



Learning Outcomes

Conflict Navigation

Core & Specialized Credentials

International Certification Alliance

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LICENSING INFORMATION

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HOW TO READ THIS DOCUMENT

This document outlines the learning outcomes that accredited member organizations must address to offer ICA's Conflict Navigation certification. To achieve the certification, a learner must complete the core credential plus at least two specialized credentials.

Each learning outcome (LO) follows a particular pattern, described below.

O.O Learning Outcome Name

Additional Context, describing why this Learning Outcome is important or what it is intended to impart.

The learning outcome's purpose further describes what is expected to be imparted to the learner (e.g., a key point, framework, model, approach, technique, or skill).

CORE CREDENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Conflict Navigation Core

Conflict is a normal feature of collaborative work, yet most people have never been equipped with a shared language or a reliable approach for engaging with it constructively. This course addresses that gap. This is an 8-hour Core Credential within the Influence & Interpersonal Dynamics Skill Area, for anyone who works with others, across teams, functions, or organizations. Learners will explore the nature and dynamics of workplace conflict, the role of perception and emotion in escalation and de-escalation, and practical approaches for moving from entrenchment to dialogue.

1. Understanding Conflict

1.1 Healthy and Unhealthy Conflict

Healthy conflict can surface important differences, generate solutions, and build trust. Unhealthy conflict erodes trust and performance. Knowing the difference is the first step to making conflict productive.

Establish an understanding of the differences between healthy and unhealthy conflict. Build the ability to recognize conflict early, identify what kind of conflict is actually happening (healthy or unhealthy), and determine how to respond. Help learners understand that creating conditions for healthy conflict must be done intentionally.

1.2 Conflict Escalation and De-escalation

Conflict rarely erupts without warning. It moves through stages, and missing the early signals of escalation means responding only after a disagreement has already hardened.

Introduce stages of conflict and the factors that can cause conflict to escalate. Build the ability to recognize what stage a conflict is at and choose a response suited to that stage.

1.3 Perception and Attribution in Conflict

The same event can look completely different to each person in a conflict.

Build the ability to spot the assumptions each side is making in a conflict, not just what actually happened. Assumptions such as intent, identity threat, or perceived fairness shape how people feel and act.

2. Self-Awareness and Emotional Regulation in Conflict

2.1 Personal Conflict Patterns

Everyone develops a default way of responding to conflict, usually without noticing, and a pattern that works well in one situation can quietly undermine another.

Develop learners' awareness of their default conflict response, and when it helps versus when it gets in the way.

2.2 Emotional Regulation Under Conflict Pressure

Conflict can trigger a stress response that narrows attention and increases reactivity, right when clear thinking matters most.

Cover a variety of triggers and the types of responses that can happen. Introduce emotional regulation strategies that can be used to reduce stress responses and help learners respond constructively when conflict emerges or escalates unexpectedly.

3. Engaging Conflict Constructively: Dialogue and Communication

3.1 Active Listening and Inquiry in Conflict

Conflict often becomes positional, with people defending outcomes rather than exploring underlying concerns. Listening, inquiry, and acknowledgment can reduce tension and create space for more productive dialogue.

Develop practical listening, inquiry and acknowledgement skills that help de-escalate tension, surface underlying needs, and engage safely in conflict dialogue.

3.2 Preparation for Clear Conflict Messages

Navigating conflict without preparation increases the likelihood of reactive patterns taking over. Thoughtful preparation around intent, anticipated responses, and de-escalation moves significantly improves outcomes.

Develop learners' ability to prepare intentionally for conflict conversations using structures that address purpose, tone, anticipated reactions, and recovery strategies, so they enter difficult interactions with greater clarity and confidence.

3.3 Written Conflict Communication

Conflict can escalate from misinterpretation of written or asynchronous communication

Cover the additional complications of written or asynchronous communication in conflict such as the lack of tone and body language. Written and asynchronous communications require explicit clarity about intent and stance. Emphasize that these messages are permanent and easily misinterpreted.

