

Workplace Conflicts

Sources and Costs to Your Organization

85% of employees at all levels experience some degree of conflict

36% of employees spend a significant amount of time managing disputes



85%

36%

25%

27%

29%

29% the employees deal with conflict frequently

25% the employees have reported avoidance of conflict resulted in sickness or absence from work

27% of employees have witnessed conflict morph into a personal attack

Source: CPP Global Human Capital Report¹



What are the Sources of Conflict?

Two kinds of common conflict sources²:

RELATIONAL

—attributes or situations between people including:

56% PERSONALITY CLASHES

56% of surveyed employees say personality clashes with co-workers is a problem they deal with³

35% COMPETITION FOR RESOURCES

35% of workers reported feeling stressed due to workplace competition⁴

18% CONFLICTING VALUES

18% of surveyed employees say clash of values is the main cause of conflict¹

ORGANIZATIONAL

—the organization's policies, procedures, and communications that lead to conflict due to:

22% UNCLEAR ROLES /RESPONSIBILITIES

22% of surveyed employees say main cause of conflict is lack of role clarity, 21% say lack of clarity about accountability¹

44% LACK OF COMMUNICATION

44% indicated that poor communication led to delay or failure to complete projects⁵

33% INADEQUATE RESOURCES

33% of surveyed employees say inadequate resources and workload is the main cause of conflict¹

What are the Costs of Conflict?

Workplace conflict and the bottom line:

—estimated to—

WASTE APPROX. 3 HOURS/WEEK /EMPLOYEE

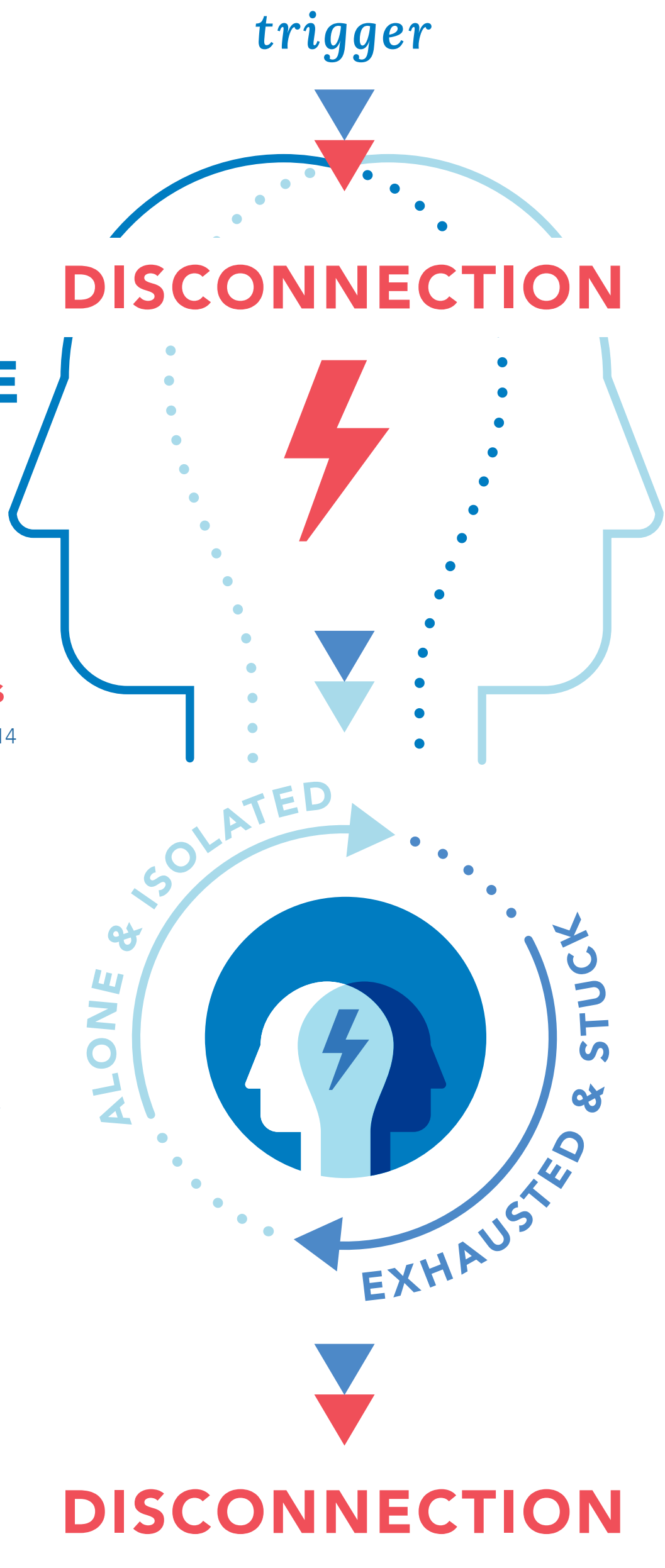
TOTALING 385 MILLION HRS/YEAR

\$389 BILLION IN PAID HOURS^{1,6}

- **Legal fees:** estimated average \$160,000 per claim⁷
- **Absenteeism:** time off and healthcare expenses 50% more due to conflicts⁸
- **Loss of productivity:** approximately 1-3 hour per week, 20-42% time wasted managing conflicts in the workplace^{9,10,11}
- **Employee turnover:** 50% of voluntary, 90% of involuntary departures⁸ = +150% cost of each employee salary to replace^{8,12}
- **Low morale, decreased job satisfaction:** Gallup estimates \$350 million per year in lost productivity, \$3,400 per every \$10,000 in salary per disengaged employee¹³

Root Cause of Conflict: Erosion of Connection

Humans are social creatures and require connection to survive and thrive.



