



You, Me, and Conflict

Understand how participants respond to and resolve conflict

TIME

10-20 minutes



TEAM STAGE

Storming, Norming

MATERIALS

None

SUMMARY

In this activity, participants will use their body language to show how they respond and react to conflict. Through this exercise they will have a better understanding of where conflict comes from and how to better resolve disagreements.

SET UP

- Make sure there is a space large enough for your group to stand in a circle shoulder to shoulder.

INSTRUCTIONS

- The facilitator should stand in the middle of the room and say, “Imagine that I represent conflict. Think about how you usually react when you experience a conflict personally or witness a conflict happening. Then, place yourself, in relation to me, somewhere in the room in a way that indicates your first response to conflict or disagreement. Represent your reaction with your body position, the direction that you’re facing, and the distance from conflict.”
- Participants may respond in a variety of ways depending on their personal reactions:
 - Participants may move closer to the facilitator or as far away as they can.
 - They might try to make themselves very small or very big.
 - They might turn away, close their eyes, pace around the room, cross their arms, reach out, etc.
- Once everyone has placed themselves, ask individuals to explain why they are standing the way that they are.
- Consider also asking, “If this represents your first reaction, what might your second reaction be, after thinking more about the conflict?” Then, have participants reposition themselves and discuss.

VARIATIONS

- If the facilitator is not comfortable representing conflict themselves, they may use an object to represent conflict instead.
- Have the group think about specific types of conflict they might encounter, each time allowing them to move and show their reactions differently if they choose. For example, “*I represent conflict... with a peer, with an authority figure, with a client, with a stranger, etc.*” or “*I represent conflict... as gossip, as difference in opinion, as disrespect, etc.*”

 **Online:** To facilitate this activity virtually, create a Google Slides document with the word “conflict” in the middle. Tell participants to think of one word or phrase that represents how they feel about conflict. Encourage them to be creative with text size, font, color, and positioning to represent their reactions. Alternatively, have each participant add an image or GIF that represents their reaction to conflict. Create multiple slides if there are more participants than can fit on one. [\[click here for video\]](#)



DEBRIEF QUESTIONS

- What:
 - What factors affected how you responded to conflict in this activity?
 - What similarities or differences did you notice when comparing your reaction to conflict with other participants' reactions?
 - So What:
 - Why is it important to know how you react to conflict?
 - Why is it important to know how other people react to conflict?
 - Now What:
 - How can you use this activity to improve your relationship with conflict?
 - What can you take away from this activity that will allow you to work better as a team?
- **Facilitator Note:** These questions can be used to guide your debrief, however, pick the questions that best match your group's experience and add or change questions as needed.