



Understanding and Applying Conflict Resolution Styles for Team Success

Competency

Paraeducators and teachers understand and apply conflict resolution strategies to improve the effectiveness of their team.

Key Method

Paraeducators and teachers research and understand conflict management and resolution strategies, apply/practice the conflict resolution strategies, develop an action plan, and reflect on the process.

Method Components

Guiding Principles

To enhance student outcomes, it is critical that paraeducators and teachers see themselves as partners in the educational process and continuously work to ensure they have an effective working relationship.

Conflict is a natural, though uncomfortable, occurrence in any working relationship that usually arises when two or more people have opposing ideas or interests. It often involves emotions, especially when either party feels that they are right or that they know best. Teams need to understand the nature of conflict and use



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

conflict resolution strategies to resolve issues early in order to lessen the emotional response and to avoid an interruption in services to students.

The most effective conflict resolution strategies use an objective approach that is respectful of everyone. This provides a way for two or more individuals to find a peaceful solution to a disagreement among themselves.

Conflict resolution strategies include:

1. Talking with the person(s) involved
2. Practicing active and effective listening and empathy
3. Naming the conflict or source of the conflict
4. Identifying solutions/options to solving the problem
5. Developing and implementing an action plan

See the Resource section to learn more about conflict management and resolution strategies.

Note: Paraeducators support certified/licensed educators, including teachers and other related service providers. Teams participating in the micro-credential process can also include related service providers, although the design of some of the micro-credentials and related artifacts are specific to the partnership between paraeducators and teachers. Related service providers might include speech-language pathologists, school nurses, transition specialists, school psychologists, school social workers, creative arts therapists, occupational therapists, physical therapists, and school counselors. Most of these professions are currently defined as "providers of related services" in the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA, 2004) and "specialized instructional support personnel" (SISP) in the Every Student Succeeds Act (2015). NEA and the National Alliance of Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (NASISP) both recognize and use the term SISP. See the Resource Section to learn more about SISP.

Method Components

Through research, application, action plan development, and reflection, paraeducator-teacher teams will understand and apply conflict resolution strategies to improve the effectiveness of their team.



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

Step 1 - Demonstration of Knowledge (Individual Research)

In this step, paraeducators, and teachers will utilize research-based resources to demonstrate an understanding of the common causes of conflict in the education setting, barriers to conflict management, conflict management styles, and resolution strategies.

Step 2 - Application/Practice (Team Process)

In this step, paraeducator-teacher teams will apply/practice the first four conflict resolution strategies to an existing, real-life, or fictional example of a situation that involves conflict.

Step 3 - Team Action Plan Development (Team Process)

In this step, paraeducator-teacher teams will practice the fifth conflict resolution strategy by developing a team action plan. Teams will work together to identify a SMART goal (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant, Time-bound) related to the conflict situation selected for Step 2 and develop an action plan to improve team effectiveness in this area.

The action plan provides a framework so that team members are clear on the goal, purpose, outcomes for success, strategies, implementation steps, timeline, and support needed.

Before establishing a SMART goal, teams should consider the following questions:

- What do we want to accomplish? What do we want to happen?
- Why do we want to accomplish this? What issues will the goal help to resolve?
- What is the overall desired outcome? How will we know if we were successful? How will we measure success?
- How will we meet our goal? What strategies will we implement to achieve success?
- When can we expect the goal to be completed? What is our timeline (e.g., start and end dates, key milestones, check-ins on progress)?



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

Step 4 - Reflection (Team Process)

Lastly, paraeducator-teacher teams will reflect on the process. Reflecting on what you have learned about yourself, your partner, your team, and conflict management and resolution strategies will cement learning, further improve team effectiveness, and encourage continued professional growth.

