

AF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT COACHING **POLICIES AND GUIDANCE**

Conflict Management Coaching (CMC) in the Conflict Management Spectrum

AF Conflict Management Coaching (CMC) is a one-on-one voluntary process in which a trained coach supports and assists a person in gaining increased competence and confidence in managing his/her conflict. CMC is a part of the conflict management spectrum, which is broadly defined to include a spectrum of processes from conflict prevention (such as team-building and proactive facilitated discussions) to resolution efforts such as mediation, arbitration, and litigation.

CMC is not Alternative Dispute Resolution. The portion of the conflict management spectrum that includes processes to resolve disputes is called "alternative dispute resolution." This is defined in the Administrative Dispute Resolution Act (ADRA) as a process that must include the use of a third party neutral. A neutral assists more than one party. CMC, also known as conflict coaching, does not include the use of a third party neutral and it is therefore not an ADR process. The conflict coach empowers an individual on one side of a conflict. The coach may be impartial but he/she is not a designated neutral under the ADRA. Coaching is a one-on-one process not designed for additional participants. It can be used in tandem with an alternative dispute resolution (ADR) process, either before or after a session.

CMC Clients

CMC is available to any employee of the Air Force with a conflict or the need to address a difficult situation with another involving the workplace. Interpersonal conflict with colleagues, supervisors, and contractors are appropriate topics for AF CMC, but interpersonal conflict with family members or private parties are not appropriate for AF CMC. Coaching does not substitute for counseling services offered by the Employee Assistance Program (EAP). If an Airman prefers to utilize any coaching provided by EAP, the Airman is welcome to do so.

AF Qualified Conflict Management Coaches

AF Qualified Coaches are trained and assessed before they provide coaching. They are approved by SAF/GCD and may provide the service as a tool in their regular job duties or as an internal collateral-duty coach for the Air Force. Air Force employees are not precluded from employing the elements of conflict coaching to any interpersonal workplace situation. AF Qualified Coaches assessed as qualified by SAF/GCD shall use the forms provided and abide by the policies and standards of conduct.

Supervisors

Supervisors are encouraged to refer employees to supervisor. How will supervisors determine the success/outcome of coaching? Since CMC doesn't involve reporting back, the results of coaching will instead be demonstrated by the change for the better in relationships among the client and others. Alternatively, the client could share what he/she is comfortable sharing (if anything) with his/her supervisor. Private meetings with the coach and referring person/supervisor are not appropriate. If supervisors need proof that the employee saw a coach, the Coaching Coordinator may report back the dates and time of the sessions attended upon request. No additional information will be provided outside the coaching session, unless required by law or policy, because of the importance of providing a private forum for Airmen to gain skills to better manage conflict independently.

Coaching Coordinator

The Coaching Coordinator will explain coaching, answer any questions, and select a coach at the employee's request. The Coaching Coordinator will arrange a space and location (in person, telephone, webinar, or videoconferencing) that is mutually convenient for the coach and employee. The Coaching Coordinator will inform prospective clients that, if they are bargaining-unit employees, they should notify their local union representative. The employee will complete the Preparation and Readiness Questionnaire and bring it to the first session.

Referral or Request Process

Any employee can request CMC either through their installation's ADR Manager or by reaching the Coaching Coordinator through SAF/GCD at 703-693-2782 (DSN 223), completing the request form at www.adr.af.mil/main/contactus.asp, or emailing SAFGCD.Workflow@pentagon.af.mil.

A supervisor may also suggest their employee tries CMC. Any office can refer someone to CMC. An airman qualified as an AF Qualified Conflict Management Coach can provide the service directly to a client without coordinating through a Coaching Coordinator. The coaching will advise the Client that he/she will be information the Coaching Coordinator so that statistical information may be kept.

An employee can discover the coaching opportunity through any number of offices, such as offices handling grievances or human resource offices. Staff members in those offices are encouraged to refer clients to coaching at any point in time.

Bargaining-unit employees should inform their union representatives of their participation in the coaching process. Coaching can be used concurrently with any workplace dispute process, such as equal opportunity counseling. The coach will not dissuade clients from utilizing any process to which they are legally entitled. Personnel in the inspector general's office (IG) can refer Airmen to the coaching services, though IG personnel will not be serving as coaches.

Does not affect Equal Opportunity (EO) timing/claim

If an employee believes that he/she has been the victim of discrimination, he/she generally has 45 days from the day the discrimination occurred to contact an EO counselor where he/she works or where he/she applied for a job. If the discrimination involved a personnel action (for example, a demotion or suspension), he/she generally must contact the EO Counselor within 45 days of the day the personnel action takes effect. Participating in the CMC process does not extend these deadlines nor is it considered notice of a discriminatory complaint. For more information regarding the EO complaint process, please go to http://www.eeoc.gov/federal/fed_employees/complaint_overview.cfm.

The Process

During the first session, the coach and the employee (now called a client) will begin by discussing the coaching relationship and any outstanding questions before coaching starts. The coach will confirm the conflict is appropriate and that bargaining unit employees have notified their union of their participation. The coach and client will schedule any subsequent sessions at their mutual convenience.

After the last session, the coach will provide by email the evaluation form for the client to complete. The coach will inform the Coaching Coordinator that a coaching cycle is complete.

The Coaching Coordinator will follow-up with the client if an evaluation form has not been received within 5 business days of the last coaching session.

Evaluations completed by the client for each coaching cycle (one evaluation for up to 4 sessions) shall be retained by the Coaching Coordinator, input into Entellitrak as a "Non-ADR" Attempt, and sent to SAF/GCD on a monthly basis. SAF/GCD will analyze the evaluations and provide feedback as necessary.