OPM Presents:

Thriving in a Hybrid Environment

By Government, For Government

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Agenda

- **Introduction to the Hybrid Environment**
  - Telework vs. Remote Work vs. Hybrid Work

- **Establishing Effective Performance Management in a Hybrid Environment**
  - Understanding results-focused performance goals and effective measures
  - Tracking performance successfully through effective processes, communication, and feedback

- **Developing Hybrid Norms, Processes, and Protocols for Individuals and Teams**
  - Positive conflict management with teams and individual norms
  - Establishing durable hybrid work routines

- **Using Tracked Results to Support Performance Accomplishments**
  - Writing accomplishment narratives that support performance ratings, career development, enhancing the employee experience, and awards and/or recognition

- **Leadership Traits in a Hybrid Environment**
  - Key leadership facets for establishing and maintaining a successful hybrid environment

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Introduction to the Hybrid Environment

Telework vs. Remote Work vs. Hybrid Work

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What is telework?

A work flexibility arrangement under which an employee, under a written agreement, is eligible to perform their work at an alternative worksite other than the location from which the employee would otherwise work

- The most common types of telework are **routine** and **situational**
- Telework is a privilege and not a right (with the exception of **emergency** telework). Examples of telework eligibility may include:
  - The employee demonstrates performance at a level three (3) (e.g., "fully successful", "meets expectations") or higher
  - Work is sufficiently compatible to be performed at an alternate work site
  - The employee has demonstrated independence and dependability in accomplishing work assignments
  - The employee can work effectively in an isolated environment and can manage their time
  - The employee has a history of reliable and responsible performance of their duties in their current organization

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What is remote work?

An arrangement under which an employee is approved to work within or outside the local commuting area of an agency worksite and is not expected to report to the agency worksite on a regular and recurring basis

- Proactive performance management is essential when being or managing a remote employee

- When hiring or applying for a remote position, consider the qualities that are required to successfully perform in a remote environment

- Examples may include:
    - Able to work independently
    - Self motivated
    - Strong communicator
    - Comfortable with learning and using digital tools
    - Team player
    - Emotionally intelligent

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What is hybrid work?

A flexible work model that supports a blend of in-office, telework, remote work, mobile work and/or dispersed teams

- Based on the above, it may be difficult to think of team or organization that isn't hybrid in some way or heading in that direction

- Due to the complexity of hybrid work it is vital that we establish protocol for our hybrid teams and environments, or regularly re-evaluate and update existing ones, to optimize success

- Examples of hybrid protocol may include:
  - How to track and communicate performance in a hybrid environment
  - Team norms for clarification, communication, and collaboration
  - Individual norms for durable hybrid work routines
  - Positive conflict management
  - Team mindset
  - Create an intentional workspace

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Establishing Effective Performance Management in a Hybrid Environment

Understanding results-focused performance goals and effective measures

Tracking performance with effective processes, communication, and feedback

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Understanding results-focused performance goals and effective measures

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Performance Plan Terminology

- **Performance Element:** Any component of a position, such as a duty or responsibility, the performance of which contributes meaningfully to success and/or failure in the position

- **Performance Standard:** A statement of the **goals**, expectations, or requirements for an element at a particular rating level including **measures** of quality, quantity, timeliness, and/or manner of performance

- **Performance Level:** Standards must be written at the level 3 (e.g., "fully successful", "meets expectations")

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Results-focused Performance Goals

These are the clear and effective milestones an employee is expected to achieve on their journey to success

Results are NOT

- Activities
- Skills or Knowledge

Results ARE

- Outputs: products or services
- Outcomes: what is expected based on the use or implementation of the products and services

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Effective Performance Measures

- **Quantity**:
  - Number of products or services provided
  - Can be a specific number, range, or percentage

- **Quality**:
  - Addresses the level of effectiveness
  - Can include accuracy, appearance, customer satisfaction, usefulness, etc.

