

# **FOUR WAYS TO START MANAGING CONFLICT RIGHT AWAY**

**Simple steps to eliminate frustration.**





## WHY CONFLICT IS IMPORTANT TO YOUR TEAM

Conflict is a normal occurrence on any team no matter how great the leader is. Common problem areas include inter-personal disputes caused by different values, work ethics, confusion around responsibilities and roles on your team, mitigating gossip, and handling cliques.

Let's be honest. Most of us you don't enjoy conflict and so tend to avoid it, however avoidance doesn't make it go away - things just escalate. The good news is that it doesn't have to be this way. This guide will show you how to anticipate, recognize, address and prevent conflict so your team comes out on top by leveraging it to make you stronger. As your team moves through conflict and resolves issues together, they will become *better* together.

**With a little guidance, you can take charge of conflict before it becomes a problem and achieve the most for your team!**

- ✓ Improve retention
- ✓ Better performance
- ✓ Superior experience
- ✓ Transferable skill-building

## ANTICIPATE CONFLICT ON YOUR TEAM

Have you ever been on a team that never really got off the ground? It can be frustrating and tough to pin point the problem. Here is a trick to help... *Anticipation is everything*. The best way to keep your team on track is through understanding the four stages of group development. Each stage is inevitable and necessary for team growth on the way to optimal performance.

### Forming

This is the first stage of team formation where people come together to work toward a common goal or task. Although every team or group is made up of leaders and members with unique personalities and conflict styles that have been shaped by their life experiences, it is the common goal that makes a team, a team. During this stage, you will see politeness and no risk-taking.

### Storming

The storming phase begins after the team has been together for a while—anywhere from 4–8 weeks—and has been through some high-pressure situations. During this phase, personality differences start to bump up against each other and relationships become strained. Already-established cliques become further entrenched. Some team members start to question authority. If there is a lack of alignment on team goals and processes, unmanaged conflict starts to show.

### Norming

Teams that accept and anticipate conflict are able to move to the norming stage. This is when conversations start to happen and trust is slowly built. Issues are named and discussed. Team members align on the team goal, which becomes the primary focus.

### Performing

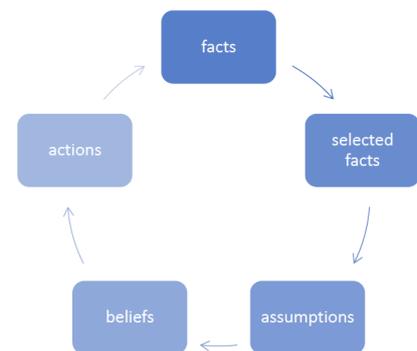
In this stage, conflict is no longer feared or avoided. There is general understanding that things may get hairy or unpleasant, but the team is aligned on their mission. The team goals come before anything else, including individual egos (the need to be right) or the general adversity that inevitably arises. New team members are able to come and go smoothly.

[Learn more about Bruce Tuckman's 4 Stages of Development here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyRGhgbJeSY](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RyRGhgbJeSY)

## RECOGNIZE CONFLICT ON YOUR TEAM

As humans, we don't have the power to read minds, yet every day we are faced with the task of trying to understand what others are thinking. We do this so we can determine our own actions. When we misinterpret another's motivations based on our own perception of the facts, it can lead to conflict. In simple terms, we jump to conclusions. Human nature leads us to do this hundreds of times a day. This chapter explores why we jump to conclusions and how we can avoid doing so.

**The Circle of Inference** adapted from Peter Senge's Ladder of Inference helps us understand the assumptions and decision-making that guides our daily lives. Slowing down our decision-making process by applying this tool can help us make great choices, manage conflict and build relationships.



### Facts

A fact is not something that's open to interpretation. It is pure data. It can be observed by anyone.

### Selected Facts

Selected facts are the facts we pull (notice or think are important) based on our past experiences, culture, upbringing, state of mind, level of distraction and tendencies.

### Assumptions

Assumptions are what we believe to be true, but are not based on fact. Assumptions are made using the selected facts we take from a situation. They are often made in a split second and occur hundreds of times in a day. They inform our decisions—we analyze information and draw conclusions about reality based on them.

### Beliefs

Beliefs are formed once an assumption is made. You can't have a belief without an assumption. A belief is also the foundation for decision-making. Once you arrive at a belief—again, all of this happens in seconds—you move forward with a decision and take an action.

### Actions

An action naturally flows out of a decision. We make decisions based on our beliefs.

## ADDRESS CONFLICT ON YOUR TEAM

Conflict happens between people—not in isolation. This means it cannot be solved in isolation either. As uncomfortable as it may be sometimes, when a conflict arises, a neutrally facilitated conversation may need to happen among everyone involved. Managing conflict on your team doesn't have to be a win-lose proposition. ***The key to a win-win outcome is understanding the positions and the interests of each person involved.***

**Positions** are perceived fixed solutions to a problem. A position is typically a stance taken by the party who raises the conflict or takes issue with something.

