

Welcome to

Navigating Communication & Conflict in the Workplace

THE TRAINING WILL BEGIN SHORTLY! WHILE YOU'RE WAITING...

 **Icebreaker Question**
(answer in the chat)

What is one communication habit that makes you feel respected and valued at work?



Survey & Certificate of Completion

Available following the training.

Connect With Us!



VISIT [CALTRIN.ORG](https://caltrin.org) &
SCAN TO LEARN MORE





Hi, We're CalTrin

Supporting child abuse prevention in California through **FREE** professional development & extended learning.

Who We Are

CalTrin delivers free science-based training to staff of Family Resource Centers, Child Abuse Prevention Councils, community-based organizations, and other child- & family-serving systems.

What We Offer

- Live webinars & interactive, small-group training
- Virtual, self-paced courses
- Job aids & other resources

And check out our partner project, **The California Evidence-Based Clearinghouse (CEBC)**!



Advancing the effective implementation of evidence-based practices for children & families.

A FREE, searchable database of 500+ programs & resources for implementation.



UPCOMING TRAININGS

mark your calendars!

Visit caltrin.org to view and register for upcoming webinars or workshops



June 11: HOPE 101



June 18: Knowledge of Parenting and Child Development



July 15: Sexual Health Conversations as an Ally to Trauma Treatment



July 21: Protective Factors Overview



Before We Begin...

DURING



Access your Notetaking Slides now! The link can be found in the chat.



Review interactive features for today's session. Locate the controls on the toolbar at the bottom of your screen.



This presentation is being recorded.



External AI assistants are not allowed in CalTrin trainings due to California privacy laws.

AFTER



Complete the survey at the end of this webinar to receive your Certificate of Attendance.



A follow-up email will be sent to all participants within two days.

Expectations for **BREAKOUT ROOMS**



**Camera and
microphone on
(muted if not speaking)**



**Be present at all
times, even when
not speaking**



**Participate in
the conversation**



**Create space
for everyone
to speak**



**What is
discussed here,
stays here**



**If your group gets
stuck, click the
“Ask for Help” icon**



Navigating Communication & Conflict in the Workplace

Presented by Ronesha Jackson, MS



Ronesha Jackson, MS

Evolve Training
Coaching Facilitation

- Founder and Chief Leadership Officer of Evolve Training Coaching Facilitation (EvolveTCF)
- Over a decade of experience working alongside mission-driven organizations, partnering with boards, executive leaders, and staff
- Brings a community-informed, practice-oriented approach to inclusive leadership
- Master of Science with a concentration in Nonprofit and Association Management

CREATING A SUPPORTIVE LEARNING SPACE

Care for Your Needs

Participate in ways that support you. Step away, stretch, or take care of yourself as needed.

Confidentiality of Stories

Stories stay here. Take the learning, not the details.

Speak From Your Own Experience

Use “I” statements. Make space for different perspectives.

Engagement & Presence

Engage in ways that work for you. Speak, listen, use chat, or reflect.

Access & Support

If you need support to participate, please let us know.



Who's in the Room?

In the chat, please share your:

- Name
- The mission you help to support
- How do you take your coffee?



Session Objectives

Today, we will focus on strengthening the communication skills that help teams navigate conflict and work more effectively together.

By the end of our time together, you will leave with:

- A clearer understanding of common communication challenges and conflict patterns
- Practical tools for navigating difficult conversations with confidence and clarity
- Strategies for building trust, strengthening collaboration, and improving team effectiveness



Why Does Navigating Conflict and Communication Matter?

Communication and conflict are a natural part of working with others. How we respond to them influences:

- Trust and workplace relationships
- Team collaboration and effectiveness
- Employee engagement and retention
- Problem-solving and decision-making
- Organizational culture and mission impact

When conflict is addressed constructively, it can strengthen relationships, improve outcomes, and create healthier, more effective workplaces.



Grounding Shared Language

- These words are used in different ways
- That can create confusion, tension, or avoidance
- Today, we're grounding in shared meaning so we can move into practice





Defining

COMMUNICATION



Communication is the process of sharing information, ideas, needs, perspectives, and feelings with others in an effort to create shared understanding.

Communication is not just about what is said. It also includes:

- **How something is said**
- **What is left unsaid**
- **Body language and tone**
- **How a message is received and interpreted**

Key takeaway: Communication is successful when understanding is created, not simply when a message is delivered.



DANGER
NO
LIFEGUARD
ON DUTY



Defining

CONFLICT



Conflict occurs when differences in needs, perspectives, priorities, values, expectations, or goals create tension between individuals or groups.

Conflict is a normal part of working with others and is not inherently good or bad. Conflict becomes productive or harmful based on how it is addressed.

Key takeaway: Conflict is not the problem. How we respond to conflict is what determines the outcome.

Which do you prefer?



Which do you prefer?



Work In-Office



Work From Home

Which do you prefer?



Email



Phone Call

Why Some Differences Create Tension

Not all differences are created equal. Some feel like no big deal and others can feel heavy and spark conflict.