Supporting Rationale and Research

Conflict Management and Resolution Strategies

Shapiro, Gail Joyce. 2014. Identifying the Factors That Influence Conflict Management Behavior of Human Resource Professionals in the Workplace: An Analysis of the Relationship Between Personality and Conflict Management Behavior. Nova Southeastern University.

https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1025&context=shss_dcar_etd

Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Flowers, Nancy & Mertens, Steven & Mulhall, Peter. (2000). How Teaming Influences Classroom Practices. *Middle School Journal*. 32. 52-59.

https://www.researchgate.net/publication/254164177_How_Teaming_Influences_Classroom_Practices

Sharon Mickan and Sylvia Rodger. (2000). Characteristics of Effective Teams: A Literature Review. *Australian Health Review*. Vol 23. No 3.

<http://tlmerrill.pbworks.com/w/file/attach/85213915/Mickan%2520and%2520Rodger%2520-%2520Characteristics%2520of%2520Effective%2520Teams.pdf>

Berdi Safford, MD, and Cynthia A. Manning, MA. (2012). Six Characteristics of Effective Practice Teams. *Family Practice Management*. 2012 May-June; 19(3):26-30.

<https://www.aafp.org/fpm/2012/0500/p26.html>

Ruedel, K., Diamond, M., Zaidi, A., Aboud, A. (2002) The Inclusive Environment: Paraeducators and Teachers Working Together. Wed. May 11, 2018



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

http://www.academia.edu/922366/The_Inclusive_Environment_Paraeducators_and_Teachers_Working_Together

Keefe, E.B., Moore, V., Duff, F. The Four "Knows" of Collaborative Teaching. Council For Exceptional Children, May/June 2004.

<https://www.scribd.com/document/371822820/the-fours-knows-of-collaborative-teaching-keefe-et-al>

Resources

Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams Training Resources

- BWTRES_Conflict Management and Resolution Strategies.pdf
- BWTRES_Effective Communication.pdf
- [BWTRES_The Five Knows of Collaborative Teaming.pdf](#)
- BWTRES_Generational Differences_Impact on Tming and Comm.pdf
- BWTRES_Problem Solving and Action Planning.pdf
- BWTRES_Roles and Responsibilities of Paras_Teachers_Administrators.pdf
- BWTRES_Teaming and Char of Effective Para-Teacher Tea...

Conflict Management and Resolution Strategies

[Conflict Resolution: Using the "Interest-Based Relational" Approach](#)

[Dealing with Conflicts in School: Advice from a Former Principal](#)

[3 Effective Strategies to Manage Workplace Conflict - Professional Development | Harvard DCE](#)

[How to Handle Conflict in the Workplace](#)

[5 Keys of Dealing with Workplace Conflict](#)



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

Common Barriers to Conflict Management

[Barriers to Conflict Resolution](#)

[Barriers Encountered in Resolving Conflict](#)

[6 Conflict Resolution Barriers You Need to Overcome](#)

Conflict Management Styles

[5 Conflict Management Styles for Every Personality Type](#)

 [Thomas Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument](#)

[Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument](#)

Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

[Let's Team Up: What Every Paraprofessional Needs for Student Success and Effective Teamwork](#)

[Teacher and Paraeducator Team Perfects the Art of Collaboration | NEA](#)

["TOP 10 LIST"-What Paraeducators Want You to Know](#)

SMART Goals

[SMART Goals - Time Management Training From MindTools.com](#)

Specialized Instructional Support Personnel (SISP)

[Specialized Instructional Support Personnel - NEA webpage](#)

Artifact Templates

 [6MC_Artifact 4- Team Action Plan_FINAL.docx](#)

Submission Guidelines & Evaluation Criteria

To earn the micro-credential, you must receive a passing score in Parts 1 and 3, and be proficient for all components in Part 2.



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Last Revised on [Nov 12, 2022](#)

Part 1. Overview Questions (Provides Context)

(250-350 words)

Please use the suggested word count as a guide to answering the following contextual questions. This will help our assessor understand your current context for working on this micro-credential.

