
- **Trust**
Have you been able to help the parties build trust with each other?
- **Power / BATNAs**
Are you clear about the nature of power and how it affects the parties' alternatives to a negotiated agreement? Are you clear about the powers available to other stakeholders? Have you been able to demonstrate to people the powers that the parties are willing to use to defend their interests? (Here you should consider legal, political, and economic power as well as the ability to resist violent assaults.)
- **Violence**
If the conflict becomes violent, do you have a strategy for de-escalating the violence? Is it possible for you to prevent the violence or is there anything you can do to decrease the suffering caused by it?
- **Dispute Systems Design**
Do you expect a continuing series of similar disputes? Do you know about options for developing a system for the handling of routine disputes?
- **The Future**
Have you envisioned a more constructive way of dealing with this conflict in the future?

Workplace & Organization Conflict Transformation: A Checklist for Disputing Parties

Beyond Intractability checklists offer users involved in various conflict situations lists of things to think about, along with links to sections of Beyond Intractability that relate to each item. Any person involved in a workplace or organizational conflict (as a disputant) might want to consider the following questions.

- **Identify Stakeholders**
Have you identified the other people who are involved or are likely to become involved in this issue?
- **Clarify Goals**
Are you clear about your underlying goals and interests? Is restoring relationships an important (or your most important) interest?
- **Determine the Conflict Stage**
Is the conflict latent, developing, or fully escalated? Has it become intractable? Is the conflict ripe for resolution, or do you feel it is in your best interest to continue with the status quo or even escalate the conflict?
- **Learn the History**
Are there underlying issues that are contributing to your conflict?
- **Unrightable Wrongs**
Does the conflict involve a history of unrightable wrongs? Are you aware of options for transforming such conflicts?
- **Misunderstandings**
Do you know how much of the conflict might be attributable to misunderstandings? If not, do you know how to setup communication processes that might be able to answer this question? And, do you know how to setup communication processes that might limit these misunderstandings?

- **Culture and Conflict**
Are cultural misunderstandings contributing to the conflict? Are there differences between you and the other parties such as nationality, language, gender or age? Do you know some strategies for overcoming cultural differences?
- **Emotional and Psychological Dimensions**
Do you know to what extent your responses are due to emotional and psychological dimensions such as anger, fear, or prejudice? Do you know what is causing these reactions and how to address them?
- **Fact-Finding**
Do you know how much of the conflict is attributable to disagreements regarding the basic facts? If not, do you know how to setup a communication process that might be able to answer this question? And, do you know how to setup a joint fact-finding process that might limit factual disagreements?
- **Escalation**
Do you know how much of the conflict is attributable to escalation and polarization? Have you developed and implemented effective steps to limit or reverse this effect?
- **Response Options**
Are you familiar with different response options?
- **Persuasion**
Do you have a strategy for explaining your goals and actions to other parties? For persuading others that your goals are reasonable and equitable?
- **Trust**
Have you been able to earn the trust of people who are skeptical of your intentions and motivations?
- **Power / BATNAs**
Are you clear about the nature of power and how it affects your "alternatives to a negotiated agreement?" Are you clear about the powers available to other stakeholders? Have you been able to demonstrate to people the powers that you are willing to use to defend your interests? (Here you should consider legal, political, and economic power as well as the ability to resist violent assaults.)
- **Violence**
If the conflict becomes violent, do you have a strategy for de-escalating the violence and preventing it from occurring again?
- **Complexity**
If the conflict you are involved in has become overly complex, do you understand theories of complexity and how to deal with it?
- **Dispute Systems Design**
Do you expect a continuing series of similar disputes? Do you know about options for developing a system for the handling of routine disputes?
- **Envisioning the Future**
Have you envisioned the end goals of your peacebuilding process?