

## Training Session Plan: Conflict Management

<b>Session:</b>	Conflict Management
<b>Session purpose:</b>	The purpose of this session is to give you tips and techniques to help you prevent and resolve conflict situations that may arise.
<b>Learning outcomes:</b>	<p>By the end of this session you will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Understand how your brain responds to potential conflict and how this effects your own and others' behaviours in relation to conflict</li> <li>• Recognise the early signs of a conflict, and the key drivers and characteristics of conflict</li> <li>• Select appropriate response options in relation to the different types of conflict</li> <li>• Apply strategies and skills to confidently resolve and manage conflict effectively, productively and decisively both on and off the field</li> <li>• Assess the effectiveness of conflict strategies as a conflict manager and mediator.</li> </ul>
<b>Facilitator:</b>	
<b>Duration:</b>	2.5 hours

**Resources:**

Starting activity:

- One envelope (big enough to hold the pieces of paper)
- A pen
- A pile of small pieces of paper (e.g. cube notelets)

Felt pens or coloured pencils (1 for each person)

4 sheets of flipchart paper with one of the following headings on each:

- Acting in a professional manner
- Non-verbal communication techniques
- Active listening techniques
- How to promote cooperation and good relationships.

Blu Tack

Case study: recognising and dealing with the early signs of conflict

Fact sheet: Managing conflict

Role play activity cards

- Official cards (1–5)
- Player/coach/support cards (1–5)
- Role play observation sheets

Self-check quiz

Evaluation forms

**Preparation  
required:**

Starting activity:

- Have the starting activity resources ready before the participants arrive for the session
- On the front of the envelope write: What are you most afraid/wary/nervous of when dealing with a conflict situation?

Managing conflict brainstorming activity:

- On the top of the flipchart paper write one of the following headings:
  - Acting in a professional manner
  - Non-verbal communication techniques
  - Active listening techniques
  - How to promote cooperation and good relationships.
- Use Blu Tack to put the flipcharts up in different rooms or parts of the main session room.

Time	Instructions	Resource
	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
	<p><b>Pre-session activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• As participants arrive for the session ask them to jot down on a piece of paper their response to the question on the front of the envelope.</li> <li>• Let them know that their responses are anonymous.</li> <li>• They should put their paper into the envelope.</li> </ul>	<p>Starting activity resources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Envelope</li> <li>• Pen</li> <li>• Small pieces of paper</li> </ul>
15 mins	<b>INTRODUCTION</b>	
15 mins	<p><b>Welcome and overview of training session</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Welcome participants to the training session.</li> <li>• Do introductions by asking the following questions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Name</li> <li>- Sport</li> <li>- Why did you get involved?</li> <li>- What do you hope to achieve from this training session?</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Go through housekeeping, e.g. emergency procedures, location of toilets, expected finish time.</li> <li>• Go through the session purpose and learning outcomes.</li> </ul>	

20 mins	<b>OUR BRAINS RESPONSE TO POTENTIAL CONFLICT</b>	
1 min	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Sporting environments and competitions evoke a lot of emotion and passion for those involved including the spectators.</p> <p>This makes the officiating role challenging and at times puts you in a potentially hostile situation. There is a common perception that official's are regularly abused. This is not necessarily the case. There is some abuse but this is isolated and it receives disproportionate publicity from the media.</p> <p>Dealing with conflict can be tough for an experienced official, let alone if you are an inexperienced one. Good officiating relies on dealing with conflict professionally and positively.</p> <p><b>Conflict and your brain</b></p> <p>Why do we naturally react to potential threats the way we do?</p> <p>It's all to do with how the different parts of our brain receive and process information. Our response will likely be based on patterns or behaviours that we followed under similar situations.</p>	
8 mins	<p><b>Activity: scenario discussion</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Read out the first part of the refereeing scenario from page 1 of the factsheet.</li> <li>• Ask the group the following question: what happens next physically and mentally for the ref? (see the factsheet for answers).</li> <li>• Ask the group if they know why it is that we have little or no ability to</li> </ul>	<p>Factsheet: Conflict and Your Brain aka 'The Amygdala Hijacking'</p>