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. Describe the context of the classroom or setting in which you work (e.g. general ed classroom, resource room, community-based setting).
2. Describe the makeup of your team (whom you work with regularly to directly support students). Include who is on your team (i.e. teachers, paraeducators, related service providers/SISP), each team member's roles/responsibilities, and how long you have worked together.
3. What did you know about conflict resolution before any information or resources were made available to you?
4. Describe your strengths and weaknesses related to conflict resolution.
5. What current process or strategies does your team use to resolve conflict?
6. Explain why you chose to complete this micro-credential?

Passing: Responses should completely answer each question, cite specific examples from personal experience, and justify the reason for choosing this micro-credential to address the specific needs of both the paraeducator teacher team and students. Writing is organized and easy to understand.

Part 2. Work Examples/Artifacts/Evidence

To earn this micro-credentials please submit the following **five** artifacts as evidence of your learning. Templates can be found in the Resource section.

**Please do not include any information that will make you or your students identifiable to your reviewers.*

Artifact 1: Content Explanation

Based on information gained from your reading and research, explain 1) the most common causes of conflict, 2) barriers to conflict management, 3) conflict management styles, and 4) the strategies to resolve conflicts.

An artifact can be a presentation, video, written analysis, podcast, or any other mode that can effectively demonstrate your understanding of this information. Video/audio artifacts should be 10 minutes maximum. Written artifacts should be 350-450 words. At the beginning of your artifact, indicate



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

your role on your team (i.e., paraeducator, teacher, related service provider/SISP).

Note: Paraeducators and teachers must complete this artifact independently.

Artifact 2: Article Summary

Summarize one independently sourced article on conflict management and resolution strategies. Include in your summary if and how the article connects to your experience in dealing with conflict management and resolution on your paraeducator-teacher team. Does the content align with strategies you and your team have used in the past? Did you learn any new strategies that would have been effective in resolving past conflicts? Please provide specific examples.

An artifact can be a presentation, video, written analysis, podcast, or any other mode that can effectively demonstrate your understanding of this information. Video/audio artifacts should be 10 minutes maximum. Written artifacts should be 350-450 words. At the beginning of your artifact, indicate your role on your team (i.e., paraeducator, teacher, related service provider/SISP).

Note: Paraeducators and teachers must complete this artifact independently.

Artifact 3: Application/Practice Evidence

Apply/practice the first four strategies of conflict resolution to an existing, real-life, or fictional situation that involves conflict. The situation must be related to your team and the worksite/classroom environment. Two optional scenarios have been provided and can be used as the basis of this activity.

The format of your artifact can be a video or written analysis.

Video Artifacts

The video must demonstrate the following conflict resolution strategies. The video should be 10 minutes maximum.

1. Talking with the person(s) involved
2. Practicing active and effective listening and empathy
3. Naming the conflict or source of the conflict
4. Identifying solutions/options to solving the problem



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

At the beginning of your video, indicate your role on your team (i.e., paraeducator, teacher, related service provider/SISP). Both team members must actively participate in the video.

Written Artifacts (350- to 450-word limit)

Written artifacts must address the following conflict management strategies as follows:

1. Talking with the person(s) involved
 - Artifact must include a summary of the conversation/meeting including 1) where the meeting took place, 2) meeting attendees (use Paraeducator 1, Teacher 1, etc., to maintain anonymity), 3) length of the meeting, 4) purpose of the meeting.
2. Practicing active and effective listening and empathy
 - Artifact must include a summary of the active listening and empathy techniques used by attendees.
3. Naming the conflict or source of the conflict
 - Artifact must include a summary of the specific issues and perceptions of the conflict identified during the conversation/meeting as well as a prioritized list of areas of conflict. The conflict and/or source of the conflict must also be named.
4. Identifying solutions/options to solving the problem
 - Artifact must include a summary of possible solutions/options identified during the conversation/meeting.

At the beginning of your artifact, indicate your role on your team (i.e., paraeducator, teacher, related service provider/SISP). Both team members must actively participate in the written analysis.

Note: Paraeducators and teachers should complete this artifact together. They can submit the same artifact.