- **Timeliness**:
  - Timeframe or deadline for the result
  - Can be "by established deadlines" or "agreed upon timeframes"

- **Cost-Effectiveness:**
  - How much savings or cost controls
  - Must have a baseline against which to compare the increase or decrease

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Tracking performance with effective processes, communication, and feedback

Tracking Performance in a Hybrid Environment

While our performance standards will not change based on our work environment, the processes we use to measure, track and/or communicate may

- How can (quantity, quality, timeliness, or cost-effectiveness) be properly and tangibly observed in this environment?

- Can metrics be properly tracked with current/available protocol, tools, or resources?

- Who can determine that the standard was done well? What can be observed or verified?

- Have the measures of success been clearly established and communicated?

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Tracked Results Example

Element and Goal	Work Output Information	Success Measures	Performance Level Criteria
Facilitation **Standard 1:** Conduct effective performance management training for federal employees. Success will be verified by attaining the average survey score criteria per performance level.	Delivered government—wide hybrid training for the federal workforce on March 1, 2023. 186 attendees in-person and 562 virtual 418 surveys returned (specific examples of positive feedback saved to project folder)	Behavior: 4.63 Content: 4.76 Instructor: 4.94 Learning: 4.69 Total: 4.76	Standard 1: Achieved Expectations: Average survey score 4.0-4.5 **Exceeds Expectations: Average Survey score 4.51-4.89** Achieved Excellence: Average survey score 4.9 or higher

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Effective Communication and Feedback

Employee Responsibilities	Supervisor Responsibilities
• Complete work in accordance with the expectations of the performance plan	• Provide a results-focused and measurable performance plan for your employee(s)
• Meet deadlines	• Align work to agency mission, goals, and outcomes
• Consistently meet your stakeholder's expectations or ask for clarification when struggling to do so	• Provide timely and effective clarification for the employee
• Track accomplishments throughout the rating period	• Communicate expectations and provide training on how to track results
• Be ready and able to discuss all the above with your supervisor	• Provide regular and consistent feedback throughout the appraisal cycle

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Developing Hybrid Norms, Processes, and Protocols for Individuals and Teams

Positive conflict management with team and individual norms*

Establishing durable hybrid work routines to strengthen engagement

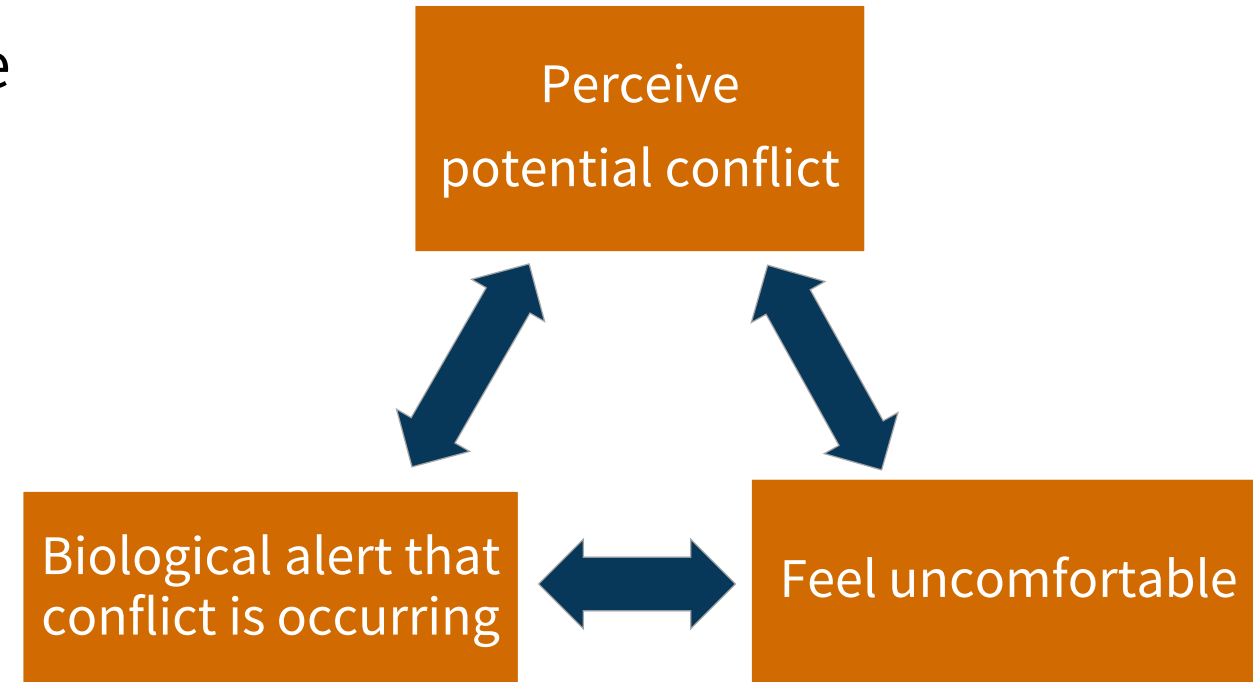***Agency Policy and Union/Collective Bargaining Unit Regulation Dependent**

