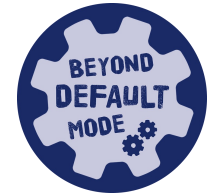


**BEYOND
DEFAULT
MODE**

SESSION 5
HANDOUTS

SESSION 5

BEYOND DEFAULT MODE



Introduction

This session introduces a model for reflecting on how we approach conflict. Through a questionnaire, it provides a method for exploring our preferences between those approaches. The challenge for most of us is to move beyond our preferences, our default mode of operating, and to work with approaches that are outside our comfort zone. The session provides a process for evaluating the advantages and disadvantages of each approach, and advocates for the need for flexibility between them, according to the different circumstances we face.

Session Objectives

- To encourage self-management as a means of handling conflict more effectively.
- To present five different approaches to conflict.
- To assess personal preferences among the five different approaches using a questionnaire tool.
- To explore the strengths and drawbacks of each of the five approaches.
- To increase awareness of the choices we can make in approaching conflict.
- To begin to build confidence in working with different approaches.

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the session participants will have:

- Become familiar with five different types of approach to conflict.
- Explored the difference between calm and storm conditions and noted their own default preferences.
- Considered different conflict approaches in both personal and church-based examples.
- Recognised some of the strengths and drawbacks of each approach.
- Thought about which approach best serves which circumstances.
- Been equipped to make a more informed judgement as to which approach is appropriate in given circumstances, and to be more intentional about drawing on that approach.

Overview of Session Segments

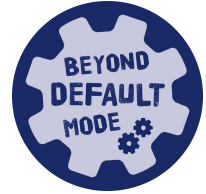
| | |
|------------|---|
| Welcome: | Arrival and introduction |
| Way in: | Approaches and options |
| Explore 1: | Filling out the questionnaire and providing an overview |
| Pointer 1: | Presentation of the five approaches |
| Pointer 2: | The concept of preference (or default) |
| Explore 2: | Interpreting our own scores |
| Pointer 3: | The concept of going beyond default |
| Explore 3: | Using the five approaches appropriately |
| Pointer 4: | The challenge of moving beyond default |
| Explore 4: | Looking at personal scores and moving beyond default |
| Review: | Looking back over the session |
| Feedback: | Completing written feedback |

Handouts

- Handout 1: Introduction and overview of Session 5
- Handout 2: How do I approach conflict – questionnaire
- Handout 3: How do I approach conflict – identifying my preferences
- Handout 4: Approaches to conflict
- Handout 5: Evaluating approaches to conflict
- Handout 6: Case studies for exploring ways to approach conflict
- Handout 7: Exploring your own approach to conflict
- Handout 8: Feedback form for participants (for return to course leader)

HOW DO I APPROACH CONFLICT?

A Questionnaire for Reflecting on Yourself



Instructions

- Consider your response in situations where you encounter some tension over differences with another person (or people). Read each of the statements from A to T. Decide how like you or unlike you each statement is. There's a range from very like you – a high 6 – down to very unlike you – a low 1 – with a range of possibilities between those two points. You have to choose a whole number.
- Circle one number on the line below each statement.**
- Statements A – J, in Part One, deal with your initial response to these tensions.
- Statements K – T, in Part Two, deal with your response after the tensions have intensified.
- Try to focus on one particular setting (such as your ministry context, your work or your home) and use it as the background for your response to all the statements. But don't just think of one particular scenario or example. You could retake the questionnaire for different settings: our approaches can vary according to the situation, sometimes significantly.

Please Note

- There are no right or wrong answers, only something that is a good fit for you at this point in time. The reflection that this questionnaire prompts is more important, and more useful, than the numbers on the tally sheet.
- The instrument has not been standardised, but its usefulness has been proven over many years.
- You may agree or disagree with the results. **Whether you like the results or not, test the picture that it offers through self-reflection, by 'looking in the mirror', and in discussion with others who know you well, finding out how they experience your responses. This questionnaire is a tool to facilitate these larger tasks.**

Part One – Initial Response to Tensions

A. WHEN I FIRST MEET TENSIONS OVER OUR DIFFERENCES

I want to make sure that we understand each other. I seek to fully explore your view, even if it's very different from mine. It's OK if we're uncomfortable: I'll work hard to find a way forward that really works for both us. I'll take time and energy to get to that point.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