Two reasonable people can look at the same situation and arrive at different conclusions based on their experiences, needs, priorities, and preferences.



Relevance

Some differences touch our core values, professional identity, or beliefs about what is best for the people we serve, which can make them feel deeply personal.

Imagine a family-serving organization where a team is discussing whether to discharge a client who has repeatedly missed appointments. One staff member believes maintaining clear boundaries and program expectations is necessary to serve all clients fairly. Another believes extending additional support is the most compassionate response given the client's circumstances. The disagreement isn't simply about attendance policies. It's about different beliefs regarding fairness, accountability, compassion, and service. When conflict touches those deeper values, conversations can become more emotionally charged and more difficult to navigate.

Impact

Impact: Differences that affect shared goals, limited resources, or outcomes for the people we serve often feel higher stakes.

Imagine a team deciding how to allocate a limited emergency assistance fund. One staff member believes the funds should be spread across as many families as possible, while another believes the organization should provide deeper support to fewer families facing the greatest barriers. Both approaches are rooted in a desire to help. The tension arises because resources are limited, the needs are significant, and the decision directly affects community outcomes.

Power & Equity

Power and Equity: Tension often grows when differences connect to who has power, voice, or influence within an organization.

Imagine a frontline staff member raising concerns about how a policy affects the families they serve. Leadership may view the policy as necessary for consistency and accountability, while the staff member sees unintended barriers for clients. The disagreement is not simply about the policy. It is also about whose knowledge and lived experience are valued in the decision-making process.

Context

Context: What feels normal, appropriate, or effective in one situation may feel very different in another. The context we bring to a situation shapes how we interpret people, decisions, and actions.

Imagine a supervisor encouraging staff to maintain strong professional boundaries with clients to prevent compassion fatigue and ensure sustainability. A newer staff member may view those same boundaries as impersonal or inconsistent with their approach to relationship-building. Neither person is necessarily wrong. They are interpreting the situation through different experiences, training, and professional contexts. The tension is not only about boundaries. It is about the meaning each person attaches to what good client service looks like.

Communication

Expression and Reception: Differences do not create conflict on their own. How ideas are expressed and received often shapes whether people feel respected, valued, and heard.

Imagine a team member raising concerns about a process that is creating challenges for clients. A supervisor responds, "That's just how we've always done it." The supervisor may intend to explain existing constraints, but the staff member may hear that their perspective is not valued. When curiosity replaces dismissal, conversations are more likely to lead to understanding, problem-solving, and trust.



Processing Pause



When a disagreement becomes conflict it usually touches on:

- Relevance
- Impact
- Context
- Communication
- Something else?

Breakout Discussion (10 minutes)

In your group, discuss:

- Think of a time when a disagreement became a conflict at work.
- What contributed to the misunderstanding?
- What would have helped?

Be prepared to share 1–2 insights when we return.



Conflict is not something to survive or endure. It is an invitation to growth. The first step is looking inward. Each of us carries patterns and habits that shape how we respond to tension. Growth starts when we notice our role.

Conflict Tendencies

Please have pen and paper for this section.



Understanding Our Conflict Tendencies

Common conflict responses:

- **Avoiding**
 - **Accommodating**
 - **Competing**
 - **Compromising**
 - **Collaborating**
-
- **Which response feels most natural?**
 - **When does it serve me well?**
 - **When might it create challenges?**



The Avoider



"I'd rather not deal with it."

When conflict arises, you tend to:

- Delay difficult conversations
- Hope the issue resolves itself
- Minimize tension
- Keep the peace by staying out of conflict

Strengths:

- Calm under pressure
- Thoughtful and reflective
- Avoids unnecessary drama

Watch-outs:

- Important issues may go unaddressed
- Resentment can build over time

The Accommodator



"The relationship matters most."

When conflict arises, you tend to:

- Prioritize harmony
- Give in to maintain relationships
- Focus on others' needs before your own

Strengths:

- Empathetic
- Relationship-centered
- Cooperative

Watch-outs:

- Personal needs may be overlooked
- Can lead to burnout or frustration

The Competitor



"Let's get to the answer."

When conflict arises, you tend to:

- Take a firm position
- Advocate strongly for your perspective
- Move quickly toward decisions

Strengths:

- Decisive
- Confident
- Willing to address issues directly

Watch-outs:

- Others may feel unheard
- Can unintentionally create defensiveness

The Collaborator



"Let's find a solution that works for everyone."

When conflict arises, you tend to:

- Seek understanding
- Explore multiple perspectives
- Look for win-win solutions

Strengths:

- Inclusive
- Curious
- Strong relationship builder

Watch-outs:

- Can take longer to reach decisions
- May overcomplicate simple issues

The Compromiser



"Let's meet in the middle."

