



Worksheet: Understanding the Escalation Process Through a Trauma-Informed Lens

Case Study: Jordan's Workplace Conflict

Jordan is a new employee in a social enterprise program that helps individuals who have experienced homelessness transition into the workforce. Jordan has a history of trauma related to unstable housing and authority figures, which makes it difficult for them to trust supervisors.

Recently, Jordan missed several important deadlines, delaying a critical project. Their supervisor, Alex, calls Jordan into a performance review to discuss the issue.

During the meeting, Alex gives feedback about Jordan's missed deadlines. Jordan immediately becomes defensive, raising their voice and saying, "You don't care about what I'm going through! I'm doing the best I can, but you're just here to criticize me." Jordan begins to tear up, and the conversation becomes tense.

Instructions:

1. **Identify the Escalation Stage:** Review the escalation process and identify which stage Jordan is currently in.
2. **Apply TIC Principles:** Using TIC principles, think about how Alex can de-escalate the situation at that stage.
3. **De-escalation Techniques:** Propose specific techniques Alex can use to prevent the conflict from escalating further.

Part 1: Identifying the Escalation Stage

Question 1:

At which stage of the escalation process do you think Jordan is during the conflict with Alex?
(Check one)

- **Trigger:** Jordan reacts emotionally to feedback.
- **Perception Distortion:** Jordan's perception of the feedback becomes skewed, and they feel attacked.
- **Emotional Flooding:** Jordan becomes overwhelmed and begins to tear up.



- **Survival Response (Fight, Flight, Freeze, Fawn):** Jordan raises their voice and becomes defensive.

- **Escalation of Conflict:** The conflict is escalating toward a communication breakdown.

Explain why you chose this stage:

Part 2: Applying TIC Principles

Question 2:

Which TIC principles can Alex use to manage the conflict at this stage? (Check all that apply)

- **Safety:** Create emotional safety by acknowledging feelings and offering a supportive environment.
- **Trustworthiness & Transparency:** Be clear and transparent about the purpose of the feedback.
- **Empowerment, Voice & Choice:** Offer Jordan choices to regain control over the conversation.
- **Collaboration & Mutuality:** Work together to address the performance issues.
- **Peer Support:** Involve a trusted colleague to mediate or provide support.
- **Cultural, Historical, & Gender Sensitivity:** Be aware of cultural or historical factors that may influence Jordan's reaction.

How could these TIC principles be applied to de-escalate the situation?

Part 3: Proposing De-escalation Techniques

Question 3:

What specific de-escalation techniques could Alex use in this situation? (Provide at least two strategies)

- **Strategy 1:**
- **Strategy 2:**



Part 4: Reflection

Question 4:

How could identifying the escalation stage early in a conflict help prevent further escalation in the future?