



Practical Skills for Resolving Conflict

NYS & CSEA
Partnership





What is the Partnership?



Core Principles:

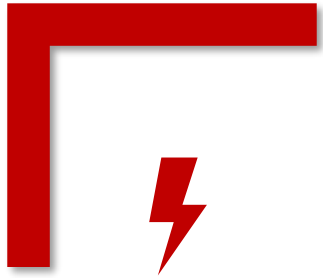
Conflict is inevitable.

How we deal with conflict is our choice.

Objectives

1. Define conflict and its impact on the workplace.
2. Describe how the brain reacts to conflict.
3. Identify the conflict cycle.
4. Identify the resolution cycle.
5. Describe resolution gestures.

Roadmap



**Conflict and
Its Impact**



The Brain



**Conflict
Cycle**



**Resolution
Cycle**



**Resolution
Gestures**



What is Conflict?



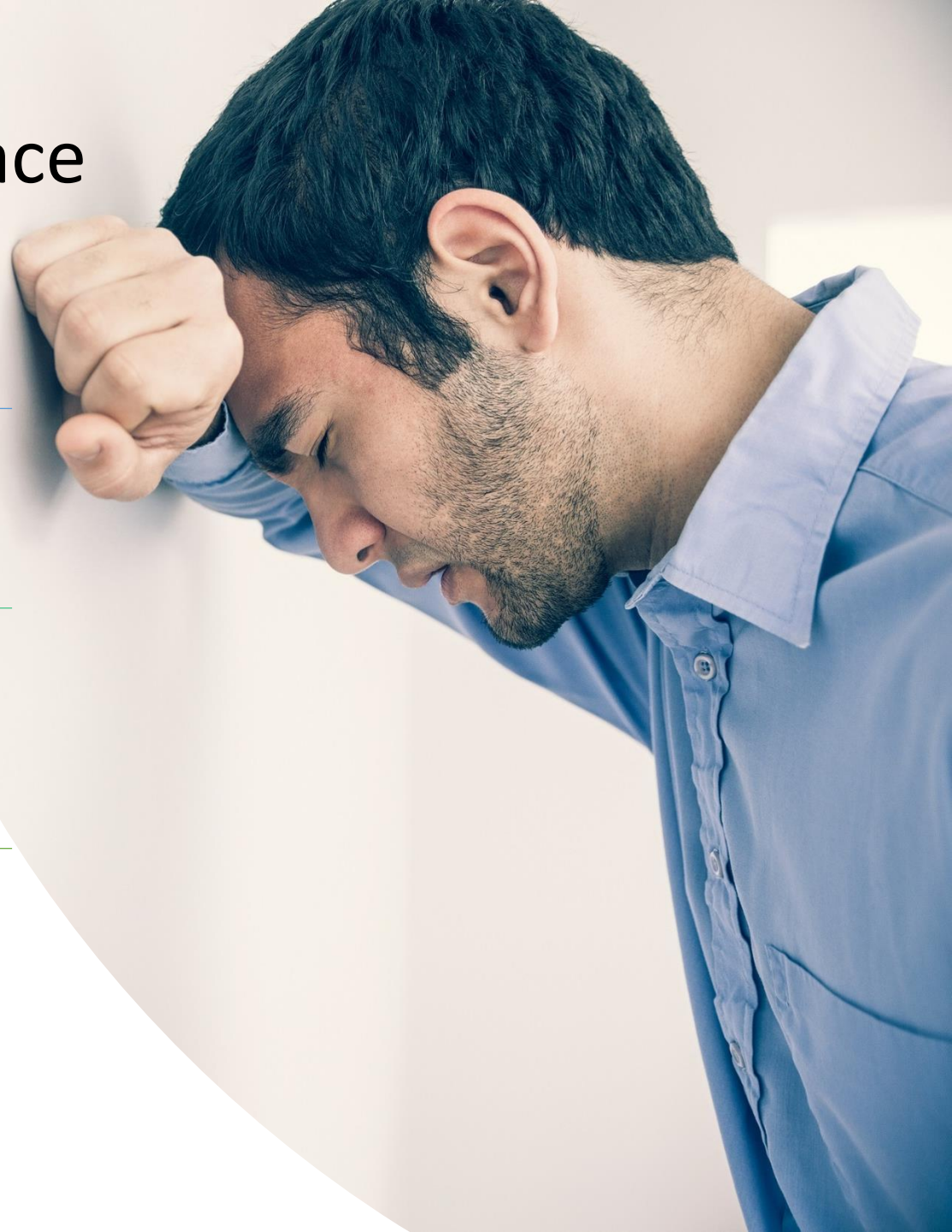
A serious disagreement caused by the actual or perceived opposition of needs, values, and interests between people working together; it exists when one person has a need of another person that is not met.