B. WHEN I FIRST MEET TENSIONS OVER OUR DIFFERENCES

I'll take time to ensure that you understand my point of view, and why it makes sense. It's OK for you to have a different view. I'm less concerned with making you happy or having you like me; but I do want you to understand where I'm coming from, and why I think the way I do.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

C. WHEN I FIRST MEET TENSIONS OVER OUR DIFFERENCES

I'm willing to let my views be known; but I won't insist on them. I'd prefer to find a way forward that meets somewhere in the middle, so that you're also able to live with things. I'm not keen to take too long over finding a resolution – I'd rather move on.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

D. **WHEN I FIRST MEET TENSIONS OVER OUR DIFFERENCES**

I take time to reflect, and I'm uncomfortable facing the tensions directly until I've thought through my own views. Unless you insist, I'm happy to ignore the tensions, and to get on with the rest of life, at least for the time being.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

E. **WHEN I FIRST MEET TENSIONS OVER OUR DIFFERENCES**

I want to ensure that we find a way forward that you're happy with. I'm less concerned about whether it will suit me. It's more important to me that you feel good about things and that the two of us get along well.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

F. **WHEN I FIRST MEET TENSIONS OVER OUR DIFFERENCES**

I won't insist on my own view being heard. I'm keen to make sure that what I want doesn't get in the way of our relationship. I want you to be happy with me, so I'll go along with what you want, even when it's not what I'd choose.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

G. **WHEN I FIRST MEET TENSIONS OVER OUR DIFFERENCES**

I'll actively explain my own ideas, thoughts and feelings, until you've understood; **but I will also work to ensure that I understand your ideas, thoughts and feelings,** even if it takes us considerable time, effort and energy.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

H. **WHEN I FIRST MEET TENSIONS OVER OUR DIFFERENCES**

I'm more concerned with what I believe to be important, and with ensuring that you've heard and properly understood my point of view. I don't need you necessarily to agree with me, or to like my view, providing you've understood me.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

I. **WHEN I FIRST MEET TENSIONS OVER OUR DIFFERENCES**

I'm inclined to think that the differences probably aren't worth worrying about, and that it's better to move on to more pleasant topics where there isn't tension between us.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

J. **WHEN I FIRST MEET TENSIONS OVER OUR DIFFERENCES**

I'm willing to give up some points in exchange for others if it means we can find a way forward, so that we can move on. I won't give up all my ground, and I won't expect you to give up all yours either, providing we can meet somewhere in the middle.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

Part Two – Response When Tensions Escalate

K. **WHEN THE TENSIONS INCREASE AND FEELINGS INTENSIFY**

I get more engaged and enter into deeper discussion to explore the tensions. I work hard to ensure that your concerns can be addressed as well as my own. I'm committed to finding a way forward that satisfies both of us, even if it's exhausting to do so.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

L. **WHEN THE TENSIONS INCREASE AND FEELINGS INTENSIFY**

I put more effort into making sure that my point of view – the truth as I see it – is understood and recognised. I'm less concerned about pleasing you. I'm more concerned that you're clear about my perspective, and can understand how I see things.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

M. WHEN THE TENSIONS INCREASE AND FEELINGS INTENSIFY

I try to be reasonable and to give some ground. I won't insist on what I prefer; but I'll make sure that I get some of what I want. I'm happy for you to get some of what you want. And I don't want to lose a lot of sleep over getting there.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

N. WHEN THE TENSIONS INCREASE AND FEELINGS INTENSIFY

I don't push for things to be done entirely my way. At the same time, I won't just give in to your demands. I will take some time to find a meeting point, but won't agonise over it.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

O. WHEN THE TENSIONS INCREASE AND FEELINGS INTENSIFY

I set aside my preferences in order to keep things comfortable between the two of us. Having a happy relationship between us is the most important thing for me, even if I have to give up a lot.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

P. WHEN THE TENSIONS INCREASE AND FEELINGS INTENSIFY

I tend to interact less, to withdraw into myself. I look for ways to find a safe distance. I don't want to feel overwhelmed by strong feelings or difficulties in my relationship with you.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

Q. WHEN THE TENSIONS INCREASE AND FEELINGS INTENSIFY

I do what needs to be done and stand firm with my own thinking and convictions. I can live with your discomfort. I hope that we can mend feelings later.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