3.4 Conflict Conversations

Conflict conversations rarely unfold as planned. They require preparation paired with real-time responsiveness and flexibility.

Develop learners' ability to frame concerns, observations, and requests in ways that are direct without being adversarial, and to adapt their approach as a conflict conversation unfolds. Use communication structures that separate observable facts from interpretation and invite dialogue rather than defensiveness.

4. Resolution and Knowing When to Involve Others

4.1 Conflict Resolution, Management, and Transformation

Not every conflict can or should be fully resolved. Treating all conflict as a problem to be solved quickly can prevent more meaningful change.

Build learners' understanding of different conflict outcomes such as resolution, management, the need for repair, and transformation. Help the learner match the conflict outcome to the nature and depth of the situation.

4.2 Self-Management and Third-Party Involvement

Direct engagement is appropriate in some conflicts, while power imbalance, safety concerns, or entrenched dynamics may require third-party support. Choosing the wrong path can increase risk or reduce accountability.

Develop learners' judgment about how power dynamics, safety concerns, and entrenched patterns affect the appropriate approach to conflict, including when direct engagement is appropriate and when mediation, HR, leadership, or other support is needed.

SPECIALIZED CREDENTIAL LEARNING OUTCOMES

Resistance & Conflict

This 2–4 hour Specialized Credential equips practitioners with a deeper understanding of resistance as a meaningful signal rather than obstacle, and builds capacity to engage conflict and pushback in high–stakes, group, or change–related contexts.

1.1 Resistance as Meaningful Information

Resistance is usually treated as something to push through, but it often carries real information about a concern, risk, or condition that hasn't been addressed yet, and dismissing it outright means missing that signal.

Build the ability to read resistance as information before deciding how to respond to it. For example, the same pushback in a meeting could mean "this person doesn't want to lose control" or "this person sees a real flaw I haven't addressed," and those two readings call for completely different responses.

2.1 Drivers of Resistance

Resistance rarely comes from a single cause. It often reflects individual concerns, group dynamics, and structural conditions all at once, and responding only to the visible behavior can leave the real cause untouched.

Build the ability to trace resistance back to what's actually driving it, at the individual, relational, and systemic level. For example, the same behavior might be partly a personal fear of looking incompetent, partly a team norm that punishes anyone who stands out by adapting first, and partly a structural issue like a performance metric that still rewards the old way of working. Responding to only the loudest or most visible layer, usually the individual complaint, leaves the relational and systemic drivers fully intact and free to keep generating the same resistance in someone else.

3.1 Constructive Responses to Resistance

Understanding why resistance is happening doesn't help if it never turns into action, and a response chosen without rehearsal is harder to execute once real pressure hits.

Build the ability to choose and rehearse a response to resistance that fits its actual cause and context. A strategy that looks sound on paper can fall apart the moment the other person pushes back harder than expected or brings up something unaddressed, so learners need to practice delivering a response under real conversational pressure, not just design one in the abstract.

4. Effectiveness and Impact of Conflict Responses

Confusing "the conflict ended" with "the response worked" is an easy mistake to make. Without stepping back to genuinely evaluate a response, practitioners keep reaching for the same approach out of habit, never learning whether it's actually effective or just familiar.

Build the ability to evaluate how well a past response to resistance or conflict actually worked, beyond how it felt in the moment. For example, in the moment, emotion can make it hard to judge whether a response to resistance or conflict actually worked, and without deliberate review, the same approach tends to repeat regardless of its results. Or a response that felt like it went well, may have only suppressed the concern rather than resolved it.

Rebuilding Trust

Trust erodes for many reasons—broken commitments, misalignment, unmet expectations, or simple disconnection. Once lost, the relational residue, guardedness, and unspoken resentment can quietly undermine collaboration for months or years. This 2–4 hour Specialized Credential focuses on what happens after trust breaks down: how it fractures, what genuine repair requires, and how to re-establish the conditions for productive working relationships.

