



Conflict

Using the MBTI assessment to help people:

- Understand different approaches to conflict
- Approach conflict constructively within teams



Setting the scene for your session

Before the session, you might want to find out

- Whether the team are experiencing interpersonal or professional conflict
- How long conflict has been an issue.



Conflict management activity

Overview

This activity helps people explore the conflict between preference pairs (E-I, S-N, T-F, J-P). Doing this can often act as a catalyst to help teams work together more effectively.

Time

30 minutes

Materials

Flipchart, sticky notes and pens for four groups

Instructions

- Put four flipcharts (or four sheets of flipchart paper) around the room
- Write a preference pair at the top of each flipchart
- Write these three headings (below) on each flipchart under the preference pair. Allow space for participants to write or add sticky notes under each heading
 - Potential sources of conflict
 - Avoiding conflict
 - Resolving conflict
- Put your participants into groups of similar types (do not use the flipcharts yet)
- Ask each group to discuss what they find irritating about their opposite preferences, and how they think they might irritate others
- Allow 10 minutes for discussion

Next, pair participants with their opposite preferences. This gives them an opportunity to discuss differences. Ask each pair to identify possible sources of conflict and how they could avoid or resolve them. Give them five minutes.



Now introduce the flipcharts.

Ask participants to move around the room. Get them to write their ideas on the flipcharts or on sticky notes on the charts. Encourage participants to keep moving around the room.

Debrief

- Ask participants to stand next to one of the flipcharts
- Give each group three minutes to summarize the information on their flipchart
- Ask them to share their summaries with the group

How to do this activity virtually

To use this exercise with virtual or remote groups:



- Use an app that allows you to set up breakout rooms
- The first two parts of the activity can be run in a parallel way to the face-to-face exercise:
 - Put participants of similar or the same MBTI type into breakout rooms
 - Ask each group to discuss what they find irritating about their opposite preferences, and how they think they might irritate others
 - Allow 10 minutes for discussion. If supported by your app, visit each of the breakout groups during this time
 - Close the breakout rooms and pair participants with their opposite preferences in fresh breakout rooms. Unlike the face-to-face exercise, these groups may need to be include 3-4 people rather than pairs but try to keep group sizes as small as you can
 - Ask each group to identify possible sources of conflict and how they could avoid or resolve them. Allow five minutes
 - Close the breakout rooms and bring participants back together



- The next part of the activity, when carried out face-to-face, helps participants learn from and build on each other's ideas as they move between the flipcharts. There are several ways this can be achieved in a virtual setting, depending on the capabilities of your app and the size of the group:
 - For smaller groups, set up a whiteboard chart with four columns, labelled E-I, S-N, T-F, J-P and with the three rows, labelled potential sources of conflict, avoiding conflict, resolving conflict. Ask participants to write their ideas on the whiteboard, starting wherever they want, ideally using a small font. Debrief once ideas have begun to dry up or after 10 minutes
 - For larger groups, prepare a whiteboard for each preference pair, allowing 5 minutes for participants to enter their ideas on each. Debrief for each preference pair and then facilitate an overall discussion at the end
 - If you do not have access to a whiteboard, use a chat box. Go through each preference pair in turn, starting with E-I. Emphasise that participants do not have to wait their turn; everyone can type at the same time. After 5 minutes on E-I, stop the discussion, debrief and move on to S-N. Facilitate an overall discussion at the end
 - You may also have access to other platforms or software that can be used for this activity. For example, some online systems, used or originally designed for project planning and idea generation in virtual teams, will allow sharing of virtual 'post-it notes'.



Conflict resources

Read this

- [White paper: Squaring up to conflict](#)

Use these

- [MBTI Step I Exercise: Conflict case study](#)
- [MBTI Step I Exercise: Conflict and complementarity](#)
- [MBTI Step I Exercise: Define conflict](#)
- [MBTI Step I Exercise: Rights and responsibilities](#)

Available to buy at www.themyersbriggs.com or on Elevate®

- [MBTI Conflict Style Report](#)
Improve people's conflict management with tips and advice based on their conflict style.
- [MBTI Comparison Report: Work Styles](#)
Compare two respondents' types to help them manage differences more effectively.
- [Introduction to Type and Conflict](#)
See how MBTI type improves conflict management strategies. Available in print or e-book formats.



See also

The [Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument \(TKI™\)](#) is a world-renowned conflict management assessment – and you don't need to get certified to use it.