



Church Leader Training

# POSITIVE COMMUNICATION



FAMILY LEADERSHIP  
INITIATIVE



# Welcome

Each of us communicates in ways we don't always realize. Our words, facial features, body gestures, eye contact, touch, space, and voice may be sending messages we don't intend, thereby creating conflict instead of positive communication. We will learn ways to improve our communication and address conflict. At the end of this session, you will be able to:

- **Identify conflict.** *Page 4*
- **Develop positive ways to handle conflict.** *Page 7*
- **Utilize ABC thinking when navigating challenging or stressful situations.** *Page 10*



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## Identifying Conflict

What is conflict?

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From Webster's Dictionary, conflict is a ...

**Noun**

- Mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes, or external or internal demands.
- The opposition of persons or forces that gives rise to the dramatic action in a drama or fiction.

**Verb**

- To be different, opposed, or contradictory: to fail to be in agreement or accord.

## Developing Communication Skills

At what age is someone able to hear?

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## Learning to Listen and Speak

Human development experts tell us the following:

### **3-4 weeks gestation**

- Ear development in the womb.

### **3-12 months after birth**

- Cooing, laughing, and playing with sounds.

### **12-18 months old**

- First words with meaning.
- Adding more words to his/her vocabulary.
- Understands more than can be said.
- Can follow simple instructions.

### **18 months-2 years old**

- Can put two or more words together.
- Language is more clear.

## Non-verbal Communication

What is non-verbal communication?

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Non-verbal communication can be done through:

- Facial expressions
- Body language
- Eye contact
- Touch
- Space
- Voice
- Actions

In fact, we communicate more through non-verbal mechanisms.

## Ongoing Influences

**Family:** We learn how to communicate from our families. We pick up how to handle conflict and demonstrate anger from interactions with our family members.

**School:** We develop communication skills from our education. By watching our peers and through the curriculum being taught, we learn the importance of words.

**Society:** We learn a tremendous amount communication through society and social media.



**We assume that emotional skills will be taught as we grow up; yet other than learning basic social skills, there is no formal training in emotional competency.”**

*“De-Escalate: How to Calm an Angry Person in 90 Seconds or Less”  
by Douglas E. Noll*



*Scripture* SUPPORT

**There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing. *Proverbs 12:18***

# Positive Ways to Handle Conflict

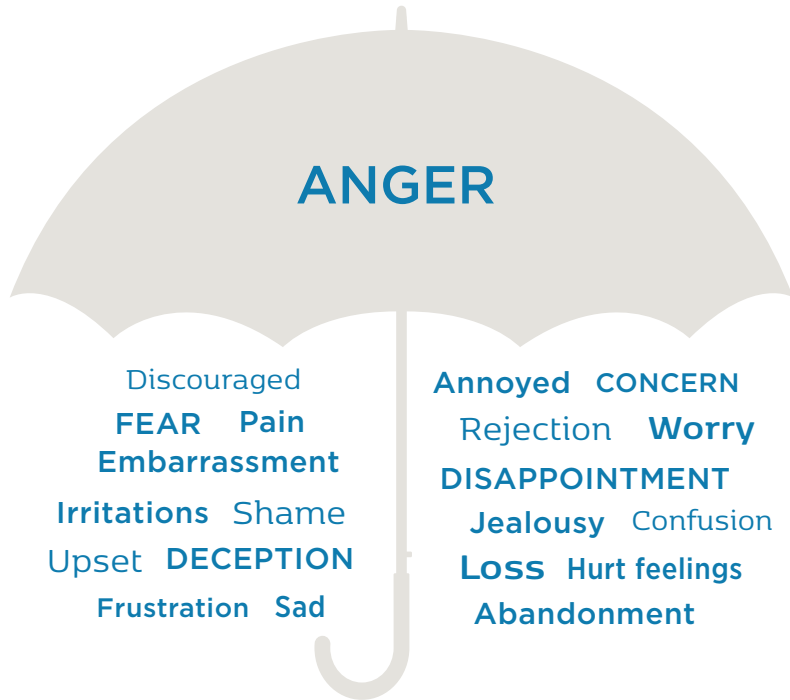
Anger is a secondary emotion. Identifying and acknowledging what is underneath anger is key.

