



**Strength Through
Unity Tour**

**Kimberly A. Mlinaz, JD
DAF
Negotiations & Dispute
Resolution**

DE-ESCALATING CONFLICT

ANOTHER DAY. ANOTHER COMPLAINT BRIEFING. SUIT UP, SUPERVISOR.

ALRIGHT TEAM...
LET'S TALK.

WHY DO WE
ALWAYS HAVE TO
STAY LATE?!

THESE
TASKERS ARE
RIDICULOUS!

TODAY'S TOPICS:

- MANDATORY FUN
- NEW PT TEST
- WHY YOU CAN'T WEAR SUNGLASSES INSIDE
- SOMEONE ELSE GOT A STRIPE
- THE COFFEE WAS COLD

EMOTIONAL
DAMAGE
RESISTANT

COMPLAINT
LOG
VOLUME 7,842

BUILT ON
CAFFEINE
&
CHAOS

TRAINED IN
ACTIVE
IGNORING

NOT
MY JOB

CAN WE GET
A DIFFERENT
SUPERVISOR?!





You cannot de-escalate someone else, until
you de-escalate yourself first.



Help Us Help You



Checking the Water Level

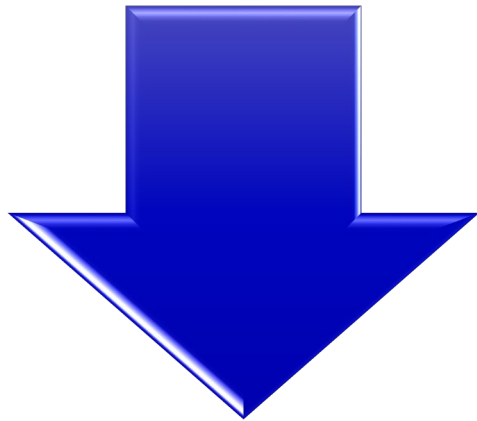
This form is set to “anyone can respond,” allowing for anonymous response.

Your name and email address are **not** automatically collected.





You are the Credibility



Social Media Narratives
Declining Institutional Trust



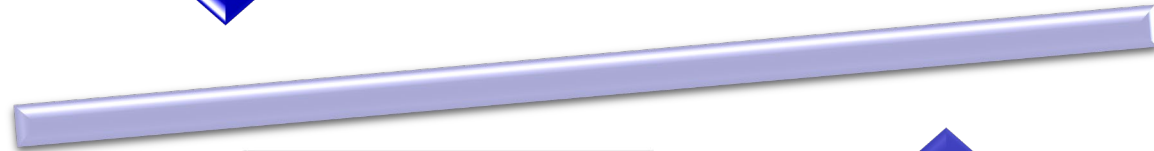
You should be heard,
accommodated, and protected.

The “Say-Do” Gap

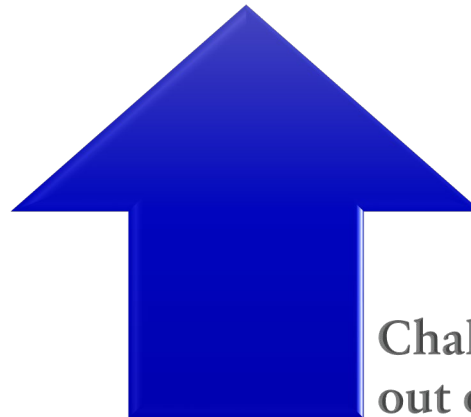
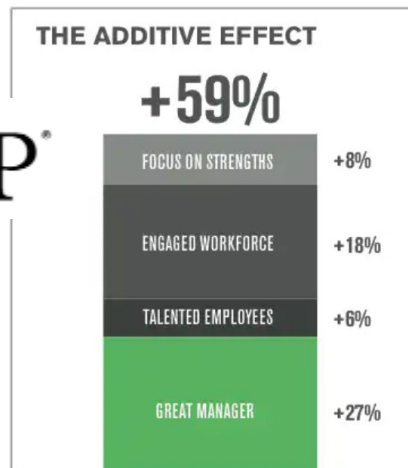
Patriotism and duty to country
are old fashioned ideas.

Ops Tempo / Deployments / Manning

You are exploited so: “act your
wage” and “bare minimum
Monday’s”



GALLUP®



Challenging the idea without credible evidence seems
out of touch and disconnected.

Internet memes like “hurry up
and wait” or “the lying recruiter”



S

Stop. Don't react, the first move is not to move. Catch the response and interrupt the impulse to answer, defend, or match their energy.

T

Take a Step Back. Take a breath and let a beat of silence sit. A few seconds costs you nothing, and it helps reset the room. (Combat Breathing)

O

Observe. Read the situation before you shape it. Silently, name what you feel and think, and why. Then trace their side – what's the real issue here?

P

Proceed Mindfully. Re-engage with intention instead of reaction. Your goal is influence, not victory.



