

# Conflict at work is inevitable, so why are so few trained on managing it?



Less than half of employees report that they have been trained or coached in handling workplace conflict, according to a 2021 survey by faculty at Harvard University.

**Conflict is an inescapable and time-consuming part of work life for employees at all levels.**

According to a 2021 survey conducted by faculty at Harvard Business School and Harvard Kennedy School of Government:



**89%**  
of employees report experiencing conflict at work

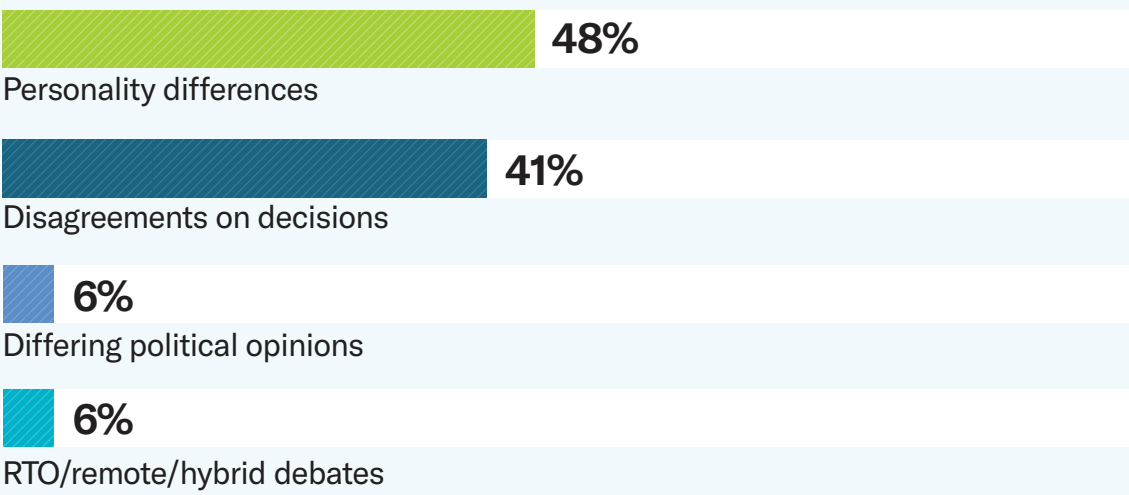


**3.5 hours**  
per week are spent by employees dealing with conflict at work

Julia A. Minson and Francesca Gino, "Managing a Polarized Workforce," *Harvard Business Review*, April 2022.

**Most of the conflict people face at work falls into two categories: personality differences and disagreements on decisions.**

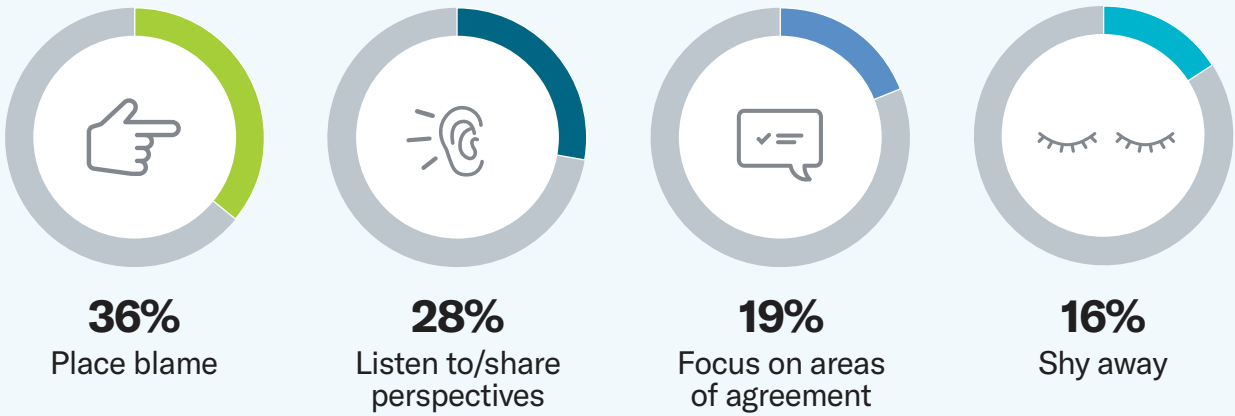
Which of the following issues are a significant source of conflict in your team or organization?



Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning, "Which of the following issues are a significant source of conflict in your team or organization?" LinkedIn, October 2022.

**When difficult interactions at work occur, people don't always respond in productive ways.**

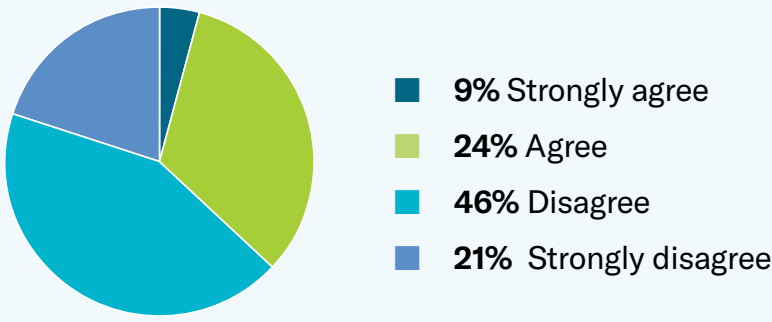
When there is conflict among individuals in your organization, how do they most often respond?



Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning, "When there is conflict among individuals in your organization, how do they most often respond?" LinkedIn, November 2022.

**Why do people approach disagreements unproductively? Perhaps because so few are adequately trained on how to manage conflict at work.**

Do you agree with the statement: "I feel my organization has adequately trained employees and leaders on how to manage conflict at work."

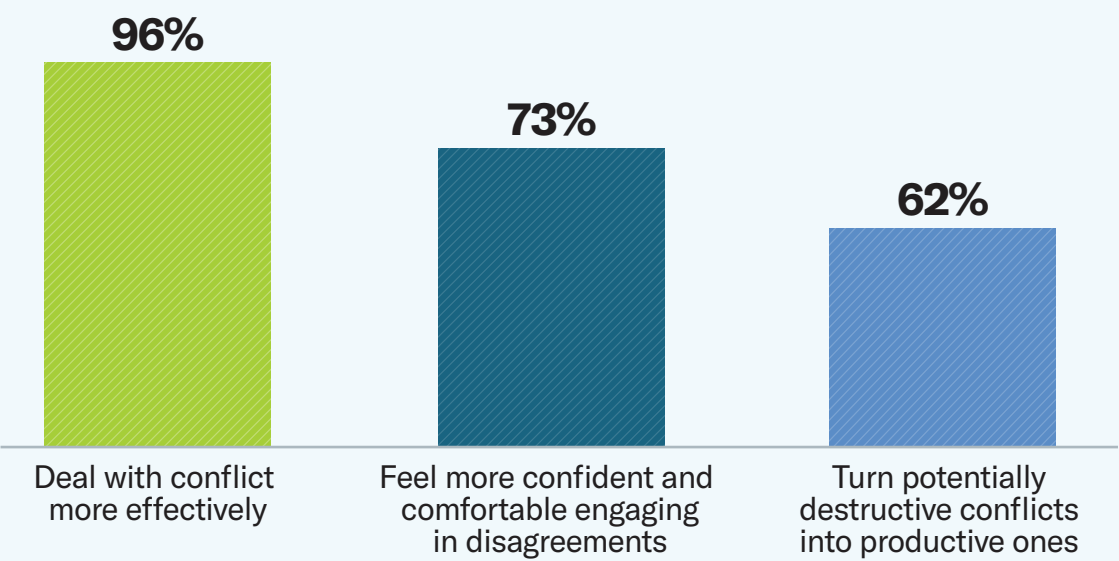


Harvard Business Publishing Corporate Learning, "Do you agree with the statement: 'I feel my organization has adequately trained employees and leaders on how to manage conflict at work.'" LinkedIn, November 2022.

**Those who are trained in managing difficult interactions turn potentially destructive conflicts into productive ones.**

According to the 2021 survey by Minson and Gino, **only 39% of employees report that they have been trained or coached in handling workplace conflict.**

Among those who were trained to handle workplace conflict:



Julia A. Minson and Francesca Gino, "Managing a Polarized Workforce," *Harvard Business Review*, April 2022.