R. WHEN THE TENSIONS INCREASE AND FEELINGS INTENSIFY

I do what is necessary to soothe your feelings. I don't like seeing you unhappy. I will adapt in whatever way enables an outcome which pleases you.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

S. WHEN THE TENSIONS INCREASE AND FEELINGS INTENSIFY

I pay attention to what you want and need, whilst remaining firm that you need to give equal consideration to my wants and needs. I'll take the time and make the effort to find a way forward that works for both of us, journeying through difficult and intense feelings.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

T. WHEN THE TENSIONS INCREASE AND FEELINGS INTENSIFY

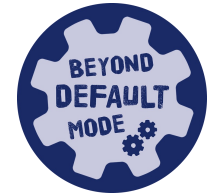
I press for moderation and for each of us to give some ground. I want us to reach a conclusion or make a decision, and then move on.

Very unlike me 1 – 2 – 3 – 4 – 5 – 6 Very like me

Inspired by and adapted from MCS 1987.

HOW DO I APPROACH CONFLICT

Identifying My Preferences



Tally Chart

| | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------|-------|------------------------------------|-------|---------------------|-------|-----------------|-------|----------------------|-------|
| A | K | B | L | C | M | D | N | E | O |
| G | S | H | Q | J | T | I | P | F | R |
| | | | | | | | | | |
| Calm | Storm | Calm | Storm | Calm | Storm | Calm | Storm | Calm | Storm |
| Collaborating | | Confronting (or Forcing) | | Compromising | | Avoiding | | Accommodating | |

Using your scores from the tally chart above, list your score numbers and the approach names below, in order of the highest to the lowest score. If necessary, bracket equal scores together (or put them on the same line together).

CALM

Response when tensions first arise.

| Score | Approach |
|-------|----------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

STORM

Response when tensions increase and feelings intensify.

| Score | Approach |
|-------|----------|
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ |

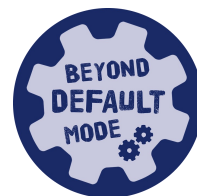
The approach with the **highest score** in each of the columns, calm and storm, indicates your **'preferred'** or primary style of responding to conflict, depending on the intensity of the situation. If two or more approaches have the same score, they are equally preferred. The questionnaire suggests that you are most likely to respond using your preferred styles.

The **second highest score** indicates your most likely **'backup'** approach, especially if the number is close to the highest score. If your preferred style does not yield positive fruits, you are most likely to use your backup style as an alternative approach.

A fairly even score across all of the approaches indicates a 'flat profile'. If you have a flat profile you will tend to be able to choose easily among the various responses to conflict. This probably provides you with flexibility, but it may make it hard for others to read you, or they may possibly perceive you as inconsistent.

Inspired by and adapted from MCS 1987.

APPROACHES TO CONFLICT



CONFRONTING (OR FORCING)

High assertiveness/Low affirmation

'We're doing it my way/by the book...'

- **Strategies** Discourage disagreement; persuade; be firm, set limits and consequences; cite policy; insist and repeat; control; be inaccessible.
- **Source of power** From position, authority.
- **Benefits** Speed, decisiveness, protection of innocents; preservation of important values; maintenance of needed boundaries; stability.
- **Cost when over-used** Damaged or hierarchical relationships; loss of cooperation; atrophy of gifts in others; anger, depression and diminished self-respect in others; stagnation.

BULL

HIGH ASSERTIVENESS

COLLABORATING

High assertiveness/High affirmation

'My preference is... but I also want your views...'

- **Strategies** Assert self while also inviting other views; jointly list strengths and weaknesses of all the views; cooperate in seeking additional information, and exploring creative possibilities.
- **Source of power** From trust, skill, ability.
- **Benefits** Good will, creativity and growth; others blossom and develop new gifts; energy and joy.
- **Costs when over-used** Fatigue, time-loss, burnout; distraction from more important tasks; paralysis from over-analysis and over-processing.

OWL

COMPROMISING

Medium assertiveness/Medium affirmation

'Let's split the difference...'