<p>5 mins</p> <p>1 min</p> <p>5 mins</p>	<p>rely on intelligence or reasoning in these situations.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Discuss the ‘amygdala hijack’ concept with the group (you can refer to the factsheet for information).</li> </ul> <p><b>What can you do to reduce the chance of an ‘amygdala hijack’?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the group for ideas on how they could reduce the chance of an ‘amygdala hijack’ (see the factsheet for suggestions).</li> </ul> <p><b>Are you interested to know more about how our brain works?</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• If anyone is interested to know more about how we receive and process information they can read the factsheet titled ‘Conflict and your Brain aka ‘The Amygdala Hijacking’.</li> </ul> <p><b>When does conflict arise?</b></p> <p><b>Brainstorming activity: typical conflict situations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the group to share typical situations where conflict seems to arise in their sporting code.</li> <li>• Write the responses up on the whiteboard.</li> </ul>	<p>Whiteboard</p>
<p>25 mins</p>	<p><b>PREVENTING CONFLICT</b></p>	
	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Prevention is always better than cure! Recognising the early signs of conflict and developing strategies to prevent conflict from arising is important. There are still occasions when conflict is inevitable.</p>	

10 mins	<p><b>Case study activity: recognising the early signs of conflict</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break the group into pairs or groups of three.</li> <li>• Explain what they need to do: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Read the case study</li> <li>- Jot down the group's answers to the three questions that follow the case study situation.</li> <li>- Give each group a copy of the case study and suggest they find some space away from the other groups to complete the activity.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	Case study: recognising and dealing with the early signs of conflict
10 mins	<p><b>Debrief case study activity</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Go through each question asking the groups to share their responses.</li> <li>• Possible answers for question 1 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bob's body language, i.e. marching, shaking his head</li> <li>- Verbal, i.e. muttering sarcastically about Tim's ability, and yelling out in frustration.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Possible answers for question 2 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Bob was annoyed because he got there early and expected Tim to be there so they could catch up before the game started</li> <li>- Tim was short with Bob and dismissed him since the game was starting</li> <li>- Bob is under pressure because his team must win today to make the playoffs.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Possible answers for question 3 include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Getting to the game with plenty of time spare</li> <li>- Showing Bob some empathy because there was no time for them to talk rather than just dismissing him</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	

5 mins	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Tim should have tried to relax and put his stressful start behind him once he got to the game</li><li>- At the first ruling Tim should have briefly discussed his decision and his interpretation of the law to potentially avoid further penalties in the game.</li></ul> <p><b>General tips for managing a game to reduce the chance of conflict</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Discuss general tips for managing the game in a way to reduce the chance of conflict happening. Examples include:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- Smile and use a calm manner and pleasant style to create a positive environment. This in turn has a positive effect on the players, coaches and most spectators</li><li>- React immediately to rule infringements when appropriate</li><li>- Remain objective no matter what prior knowledge of players/teams an official has</li><li>- Be definite and firm with decisions and communications</li><li>- Look sharp and act sharp (this will help gain respect)</li></ul></li><li>- At the beginning of the game/competition, provide structure and guidance.</li></ul>	
--------	---	--



25 mins	<b>TECHNIQUES TO MANAGE AND RESOLVE CONFLICT CONFIDENTLY</b>	
7 mins	<p><b>Introduction</b></p> <p>Even if you have implemented good conflict prevention strategies, you will often be called on to manage and resolve conflict situations.</p> <p>Did you know that 90% of conflict occurs not because of what was said, but the tone in which it was said!</p> <p><b><i>Flipchart activity: tips for resolving conflict</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Break the participants into groups of four.</li> <li>• Ask each person to select a felt pen or coloured pencil.</li> <li>• Give the instructions before sending the groups off: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- You have one minute at each flipchart to jot down your tips and techniques relevant to the heading, e.g. non-verbal communication techniques for managing and resolving conflict.</li> <li>- There are four flipcharts to move around.</li> <li>- Once I call out time, move onto the next flipchart and do the same.</li> <li>- At the end of the activity we will have a whole lot of practical tips and techniques to help you manage a conflict situation.</li> </ul> </li> </ul> <p>Note for the facilitator:</p> <p>This is a good activity to get people up and moving and to inject energy into the session. Playing music during this activity is also a good idea if you have the facility.</p>	<p>4 pieces of flipchart paper each with one of the following headings:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Acting in a professional manner</li> <li>• Non-verbal communication techniques</li> <li>• Active listening techniques</li> <li>• How to promote cooperation and good relationships.</li> </ul>

