

PPA 600

Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Skills

Instructors: Drs. Neil Katz & Assistants
Meeting Times: Thursdays 3:30-6:15 Oct. 5-Nov. 7 in Eggers 070

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Successful public managers need highly refined communication and conflict resolution skills in today's stressful and competitive environments. This workshop will help you learn about, practice, and further develop some key fundamental behaviors designed to establish powerful rapport with others, and to manage interpersonal conflict creatively and constructively when it occurs. Core skills include reflective listening, matching and pacing, managing agreement (assertion), problem solving and negotiation. Approaches to learning will include theory presentation, skill demonstration, skill practice and critique. A willingness to examine current behavior is essential for success and benefits in this workshop. It is expected that you will be able to use these skills on a daily basis to achieve desired outcomes in work and non-work settings.

Requirements: (Section A is one third of grade; B is 2/3 of final grade)

A. A regular attendance and active participation: this class will run as an experiential workshop so that your active participation is essential. There is much material to cover, and the knowledge and skills learned build upon one another. For all these reasons, it is essential that you attend and actively participate in class, be present and attentive for the entire class, and complete assignments on time.

B. Journal: this is your major written work for the class. In your journal you will have different kinds of entries:

1) Your learning goals. This section will include several subsections.

a) A clear articulation of your learning goals (e.g., "I want to be able to assert to my boss without escalating the conflict and me suffering as a result").

b) Your initial perspective on your current situation (your listening, problem solving, assertion, and conflict management skills and your ability to use them). In the above example, how you think/feel about assertion and what currently happens (or what you fantasize will happen) when you assert to your boss?

c) Sensory evidence that will let you know when you have achieved your goal. What will you see, feel, and hear?

At the end of the course, review the progress you have made toward accomplishing your learning goals. Discuss how you progressed toward your goals and what you will do to continue moving forward.

- 2) Short written assignments to be completed on handouts, journals, or workbooks.
- 3) Class Reactions: thoughts and feelings about material and exercises presented and practiced in class. What specifically enhanced your learning? What was a barrier to your learning? What might you or the instructor(s), do differently to maximize learning? Make sure to include most significant learnings for each activity, in each class.
- 4) Reading Reactions: notes, thoughts, feelings, about reading assignments - what excites you, what infuriates you, or confirms some class learning? (Please include page numbers of specific ideas in the reading to which you are referring). Again, most significant learnings are needed in this section.
- 5) Skill Practice: a written record of how you are using the material outside of class. Relate specific examples of cases where you used skills with other people (and use bits of dialogue in your report, including nonverbal cues). What skills are you using successfully? Which ones are you choosing not to use or are not able to use? Why? What do you need to demonstrate improvement? When you practice skills, what specifically are you doing and what results are you getting, verbal and nonverbal? What might you do differently to achieve better results and progress on your learning goals? This section is the most important part of your journal!

Your task in the journal is to be reflective and analytical. It is your opportunity to give the staff feedback on what is working and not working for you. Even more important, it is an opportunity for you to chart your own progress with skill competency and to use some of the major concepts that are being presented.

Journal entries should be concise and thoughtful rather than rambling or mere generalities (i.e., “I liked class today” or “I learned a lot today” are not appropriate). Journals will be most helpful to you if they include ideas that are important to you, conclusions you have drawn, lessons to remember, questions that trouble you, and a synthesis of theory and practice. Your journal should help us to evaluate the effectiveness of the material and presentations, as well as the depth, intensity, and sincerity of your effort and learning in this educational process. In order for you to receive an “A” for your journal, you will have to do outstanding work in each of the four major sections of the journal.

Try your best to make journal entries promptly at the end of each class. Entries are best and easiest when they are fresh in your mind. We will review the journals once during the course. Final journals will be handed in approximately ten days after the last scheduled class.

You will be making several entries in your journal every week, especially items 3, 4, and 5 above. These will typically average a total of about 4-6 typed double-spaced pages per day.

Please label each of your sections and entries clearly. Sample journals will be provided for you to use as models. After the last class, some additional questions will be distributed for you to work on after the class and to include in your final journal.

C. Required Texts:

- 1) Interpersonal Conflict Resolution Skills chapters and selected articles in Course Reader.
- 2) Neil Katz and John Lawyer. *Communication and Conflict Resolution Skills*. Iowa: Kendall/Hunt, 1992.
- 3) Dan Dana. *Conflict Resolution*. N.Y.: McGraw-Hill, 2001.