Impact of Workplace Conflict

Waste of resources

Negatively impacts decision making

Hidden cancer in organizations





What are some conflict situations at work?


Roadmap




**Conflict and
Its Impact**



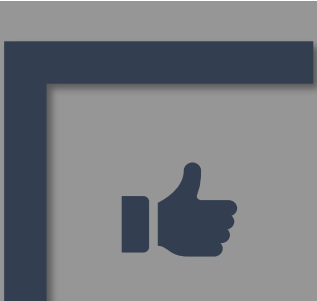
The Brain



**Conflict
Cycle**



**Resolution
Cycle**

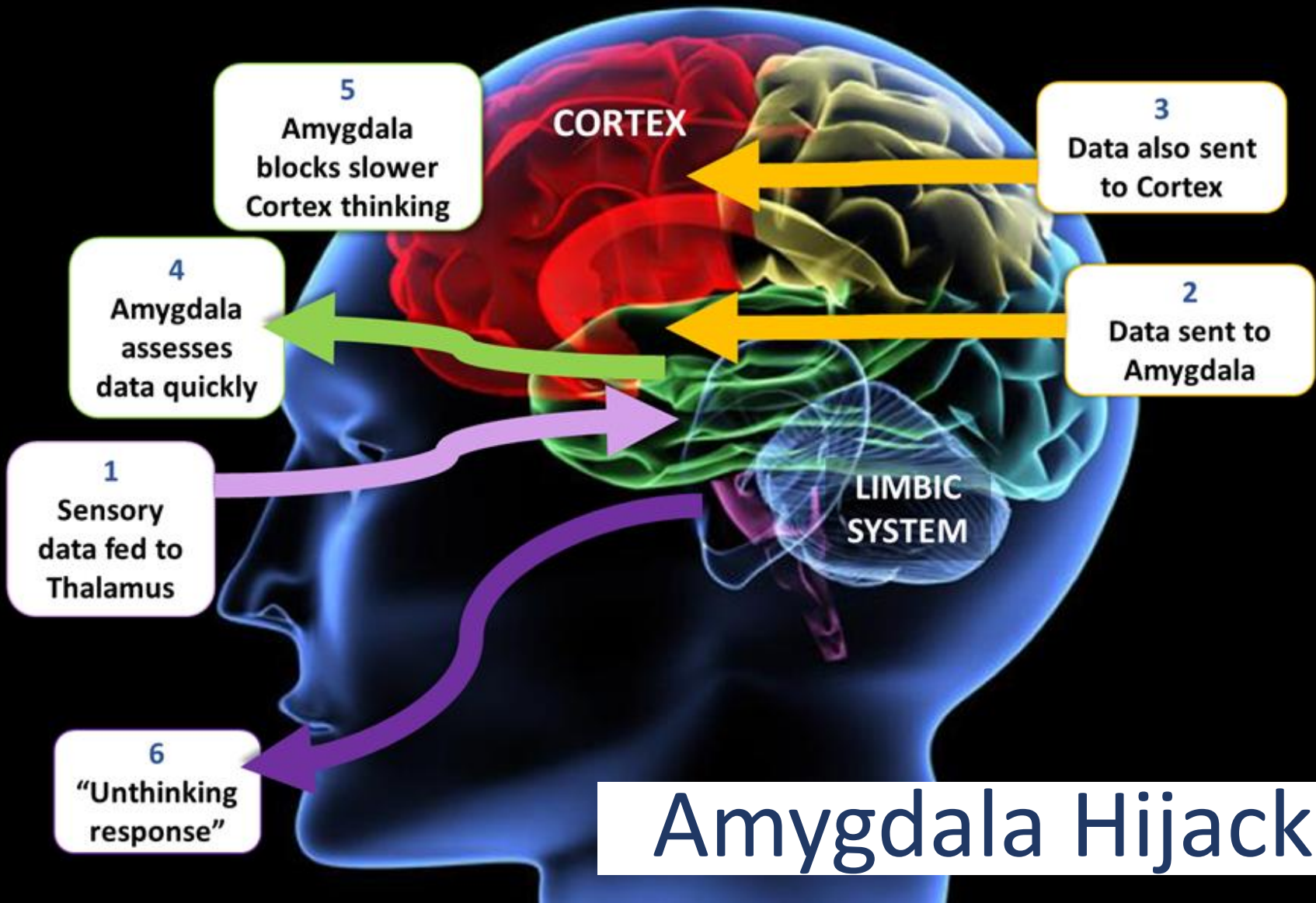


**Resolution
Gestures**



Fight or Flight





Amygdala Hijack

Discovering Our Conflict Reflexes

Power Plays

- Shouting
- Threatening
- Pre-empting
- Getting others to take sides
- Hostile gestures

Walk Aways

- Avoiding
- Withdrawing
- Withholding information
- Not returning messages
- Silent treatment

Think About a Past Conflict ...



What strategy did you respond with?