**Interests** are what is important to each person involved in the conflict. Positions are based on interests. Interests show us the deeper reasons for the conflict, as well as why those issues are important to them.

### THE FIVE STEPS TO AN ALL-WIN:

#### **1. Frame the issue**

Name the problem using neutral language.

#### **2. Identify positions**

These may be demands, threats, or terms and conditions.

#### **3. Explore interests**

Our interests are what we really want. They are the reason our position is important to us. They are our hopes, feelings, concerns, needs and aspirations.

#### **4. List common interests**

Which interests are important to both parties? This is the golden ticket in finding common ground to move forward.

#### **5. Explore options and develop a plan**

What options are there that will serve the interests of all parties? How can those options be actioned? Who needs to do what to make change happen?

## PREVENT CONFLICT ON YOUR TEAM

### **Establish Group Guidelines:**

Teams are made up of members who may have different ideas of what is and isn't acceptable conduct. This can lead to negative behaviours, such as members being late for practice, gossiping, or texting during team meetings—and will ultimately result in frustration on the part of other team members and coaches. Guidelines establish a baseline for behaviour and set group norms. They provide an agreement to refer to if they're not being followed in the future. They should be developed by the group that is agreeing to them—not created as a solo exercise by a team leader, coach or board executive. You need your team's buy-in for this to work. This is some of the most important work you'll do as a team all season.

### **Here are some examples of meeting guidelines I use and have seen used successfully:**

- 1. Confidentiality** – What is said in the room stays in the room unless everyone agrees to share the information outside the group.
- 2. Listen to understand** – When we do this, we are able to hear what our teammates are saying rather than focusing on our own response.
- 3. Focus on the future** – An easy rule to apply: Discuss the past only if it is to make a plan for the future. This helps avoid prolonged conversations that can sidetrack your group. By focusing on the future, you will ensure your group moves forward.
- 4. One person speaks at a time** – Allowing one person at a time to have the floor creates respect within the group and allows for more effective communication.
- 5. No blaming or shaming** – Blame tells someone they've done something wrong. Shame exposes them. Both inhibit trust and openness.
- 6. Give feedback, not criticism** – Feedback uses strength-based language describing first what is working followed by what isn't. Avoid using the word "but" between the two descriptions, as it tends to negate the first statement.
- 7. Take a break if you need one** – Breaks are a powerful tool to use when emotions are running high.
- 8. Phones away, in bags or with facilitator** – Phone use during meetings is distracting for everyone.

**It's a good idea to set up specific guidelines anytime you are working together with a group. Guidelines allow for predictability in these environments and create trust.**

## 4 EASY WAYS TO MANAGE CONFLICT

1

Step

### ANTICIPATE

**Goal:** To no longer be blindsided by conflict leading to a distracted and discouraged team.

**Outcome:** Your team will be confident in being able to anticipate conflict using the 4 stages of team development. You will know where you have been and how to get to where you want to be as a team.

2

Step

### RECOGNIZE

**Goal:** To end conflict avoidance by recognizing it at it's earliest stages! Conflict can be subtle and insidious and early recognition can keep it in check.

**Outcome:** Your team understands the *Circle of Inference* and how making assumptions based on selected facts can lead to unnecessary conflict.

3

Step

### ADDRESS

**Goal:** To be confident in addressing conflict effectively when it comes up.

**Outcome:** Conflict is addressed effectually using the 5 steps to create an all-win. Trust is built on your team because team members know that when conflict comes up again it will be dealt with in a fair way that allows the team to become stronger.

4

Step

### PREVENT

**Goal:** To prevent conflict from negatively impacting your team prior to it escalating.

**Outcome:** Through common understanding of how conflict will be managed by using group guidelines, opportunities for communication and honesty will normalize conflict on your team and leverage it into opportunities for creativity, trust-building and team growth.

"There are always new, grander challenges to confront, and a true winner will embrace each one."  
- Mia Hamm

## **NADIA KYBA PRESIDENT OF NOW WHAT FACILITATION**

Nobody likes conflict, especially when it causes your team to lose focus, keeping everyone from reaching their full potential. My wish for your team is to utilize the framework within this document to set your team up for success! We've seen far too many teams struggle because they haven't taken the steps to equip themselves for conflict – and they should because it's to be expected when the stakes are high!

Now What helps teams come together in a more meaningful way, through workshops, practical workbooks, and follow up sessions. When we work together, you'll get the tools you need to manage conflict effectively – resulting in a team that is more unified, confident, and successful.