1.1 How Trust Breaks Down

Trust is rarely broken in a single moment. It erodes through repeated experiences that accumulate into a sense of unsafety.

Establish an understanding of trust as a dynamic and fragile relational resource, the experiences that damage trust and why time alone does not restore it.

2.1 Genuine Repair and Surface Resolution

Attempts to repair trust often fail when they address the immediate incident but not the broader sense of unreliability, harm, or reduced safety.

Develop learners' ability to distinguish genuine repair (addressing the relationship rupture) from surface resolution (addressing the incident) and recognize what conditions are still missing. Introduce practices to support relational repair such as acknowledgment, accountability, and renewed agreements.

3.1 Accountability and Acknowledgment in Repair

Accountability can support repair when it clearly acknowledges impact and responsibility without becoming blame or a performative apology.

Build learners' ability to support repair through acknowledgment, accountability, renewed agreements, and other practices that restore working relationships. Cover the importance of addressing the impact on the other party, taking clear responsibility, and offering a concrete forward commitment.

4.1 Sustained Trust Building

Rebuilding trust requires follow-through or risk falling back into old patterns causing loss of trust again.

Develop learners' ability to assess whether a trust-rebuilding effort has created the conditions for sustained repair, using criteria such as consistent behavior, agreements being honored, or moments where old patterns resurface. Help learners recognize that continuing to evaluate progress and adapting is an act of trust building.

Conflict Across Difference

Standard conflict frameworks were largely developed from a single cultural vantage point and often assume a level playing field that does not exist in most organizations. When conflict crosses lines of identity, culture, or structural power, the dynamics change in ways that generic approaches do not account for. This 2–4 hour Specialized Credential equips practitioners to recognize and work constructively with those differences.

1.1 Culture, Identity, and Conflict Experience

Conflict is not a universal experience. Culture and social identity can shape how people experience conflict.

Build learners' understanding of how culture and identity shape conflict. Some examples of this context are how people perceive threat, express disagreement or concerns, interpret silence, and understand resolution. Help learners recognize how using a single conflict approach regardless of context risks misreading behavior, causing harm, and producing outcomes that feel fair to some parties and unjust to others.

2.1 Power Imbalance in Conflict

When parties have unequal organizational, social, or structural power, they may not have the same choices or risks in a conflict.

Teach learners to recognize power imbalances based on social identity, organizational role, or structural position and how they fundamentally change each party's perception of threat, available options, and how behavior is interpreted. Emphasize that neutral conflict approaches fail when power is unequal; direct engagement may be unsafe or inappropriate for the person with less power. Introduce practical alternatives such as documentation, seeking support, building safer conditions before engaging, or escalating when necessary.

3.1 Adapting Conflict Practice Across Difference

Awareness of difference is necessary but not sufficient. Awareness must lead to adapted practices.

Develop learners' ability to design conflict engagement approaches that are deliberately adapted to the identity, cultural, and power context of a specific situation rather than applying a standard framework uniformly. Examples of engagement approaches are adjusting how they listen, how they frame issues, how they create safety, and how they define a good outcome in ways that are genuinely responsive to the people in the room rather than performatively inclusive. Reinforce that approaches that assume equal voice can unintentionally reinforce the imbalance.

4.1 Equity and Effectiveness Across Difference

Engaging well across differences is not a skill that is mastered and set aside. It requires ongoing reflection on impact, willingness to receive feedback about how one's approach landed, and a commitment to adjusting practice when it causes harm, even unintentional harm.

Build learners' ability to evaluate conflict engagement for both effectiveness (did it produce a workable outcome that both parties can live with) and equity (did both parties have a genuine voice and agency in shaping the outcome). Introduce the need to remain open to feedback and adjust when an approach produces unintended inequity or harm.