- **Strategies** Urge moderation; bargain; split the difference; find something for everyone; meet people halfway.
- **Source of power** From moderation and reasonableness.
- **Benefits** Relatively fast, enables the show to go on; can provide a way out of the stalemate; readily understood by most people; builds atmosphere of calmness and reason.
- **Costs when over-used** Mediocrity and blandness; possibly unprincipled agreements; likelihood of patching *symptoms* and ignoring *causes*.

FOX

LOW AFFIRMATION

HIGH AFFIRMATION

AVOIDING

Low assertiveness/Low affirmation

'Let's not make a big deal out of this...'

- **Strategies** Withdraw; delay or avoid response; divert attention; suppress personal emotions; be inaccessible or inscrutable.
- **Source of power** From calmness, silence, non-cooperation; being above it all.
- **Benefits** Freedom from entanglement in trivial issues or insignificant relationships; stability; preservation of *status quo*; ability to influence others without doing anything.
- **Costs when over-used** Periodic explosions of pent-up anger; freeze or slow death of relationships; residue of negative feelings; stagnation and dullness; loss of accountability; sapped energy.

TURTLE

LOW ASSERTIVENESS

ACCOMMODATING

Low assertiveness/High affirmation

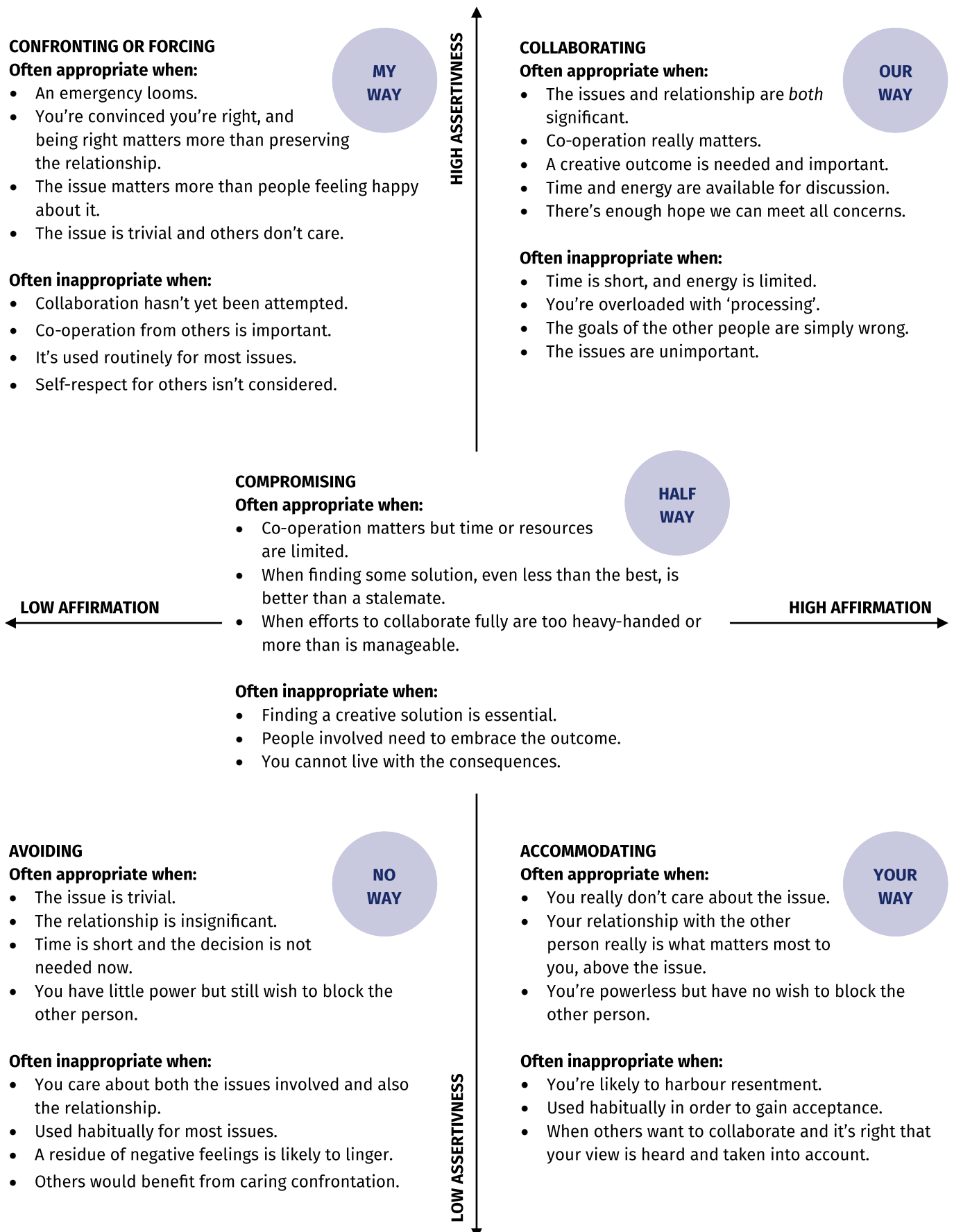
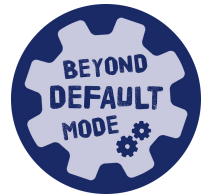
'Okay, whatever you say...'