Optional Scenarios

Scenario 1: You are Chris Baxter, an elementary teacher in a large urban school



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

district. You have been a teacher for five years and have been in your present position for two years. Several months ago, you were assigned a new paraeducator, Joan Kelly, an experienced, outgoing, and committed individual. She has worked as a paraeducator for 15 years. Her length of experience is a source of discomfort for you. You previously had paraeducators who consistently argued with you about methods of treatment and instruction, something which is a drain on your time and energy. You are not looking forward to the possibility of this occurring again. You have seen Joan periodically not follow your instructions when working with some students. To date, you have not said anything to her. You and Joan are meeting today to discuss a plan of action for dealing with one student's poor math performance. You also plan if the opportunity presents itself, to raise your concerns about Joan.

Scenario 2: You are Joan Kelly, a paraeducator in a large urban school district. You have been a paraeducator for 15 years and love working with children. You have three children of your own, two of whom have learning disabilities. You've spent the past five years working at another school system with a teacher who recognized your commitment and respected your expertise. You were continually involved in planning lessons and providing classroom monitoring as well as evaluative input in the development of the student's lessons. Several months ago, you were transferred to work with Chris Baxter, a special education teacher. You find her cordial and competent but disagree with some of the instructions she has given you when monitoring certain students' work. You've not discussed these disagreements with her, however, because of your workload. You have instead gone ahead and relied on your own expertise when you felt it necessary. Chris has scheduled a meeting to discuss the poor performance of one of the students with whom you have been working very closely. You plan to contribute your perspectives on improving the student's performance.

Artifact 4: Team Action Plan

Using the template provided, submit a team action plan around at least one SMART goal related to the conflict situation selected for Step 2. This artifact satisfies the fifth conflict resolution strategy.

Note: Paraeducators and teachers should complete this artifact together. They can submit the same action plan.

Artifact 5: Reflection



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

Reflect on this process by answering the following questions. The format of your artifact can be a video or written analysis. Video artifacts should be 10 minutes maximum. Written artifacts should be 350-450 words.

1. What type of workplace conflict do you think most interferes with meeting the needs of students?
2. Which conflict resolution strategies do you think are most important? Which do you think are most challenging?
3. What did you learn about yourself as it relates to conflict resolution?
1. Based on what you know now, how well has your team resolved conflict in the past? What has worked? In what ways does your team need to improve? How does your team plan to continue to practice and improve in this area?
5. Describe the conflict situation that was the focus of your action plan. What goal did you choose for your action plan and why?

At the beginning of your artifact, indicate your role on your team (i.e., paraeducator, teacher, related service provider/SISP). Both team members must actively participate in the reflection.

Note: Paraeducators and teachers should complete this artifact together. They can submit the same artifact.

Part 2. Rubric

	Proficient	Basic	Developing
Artifact 1: Content Explanation	Artifact explicitly demonstrates an understanding of: -the most common causes of conflict -barriers to conflict management -conflict management styles	Artifact partially demonstrates an understanding of: -the most common causes of conflict -barriers to conflict management -conflict management styles	Artifact does not demonstrate an understanding of: -the most common causes of conflict -barriers to conflict management -conflict management styles



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

	-conflict resolution strategies Explanation is clear and sufficient details are provided	-conflict resolution strategies Explanation is somewhat clear and sufficient detail is provided	-conflict resolution strategies Explanation is unclear and detail is lacking
Artifact 2: Article Summary	Summary explicitly demonstrates an understanding of conflict management and resolution strategies. Artifact makes connections to the team's experience with conflict management by addressing 1) how the content aligns with conflict resolution strategies used in the past, and 2) newly learned strategies that could have been effective in resolving past conflict. Specific examples are cited. Article is relevant to conflict management and resolution strategies Explanation is clear and sufficient detail	Summary partially demonstrates an understanding of conflict management and resolution strategies. Artifact makes connections to the team's experience with conflict management by addressing 1) how the content aligns with conflict resolution strategies used in the past, or 2) newly learned strategies that could have been effective in resolving past conflict, but not both. Specific examples are cited. Article is relevant to conflict management and resolution strategies. Explanation is somewhat clear and	Summary does not demonstrate an understanding of conflict management and resolution strategies. Artifact does not make connections to the team's experience with conflict management by addressing 1) how the content aligns with conflict resolution strategies used in the past, or 2) newly learned strategies that could have been effective in resolving past conflict. Specific examples are not cited Explanation is unclear and detail is lacking.