## **NEED SUPPORT? WE CAN HELP!**

Conflict that divides a team can be discouraging and distracting. Now What can show you how to bring your team together by giving you the tools to manage difficult situations. Together, you will grow in confidence and become a more successful team.

Contact us to chat about Meeting Facilitation, Team Building through Conflict Management Workshops and Mediation.

## **CONTACT US**

Phone: 604-788-3547

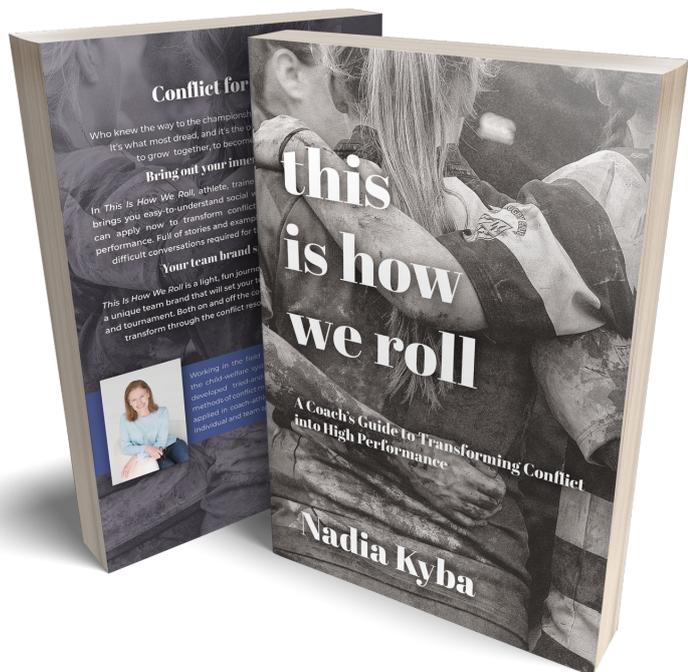
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## THIS IS HOW WE ROLL

A COACH'S GUIDE TO TRANSFORMING CONFLICT INTO A HIGH PERFORMING TEAM  
BY NADIA KYBA, PRESIDENT, NOW WHAT FACILITATION



Who knew the way to the championship was moving through conflict? It's what most dread, and it's the only way for teams to make it, to grow together, to become stronger—and to win.

In *This Is How We Roll*, I bring you easy-to-understand social work concepts and tools that you can apply now to transform conflict on your team to growth and performance. Full of stories and examples, this is your guide to the often difficult conversations required for true, lasting conflict resolution.

*This Is How We Roll* is a light, fun journey through the process of creating a unique team brand that will set your team apart in every practice, game and tournament. Both on and off the court, ice or field, witness your team transform through the conflict resolution method of champions.

Working in the field of alternate dispute resolution for over 20 years, I have developed tried-and-tested techniques and unique methods of conflict management that can be effectively applied in coach-athlete-parent-trainer dynamics in all individual and team sports.

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## WORD ON THE STREET...

Nadia has such an excellent grasp of the sport world and the current sport climate. My conversations with her in the planning and organizing of our event were incredibly insightful and inspirational, and were a huge help in forming our vision. She led and facilitated our event with expertise and professionalism and kept all participants on track to get the very best out of the experience. The day was a great success! I look forward to working with Nadia and Now What Facilitation again in the future!

- *Pacific Sport Fraser Valley*

We really appreciated working with Nadia - she was extremely flexible working around our hectic schedules and was eager to support us with collaborative planning, conflict management and improving our team's communication. She's personable and easy to connect with, which made it much easier to share our experiences. Thank you!

- *Buckets Ice Cream*

I have had the privilege to attend 2 Conflict Management Workshops put on by Now What Facilitation. These workshops have been beneficial to both myself and my staff. The workshops provided us with step by step instruction for having difficult conversations. They provided our staff members with opportunities to create unity and have team bonding. I am sure we will use these strategies for years to come.

-*Head Coach, Kigoos Swim Club*

I have had the opportunity to work with Nadia and see firsthand the positive impact she is able to make with teams through her approach to conflict resolution.

- *President, Ravens Female Hockey*

I have had the privilege of attending several family meetings that Nadia has facilitated. I am always impressed by the level of care, concern and professionalism that Nadia consistently brings to every meeting, regardless of the climate in the room. She has a genuine interest in making sure that everyone in the meeting feels comfortable, heard and respected.

- *Teresa Vozza, Touchstone Family Services*

Our team struggled with communication. The Now What Team Building through Conflict Management Workshop gave players tools to help them effectively communicate with each other. Since the workshop and follow-up session our players have prevented conflict by talking with their teammates when it matters most.

- *Head Coach, Raven's Female Hockey*