## Anger Umbrella *Visual*

Anger is often viewed as an umbrella emotion. Anger can hide or protect us from a variety of more vulnerable emotions, similar to how an umbrella protects us from rain.

The next time you feel anger, ask yourself:

- **What am I really feeling?**
- **What is driving my anger?**



What do you think about the Anger Umbrella? How does this concept impact you?

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The Wheel of Conflict is a graphic representation of factors that can lead to conflict. The points along the wheel remind us of the contention that can separate one person's feelings and experiences from another's. By understanding the Wheel of Conflict, you can prepare for complicated and tense interactions.



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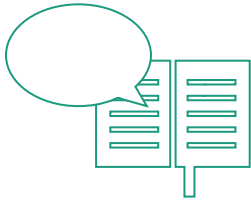
*Source: Bernard Mayer, Ph.D., and Christopher Moore, Ph.D.*

## De-escalating Conflict

Here are a few tips to help de-escalate and resolve conflict:

- Present a calm tone.
- Empathetic listening.
- Validate and name emotion.
- Ask open-ended questions.





*Scripture* SUPPORT

Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth.  
And the Lord said to me, “Behold, I have put my words  
in your mouth.” *Jeremiah 1:9*

**Additional Tips**

Additional ways to positively handle conflict include:

- Self-awareness.
- Use of “I” statements.
- Body posture and other non-verbals.
- No judgment.

Of all the information we’ve covered, what is the most helpful and why?

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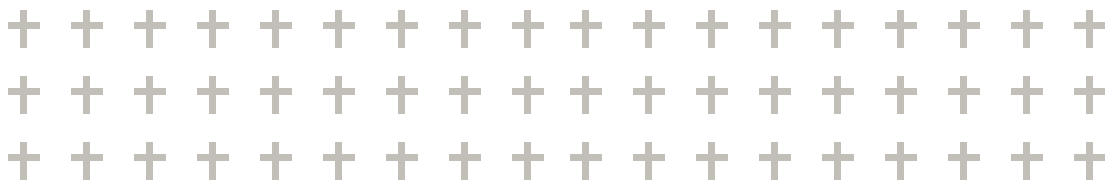
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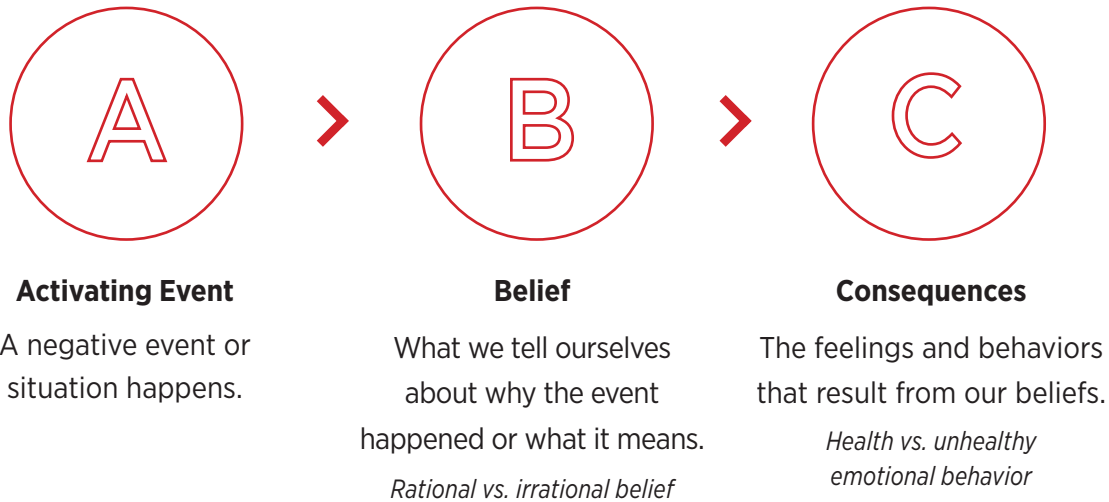
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# ABC Thinking

There is a tendency to think certain situations cause us to react in a certain way. But in reality, we know that people respond differently to the same event. Psychologist and researcher Dr. Albert Ellis created the ABC model to help us understand the meaning of our reactions to difficult situations, including conflict. “ABC” is an acronym for:



## Beliefs Influence Our Feelings and Behaviors

Whenever a negative situation happens we tell ourselves why it happened and what it means. The ABC model says it is not the event itself that causes us to feel and act a certain way. But instead, it is our beliefs about the event that lead to our feelings and behaviors.