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Positive conflict management with team and individual norms

Why is it important for a successful performance culture?

What is Conflict?

A process that begins when one party *perceives* that another party has negatively affected, or is about to negatively affect, something they care about

- Conflict does not necessarily involve arguing or fighting
- It more looks like:
  o Resentment
  o Frustration
  o Gossiping
  o Polarization
  o High turnover

Perceive potential conflict

Biological alert that conflict is occurring

Feel uncomfortable

Conflict is bad for your health!

Ways to Participate in Positive Conflict Management

- Set or ask for crystal clear expectations from the get-go
- Support equitable collaboration opportunities and experiences for all employees
- Foster frequent and open communication
- Invest time in building trust
- Recognize all employees' contributions

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Set or Ask for Crystal Clear Direction from the Get-Go

To better address, or proactively avoid, conflict on our teams, we need to set or ask for crystal clear direction from the get-go

- This is particularly important if your team is still adjusting to a hybrid environment or there is significant collaboration required for the work being performed

- If employees don't know who is responsible for what or what's expected of them, both individually and as a team, it can cause conflict

- Detailed project plans, communication plans, and team charters are great ways to improve clarity

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Support Equitable Collaboration Opportunities and Experiences for all Employees

Remote or mobile employees may feel they don't receive a similar opportunity or experience to collaborate as employees who work in the office or are co-located with their teams

- If there isn't established hybrid meeting protocol, it can be easy for in-person employees to communicate and collaborate while those participating remotely might find it difficult to contribute, ask questions, or interject with their opinions
  - Ask all employees to call into meetings virtually, even those present in the office
  - If not feasible, create and honor processes to ensure everyone has a metaphorical "seat at the table"
- Reach out to your colleagues, no matter where you or they "sit"

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Foster Frequent and Open Communication

Teams function properly with effective communication. If we fail to deliberately foster communication between all hybrid employees, we set the stage for conflict within our hybrid teams.

- Forming connections, feeling like an integral part of the team, and communicating effectively can be challenging when team members work in different locations

- Look for ways to improve communication between yourself and hybrid team members—especially for remote workers who are often excluded from spontaneous, organic workplace conversations and relationship building

- Examples may include:
  - Digital "water coolers"
  - Virtual lunches
  - Formal plans to foster better communication—especially if you've experienced, or are worried about experiencing, any issues (e.g., not assuming a particular time zone)

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Invest Time in Building Trust

Building trust is a must for a successful team—and that means investing time in getting to know your team

- These norms serve as safety nets that protect us from falling into unnecessary, or avoidable, conflict
- If there's no trust within your hybrid team—both in leadership and in fellow team members—you can pretty much guarantee there is going to be conflict
- Try taking a team assessment to manage conflict in a hybrid environment
  - A team assessment can help foster understanding for how each person naturally communicates, what causes them stress, and their preferences for how they work—**and honor this information**!
    - With this information, project teams will know if there are similar work styles shared, or proactively plan projects in more detail when people with differing work styles are paired together (i.e., fostering more communication)
    - This information can also be used to assume positive intent and strengthen emotional intelligence