- **Strategies** Agree; support; acknowledge errors; give in; convince oneself it's no big deal; placate.
- **Source of power** From relationships or approval of others.
- **Benefits** Approval and appreciation of others; freedom from hassle, in the short-run at least; self-discipline of ego.
- **Costs when over-used** Frustration for others who wish to collaborate; personal resentment and depression; stunted growth of personal gifts; over-dependence on others; denies others benefit of healthy confrontation.

TEDDY BEAR

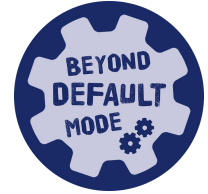
Inspired by and adapted from MCS 1987.

EVALUATING APPROACHES TO CONFLICT



Inspired by and adapted from MCS 1987.

CASE STUDIES FOR EXPLORING WAYS TO APPROACH CONFLICT



Case 1 – The Youth Group Programme

There has been some difficulty with the Youth Group programme. Some church members have been critical of the balance between Bible teaching and fun activities. Others have complained about the quality of recent meetings. The Youth Worker remains popular with the young people and is a source of support to those struggling with high expectations of exam results.

As chair of the Youth Worker's Support Group today you received a formal request from one influential parent to review the programme being delivered by the Youth Worker. Last week the Youth Worker had a confidential word with you: his marriage is in difficulties and he has decided to leave his post later in the summer. He does not want this decision to go public until youth group members have finished exams next month, but is already exploring possibilities of different employment.

You consider a review might possibly be a good exercise at some point; it is hard to judge right now. You are also conscious that you are holding confidential information that has considerable bearing on the situation. What approach might you take in responding to the influential parent?

Case 2 – The Sunday School

South Street Methodist Church is struggling to maintain Sunday School in an urban context. Both children and teachers are erratic in attendance and often late, although everyone seems to enjoy activities when they get together during the morning service. Their meeting room is separate from the main worship area.

One Sunday there is a cohort of children and only one experienced teacher at the point when Sunday School leaves the main church. The teacher, having noted that there is no-one else available with DBS clearance, gathers the children and heads for the door, confident in her ability to manage should her co-teacher not turn up. The minister hasn't noticed that there is only one teacher present.

As Senior Steward (a key lay leader) you are aware of church policies and feel anxious. What approach will you take in response to this situation, and with the teacher concerned?

Case 3 – The Coffee Policy

The PCC cannot reach agreement on a coffee policy. There is strong support to change to a fairly-traded brand; this would bear witness to kingdom values and reflect God's bias to the poor. No one disagrees with this justification.

Some members, however, are concerned about comments from church members that fairly-traded coffee does not taste nearly as good. They might not stay for coffee after the service if they don't like the new coffee and there is no other choice – and talking over coffee brings significant missional and pastoral opportunities. No one argues with this consideration either.

This is the second time the item has been on the agenda; stalemate is not an option and a decision has to be made. What approach might help move the PCC towards agreeing a coffee policy now?

Case 4 – The Cancer Charity Fundraiser

You have followed due procedure and checked the church website to find an available Saturday morning to host a Coffee Morning in church to support a cancer charity. As you start to ask around for help on the day, you discover that the Messy Church team have planned an additional informal outreach event in church for the same date. The person who was asked to do publicity forgot to put the date on the church website. Apparently lots of information and discussion is happening on Facebook (which you do not use) and plans are well advanced for a great summer party.

You are exasperated, but Messy Church has brought new families to a small traditional congregation in need of energy and growth and you do not want to detract from this aim – and after all, anyone can make a mistake. What approach will you take to the clash of date?