- A. Power Play
- B. Walk-Away

Roadmap



Conflict and
Its Impact



The Brain



Conflict Cycle

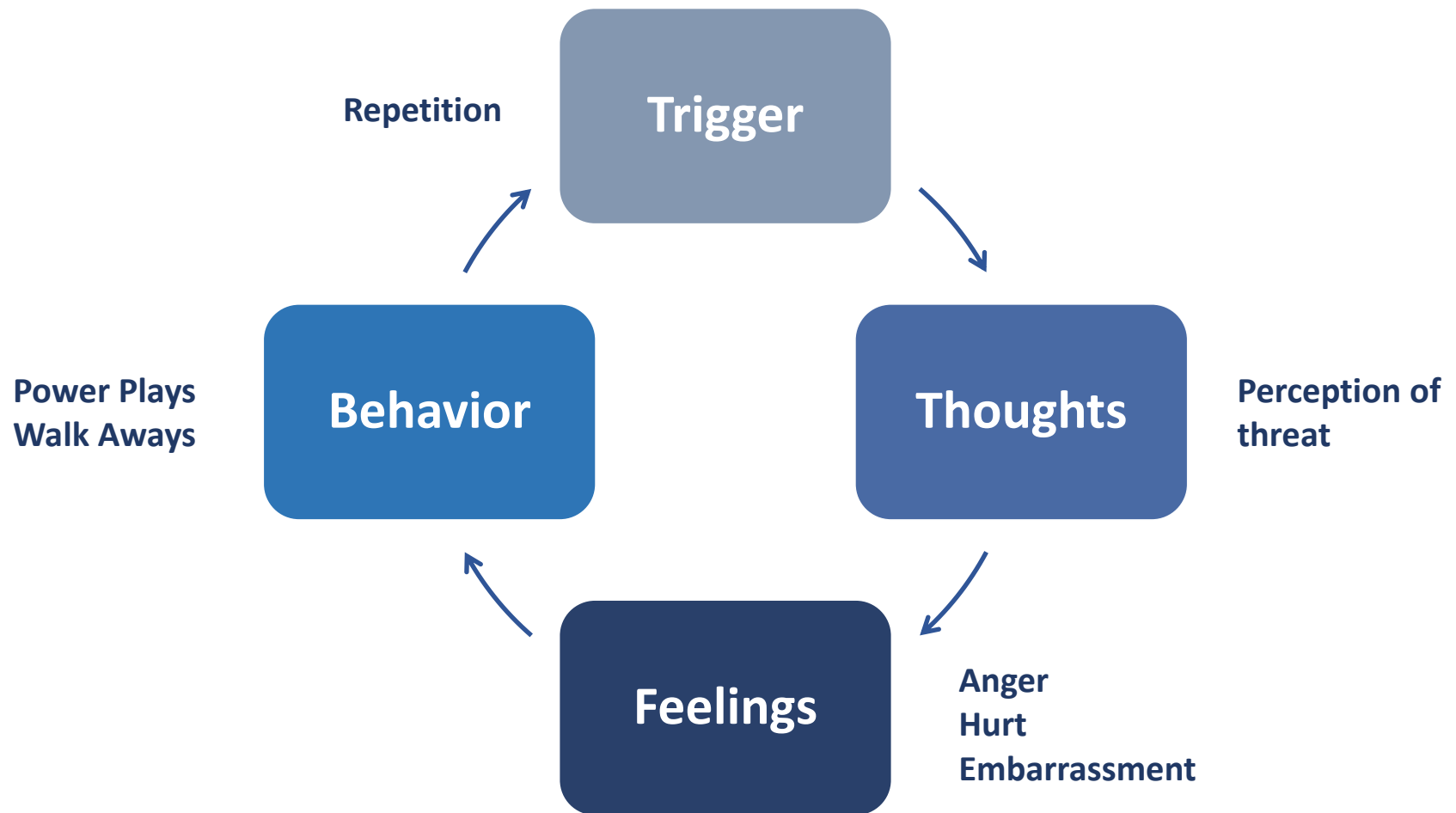


Resolution
Cycle



Resolution
Gestures

The Conflict Cycle





No Walk Aways



No Power Plays

The Cardinal Rules of Dialogue

Dialogue vs. Debate



Collaborative; both sides
work together

Everyone contributes to solving
a problem

Listen to each other to understand
and build agreement

Type of fight; oppose each other
to prove each other wrong

One person and viewpoint wins,
the other is dismissed

Listen to each other to find
flaws and disagree

A man and a woman are shaking hands across a desk. The man is on the left, wearing a plaid shirt, and the woman is on the right, wearing a white blazer. They are both smiling. On the desk, there is a laptop and some papers. The background is a bright, modern office setting.