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Recognize All Employees' Contributions

It's important to be deliberate about recognizing employees and colleagues, no matter their hybrid status

- This requires being intentional and promoting a "team mindset"
- In a hybrid environment, there is the risk of remote or mobile employees being "out of sight, out of mind"
- This may lead to these workers feeling undervalued or less recognized than other employees
- Positive feedback and recognition is free and easy to provide, which makes it an incredible asset for all employees to bring to their teams
- Consider the following intentional practices:
  - Shout out peer-to-peer recognitions during staff meetings and include both in-person and remote employees when possible
  - Mimic experiences that occur organically in-person, in a virtual environment (e.g., send a quick message complimenting someone on their presentation)

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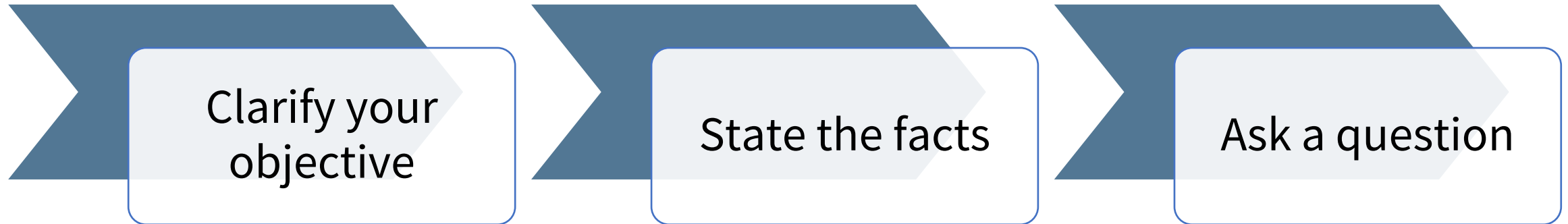# Actionable Ways to Proactively Avoid Team Conflict

- **Communicate regularly and effectively** with supervisors, employees, and/or colleagues about availability to support others, work/project status, resource/support requests:
  - Establish what "regularly" objectively and tangibly means
    - What are appropriate response times to requests?
    - What is a regular check-in schedule?
    - How far in advance are resource requests to be submitted?
  - What are the best media platforms to communicate through?
    - Teams? Outlook? Slack? Zoom? Phone? Other?
    - Are there situations where different platforms should be used, and what are those situations?
- **Establish practices for collaborating** on documents and projects using available collaboration tools
- **Set participation expectations** for engaging in virtual meetings:
  - What types of meetings should we be on video for compared to audio only?
  - Are we expected to communicate verbally or through chat boxes?