Conflict & Team Health

Teams develop conflict cultures over time, characteristic patterns of how they handle tension, disagreement, and rupture. These patterns shape performance, psychological safety, and the team's ability to learn and adapt. This 2–4 Specialized Credential shifts the unit of analysis from the individual to the team, examining how unresolved conflict accumulates into dysfunction and what leaders and team members can do to shift those patterns.

Learners will explore the relationship between conflict norms and team health, how to diagnose a team's conflict culture, and practical approaches for intervening at the team level to create conditions where productive disagreement is possible.

1.1 Conflict Cultures and Team Health

Teams do not handle conflict randomly. Over time teams develop recognizable norms and patterns around conflict, whether they are expressed or not.

Build learners' understanding of how conflict norms develop and how they influence overall team health and effectiveness. Conflict may be embraced, expressed, avoided, and resolved in both healthy and unhealthy ways. The conflict culture influences team psychological safety, trust, learning, and performance.

2.1 Diagnosing a Team's Conflict Patterns

Team conflict is not always visible as open disagreement. It may appear through disengagement, avoidance, undermined decisions, cliques, or topics that are repeatedly left unspoken.

Develop learners' ability to recognize team conflict patterns and the visible symptoms of conflict such as not having conflict, silence in conversations, power struggles, or misalignment. Explain approaches to go beyond the visible symptoms to expose underlying issues.

3.1 Team–Level Conflict Interventions

Changing a team's conflict culture requires more than addressing individual incidents. Lasting change requires intentional work to create the conditions for healthy conflict to become possible.

Develop learners' ability to design team–level interventions that address the root conditions of unhealthy conflict patterns, drawing on approaches such as norm setting, psychological safety building, and structured dialogue.

4.1 Sustaining Healthy Conflict Norms

Healthy conflict norms require continued reinforcement. Under pressure, changing membership, or heavier workloads, teams can return to earlier patterns unless supportive behaviors and structures remain consistent.

Introduce the conditions that sustain healthy conflict norms such as psychological safety, clear agreements, open engagement, and addressing tension early. Cover the organizational pressures that challenge those conditions and introduce ongoing practices to build and strengthen healthy conflict norms.

Team Coaching

Team Coaching is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to coach an intact team as a collective client rather than coach individual team members separately. Learners develop the ability to recognize what appropriately belongs within team coaching, establish a shared coaching agreement, maintain a stance that serves the team as a whole, and facilitate interventions that help the team notice and work with its own patterns, relationships, and ways of working. Through practice and reflection, learners strengthen their ability to support collective ownership and capability and evaluate whether coaching is contributing to meaningful behavioral and relational change within the team.

1.1 Team Coaching as a Practice

Team coaching works with an intact team as the client rather than coaching individual members separately. The focus is on how the team thinks, interacts, learns, and works toward shared outcomes.

Develop learners' understanding of team coaching as a distinct practice focused on the team as a collective client. Build learners' ability to distinguish team coaching from individual coaching, facilitation, team building, and systems coaching; keep attention on patterns and outcomes that belong to the intact team; and recognize when a team need may be better addressed through another approach.

2.1 Contracting and Stance with a Team

Team coaching requires agreement about the team's purpose for coaching, roles, participation, confidentiality, sponsor expectations, and how the coach will work with the team as a whole.

Develop learners' ability to establish a clear coaching agreement with an intact team and maintain a stance that serves the team as a whole. Build learners' capacity to clarify the purpose of coaching, roles and expectations, confidentiality boundaries, sponsor expectations, and how progress will be understood. Reinforce balanced attention across team members and awareness of power and participation dynamics, while avoiding alignment with the leader, a subgroup, or an individual agenda.

3.1 Team Coaching Interventions

Team coaching interventions help an intact team notice and work with its own patterns rather than relying on the coach to diagnose its problems or provide the solutions.