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

	is provided.	sufficient detail is provided.	
Artifact 3: Application/ Practice Evidence	<p>Artifact demonstrates evidence that each of the following strategies were implemented:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Talking with the person(s) involved -Practicing active and effective listening and empathy -Naming the conflict -Identifying solutions/options to solving the problem <p>Evidence of each strategy is explicitly clear and sufficient detail is provided</p> <p>The situation or conflict is relevant to the team and worksite or classroom environment</p> <p>Both the paraeducator and teacher actively participated in the activity</p>	<p>Artifact is missing evidence of the implementation of one or two of the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Talking with the person(s) involved -Practicing active and effective listening and empathy -Naming the conflict or source of the conflict -Identifying solutions/options to solving the problem <p>Evidence of each strategy is somewhat clear and sufficient detail is provided</p> <p>The situation or conflict is relevant to the team and worksite or classroom environment</p> <p>Both the paraeducator and teacher actively participated in the activity</p>	<p>Artifact is missing evidence of the implementation of two of the following strategies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> -Talking with the person(s) involved -Practicing active and effective listening and empathy -Naming the conflict or source of the conflict -Identifying solutions/options to solving the problem <p>Evidence of each strategy is somewhat clear and detail is provided</p> <p>The situation or conflict is not relevant to the team and worksite or classroom environment</p> <p>The paraeducator or teacher actively participated, but not both</p>



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

<p>Artifact 4: Team Action Plan</p>	<p>The action plan contains all of the following components: -at least one goal -purpose/rationale desired outcome(s) -1-3 strategies for achieving goal -steps to implement strategies -timeline -supports needed</p> <p>The goal is SMART and aligns to each element of the SMART framework (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant to team, worksite, classroom conflict, and time-bound)</p> <p>Strategies are relevant to the goal and are achievable</p> <p>The plan has clearly defined action steps</p>	<p>The action plan is missing one or two of the following components: -at least one goal -purpose/rationale desired outcome(s) -1-3 strategies for achieving goal -steps to implement strategies -timeline -supports needed</p> <p>The goal is missing one or two elements of the SMART framework (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant to team, worksite, classroom conflict, and time-bound)</p> <p>Strategies are relevant to the goal or are achievable, but not both</p> <p>Action steps are broad</p>	<p>The action plan is missing more than two of the following components: -at least one goal -purpose/rationale desired outcome(s) -1-3 strategies for achieving goal -steps to implement strategies -timeline -supports needed</p> <p>The goal is missing more than two elements of the SMART framework (specific, measurable, achievable, relevant to team, worksite, classroom conflict, and time-bound)</p> <p>Strategies aren't relevant to the goal and they aren't achievable</p> <p>Action steps are not evident</p>
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Part 3 Reflection

(250-350 words)

Use the word count as a guide to writing a personal reflection about your work on this micro-credential. For tips on writing a good reflection review the following resource:



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Building Winning Teams: Effective Paraeducator-Teacher Teams

Last Revised on Nov 12, 2022

[How Do I Write a Good Personal Reflection?](#)

Please do not include any information that will make you identifiable to your reviewers.

1. How did (or will) the process of understanding and applying conflict resolution strategies impact team effectiveness? How did (or will) it impact students?
2. How has this experience affected you in your role as a paraeducator or teacher?
3. How do you envision using your new learnings with existing or new team members in the future?

Passing: Reflection provides evidence that this activity has had a positive impact on both educator practice and student success. Specific examples are cited directly from personal or work-related experiences to support claims. Also included are specific actionable steps that demonstrate how new learning will be integrated into future practices.



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