Some research has shown that there has been an increase in isolation and loss of connections to one another in recent decades¹⁴

Neuroscience has shown that the brain goes into panic during separation distress¹⁵; results can be:

- Complaining, blaming, demanding, criticizing, judging;
- Disengagement, distancing, stonewalling, avoidance;
- Shutting down & increased anxiety

As these behaviors continue to persist and the distance continues to widen, the intensity to pursue or preserve the connection increases as well, leading to:

- Behaviors that become aggressive, demanding & threatening
- Full-blown conflict or hidden conflict that festers and grows
- Creating a toxic culture

Attachment and Reconnection

Work relationships are attachment bonds

Attachment is a psychological concept from John Bowlby

Within the context of the workplace it refers to emotional bonds co-workers develop because of their dependency to one another¹⁵



SECURELY ATTACHED EMPLOYEES ARE:¹⁶

- Comfortable with and good at forming strong bonds
- Perceived by others in the organization as valuable members

EMPLOYEES WITH INSECURE ATTACHMENT:

- Experience more anxiety and fear
- Become easily triggered, lose emotional balance and focus

- What matters is the repair of moments of disconnection
- Relationships regain their bonds creating security and stability
- Managers and employees can learn the process of reconnection which is essentially a two-step process:

1. Help each other slow down and recognize the negative cycles
2. Learn how to reach for each other and engage on a human level



CONTACT US AT emc@emcleaders.com, CALL 1-800-651-4121 OR SCHEDULE A MEETING



REFERENCES

1. CPP Global. (2008). Workplace conflict and how businesses can harness it to thrive. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from https://www.cpp.com/pdf/cpp_Global_Human_Capital_Report_Workplace_Conflict.pdf
2. Spaho, K. (2013). Organizational communication and conflict management. Management, 18, 103-118
3. Wilkie, D. (2019, August 16). Personality clashes cause most workplace discord. SHRM. Retrieved March 7, 2023, from https://www.shrm.org/resourcesandtools/hr-topics/employee-relations/pages/personality-clashes-cause-workplace-discord.aspx
4. American Psychological Association. (2017). Stress in America: The State of Our Nation. Retrieved from https://www.apa.org/news/press/releases/stress/2016/coping-with-change.pdf
5. Communication barriers in the modern workplace - economist impact. (n.d.). Retrieved from https://impact.economist.com/perspectives/sites/default/files/EIU_Lucidchart-Communications%20barriers%20in%20the%20modern%20workplace.pdf
6. Freres, M. (2013). Financial costs of workplace conflict. Journal of the International Ombudsman Association, 6, 83-94.
7. 2017 Hiscox Guide to Employee Lawsuits, https://www.hiscox.com/documents/2017-Hiscox-Guide-to-Employee-Lawsuits.pdf
8. Buss, H. (2011). Controlling conflict costs: The business case of conflict management. Journal of the International Ombudsman Association, 4(1), 54-62.
9. Thomas, K. W., & Schmidt, W. H. (1976). A survey of managerial interests with respect to conflict. Academy of Management Journal, 19(2), 315-318.
10. Watson, C., & Hoffman, R. (1996). Managers as negotiators: A test of power versus gender as predictors of feelings, behavior, and outcomes. The Leadership Quarterly, 7(1), 63-85.
11. Riaz, Muhammad Khan and Junaid, Fatima A., Types, sources, costs & consequences of workplace conflict. Asian Journal of Management Research, 2(1), 600-611.
12. Duxbury, L., Higgins, C.A., & Ivey, R. (2003). Work-life Conflict in Canada in the New Millennium - a Status Report.
13. Borysenko, K. (n.d.). How Much Are Your Disengaged Employees Costing You? Forbes. Retrieved March 11, 2023, from https://www.forbes.com/sites/karlborysenko/2019/05/02/how-much-are-your-disengaged-employees-costing-you/?sh=4fbc52034376
14. McPherson, M., Brashears, M. E., & Smith-Lovin, L. (2006). Social Isolation in America: Changes in Core Discussion Networks over Two Decades. American Sociological Review, 71(3), 353-375. https://doi.org/10.1177/000312240607100301
15. Mikulincer, M., & Shaver, P. R. (2007). Attachment in adulthood: Structure, dynamics, and change. The Guilford Press. https://psycnet.apa.org/record/2007-12400-000
16. Attachment Project. (2022, September 12). How your attachment style impacts you at work. Retrieved March 10, 2023, from https://www.attachmentproject.com/blog/in-the-workplace