Develop learners' ability to facilitate interventions that help a team observe how it communicates, makes decisions, handles disagreement, shares responsibility, and works toward shared outcomes. Build learners' capacity to respond to what is emerging in the team, create space for multiple perspectives, notice relevant power and participation dynamics, and strengthen the team's ability to recognize and work with its own patterns without turning the coach into the expert or fixer.

4.1 Team Coaching Outcomes

Team coaching should be evaluated through changes in how the team works together, not simply through completed coaching activity or individual member satisfaction.

Develop learners' ability to evaluate whether coaching is contributing to greater collective capability within the team. Build learners' capacity to recognize observable shifts in communication, decision-making, disagreement, accountability, shared ownership, learning, or progress toward team outcomes, and distinguish those changes from activities such as attendance or completed sessions.

EQ Across Culture and Identity

EQ Across Culture & Identity is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to apply emotional intelligence effectively across differences in culture, identity, context, and power. Learners develop the ability to recognize that emotional norms are not universal, consider how power and positionality shape emotional experience and expression, engage across differences with cultural humility rather than assumption, and use emotionally inclusive practices that make room for different ways of communicating and participating.

1.1 Culture, Identity, and Emotional Expression

Emotional expression and interpretation are shaped by culture, identity, individual experience, and professional context. Behaviors considered appropriate or meaningful in one setting may be understood differently in another.

Develop learners' understanding that emotional norms are contextual rather than universal. Examine how cultural background, identity, professional norms, organizational context, and individual experience can shape how emotion is expressed, interpreted, and responded to. Reinforce that cultural patterns can inform curiosity but should not be used to predict an individual's behavior.

2.1 Power, Positionality, and Emotional Experience

Power and positionality affect which emotions feel safe to express, whose behavior is viewed as acceptable, and what consequences may follow from speaking or responding honestly.

Develop learners' ability to account for power and positionality when interpreting emotional experience across differences. Consider how formal authority, social identity, status, belonging, representation, and dependence can influence what people express or withhold; recognize additional emotional work such as monitoring behavior, adapting expression, or navigating stereotypes; and examine how their own position shapes what they notice, assume, or interpret.

3.1 Cultural Humility

Cultural humility means recognizing the limits of one's own perspective and remaining open to learning from another person's experience rather than assuming expertise about them.

Develop learners' ability to engage across cultural and identity differences with curiosity, openness, and self-awareness. Examine how to notice and suspend assumptions, ask rather than infer, remain willing to revise their interpretation, and adapt their response based on what they learn. Reinforce that cultural humility is an ongoing stance rather than mastery of another person's culture or identity.

4.1 Emotionally Inclusive Practices

Emotional inclusion is shaped by repeated interpersonal practices that allow people to express concerns, perspectives, and emotions without being required to conform to one preferred communication or emotional style.

Develop learners' ability to translate awareness of culture, identity, and power into everyday EQ practices. Notice whose emotional expression is treated as normal or professional, adapt expectations where appropriate, make room for different ways of communicating and participating, respond constructively when assumptions or misinterpretations surface, and reduce unnecessary emotional burden on people who differ from dominant norms.

Navigating Resistance

Navigating Resistance is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for practitioners who want to recognize and respond to resistance and conflict as meaningful signals during organizational change.

1.1 Resistance as Meaningful Information

Resistance may reflect fear, loss, fatigue, mistrust, power dynamics, or flaws in the change itself. Treating it only as defiance can hide useful information about the system and human experience.

Build learners' understanding of resistance as data about the change, the system, and stakeholder experience. Reframe resistance from something to overcome into something to be curious about. For example, a team pushing back might be flagging a genuine flaw in the change itself (a timeline that ignores a real dependency, a process that breaks under actual workload) rather than simply resisting for its own sake.

2.1 Drivers of Resistance

Resistance can reflect fear, confusion, workload, loss of control, low trust, unclear benefits, or legitimate concerns. People experience these differently based on role, power, experience and impact.

