

SUGGESTED ACTIVITIES

Note to the instructor: Every informal discussion should be followed by one or more hands-on activities that reinforce one or more of the concepts being discussed. These activities should last 25-30 minutes, giving about one hour total block of time for the leadership session at a typical CAP meeting (25-30 minutes for the informal discussion, plus 25-30 minutes for the activities).

Along with any questions found in the activities themselves, you should be sure to ask, “**How does this activity tie in with our discussion?**”

CAP recommends activities from the *Learn to Lead Activity Guide* by Rob Smith (published by the Civil Air Patrol). You are free to substitute another activity, or create your own, as long as you tie in with one or more concepts of the informal discussion.

Main concepts for this lesson: **Personality; differences, motivation.**

11 – CONFLICT (CHAPTER 6)

Overview Statement: Where there are people, there will be problems. Conflict is unavoidable. Managing conflict is a normal and inevitable part of leadership.

Connection to the Curriculum: Ties in with a central theme of chapter six in *Learn to Lead*, Team Leadership.

Estimated Time: 25-30 Minutes

Resources Required: *Learn to Lead*, Module Two; Whiteboard (or chalkboard, butcher paper or easel pad).

Key Terms:

Conflict – “A disagreement through which individuals perceive a threat to their needs, interests, or concerns.” *Learn to Lead*, Module Two

Knee-jerk – “Not thought through.” Encarta Dictionary

INTRODUCTION

Attention: Do you agree or disagree that conflict is inevitable?

Motivation: Leaders are interested in managing conflict because conflict destroys teamwork and therefore limits the team's ability to succeed.

Overview: In today's lesson, we will describe how conflict impacts a team and the leader's role in managing conflict.

Your role in this discussion is to be an active participant. You are free to share your views with each other. Please be involved and considerate of one another. My role will be to take notes on what you say, and I may occasionally ask a question or two. There are no right or wrong answers to the questions. I am simply interested in what you have to say.

MAIN POINT 1: HOW CONFLICT IMPACTS A TEAM

Even the strongest relationships will experience bumps along the way. It is naive to believe otherwise. At one time or another, interpersonal conflict will be present on every team, in every friendship, within every family. Conflict develops when someone does not act as another wants.

The most common conflicts cadet NCOs will be called upon to help resolve are personality conflicts, which are especially irrational. The individuals' perceptions and emotions take hold at the expense of logic and the sober grasp of reality. Conflict often creates an inhospitable feeling that can affect everyone on the team, even bystanders who are not directly involved. This is especially true when two leaders develop a conflict – their ill feelings are bound to poison their teams.

Question: How does conflict negatively impact the team?

Question: How can you help to limit the amount of conflict on the team?

Question: Is it possible to stubbornly oppose someone and not be in conflict with that person? Defend your answer.

MAIN POINT 2: THE LEADER'S ROLE IN MANAGING CONFLICT

The leader has a duty to respond to conflict because the leader is responsible for the team's behavior and success. Leaders work to develop skills enabling them to manage conflict in

productive, ethical ways. The real measure of a leader then is how he or she handles conflict. Work on becoming a deliberate leader by refusing to react in “knee-jerk” fashion.

In managing conflict, leaders focus on changing people’s behavior. Outward actions count for more than inward feelings. Two teammates are not required to like one another, but they must be capable of working together. A leader may hope that each subordinate has good feelings about their teammates, and indeed good feelings can only help a team, but in the end, it’s the ability to work together that is the mark of true professionalism.

Question: Denial is when the leader refuses to acknowledge the conflict exists. Why does denial represent a failure of leadership?

Question: Sometimes, the leader is the source of the conflict because of weak people skills. How would you mentor such a leader?

Question: Describe some ways a leader can turn a conflict into a win/win situation.

CONCLUSION

Summary: In any team there will be conflict. The real measure of a leader is how he or she handles conflict.

Remotivation: Learn how to create “win/win” relationships when dealing with conflict. The goal is to change behaviors, not feelings.

Closure: If it weren’t for people, we’d all get along.

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Main concept for this lesson: **Conflict.**