4 mins	<p><b>Debrief flipchart activity: tips for resolving conflict</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Put the four flipcharts up at the front of the room.</li> <li>• Check that all key techniques have been covered (refer to the role play observation sheet as a guide).</li> </ul>	Role play observation sheet
6 mins	<p><b>Group discussion: sharing experiences and strategies</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the participants to share some of their personal managing conflict 'success' stories.</li> <li>• Ask them to give the group a brief description of what lead up to the conflict and how they managed it.</li> <li>• Ask the group how they can assess the effectiveness of the conflict strategies they are using.</li> </ul>	
3 mins	<p><b>Spectators and others</b></p> <p>Spectators and others frequently disagree with official's decisions. Comments from spectators are part of the officiating environment.</p> <p>As a group, spectators usually show highly emotional responses and often take delight in antagonising officials. At times your decisions will infuriate them to the point where they can become hostile towards you.</p>	

<p>5 mins</p>	<p>To help deal with the pressure created by spectators:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Don't engage with the spectators, e.g. no eye contact or verbal response (this can incite the spectator more). Their aim is to get your attention and distract you from doing your job well.</li> <li>• Ignore spectator comments as best you can by blocking them out. Usually, comments are not meant personally. If you don't ignore the comments it can lead to lapses in concentration which can lead to rule and infringement errors.</li> <li>• Keep calm and focus on the more important areas of your officiating role.</li> </ul> <p>There are times when spectator abuse starts to wear the official down. Abuse is negative and regular abuse reduces the enjoyment for officials.</p> <p><b><i>Group discussion: procedures for escalating unacceptable behaviour</i></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the group what procedures should be followed in situations where spectator behaviour becomes serious and contravenes the rules of their sporting code.</li> <li>• Confirm, correct or add detail to the answers given by the group.</li> <li>• Comment that if anyone is concerned about abuse they should seek support from others. Other experienced officials can share additional strategies or offer you a new approach to try. Sports administrators also have a role to address abuse and can offer strategies to stop the abuse of officials.</li> </ul>	
---------------	--	--

40 mins	<b>PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER</b>	
30 mins	<p><b>Practicing your conflict management skills</b></p> <p><b>Activity: role plays</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain that although it may feel a bit funny doing a role play, it is a good opportunity to practice some of the techniques we've covered in a 'real' situation and to learn from others in their group.</li> <li>• Explain that there are a number of different conflict management role plays that each official will have to respond to and manage. The idea is that everyone will get a go at managing at least one situation. If there is spare time, the group should complete all role plays.</li> <li>• They should try and make each role play last for a couple of minutes so there is time for the official to practice using relevant strategies and techniques.</li> <li>• The observer should use the observation sheet to jot down some quick notes so they can provide some positive feedback and a suggestion once each role play is finished.</li> <li>• Before starting any role plays, everyone should take a couple of minutes to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Decide who will play each role for each scenario</li> <li>- Read the role play information</li> <li>- Do some preparation on how they might handle the situation and what their dialogue might be.</li> <li>- Look over the observation sheet.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Split the group into groups of three and designate each group an area where they can go (ideally different rooms or as far away from each other as possible).</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Official role play cards (1–5)</li> <li>• Player/coach/spectator role play cards (1–5)</li> <li>• Role play observation sheets</li> </ul>



2 mins	<b><i>Thank participants</i></b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Thank the participants for their input and for sharing their experiences with others.</li></ul>	
--------	--	--