Dialogue

- Ask Questions
- Listen for the Ouch
- Use Open and Relaxed Tone

Roadmap



Conflict and
Its Impact



The Brain



Conflict Cycle

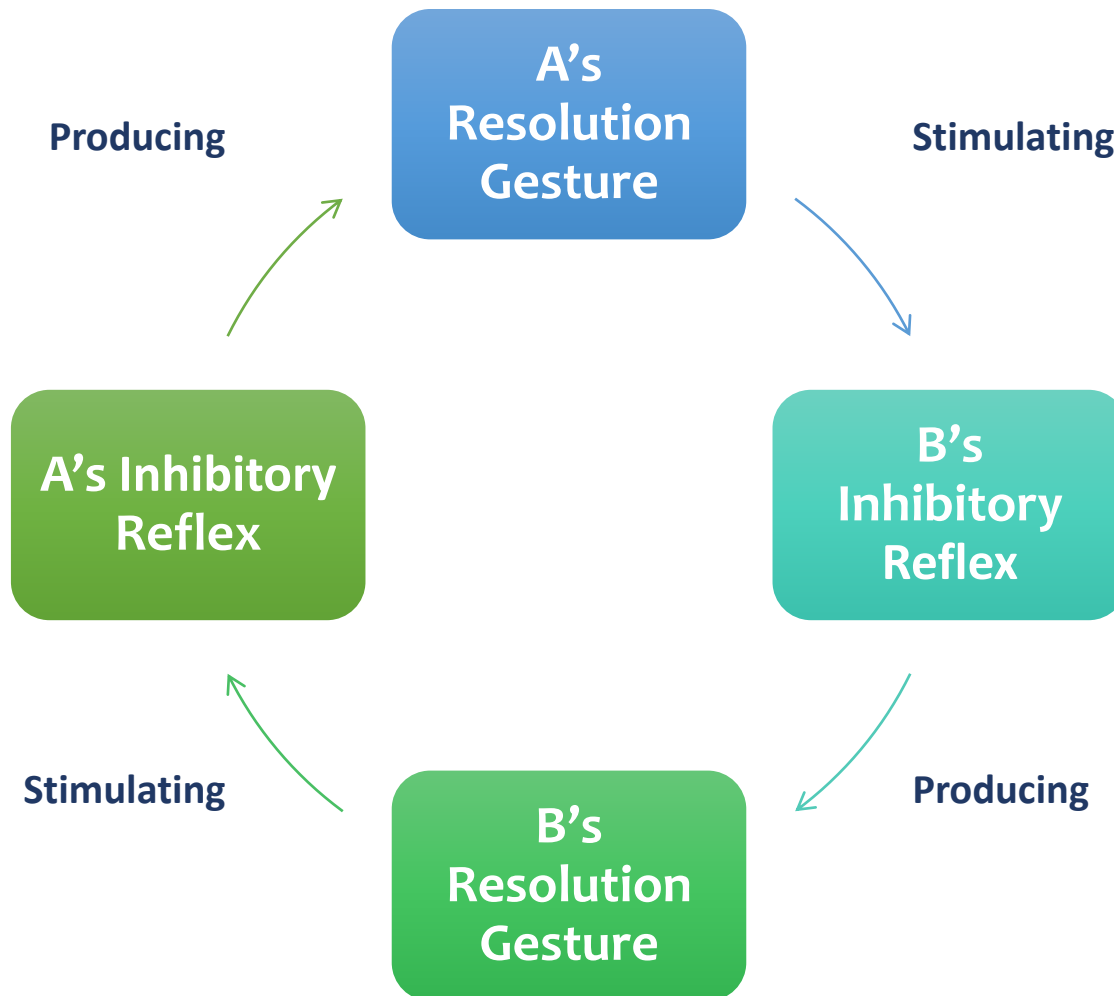


**Resolution
Cycle**



Resolution
Gestures

The Resolution Cycle



Instinctive reaction to resolution gestures

Appears in all species of social mammals

Behavioral mechanism to reduce aggression in territorial encounters

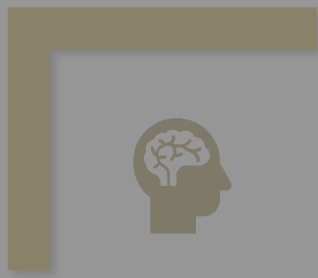
Inhibitory Reflex



Roadmap



Conflict and
Its Impact



The Brain



Conflict Cycle



Resolution
Cycle



**Resolution
Gestures**

Resolution Gestures



Apologizing

“I am sorry that my comments embarrassed you. It was thoughtless of me.”

Owning responsibility

“I see now that I contributed to the problem. I did not see that before.”

Conceding

“I’m willing to meet with you, if you are willing to do it at a time that is convenient for both of us.”

Resolution Gestures



Self-disclosing

“I have been overwhelmed with work and I took it out on you.”

Expressing positive feelings

“You’re a competent and skilled professional.”

Initiating both-gain

“How do you suggest that we solve this?”

Resolution Gestures



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Large Group Activity



CASE SCENARIO - FROWN AT THE GROUNDS

Louis works for the grounds department on campus and has been assigned Spring clean-up duties in several areas with a newer employee, Erik. Erik was hired six months ago; this is his first Spring on the job. Louis has been at the campus for 20 years and knows the routine.

Erik takes the initiative to make a list of what needs to be done: cut and remove broken limbs; mow and rake; get picnic tables out of storage.

Because of an equipment shortage, Louis does not have access to a chainsaw. He needs to finish this area and start on the next due to staffing shortages. Louis tells Erik to start mowing and he will load up the picnic tables and bring them over.