Often, our beliefs aren't accurate because they are based on personal history, past experiences, and strong emotions. Inaccurate or irrational beliefs make it difficult to deal with negative situations effectively, since those types of beliefs typically create intense emotions that undermine our ability think clearly and react calmly.



**People and things do not upset us.  
Rather, we upset ourselves by believing  
that they can upset us.”**

*Dr. Albert Ellis*

## Additional Strategies for Handling Conflict

- Remain calm and speak in a calm voice.
- Investigate all the facts. Check out everyone’s story.
- Respect everyone involved.
- Learn what other ministries have done in the past to address a similar situation.
- Seek others for healthy counsel.
- Accept there may be issues beyond what you are capable of resolving—give resources as needed.
- Be open to reading scripture and praying—together or alone—about the situation.

## Resources

Sometimes people just need help. Here are some resources for you to keep in mind:

| AGENCY                               | SERVICES                      | PHONE NUMBER     |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|------------------|
| United Way                           | Utilities, food, and housing  | 211              |
| National Suicide Prevention Lifeline | Support to prevent suicide    | 1 (800) 273-8255 |
| National Domestic Violence Hotline   | Help and support              | 1 (800) 799-7233 |
| Network180                           | Local mental health resources | (616) 336-3909   |

What is one strategy you have learned in this session that you are going to put into practice?

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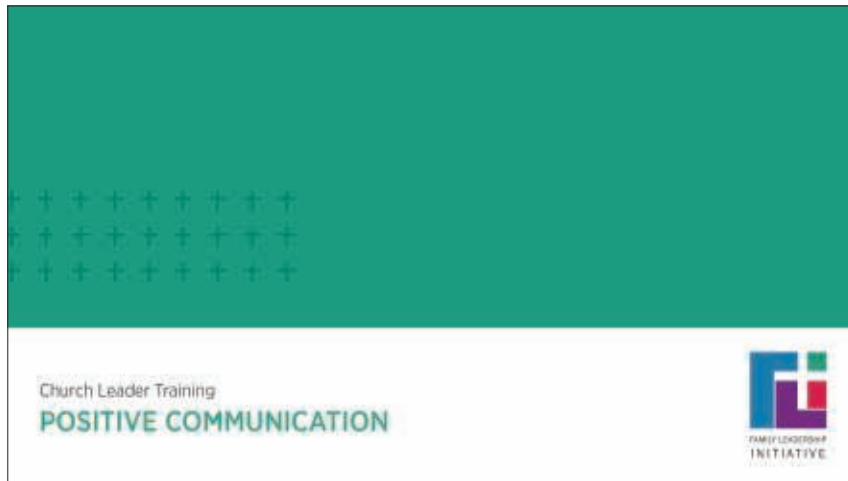
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Slide 1

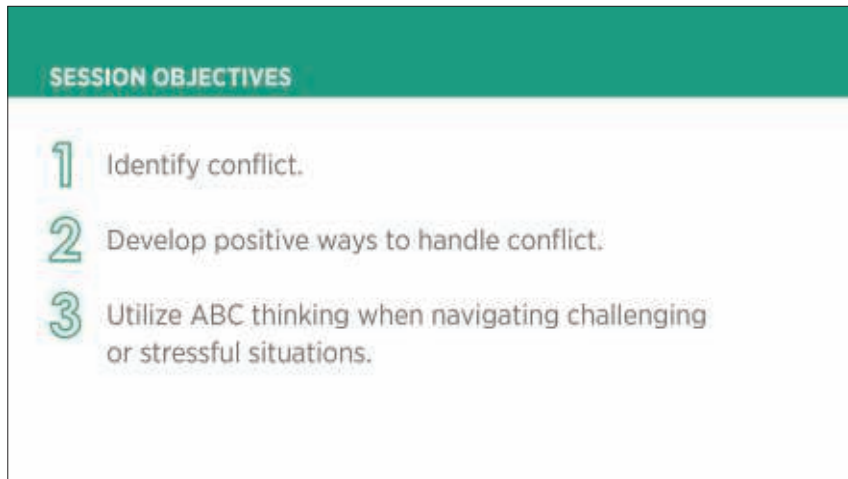


Church Leader Training  
**POSITIVE COMMUNICATION**



FAMILY LEADERSHIP INITIATIVE


Slide 2



**SESSION OBJECTIVES**

- 1 Identify conflict.
- 2 Develop positive ways to handle conflict.
- 3 Utilize ABC thinking when navigating challenging or stressful situations.

