



CONFLICT RESILIENCE

Conflict resilience is the capacity and willingness to sit with others in conflict and do the hard work of both listening and engaging. Its benefits include fostering humanization and connection while preventing demonization and othering.

A resilient approach to conflict...

- is not centered on problem-solving. Getting used to sitting with conflict is the point.
- is dependent upon our willingness to be uncomfortable. We often avoid conflict as a way to prioritize comfort.
- is both a mindset and a set of skills we can practice.

INCREASING CONFLICT RESILIENCE

We can become more conflict resilient by practicing increasing our tolerance for conflict. According to Robert Bordone and Joel Salinas, conflict tolerance involves two related “subcapacities”:

Conflict Recognition—what we view as conflict in the first place.

- We each have our own thresholds for what we consider a conflict—for one person, a dispute may not register as a conflict at all whereas for another person, it’s a full-blown crisis.
- High conflict recognition means that it takes a lot for you to see something as a conflict.
- Low conflict recognition means that it doesn’t take much for you to see something as a conflict.

Conflict Holding—how long we can sit with conflict before shutting down or attempting to move on.

- We each have our own limits on our ability to be present with others in a conflict and to meaningfully work through it.
- High conflict holding means that you when you’re in conflict, you can handle being in that space for a while.
- Low conflict holding means that when you’re in conflict, you don’t have a lot of space to stick with it.

You can be high in one area and low in another or low/low and high/high.

Context matters. Conflict recognition could be more sensitized in the workplace compared to at home or vice versa. Similarly, you may almost always view disputes over politics as conflicts compared to other topics, or disputes with a certain person as conflicts compared to those with other people.

Developing awareness of your own default modes when it comes to conflict recognition and conflict holding is one step to becoming more tolerant of conflict and therefore more conflict resilient!