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Who is Virtual?
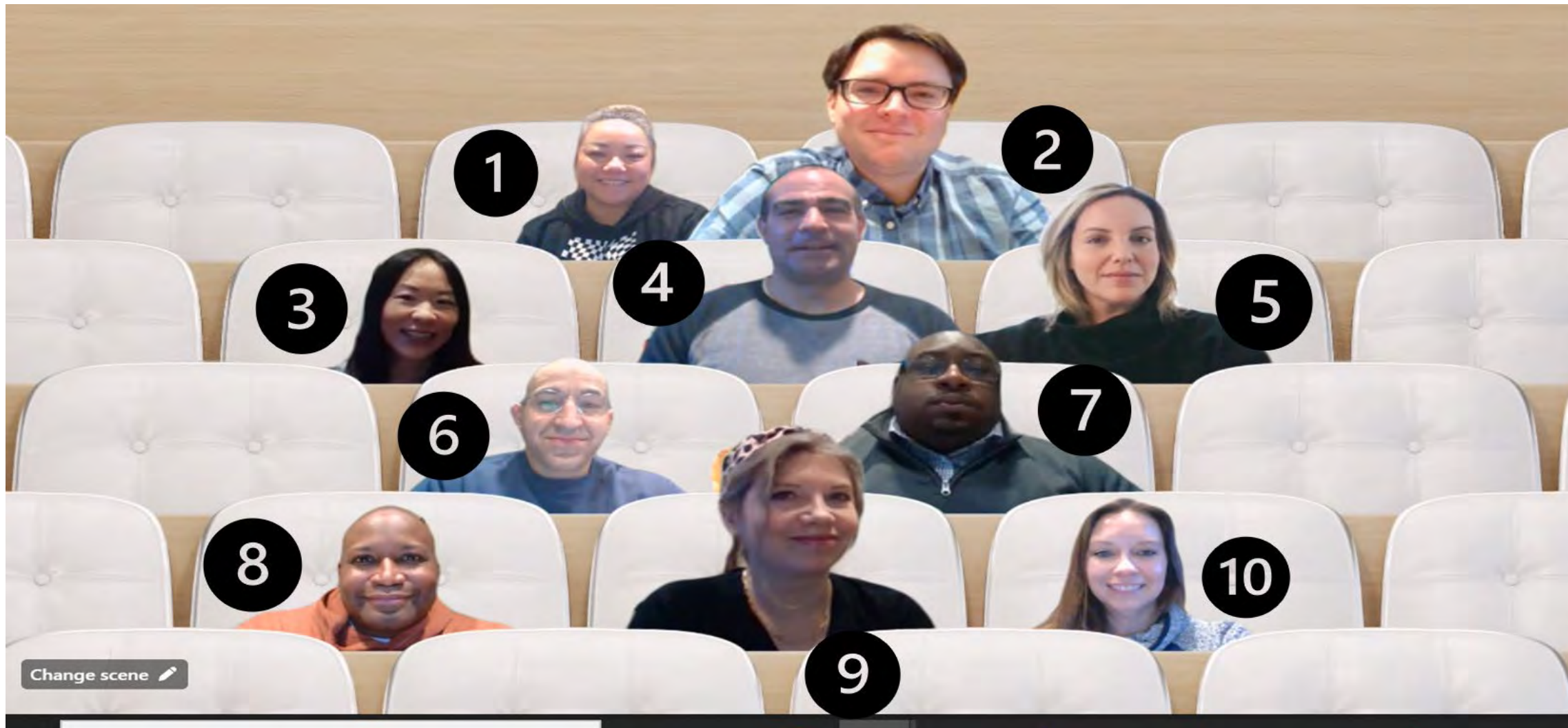
There really is only one!

Managing Existing Conflict: A Simple Approach

Clarify your objective

State the facts

Ask a question

1) Clarify your objective

- People will immediately evaluate if you are friend or foe

- Most tend to assume the worst because, biologically, this is the safe assumption

- Make it clear what your intent is
  - First, understand your own intent
  - Then, tell the other parties involved

Go one step further and consider potential conflict triggers that can occur in the conversation; if you acknowledge potential triggers, you have a better chance managing your response

2) Start and stick with the facts

- When you are ambiguous, people catastrophize
- State your case factually and try to avoid attributions and assumptions
- **Try** not to assume the worst in the other person, and don't let it be known if you do

When you attribute behavior to bad motives, you provoke your own anger and that decreases your ability to resolve the conflict

3) Ask a question

- Do this within the first 30 seconds
- This allows for the person to immediately feel invited into the conversation
- Asking a question is important because:
  - It ensures it is a 2-way conversation and provides an opportunity for all viewpoints to be aired
  - Can clarify the problem and the interests involved

- How do you see it?
- What is your perspective?
- What is your biggest concern?