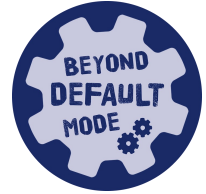
Case 5 – The Community Lunch

The community lunch team was established some 10 years ago in St Simon's Church, and has proved a valuable ministry for both serving and building community life. The lunch (which includes home-baked goods) happens all year round, taking a break only at Christmas.

Over the years some of the older team members have retired; they have not been replaced in equal numbers by new helpers. Turns on the rota come more frequently now – both for those who bake and those who prepare and serve. The faithful team remains committed to the project but members are tired and can be irritable – with each other as well as with the public.

There are potential team members in the congregation, but the reputation of the team for grumbling does not encourage offers of help. What approach might you take in this situation in moving forward?

EXPLORING YOUR OWN APPROACH TO CONFLICT

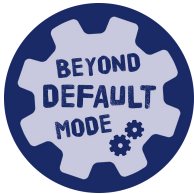


1. Look at your own approach preferences. Note any significant changes from calm to storm conditions: what might be the impact of such change on others? Remind yourself of the strengths and drawbacks of your preferences.
2. Think of an example of a disagreement or conflict between you and another person or persons (but preferably no more than a couple of other people). What approach did you primarily use through the course of the conflict? If you used different approaches what was the order or progression of these?
3. How do the approaches you used match up with your preferred and back-up approaches identified through the questionnaire results?

4. Are there different approaches you might have used that that could potentially have been more fruitful in easing or resolving the tensions between you? What might have been the benefits of using a different approach? And would there have been any costs of doing so?
5. Identify one approach that you would intentionally like to develop to enable you to move beyond default and increase your range and skills for dealing with conflict. What would this approach have looked like in the example you are thinking about?
6. Resolve to try using this approach next time you find yourself in a situation of escalating tension. Afterwards reflect on what it was like for you, moving beyond default. Find someone who is less emotionally connected to the situation to help you reflect self-critically.

SESSION 5

BEYOND DEFAULT MODE



Participant Feedback Form

Please complete this form at the end of the session. Thank you.

1. Please circle your evaluation of the following aspects of the session where 1=Unhelpful and 6=Very Helpful:

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. The content provided in the session | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| B. The way the session enabled you to learn | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| C. How your leaders led and facilitated the session | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| D. How participants worked and interacted together | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |
| E. THE SESSION OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| <hr/> | | | | | | |

2. What you most appreciated or found helpful about the session was:

3. One thing you see yourself applying or using from the session is:

4. What you would change or like to be different about the session (either the content, or the way learning was facilitated, or both) was:

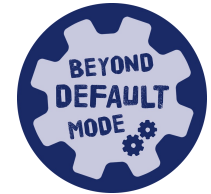
Thank you for taking the time to complete this feedback form.

GROUP:

COURSE LEADERS:

SESSION 5

BEYOND DEFAULT MODE



Course Leader's Feedback Form

Please complete a form at the end of each session. Please respond to question 5 after reading your participants' feedback forms. Thank you.

1. Please circle your evaluation of the following aspects of the session where 1=Unhelpful and 6=Very Helpful:

| | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A. Guidance provided in the Leader's Guide | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| B. PowerPoint slides, handouts, scripts and other materials | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| C. Quality and appropriateness of the content | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| D. Process offered for presenting content & facilitating learning | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| E. How you led and facilitated this session | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| F. How participants worked and interacted together in this session | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |
| G. THE SESSION OVERALL | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 |

2. What you most appreciated or found helpful about the materials provided for you was:

Thank you for taking time to complete this feedback form. Please then scan it as a PDF file, and email it to Bridge Builders:
bb@bbministries.org.uk

Only send the course leaders' feedback form.

Bridge Builders will seek to improve Growing Bridgebuilders in the light of feedback from all the course leaders.

COURSE LEADERS:

LOCATION:

GROUP SIZE:

TYPE OF PARTICIPANTS:

3. What you most struggled with in leading the session was:

4. What you would change or like to be different about the materials provided for you is:
(Note: this could relate either to the content, or to the process for facilitating learning, or both)

5. Having read all the participants' feedback comments what you would most draw attention to is:

6. Any other comments: