

# Leading with Mindfulness and Navigating Conflict

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# A Moment to Arrive



# THREE BREATHS

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1

Attention to breath

2

Relax Body

3

Ask: What's important now?



**What do you  
love about  
your work?**

**What are some  
of your biggest  
challenges?**

# Debrief

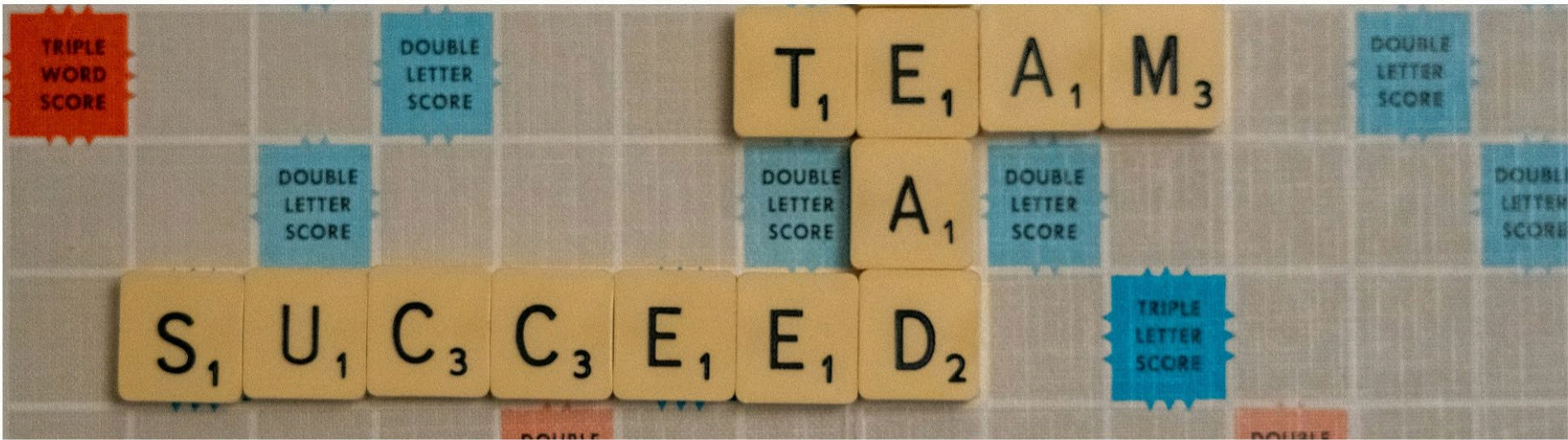
- By a show of hands, how many of you said something about the people you work with or the people you serve when talking about you love about your work?
- How many of you identified some form of conflict as one of your biggest challenges?
  - Keep in mind conflict can be systemic, internal, or interpersonal.

# Workplace Conflict Statistics

- **High Prevalence of Conflict: 85% of employees** experience some kind of conflict, with 29% experiencing conflict “nearly constantly” ([Myers-Briggs Company](#)).
- **Managers spend at least 25% of their time resolving workplace conflict** ([EEOC](#)).
- **Poor Leadership from the Top of the Organization: 29% of conflicts** are linked to poor leadership ([Myers-Briggs Company](#))

# Workplace Conflict Costs

- **Higher education turnover is at peak recorded levels**, with rates doubling during the pandemic. 33% of university employees reported actively looking for new jobs or were likely to look within the year ([CUPA-HR](#)).
- **High replacement costs**: Replacing exiting workers costs 50%-200% of the employee's annual salary ([Gallup](#)).
- **Poor student outcomes & reputational harm**: High turnover is linked to lower quality of education, institutional reputation hazard, and financial instability. Frequent turnover also disrupts institutional continuity, with knock-on effects for student learning experiences ([NASPA](#)).



# What characteristics do you value most in a leader?

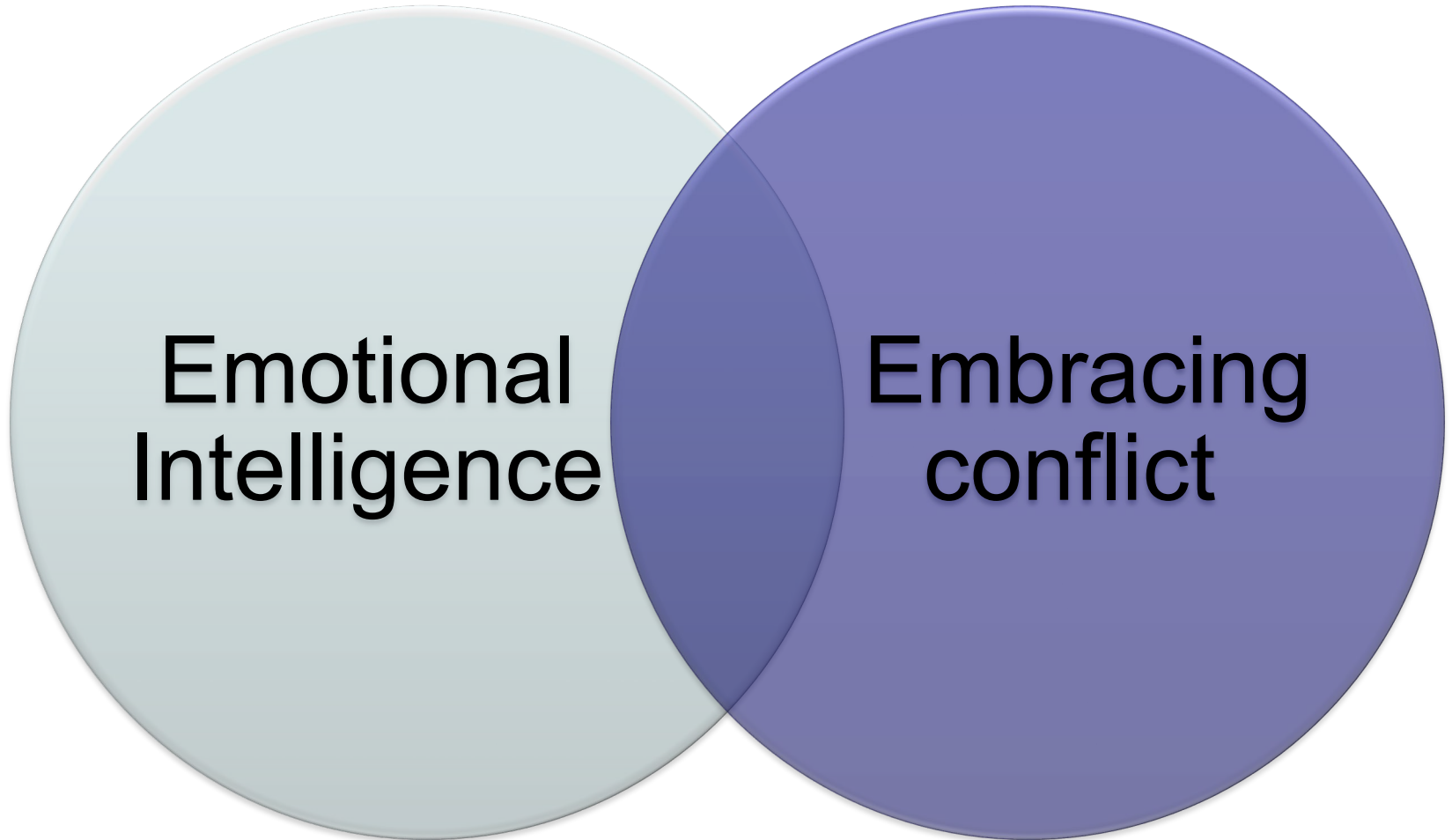
A 3D rendering of a human brain, colored in shades of blue and purple, with a glowing effect. It is positioned centrally behind the text.

# EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE

# Take Aways


- Most of us find conflict to be one of our biggest challenges as work
- We value emotionally intelligent leaders
- So... how can we shape HR strategies to reflect this information?

# The Rutgers Model



# Emotional Intelligence

- [Search Inside Yourself \(SIY\) Program](#): Originally developed by Google and Stanford, this emotional intelligence and psychological safety program provides tools to navigate the world successfully for optimal professional, personal, and leadership growth
- Mindful Moments
- Top down modeling for emotionally intelligent leadership

A photograph of three diverse people in an office setting. A man in the center is smiling broadly, looking towards a woman on the right who is also smiling and gesturing with her hands. A woman on the left is partially visible, looking towards the man. They appear to be in a collaborative conversation.

# Employee Partners for Conflict Transformation (EmPaCT)

Navigating Workplace Challenges, Together.

<https://uhr.rutgers.edu/workplace-culture/empact>





EMBRACING CONFLICT



**Conflict is going to happen.**



# Conflict Framing



## **Normal and inevitable**

- Generative (healthy) or...

## **Wide-ranging**

- Microaggressions, gossip
- Harassment, dysfunction
- Internal vs. interpersonal  
vs. structural or systemic

# Conflict Framing



## **Cultural**

- Conflicts shape culture
- Culture shapes conflict and our approach to conflict

## **Opportunity**

- Learning and reflection
- Relationship care & repair
- Change and growth

# What does Conflict Competence look like?

Skills we will focus on today include:

- **Listening**
- **Self-awareness**
- **Empathy**
- **Respectful, clear communication**

# Difficult Conversations Toolkit

STOP, THINK, SBNRR



## The Power is in the Pause

**Stop:** If you become emotionally activated, pause.

**Take a breath...** or several to calm your nervous system.

**Observe:** What are your thoughts, feelings, behaviors?  
Notice what's happening, internally and externally.

**Proceed:** With a clearer and calmer mind, decide the best course of action.

Developed by Jon Kabat-Zinn, PhD, who created the Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) program

## The Power is in the Pause

- Several mindfulness practices are woven throughout the STOP skill.
- Mindfulness strengthens a person's ability to notice emotions and thoughts without being hijacked by them (think: fight, flight, or freeze).
- This increased awareness creates space for more intentional and adaptive responses, supporting long-term emotional regulation and mental well-being.



# THINK about the impact of your words

**True:** Is what I'm about to say factually accurate?

**Helpful:** Does it serve a positive purpose or offer value?

**Inspiring:** Can it uplift or motivate others?

**Necessary:** Is it essential to share?

**Kind:** Is it shared with good intentions and spoken with a compassionate tone?

# SBNRR

- Stop
- Breathe
- Notice
- Reflect
- Respond



# STOP Practice: A Guided Meditation for Mindful Leadership





## In Pairs – Let's Debrief

- How are you feeling now, after experiencing that exercise?
- What did you experience during the exercise?
- OR ... anything else you want



**What are you taking away from this session?**  
e.g. a tool or insight

# Positive Gossip

## GUIDELINES

- Ham it up!
- Don't be afraid to go big!
- Invite gossip about others typically the target of negative gossip.
- Gossip about others if you've exhausted your target.
- Mingle cocktail-party style.
- Have fun!



# Questions