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Managing Existing Conflict

- Those first 30 seconds are the most important!
- Ensure you communicate with:
  - Respect
  - Mutual purpose
  - Professionalism
- Avoid jumping to solutions on your own
- Single solutions are rarely sufficient for true resolution

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Establishing durable hybrid work routines to strengthen engagement

Establishing Durable Hybrid Work Routines to Strengthen Engagement- Save Energy

Hybrid work and being a part of hybrid team can be exhausting when time, energy, relationships, and/or work are not managed properly

- We may feel our time is spent constantly maneuvering around potential, or existing, gaps in communication and/or expectations with our colleagues, customers, and/or leaders

- We may struggle with staying motivated, managing our time, missing social interactions, or with the transitions that come between work and home and back again—especially when those two spaces are the same

- The **power of routine** has shown to be incredibly beneficial in numerous studies when it comes to maintaining a healthy level of engagement, motivation, and job satisfaction in a hybrid environment

Establishing Durable Hybrid Work Routines to Strengthen Engagement- Find a Routine

To establish a work routine that is successful for you and fosters optimum engagement, ask yourself the following questions:

- What tasks are better to do in the office/a virtual meeting room?

- When does my team need me?

- How can I maximize my productivity?

- When do I feel the least motivated?

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What tasks are better to do in the office or a virtual meeting room?

- If you have meetings that require problem solving, decision making or are reviewing tangible items, schedule your in-office days or use a virtual meeting room for when those meetings are held

- If you have some authority over meetings as a project manager, team lead, or other role, consider being intentional about how those are planned, for example:

  o Meet in person or a virtual room when first kicking off a new task/project

  o Hold more casual or virtual meetings for standard updates

  o Meet in person again when it's time for a more in-depth review of status or deliverables

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When does my team need me?

Lean into the team mindset that is crucial for hybrid success!

- Despite having honed our virtual communication skills since 2020, people still may have preferences for communication, learning styles, and collaboration methods
  - Consider what makes sense for individuals on your team as you look at your schedule
  - Think back to building trust and honoring preferences when **able and reasonable**
    - For example, it is okay for supervisors to request a meeting at any time that employees should honor, and the goal of meeting intentionality is in an "as able" capacity.
- Consider working together to determine the expectations around this topic as a team norm

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How can I maximize my productivity?

To determine how we can go about maximizing our personal productivity, we should start with how we can **best manage our energy**

Are you inherently an:

- **Introvert**? If you have more introverted tendencies, you may find it effective to do no more than two days in a row in the office or set boundaries on the amount of time spent in virtual meeting rooms. You may tend to save the tasks that seem more daunting for your quiet days at home or days when the office is slow to limit distractions.

- **Extrovert**? On the other hand, if you have more extroverted tendencies, going into the office multiple days in a row may energize you to be more productive with certain tasks that can feel draining when alone. You may also be more invigorated overall by booking meetings both when you're in the office and at home, so you have opportunities to connect with people daily.

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When do I feel the least motivated?

THE **POMODORO** TECHNIQUE

① Decide on the Task That You Need to Do

② Set the Timer to 25 Minutes

③ Work on the Task Until the Timer Rings

④ Take a Short 5 Minute Break

⑤ After 4 Cycles Take a 15-30 Minute Break

[The Pomodoro Technique](#)

- Different people exhibit different motivation trends (e.g., start Monday with a bang but are struggling by Friday, and vice versa)

- Use in-office time/virtual meeting rooms or other time management methods (e.g., Pomodoro Technique) to pump up those times when you're finding it difficult to complete certain tasks or are feeling less motivated!

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Tip Sheet for Becoming a Pro at Hybrid Work

- ❑ Don't leave an out of office notification when you work from alternate locations

- ❑ Don't have an email signature giving different phone numbers for different days of the week, unless specifically needed

- ❑ Establish a healthy routine and set boundaries that work within your hybrid environments

- ❑ Make use of all technology options to stay connected

- ❑ Minimize distractions while working from home

- ❑ Don't hesitate to contact your hybrid colleagues

- ❑ Be presentable for a last-minute video call

- ❑ Use the mute button appropriately during conference calls

- ❑ Work with all your colleagues as you would if in the office

- ❑ Create a safe space for your animals when on audio or video calls

- ❑ Get up and move

- ❑ Feel comfortable working independently without close supervision

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OPM's Hybrid Work Environment Toolkit

Using Tracked Results to Support Performance Accomplishments

Writing accomplishment narratives that support performance ratings, career development, enhancing the employee experience, and awards and recognition

Using Tracked Results to Support Performance Accomplishments

The average adult spends 90,000 hours or 3,750 days of their life working; shouldn't we have something tangible to show for that?

