

# Incident

*by Sophia Tutorial*



## WHAT'S COVERED

While there are a number of ways that conflict can be broken into stages, all models look at three large phases:

- Pre-conflict stage
- Conflict stage
- Post-conflict stage.

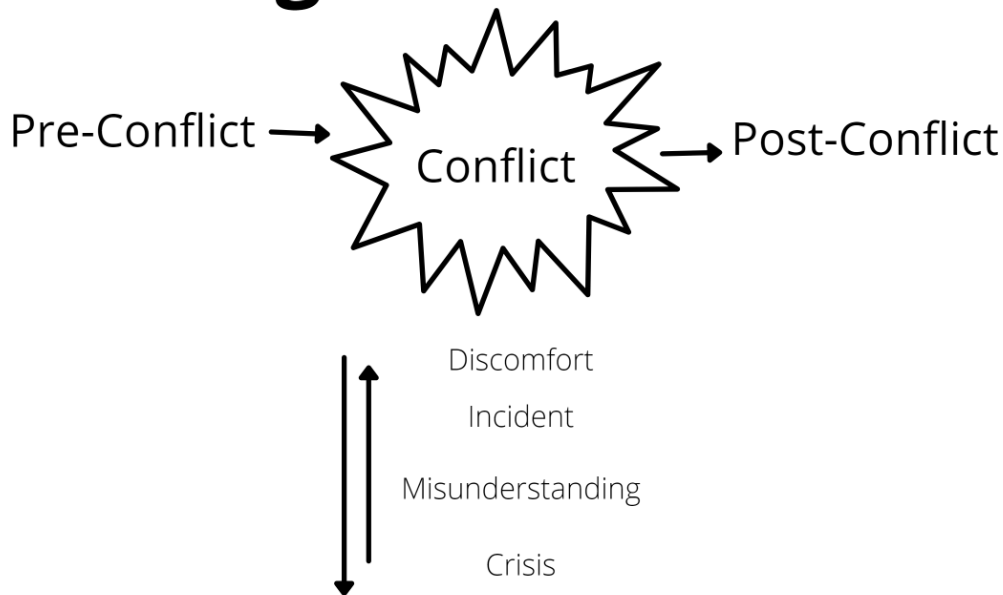
In this lesson, we will discuss the second stage within the conflict phase by focusing on:

1. Incident Stage of Conflict
2. Role in the Conflict Resolution Process

## 1. Incident Stage of Conflict

As you learned in a previous lesson, the pre-conflict stage is when an issue may be brewing, but you're not really aware of what it is. Then, there's the actual conflict stage and the post-conflict stage when things are resolved.

# Stages of Conflict



Within the conflict phase, the very first stage is often the feeling of discomfort that something is wrong. Following discomfort is the **incident stage of conflict**, in which parties become aware of each other's roles in needs not being met through a concrete occurrence in their relationship.

➦ **EXAMPLE** At your job, there have been a lot of new projects going on, and management has recently hired some new people. You've been asked to do a little bit of training or mentoring of one of these people, and you're a little bit uncomfortable with the way this relationship is going.

At a recent team meeting, your trainee shares an idea, presenting it as his own. Everybody's quite impressed with this idea, but it was your idea originally. You now feel really betrayed and like you're not getting the credit you should be getting at work.

➦ **EXAMPLE** You have recently had to work a little extra, so your nine-year-old son doesn't have a place to go after school. In order to save money on daycare, your spouse suggests that his sister take care of your son. You feel a little uncomfortable because your sister-in-law's household has different rules about screen time than your household does, but you agree. You drop your son off over there after school, and this seems to be working out in terms of saving money.

But today your son came home and was talking about a movie he watched there; this is the kind of movie you do not allow him to see. Now that you know this incident has happened, you're not comfortable with your sister-in-law providing this after-school care for your son.



## TERM TO KNOW

### Incident Stage of Conflict

The stage of conflict in which parties become aware of each other's roles in needs not being met through a concrete occurrence in their relationship.

## 2. Role in the Conflict Resolution Process

During the incident phase of conflict, there is often a tendency to minimize the incident by saying or thinking things such as:

*"Oh, he didn't really mean to take credit for the idea."*

*"Maybe he didn't realize what he was doing."*

*"Maybe they showed him the wrong movie by accident."*

*"This has never happened before."*

Despite the attempt at minimization, the incident affects the relationship as the knowledge of its occurrence lingers.

Thus, the conflict could have begun here, or it might actually have begun back in the discomfort stage. Because conflicts can escalate and de-escalate between stages, it's best to resolve the conflict at the earliest possible stage.

➦ **EXAMPLE** If the conflict is already in the incident stage, you could perhaps go to the coworker you've been training and ask to talk with him. You can share that you were a little uncomfortable with his remark in the meeting. Having this conversation actually brings the issue into the open at this stage.

➦ **EXAMPLE** You could talk to your sister-in-law; maybe you need to revisit the conversation about what you expect when your son is over at your sister-in-law's home. This would be the time to try to resolve the conflict because it's still in an early stage.



### SUMMARY

In this lesson, you learned about the **incident stage of conflict**, and how despite the impulse to minimize the incident, opening a dialogue in this stage can make the **conflict resolution process** much easier. Good luck!

Source: Adapted from Sophia tutorial by Marlene Johnson.



### TERMS TO KNOW

#### **Incident Stage of Conflict**

The stage of conflict in which parties become aware of each other's roles in needs not being met through a concrete occurrence in their relationship.