Develop learners' ability to diagnose what may be driving resistance before choosing a response. For example, a senior stakeholder protecting their authority and a frontline employee overwhelmed by workload can look like the same "resistance" while needing completely different responses. The same change can land as a minor adjustment for one group and a genuine threat for another, depending on their role, power, and how directly it touches their day-to-day work.

3.1 Human-Centered Conversations in the Moment

Diagnosing why someone is resistant is only half the job. Practitioners also have to hold the actual conversation, often in real time and under pressure, without a script to fall back on.

Develop learners' ability to facilitate human-centered change conversations and choose responses matched to the underlying concern. Change conversations help people make sense of uncertainty, surface concerns, weigh options, and take constructive next steps, which calls for listening, empathy, clarity, and adaptation in the moment. When resistance surfaces, different concerns call for different responses, such as clarification, involvement, support, adaptation, or escalation. Practitioners need practice both holding these conversations and matching their response to the underlying concern under realistic conversational pressure.

4.1 Patterns of Resistance

Resistance that shows up repeatedly across multiple people or groups is often a pattern worth acting on, not just a series of individual conversations to get through. Practitioners who only respond one conversation at a time miss the chance to address the root of the resistance itself before the same objection resurfaces everywhere.

Build the ability to look across individual instances of resistance for recurring themes that point to a real gap in the change plan such as a rollout sequence that consistently frustrates one team, a benefit that never quite lands regardless of how it's explained, etc. Rather than treating each conversation as an isolated problem to close out, learners should be able to incorporate what the resistance reveals back into the change design, timeline, or approach itself to minimize or avoid the pattern altogether.

Difficult Conversations

Difficult Conversations is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential that builds on the foundations introduced in the Communication Core Credential. This course is for anyone who needs to navigate high–stakes interpersonal exchanges in the workplace, whether delivering unwelcome news, addressing a pattern of behavior, raising a concern with a senior stakeholder, or naming tension that others are avoiding. It is role–agnostic: these conversations are part of professional life at every level.

1.1 What Makes a Conversation Difficult

A conversation becomes difficult not simply because people disagree, but because something important feels at stake. What feels high–stakes to one person may not feel high–stakes to another.

Build learners' ability to recognize what is making a conversation difficult and why the stakes may be experienced differently by each person. Explore factors such as the stated issue, emotions, past history, future uncertainty, power, identity, relationships, and perceived consequences. Help learners recognize when surface tension may be masking deeper concerns, and identify signals that the stakes are rising, such as defensiveness, disengagement, emotional reactions, or escalation.

2.1 Preparation for Difficult Conversations

Preparing for a difficult conversation is not about scripting or controlling how it will go, but without thoughtful preparation the conversation can derail before it really begins.

Build learners' ability to prepare intentionally for a difficult conversation by clarifying what they hope the conversation will make possible, examining their assumptions, considering the other person's perspective and likely stakes, considering what verbal and nonverbal responses may occur and planning how to open the conversation in a way that supports constructive dialogue.

3.1 Maintaining Dialogue Under Pressure

A difficult conversation may be anticipated, or an ordinary conversation may become difficult without warning. When conversation shifts, the ability to stay present, recognize what is happening, and respond intentionally can determine whether dialogue continues or breaks down.

Build learners' ability to maintain constructive dialogue when a conversation becomes emotionally charged or difficult. Develop self-awareness of their own reactions, the ability to recognize verbal and non-verbal signals in others, and a repertoire of techniques for responding intentionally, such as de-escalating defensiveness, recovering from missteps, redirecting dialogue, and recognizing when to pause or step away rather than force an unproductive conversation to continue.

4.1 Outcomes of Difficult Conversations

A difficult conversation does not have to end in agreement to have a useful outcome. But ending without clarity can create false closure and allow the issue to resurface/escalate.

Build learners' ability to bring a difficult conversation to a constructive close by clarifying what has been resolved, agreed, acknowledged, or remains open, and identifying appropriate next steps. Develop the ability to distinguish among different types of outcomes and determine what each requires for moving forward.