- We shouldn't be writing accomplishment narratives just to support the annual performance rating

- Detailed, yearly records of our career is truly precious information

- It is evidence that gives us the power to advocate for our worth in so many different areas

- Examples may include:
  - Detail or shadow opportunities
  - Promotions or career-advancement
  - Flexible work schedule requests
  - Career development opportunities

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Writing Accomplishments

Situation or Circumstances	• Provides a context for understanding what you did to address an issue or problem
Accomplishment	• The results of the specific actions you took
Impact of Accomplishment	• Explains the significance of the accomplishment • How it impacted a colleague, customer, office, or organization

Accomplishment Examples

- **Example 1:** Developed and delivered a PowerPoint on the effectiveness of the data tracker and delivered the presentation

- **Example 2:** Supervisor requested I develop a presentation on the **new** data tracker piloted in my program area by April 8. I **independently** developed the PowerPoint and submitted to supervisor by the established deadline. The PowerPoint was returned with **few revisions**. I delivered the presentation to an **audience of superiors** (i.e., Second line supervisors, program and branch directors) and received **positive feedback** from numerous attendees (emails uploaded to USA Performance). Presentation will be used to determine the **permanent use** of the new tracking system.

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Leadership Traits in a Hybrid Environment: The Hybrid Leadership Model

Key leadership facets for establishing and maintaining a successful hybrid environment

Facets for a Leader in Establishing a Successful Hybrid

Facets for a Leader in Establishing a Successful Hybrid Environment- Orientations

People Orientation

Focusing on employees interests, needs, and desires to foster an environment of mutual trust and productivity

Technology Orientation

Enabling productivity and engagement through the acquisition and leveraging of innovative technology

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Communication

- **Flexible**: Communication methods and mediums are adaptable based on work tasks and personal preferences

- **Participative**: Dialogue is used for the exchange of information

- **Strategic**: Expectations and standards for interactions and information sharing are distributed

- **Transparent**: Information is shared actively, freely and openly among leaders and employees

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Resources

- **Accessible**: Coordination of employee accommodations and resource allocation is prioritized

- **Adaptable**: Resources are positioned based on the complexity and fluidity of the workspace

- **Equitable**: Resources are allocated based on individual needs and preferences

- **Innovative**: Creative tools and methods are explored and integrated into work

Inclusion

- **Advocacy**: The success of all employees is maximized with understanding and representation of needs, roles and responsibilities

- **Consistency**: Fair and predictable behaviors are demonstrated across all situations and groups

- **Openness**: Input from others is encouraged and valued

- **Support**: Individual considerations for productivity and work-life balance are respected

Performance

- **Alignment:** Intentional link between the mission and the workforce to drive specific measures used to track performance

- **Employee Involvement:** Encouragement by leaders for employees to be involved in setting their performance goals

- **Feedback:** Regular and purposeful delivery of information that enables employees to develop and improve

- **Results-Focused:** Establishment of measurable performance goals used to describe the desired outcomes the employee is meant to achieve

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Connection

- **Cohesion:** Fostering a close-knit team environment in which members communicate and work effectively together

- **Collaboration**: Intentional balancing of asynchronous and synchronous interaction to maximize individual flexibility and team productivity

- **Goal Orientation**: Recognition of shared goal attainment among team members

Recap

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Q&A

Future of the Workforce Resources

[Advancing Future of the Workforce Policies and Practices to Support Mission Delivery](#)

[Future of the Workforce Webpage](#)

[Workforce Planning Guide](#)

[Foresight Guidebook](#)

[Measuring, Monitoring, and Improving Organizational Health and Organizational Performance in the Context of](#)

[Evolving Agency Work Environments](#)

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[Federal Rotational Cyber Workforce Program](#)

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[Chief Human Capital Officers Transmittals](#)

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For further inquiries please visit us at:

OPM's Future of the Workforce Website