

# Inventory of the conflict potential of the workplace: Themes that need skillful management

All workplaces have a conflict potential, i.e. themes where individuals and groups sometimes have desires that get blocked by someone else. The purpose of this worksheet is to gain an overview of the themes that an organization needs to handle in constructive and effective ways.

Which of the following themes might constitute a certain conflict potential in the workplace? List issues that can be expected to turn up sooner or later.

## 1. DISTRIBUTION ISSUES

E.g.: **Money:** priorities in the budget, distribution of budget cuts or deficits, wage negotiations, size of overtime compensation, decisions about expenses for professional training, etc. **Workload:** distribution of work tasks/customers/patients/pupils/districts, etc. **Time and attention:** how much time/attention that should be devoted to different tasks and issues

## 2. POSITIONS ISSUES

Particular positions, roles, tasks, placements, etc. that people might wish to get or avoid.

## 3. STRUCTURE ISSUES

E.g.: organizational structure, goals/strategic orientation, delegation of authority (who is authorized to make certain decisions?), distribution of responsibilities and roles, regulations, routines, methods.

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## 4. BEHAVIORAL NORM ISSUES

- a) Mutual treatment within the organization, communication styles, attitudes
- b) Ways of performing work tasks

## 5. CONVICTION ISSUES

Deep-rooted and durable differences in views on fundamental values, good/bad, right/wrong, appropriate/inappropriate, allowed/prohibited. Can be linked to convictions, belief systems, value systems, professional identities, etc.

## OBS!

When you have listed issues that may have a conflict potential: Review the list and consider whether there are issues that can be regarded as "formless", i.e. where appropriate formats for managing the issues are absent or not working well. Mark the issues where there is an obvious need to develop better management forms.