Make the “P”ause Pay Off

STEADY THE ROOM – Ease tension when emotions run high

Lower your tone: Drop the volume and pitch of your voice a notch to invite calm and patience

Slow your cadence: Ease your speaking speed so the room can slow with you, ward off panic or rushing

MAKE ROOM TO THINK – Give people space to say what matters

Ask, then wait: Resist the urge to fill the gap, quiet gives people time to think and invites honesty

Hold the silence: Leave a few seconds of quiet before you respond, it shows consideration and space to think

PROTECT THE DECISION – Guard your judgment and the quality of the call

Take a moment: Name that you are taking a moment, then actually take it – careful beats fast

Give them the floor: Turn the focus back to them while you gather your thoughts, resist reactive responses

Take a break: Step physically out of the room, but mentally stay in the conversation –fatigue and momentum are the enemies of good decisions.

BRIEF

Keep it brief
Long explanations
and arguments trigger
upsets for HCP

INFORMATIVE

Objective information
Not arguments,
opinions, or emotions
Avoid self-defense

FIRM

Your response ends
the conversation, or
Provide clear options
and deadlines

Friendly

Keep professional,
neutral, and non-
threatening tone



SIMPLE LANGUAGE:

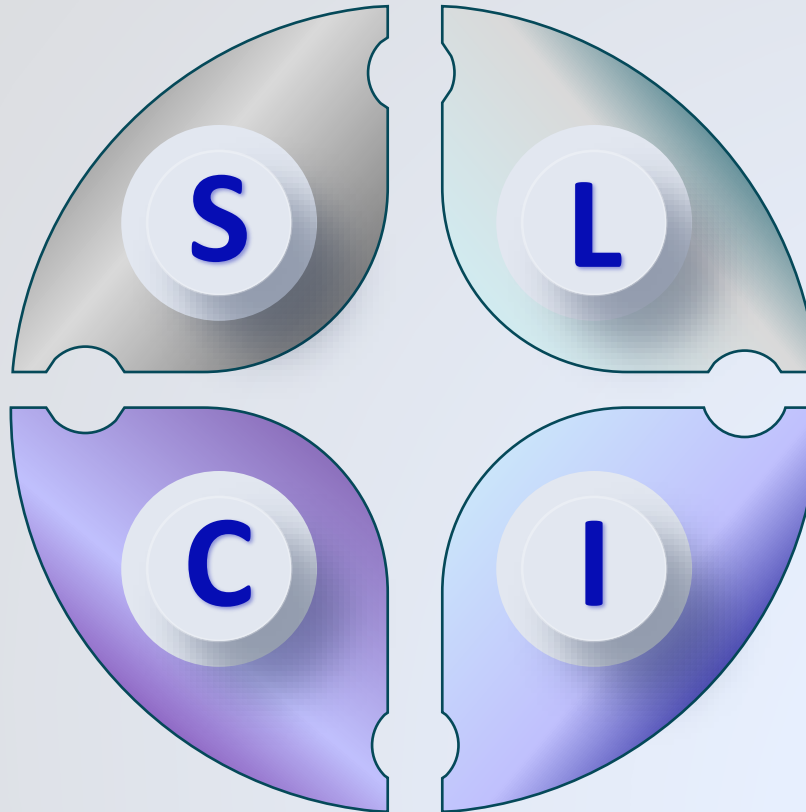
Keep your sentences. Complex, multi-concept logic is not going to be understood fully at this time. Stay fact-based and clear.

CALM DELIVERY:

Maintain a low, calm tone of voice.

OPTION: “EAR”

Empathy / Attention / Respect



LOGICAL BOUNDARY:

Set your limits clearly, focusing on the behavior. “I want to hear you, but I cannot do it while you are raising your voice.”

INFORMATIVE FOCUS:

Plainly state your expectations about their behavior and the consequences. What are their choices? Future focus, not past. Avoid empty threats.

You are not going to resolve their upset or make progress on behavior change if you focus on their mistakes – this drives defensiveness.



Simulation



You are in your office, with an hour's worth of edits to do on a report due to your boss in 30 minutes. One of your most outspoken employees barges into your office and slams a folder down on your desk while falling into the seat across from you. He accuses you of being spineless, claiming you didn't stand up for the team when an "unnecessary" schedule change means your team is now arriving at the height of morning traffic. You ask to get back together to talk about this in 45 minutes because of the report, only to be met with "then just forget it, you weren't going to do anything about it anyway." What do you do?





Tyndall Contact Information



NDR Program Manager:

Mr. Brent Thomas

Brent.thomas.1@us.af.mil

(850) 283-4130



<https://www.youtube.com/@airforcenegotiationdispute8925>



<https://www.af.mil/About-Us/Coaching/>

Conflict Coaching



<https://www.airuniversity.af.edu/AFNC/>



Help Us Help You



No endorsement intended.

Card 1: Write down the specific BIFF/SLIC boundary phrase you will use the next time someone escalates a conversation with you. (Keep This)

Card 2: What is the biggest challenge you face in your unit when trying to enforce behavioral boundaries? (Turn this In)

To download the slides or capture the resource links, click here:





Questions?



Ms. Kimberly A. Mlinaz, J.D.
Director
Negotiation & Dispute Resolution

(571) 256-6658 (DSN 260)

Cell: (202) 528-2470

kimberly.mlinaz@us.af.mil

YouTube:

<https://www.youtube.com/@airforcenegotiationdispute8925>

LinkedIn:

<https://linkedin.com/in/Kimberly-Mlinaz>