

Conflict Resolution Training Activities

Activity 1: Active Listening Exercise “Listen to Understand”

Purpose

To practice active listening, paraphrasing, emotional awareness, and resisting the urge to immediately solve or defend.

Instructions

Participants will pair up in groups of two.

One person will serve as the Speaker.

One person will serve as the Listener.

After the activity, participants will switch roles.

Scenario Prompt Options (Choose one)

- You feel overwhelmed because expectations at work continue changing without clear communication.
- You feel frustrated because you believe your ideas or concerns are not being heard by leadership.
- You feel tension with a coworker because communication has become short and defensive.

Speaker Instructions	Listener Instructions
For 2–3 minutes: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Explain your concerns naturally• Share emotions, frustrations, and perspective• Focus on helping the listener understand your experience	During the conversation: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do NOT interrupt• Maintain eye contact and attention• Ask open-ended questions• Avoid defending, fixing, or correcting• Use paraphrasing statements such as: “What I hear you saying is...” “It sounds like you felt...” “Help me better understand...”

Debrief Questions

- What was difficult about only listening?
- Did you feel tempted to interrupt or solve the issue?
- What behaviors helped you feel heard?
- How did paraphrasing change the conversation?
- What communication habits escalate conflict unintentionally?

Activity 2: Conflict Facilitation Exercise

“Leader as Facilitator”

Purpose

To practice facilitating conflict between two individuals while maintaining professionalism, neutrality, emotional awareness, and collaboration.

Instructions

Participants will work in groups of three:

- Employee 1
- Employee 2
- Facilitator/Leader

After the activity, participants may rotate roles.

Scenario

Two ministry leaders are frustrated with one another regarding communication and responsibilities surrounding a parish event.

Employee 1 Perspective

Feels unsupported and believes communication from Employee 2 has been unclear and last minute.

Employee 2 Perspective

Feels Employee 1 makes decisions without collaboration and does not communicate operational limitations effectively.

Tension has increased and both feel unheard.

Facilitator Responsibilities

- Set a respectful tone
- Clarify the purpose of the conversation
- Encourage active listening
- Ask clarifying questions
- Prevent interruptions
- Keep the conversation focused on issues, not personalities
- Help identify shared goals
- Guide the group toward collaborative solutions

Debrief Questions

- What was most difficult for the facilitator?
- When did emotions begin escalating?
- How did the facilitator redirect the conversation?
- What techniques helped lower defensiveness?
- Did participants feel heard?
- What communication behaviors helped or hurt the discussion?