



Using Climate Assessments to Address Conflict

What are Climate Assessments?

Tools for systematically gathering information to measure the effectiveness of a group.

What issues might be addressed through a Climate Assessment in CORE PLUS?

Climate Assessments “take the temperature” of a group of any size whether or not there is a conflict issue at hand. Depending on the situation, a Climate Assessment may:

- Gather information about the current status of a team, office or organization
- Identify relevant issues or concerns about a conflict situation
- Identify factors that are having an impact on the group
- Clarify signs or symptoms of a problem
- Gather ideas or input from stakeholders
- Proactively check how teams or offices are doing

When is a Climate Assessment needed?

- Anonymity is required for participants to feel comfortable providing information.
- Information needs to be gathered from a large number of people
- Information needs to be gathered on a large number of topics or areas
- Data needs to be measured objectively

THE HOW TO'S

Climate Assessment Tools

Individual interviews, focus groups, or written or electronic surveys

What are the stages in conducting a Climate Assessment?

1. Clarify purpose of the assessment: Why are you assessing the situation, what does the client need to learn, what will be done with the information.

2. Identify who needs to be included in the assessment process
3. Design questions that elicit relevant information
4. Conduct the assessment – may need facilitators and recorders if focus groups are used
5. Gather responses and organize the data
6. Summarize results and issue report
7. Action-planning based on the assessment results is frequently conducted with the assistance of a Group Facilitator

Situations where Climate Assessments can be helpful include:

- A manager/supervisor has concerns about mounting tension among staff members. The actual cause has not been identified; however the impact on the work environment is starting to surface. The manager/supervisor wants to provide a safe space for staff to express concerns in an effort to identify and address the source of conflict.
- An office team previously participated in an intervention to improve morale and address conflict among staff. After one year of implementing the action plans they developed, the team wants to re-evaluate their progress, identifying improvements and areas that still pose a challenge.
- After undergoing a major reorganization, a new supervisor is requesting assistance on best strategies to foster cohesion in the work environment. The supervisor recognizes the importance of getting staff input and has requested assistance in identifying the energy of the group to gain insight on staff priorities.
- Senior management has identified a need to improve efficiency and customer service and to reduce costs in an important program area. Management wants to engage the supervisors and employees involved in that program area to help identify and prioritize opportunities to save time, resources and energy.