# CONFLICT REFLECTION TOOL

A practical way to examine your experience of conflict, recognize your own choices, and respond with greater Consideration.

### THE IDEA BEHIND THIS TOOL

Conflict often draws our attention to what someone else should change. Personal reflection redirects us toward what we notice, assume, feel, and can responsibly choose - without excusing harm or requiring agreement.

Consideration: “The conscious regard for the needs, values, and dignity of others, especially when making decisions.”

## THREE LENSES. ONE RESPONSIBILITY.

Conflict affects individuals, is influenced by leadership, and is shaped by organizational conditions.

### INDIVIDUAL

Recognize your reactions, needs, and agency.

### LEADER

Notice power, listening, fairness, and impact.

### ORGANIZATION

Support safety, accountability, and fair process.

## HOW TO USE THIS TOOL

1. Choose one situation to reflect on privately. You do not need the other person to participate.
2. Use the CARES Attention, Awareness & Intention lens to notice your own experience.
3. Separate observations from assumptions, then choose one safe next step within your control.

### A NECESSARY LIMIT

This is a personal reflection worksheet, not an assessment of someone else, a conflict investigation, or training to mediate, lead circles, or facilitate restorative repair. Safety and voluntary participation come first.

# Pause before deciding what conflict means

Use CARES' Attention, Awareness & Intention (AAI) reflection lens. The questions below are a brief personal application of that lens, not a full intervention process. Write only what you are comfortable recording.

## 1 ATTENTION

Notice the event and your immediate response.

**What happened that caused tension or frustration?**

**What did I notice in my body or emotions?**

## 2 AWARENESS

Explore the meaning, need, or history behind your response.

**What interpretation or assumption did I make?**

**What need, value, or past experience might be influencing me?**

## 3 INTENTION

Consider who you want to be before choosing what to do.

**What value do I want my response to reflect?**

**What choice is within my agency, regardless of what others do?**

# Separate what happened from what you assumed

Our first explanation of another person's behavior may feel certain even when important information is missing. This distinction supports curiosity without denying real harm.

### A SMALL EXAMPLE

Observation: "My message has not been answered for two days."

Interpretation: "They are intentionally ignoring me."

Consideration check: "What do I know, and what remains uncertain?"

## MY SITUATION

### OBSERVATION

What could be verified, apart from my interpretation?

### INTERPRETATION

What meaning have I assigned? What is uncertain?

### IMPACT + NEEDS

How did this affect me? What needs attention?

### MY RESPONSIBILITY

What did I do, say, or avoid that I can own?

### THE CONSIDERATION CHECK

- Whose perspective or experience might I not understand yet?
- Could differences in influence, role, or safety affect what is appropriate?
- How can I honor dignity while still naming harm and accountability?

I can take responsibility for my part without taking control of another person's story.

# Choose a next step within your responsibility

Reflection does not require confrontation or reconciliation. Consider what protects dignity, honors boundaries, and responds appropriately to the situation.

## ONE RESPONSIBLE OPTION FOR NOW

- ☐ **PAUSE**
  Give myself time to respond intentionally.
- ☐ **SEEK CLARITY**
  Notice what I still do not know.
- ☐ **OWN MY PART**
  Acknowledge my own choices or impact.
- ☐ **SET A BOUNDARY / GET HELP**
  Use appropriate support or reporting channels.

## MY NEXT CONSIDERATION

**One response I can choose:**

**One boundary or source of support I may need:**

## KNOW WHEN REFLECTION IS NOT ENOUGH

This worksheet does not prepare anyone to mediate, run a restorative circle or conference, investigate misconduct, or provide trauma treatment. When there are threats, harassment, abuse, coercion, retaliation, or serious power differences, use appropriate safety and reporting processes and seek qualified support.

## TAKE THE NEXT STEP WITH CARES

Explore Restorative Leadership Training or Conflict Repair & Mediation. CARES helps individuals, leaders, and organizations discern when deeper learning or qualified facilitation is appropriate.

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