Facilitating Conflict

Facilitating Conflict is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who want to develop their ability to hold group processes productively when conflict is present. This course focuses specifically on the facilitator's role in navigating conflict within group settings, and is distinct from mediation, personal conflict resolution, or therapeutic approaches.

1.1 Conflict in Facilitated Group Work

Conflict is an inevitable part of group work when people care about outcomes or hold different perspectives. Approaching it with curiosity can surface useful tension, while suppressing it can drive concerns underground.

Build learners' understanding of conflict as a potentially productive group dynamic and help them distinguish different sources of tension before responding. For example, two participants openly disagreeing about which approach best serves a shared goal is productive conflict. A skilled facilitator can use this to surface information the group needs, while the same disagreement expressed as personal attacks or repeated interruption has crossed into unproductive territory that needs a different response.

2.1 Reading Conflict in the Room

Different conflicts require different responses, and conflict can change during a session. Facilitators must also distinguish conflict from harm: harassment, discrimination, or bullying requires appropriate organizational reporting rather than facilitation techniques.

Develop learners' ability to read conflict type, intensity, stage, and signals, while recognizing harm that falls outside the facilitator's role. Help learners practice tracking source (what and who are involved), type (task escalating into relational), intensity (rising over time), and stage (emerging → escalating → entrenched) within a single scenario, and correctly identify the point at which it stops being theirs to facilitate.

3.1 Facilitator Responses to Conflict

After reading the conflict, the facilitator must choose how to respond without becoming the mediator, manager, or therapist. The role is to hold the group's process and judge when to explore, contain, redirect, or de-escalate tension.

Build learners' judgment in selecting facilitation responses that match the type and intensity of the conflict while maintaining clear role boundaries. Cover types of responses to facilitating conflict such as whether to explore, contain, redirect, or de-escalate the conflict. For each type of response, introduce facilitation techniques that can be used in the moment. For example, when a disagreement seems to hold useful information, the facilitator might choose to explore it by asking each side to say more about what's underneath their position; when it's derailing the session's actual purpose, the facilitator might choose to contain it by naming the tension and parking it for a dedicated conversation later; and when emotion is running too hot for productive dialogue, the facilitator might choose to de-escalate by slowing the pace or calling a short break.

4.1 Reflection on Conflict Facilitation

Conflict facilitation depends on adaptive judgment developed through reflection on experience. Learners need to examine what they read accurately, what they missed, how they responded, and how their own triggers affected the process.

Develop reflective practice that strengthens conflict judgment, self-awareness, and future facilitation choices. Focus this reflection on items such as the quality of the facilitator's reading of the situation and response, the impact of their own emotional and behavioral reactions, and specific adjustments that would improve effectiveness in future conflict situations.

Navigating Competing Interests

Navigating Competing Interests is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who need to make progress when stakeholders have different goals, incentives, constraints, and levels of influence. Formal structures and decision processes rarely tell the whole story: outcomes are also shaped by informal relationships, unwritten rules, dependencies, alliances, and interests that may form well before a formal meeting or approval point. As organizations become more networked, cross-functional, and interdependent, Tomorrow-Ready professionals need to understand how work and decisions actually move through the organization without becoming politically naive or manipulative.

1.1 Reading the Informal Landscape

Formal roles and decision processes rarely show the full picture of how work actually gets done. Informal relationships, access, credibility, unwritten norms, prior commitments, and informal vetoes can shape an outcome before the formal decision point.

Develop learners' ability to read the informal organizational landscape around an initiative or decision. Explore how to distinguish the formal process from the way influence actually moves, including who matters, who has access, what unwritten rules shape behavior, and where support or resistance may form.

2.1 Understanding Competing Interests and Dependencies

Stakeholders can support the same organizational goal while still facing different incentives, risks, timelines, or dependencies. When these differences are treated simply as resistance or misalignment, the real source of tension is often missed.

