IWS
Interpersonal
Wellness Services Inc.

The Assessment Guide for

Complex Workplace Conflict



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Struggling with Complex, Costly Workplace Conflict?

Protect your leaders, culture, and valuable employees before unresolved conflict costs your organization more.

Spot the Warning Signs

Take Immediate Action

Determine Your Organization's Next Step

Why Is Complex Workplace Conflict So Difficult to Resolve?

Organizations invest heavily in recruiting, onboarding, developing, and retaining experienced leaders and high-performing employees, and these individuals in turn carry years of institutional knowledge, relationships, and organizational expertise.

Yet when complex conflict develops between senior leaders, managers, or valuable employees, even the most capable people can become trapped in unresolved tension, organizational politics, and broken trust.

UNRESOLVED TENSION | ORGANIZATIONAL POLITICS | BROKEN TRUST

The true cost extends well beyond the conflict itself, because it includes the performance, relationships, resilience, and valuable talent that the organization risks losing.

THE REAL COST TO ORGANIZATIONS

- Lost productivity and performance
- Increased mental health claims
- Higher absenteeism and turnover
- Strained leadership and team relationships
- Reputational and cultural damage

Five Warning Signs Your Organization Should Not Ignore

1

Conflict avoidance

Difficult issues remain unresolved because people are afraid to speak up.

2

Leadership tension

Senior leaders or valuable employees have stopped communicating or collaborating effectively.

3

Organizational politics

Power, influence, and competing interests prevent meaningful resolution.

4

Resilience depletion

Employees experience prolonged stress, withdrawal, exhaustion, or disengagement.

5

Talent at risk

High-performing employees are considering leaving because they no longer see a workable path forward.

Five Best Practices for Addressing Complex Conflict

1. **Recognize the problem early**, and do not allow difficult conflicts to fester under a culture of silence.

2. **Examine the full organizational dynamics** by looking beyond personalities to identify structural barriers, power imbalances, competing interests, and broken trust.

3. **Create psychologically safer conversations** by giving people credible opportunities to raise concerns without humiliation, retaliation, or unfair treatment.

4. **Make conflict a pathway to problem-solving** by encouraging constructive disagreement, innovation, shared accountability, and workable solutions.

5. **Match the intervention to the complexity**, recognizing when coaching, mediation, facilitated dialogue, independent assessment, or specialized conflict intervention is appropriate.

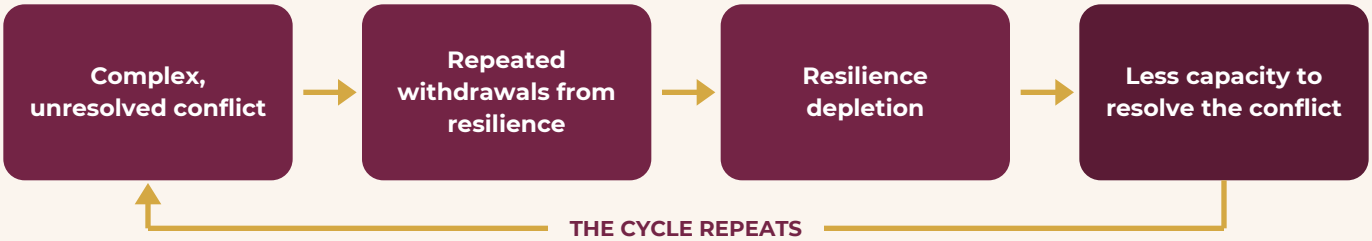
INTERVENTION OPTIONS, MATCHED TO COMPLEXITY

Coaching · Mediation · Facilitated dialogue · Independent assessment · Specialized conflict intervention

Why Complex Conflict Makes Resilience Depletion Worse

For nearly 30 years, Interpersonal Wellness Services Inc. (IWS) has helped organizations address complex workplace conflict, leadership challenges, and employee well-being. Joyce Odidison's new research on **Resilience Depletion Theory™** explores how resilience is spent, and what happens when it is drawn down faster than it is replenished.

Complex workplace conflict can intensify that depletion, because unresolved tension, organizational politics, and broken trust continue to draw on people's resilience long after the original disagreement has passed, and the leaders and valuable employees who are expected to resolve the conflict may be doing so on dwindling reserves.



SIGNS A LEADER'S RESERVES MAY BE RUNNING LOW

- Less patience and more guarded communication
- Avoiding conversations they once handled easily
- Needing more recovery after demanding periods
- Withdrawal from collaboration

PROTECT YOUR LEADERS

Talk to Joyce

Book a call with Joyce to explore how to protect your leaders from resilience depletion.

BOOK A CALL WITH JOYCE →

How Prepared Is Your Organization?

Please consider the following three questions.

1 **Can people openly discuss conflict without being labelled difficult?**

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No

2 **Does your organization have an effective system for addressing conflicts involving senior leaders and valuable employees?**

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No

3 **Are unresolved conflicts contributing to burnout, resilience depletion, disengagement, or employee departures?**

☐ Yes ☐ Sometimes ☐ No

If these questions raise concerns, your organization may have **conflict resolution gaps worth examining**.

YOUR NEXT STEP

Complete the Assessment

Discover how prepared your organization is to recognize, manage, and resolve complex workplace conflicts.

Complete the **Full Organizational Assessment** to identify your organization's strengths, areas of vulnerability, and practical next steps.

COMPLETE MY CONFLICT ASSESSMENT →

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www.interpersonalwellness.com

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