Erik argues that they need to cut down the low hanging limbs and broken branches before the mowing begins. Louis is frustrated with the “kid” questioning his experience and tells him that gravity will do the trick for the branches to fall. Erik continues to argue and states that it doesn't make sense and he will wait for a chainsaw to become available. Louis yells at Erik that he expects the lawn mowed by the time he returns with the tables. Before Erik can respond, Louis jumps in the truck and drives away.

Conflict Resolution Activity

1. Conflict

Is this a conflict? If yes, briefly describe the conflict.

What was the conflict about?

Who was involved?



Conflict Resolution Activity

2. Brain Responses

Was there evidence of an amygdala hijack or conflict reflexes (power plays or walk-aways)?

If so, what were they?



Conflict Resolution Activity

3. Conflict Cycle

What was the trigger?

What was the thought?

What was the feeling?

What was the behavior?



Conflict Resolution Activity

4. Resolution

How would you resolve the conflict?

What resolution gesture(s) would you choose?



Conflict Resolution Activity

1. Conflict

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3. Conflict Cycle

What was the trigger? What was the thought? What was the feeling? What was the behavior?

4. Resolution

How would you resolve the conflict? What resolution gesture(s) would you choose?



Key Points



Conflict is inevitable – how you handle it is your choice.

Every disagreement is not a conflict.

Resolving conflict can be an opportunity for growth and exploration.

Resolution gestures usually break the conflict cycle.

Questions and Evaluation

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