Build learners' ability to look beneath stated positions and identify the interests, incentives, constraints, and dependencies shaping stakeholder behavior. Explore why competing interests can be legitimate, how control of resources or information creates leverage, and how one group's choices can constrain another group's options.

3.1 Alliances, Sequencing and Decision Pathways

Support for an initiative is often built before the formal decision point. Who is engaged, in what sequence, and when concerns are surfaced can materially affect whether an issue gains momentum, stalls, or arrives at a decision meeting already decided in practice.

Develop learners' ability to build support and deliberately shape how an issue moves through the organization. Cover purposeful alliances, coalition-building, stakeholder sequencing, pre-wiring, timing, surfacing opposition early, and understanding when the formal meeting is only one part of the real decision process.

4.1 Ethical Navigation of Competing Interests

Skillfully navigating organizational interests does not require manipulation, but it does require judgment about trade-offs, transparency, advocacy, and whose costs or priorities are being pushed aside. Political skill can serve shared goals or narrow self-interest.

Develop learners' ability to navigate competing interests effectively while maintaining clear ethical boundaries. Explore legitimate advocacy versus manipulation, transparency and selective disclosure, reciprocity, pressure, trade-offs, and how to test whether an approach is serving the organization rather than only personal advantage.

Negotiation and Influence

Negotiation and Influence is a 2–4 hour Specialized Credential for professionals who need to reach workable agreements, shape decisions, and move people toward action in contexts where they may have limited formal authority. Negotiation and influence are not the preserve of sales professionals or senior leaders: they are everyday professional capabilities required any time someone needs to align stakeholders, secure resources, navigate competing interests, or advocate effectively for a position or a person.

1.1 Negotiation Preparation

Negotiations often go poorly before the conversation even begins because the parties have not clarified what they need, what the other side may value, what alternatives exist, or where their real leverage comes from.

Develop learners' ability to prepare deliberately for a negotiation rather than relying on improvisation. Explore positions and underlying interests, desired outcomes, BATNA—the Best Alternative to a Negotiated Agreement—walk-away conditions, sources of leverage, relevant information, stakeholders, and the process or sequence that may shape the negotiation.

2.1 Creating and Claiming Value

Negotiation is not only about splitting the difference. Some situations create opportunities for win-win outcomes by expanding the value available through different priorities, trades, or options, while other situations require protecting one's own interests and deciding how value will be divided.

Develop learners' ability to distinguish creating value from claiming value and to use both appropriately. Explore how win-win outcomes differ from simple compromise, how to uncover differences in priorities, generate options, package issues, make trade-offs, protect important interests, use concessions deliberately, and recognize when a more collaborative or competitive approach fits the situation.

3.1 Negotiation–Specific Ethical Influence

A sound “win-win” proposal does not influence people on its own. How an issue is framed, what questions are asked, what evidence or objective criteria are used, and how options and concessions are presented can materially affect how the negotiation unfolds. These choices are also expressions of power because they can shape what others perceive as possible, valuable, or reasonable.

Develop learners' ability to use influence deliberately and responsibly within a negotiation without turning this credential into a general persuasion class. Explore framing, purposeful questions, objective criteria, persuasive rationale, anchoring where appropriate, proposal sequencing, packaging, concessions, and adapting to the counterpart's responses. Connect these practices to Power & Responsibility by examining the ethical use of leverage and the difference between influence that preserves genuine choice and influence that becomes manipulative or coercive.

4.1 Agreement Quality, Commitment and Relationship Impact

A negotiation is not successful simply because someone says yes. Agreements can fail when commitments are unclear, implementation support is weak, trust has been damaged, or one party agreed only because of pressure in the moment.

Develop learners' ability to evaluate and strengthen negotiated outcomes for agreement quality, clarity of commitments, implementation viability, relationship impact, and ethical process. Explore the difference between genuine agreement and surface compliance, what should be documented or clarified, whether value was unnecessarily left on the table, and when revisiting the conversation is better than claiming a short-term win.

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