Slide 3



**DEFINING CONFLICT**

From Webster's Dictionary, conflict is a ...


**NOUN**

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**VERB**

- To be different, opposed, or contradictory; to fail to be in agreement or accord.


Slide 4



### Learning to Listen and Speak

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- 18 months-2 years old**
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Slide 5



70%  
NON-VERBAL

How We Communicate

Slide 6

“ We assume that emotional skills will be taught as we grow up; yet other than learning basic social skills, there is no formal training in emotional competency.”

*“De-Escalate: How to Calm an Angry Person in 90 Seconds or Less”  
by Douglas E. Noll*

Slide 7

There is one whose rash words are like sword thrusts, but the tongue of the wise brings healing.

*Proverbs 12:18*

Slide 8

**ANGER UMBRELLA**

**Discouraged**  
**FEAR** Pain  
**Embarrassment**  
Irritations **Shame**  
**Upset** DECEPTION  
**Frustration**  
**SAD**

**Annoyed**  
**CONCERN** Worry  
**Rejection**  
DISAPPOINTMENT  
**Jealousy** Confusion  
LOSS Hurt Feelings  
**Abandonment**

Slide 9


**Wheel of Conflict**

EMOTIONS HISTORY  
**NEEDS** STRUCTURE  
VALUES COMMUNICATION



Slide 10

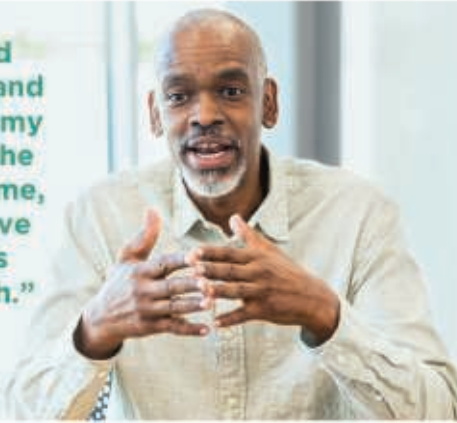
DE-ESCALATING  
CONFLICT



- Present calm tone.
- Empathetic listening.
- Validate and name emotion.
- Ask open-ended questions.

Slide 11

Then the Lord put out his hand and touched my mouth. And the Lord said to me, "Behold, I have put my words in your mouth."  
*Jeremiah 1:9*



Slide 12

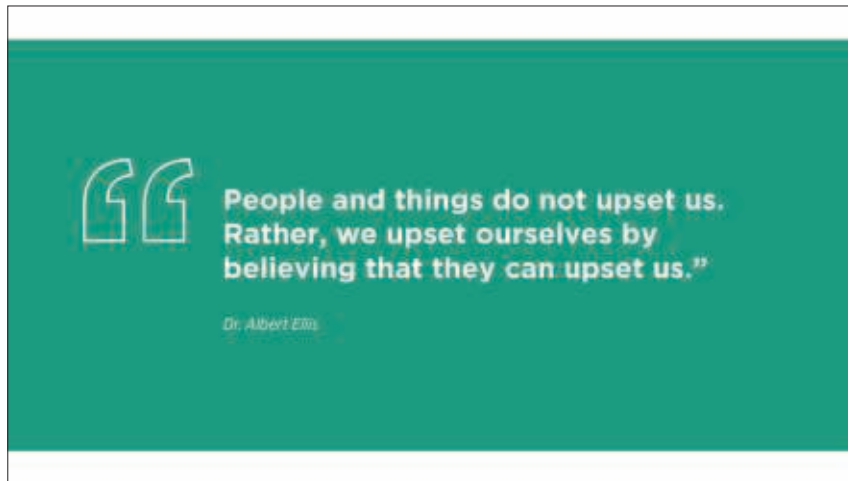
ABC THINKING



**A** > **B** > **C**

**Activating Event**      **Belief**      **Consequences**

Slide 13



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*Dr. Albert Ellis*





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