

Team tension: Prevent it, spot it, defuse it

Adaptive module

~20 min

43% of employees lose two weeks or more dwelling on a problem they don't dare raise (Crucial Learning): silent tension grows until the conflict is entrenched. This module works before things break out: four practices that make it harder for tension to take hold, a radar to read subtle signals (harder to pick up remotely), and ways to defuse tension early, including knowing when to refer it once informal resolution is no longer enough.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- 01 Build an environment that prevents tension: openness to divergent thinking, clarity, consultation before decisions, and cohesion.
- 02 Spot hidden tension through subtle signals, both in person and remotely.
- 03 Defuse tension early and gently: encourage people to express themselves one-on-one, then look for a solution together.
- 04 Recognize your own limits and refer it to HR or mediation when informal resolution is no longer enough.

WHO IT'S FOR

Managers and team members who want a calm team atmosphere and want to know how to defuse tension before it grows.

- **Prerequisite:** none

HOW THE MODULE WORKS

Self-paced, with practice tailored to each learner.

- 1 **Self-assessment:** on 9 dimensions, to gauge current habits and guide the practice.
- 2 **Expert video:** 10 minutes, with 3 pauses for reflection.
- 3 **Practice scenarios:** the first 2 chosen from the self-assessment, then 16 optional ones. Every answer gets feedback: what it leads to, and one way to improve.
- 4 **Dated commitment:** one action to try, written by the learner or picked from the suggestions.
- 5 **Memo to download:** key takeaways, questions, commitment, personal notes and checklists.

ASSESSMENT AND COMPLETION

Pass mark: 80%

The score takes into account your answers to the practice scenarios, your commitment and, where relevant, any additional learning activities. Passing requires a commitment and a score of at least 80%.

METHODS & MODELS

- Acas (Advisory, Conciliation and Arbitration Service) – favor resolving workplace conflict informally and early
- Defusing tension in 3 moves (act early, help people speak up, look for a solution together) – Afthonios method
- Preventing conflict with 4 practices (welcome divergent thinking, clarity/transparency, consult before deciding, cohesion) – Afthonios method

SOURCES & REFERENCES

- Crucial Learning, “Costly Conversations” – 43% of employees lose two weeks or more dwelling on a problem before daring to raise it
- Acas (the UK's leading public service on workplace conflict) – favor resolving tensions informally and early, before any formal procedure
- Crucial Learning – employees are more than twice as likely to avoid raising a problem when working remotely as in person
- Weger et al. (2014) – active listening and feeling understood