

ACTIVITY | Regulate the Conflict Temperature



GOAL | To encourage creative tension with a group (e.g., team, organization) by implementing strategies to bring differences of opinion to the surface.



RELEVANT FOR

- Executive
- Middle Manager
- Supervisor
- Caseworker



DESCRIPTION | Controlling the “temperature” can result in constructive conflict.

You don’t want the conflict to become too heated but rather warm enough to spark discussion and change. Stay aware and use your knowledge of the group as a community to determine the right level of “heat.”

Review Part 1 of the worksheet on regulating the temperature. Then, using the questions in Part 2, discuss this approach at an internal meeting.

How can your group encourage creative tension?



MORE INFO

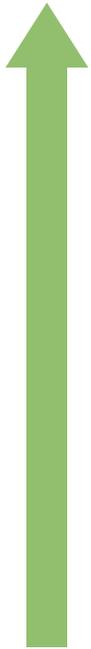
[Regulating Distress](#)



Regulate the Conflict Temperature

Part 1: Information on Regulating the Conflict Temperature

TO RAISE THE TEMPERATURE ...



- Draw attention to the tough questions.
- Give people more responsibility than they're comfortable with.
- Bring conflicts to the surface.
- Tolerate provocative comments.
- Name and use some of the dynamics in the room at the moment to illustrate some of the issues facing the group (e.g., getting the authority figure to do the work, scapegoating an individual, externalizing the blame, tossing technical fixes at the situation).

TO LOWER THE TEMPERATURE ...



- Address the aspects of the conflict that have the most obvious and technical solutions.
- Provide structure by breaking the problem into parts and creating time frames, decision rules, and role assignments.
- Temporarily reclaim responsibility of the tough issues.
- Employ work avoidance mechanisms such as taking a break, telling a joke or a story, or doing an exercise.
- Slow down the process of challenging norms and expectations.

REFERENCE

Heifetz, R., Grashow, A., & Linsky, M. (2009). *The practice of adaptive leadership*. Harvard Business School Press.