When conflict arises, you tend to:

- Look for practical solutions
- Focus on fairness
- Seek middle ground

Strengths:

- Flexible
- Pragmatic
- Solution-oriented

Watch-outs:

- May settle too quickly
- Neither party gets everything they need

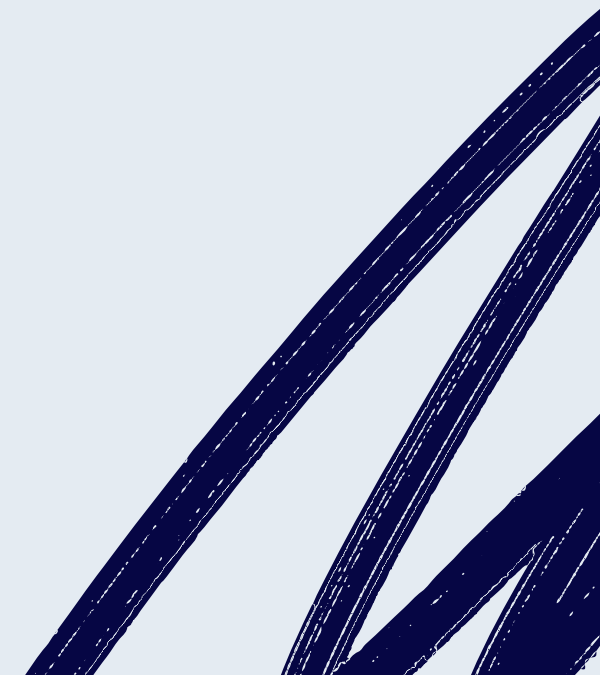
Reflection

- **When differences arise, do I avoid, engage, or invite collaboration?**
- **How do my values influence my response?**
- **What does my approach open up or close off for others?**





Practical Tools and Strategies



Facts, Stories, Feelings



Conflict often escalates because we confuse facts with interpretations.

Fact:

My coworker didn't respond to my email.

Story:

They don't respect me.

Feeling:

Frustrated. Disrespected.

What are the facts?

What story am I telling myself?

What emotions is that story creating?

The 24-Hour Rule



When emotions are high:

Don't:

- Send the email
- Reply immediately
- Escalate

Instead:

Pause for 24 hours and ask:

1. What outcome do I want?
2. What relationship do I want to preserve?
3. What conversation needs to happen?

This helps people move from reaction to intention.

Healthy Conflict in 4 Steps

PAUSE

What assumptions am I making?

GET CURIOUS

Help me understand your perspective.

SHARE IMPACT

Describe the effect, not the blame.

EXPLORE SOLUTIONS

Focus on what will help moving forward.



Breakout Case Study: "The Last-Minute Change"

- Maria is a Program Coordinator at a family resource center. On Monday morning, she learns that a community workshop she is facilitating that afternoon has been changed from in-person to virtual.
- The decision was made the previous week during a leadership meeting, but Maria was not included in the discussion and was never informed of the change.
- As participants begin calling with questions, Maria feels frustrated and unprepared. She approaches her supervisor, David, to discuss what happened.
- David says:
 - "We were moving quickly and had to make a decision. I assumed someone had told you."
- Maria feels dismissed and believes her supervisor doesn't value her role or the work she does with participants.

Psychological safety is the foundation of a healthy team culture. It means people feel safe to speak honestly, share ideas, and take risks without fear of embarrassment or punishment.

- **Listen without judgment:** Create space for people to feel heard, even if you disagree.
- **Invite and value all perspectives:** Actively bring in voices that may be quieter or overlooked.
- **Normalize repair after tension:** Conflict will happen — what matters is our ability to acknowledge harm, repair relationships, and move forward.
- **Foster inclusion and belonging:** Ensure everyone feels their presence and contributions matter.



How did we do?



Are you leaving with:

- A clearer understanding of common communication challenges and conflict patterns?
- Practical tools for navigating difficult conversations with confidence and clarity?
- Strategies for building trust, strengthening collaboration, and improving team effectiveness?

Questions?



Resource Page

Here, you'll find all materials, links, and tools referenced during the sessions, as well as additional resources to support your leadership journey beyond the workshop.



Book: Crucial Conversations

offers a structured approach to handling high-stakes, emotionally charged conversations effectively, widely used in business, education, and personal development contexts.



Article: Clear is Kind Brene Brown

A practical tool designed to help leaders bring more intention and structure to conversations about diversity, equity, and inclusion.

<https://brenebrown.com/articles/2018/10/15/clear-is-kind-unclear-is-unkind/>



Celeste Headlee TED Talk: 10 Ways to Have a Better Conversation

A data-informed approach to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion within organizations.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=R1vskiVDwl4>



Podcast: Untapped

A leadership-focused podcast featuring conversations with practitioners on strategy, talent, and building inclusive organizations.

<https://www.untapped.io/podcast>



National Coalition Building Institute

An organization focused on building stronger relationships across differences through dialogue, reflection, and skill-building.



TED: The Way We Work

A curated series of short talks exploring how people experience work, leadership, and collaboration.

Thanks for joining us!

WHAT'S NEXT?

- Survey and certificate in the chat now
- Follow-up email with resources within two days
- Watch your inbox for the next issue of *CalTrin Connect*

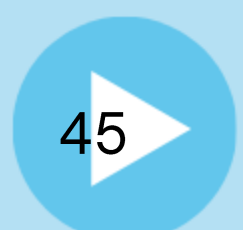


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