

A little over a year ago, we devoted this column to the Conflict Dynamics Profile® (see next page). Ayers has continued to certify its coaches in the use of this new instrument, which offers a highly-effective approach for dealing with workplace conflict in a variety of applications.

Health Care

Hospitals are acutely aware that issues associated with conflict have implications for patient welfare. When we talk to them about the CDP, their response typically is, "How soon can you start?"

There is potential for conflict among staff—particularly in scheduling and shift changes—and between staff and patients, families, and doctors. Under the extreme stress and time pressure of a hospital environment, people tend to default to fight or flight behavior when their hot buttons are pushed. In a highly-interdependent context where good ongoing relationships are crucial, those instincts take you to the wrong place.

A classic case is a doctor prescribing a treatment the nurse knows will not be right. If conflict resolution skills are not well developed, the power differential between the two can result in acquiescence on the nurse's part and a poor outcome for both patient and hospital.

We typically recommend that hospital administrative staff take the CDP 360° assessment. As leaders, they are role models. And their behaviors have widespread impact, so receiving feedback from others is important. We generally couple that with practice in using the active constructive behaviors on the CDP. We recommend that staff members take the self-assessment, which is based on the same model. This enables everyone to talk about conflict using the same language, so the organization can establish a new norm for handling conflict.

Craig Runde is Director of the Conflict Dynamics Profile® at the Eckerd College Leadership Development Institute, a network of the Center for Creative Leadership. He received a B.A. from Harvard, a J.D. from Duke, and an M.L.L. from the University of Denver.

Training

A FORTUNE 100 company approached us to create a conflict management program for its leadership development curriculum. The CDP was the ideal platform. The full-day program is designed to help the company's area sales managers understand how they cause conflict in their lives; recognize their own hot buttons; and better

manage their responses to conflict, their interactions with others to avoid creating conflict, and situations where others are in conflict.

The client wasn't interested in a large-scale 360° intervention. It preferred to use a self-assessment but liked the fact that the CDP offers the option of a 360°, which can be used at a later time in individual coaching as needed.

Each participant completes a self-assessment in advance and receives a debriefing at the outset of the program. The first half of the day focuses on what they can learn from the assessment. The second half is highly experiential, involving practice sessions and exercises focused on dealing with high-conflict personalities, increasing constructive responses, and managing conflict involving others.

To date, some 60 sales managers have signed up to participate in three separate, full-day sessions.

Michael Crystal, Ph.D., is an Ayers' executive coach/consultant across a broad range of industries and organizations. He draws on more than a decade of experience in corporate HR and OD in FORTUNE 500 firms.

Coaching

CDP is proving to be a very effective coaching tool at a senior level. This is especially true in cases where EQ issues—interpersonal skills, self-management, and understanding the emotions of others—threaten to limit or derail the otherwise promising career of a high-potential executive.

Taking the survey and debriefing the resulting report helps create greater self-awareness and provides options and alternative strategies for managing the conflict more effectively.

As a result of the unique behavioral specificity of the CDP, a recent coachee was able to focus on a development plan to improve his responses to people he worked with. He learned to take control and to realize that he had choices in how to respond in various situations that were trigger points for his hot-buttons. The process took about six months, and a mini re-survey of peers, boss, and subordinates showed measurable improvement.

Ayers' coach/consultant Joe Tomaselli's experiences in the pharmaceutical industry and as an entrepreneur and a senior HRD/OE executive have helped make him an expert in facilitating transformational change in executives and organizations. ■

THE AYERS GROUP A Division of Kelly Services

A CAREER PARTNERS INTERNATIONAL FIRM

Headquarters:

405 Lexington Avenue
New York, NY 10174
TEL: 212.889.7788

Norwalk, CT:

101 Merritt 7
Norwalk, CT 06851
TEL: 203.354.7788

Parsippany, NJ:

2001 Route 46 East
Parsippany, NJ 07054
TEL: 973.394.7788

Princeton, NJ:

7 Roszel Road
Princeton, NJ 08540
TEL: 609.720.8670