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PSYC 1205 Emotional Intelligence

ASSIGNMENT ACTIVITY UNIT 5

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Introduction

Working with a new coworker who dominates meetings and interrupts regularly creates friction and reduces the team's ability to perform. I focus my response on clear, respectful communication; practical conflict-management strategies; and measurable indicators of improved collaboration. Grounded in emotional intelligence and interest-based negotiation principles, my plan balances assertiveness with empathy to restore productive working dynamics (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004; Fisher & Ury, 1981).

1. Approaching the initial conversation

I begin by preparing specific, observable examples of the problematic behaviors (e.g., “In yesterday’s meeting you interrupted me three times while I described the timeline”) and the concrete impact on the project (missed points, incomplete feedback, delayed decisions). I choose a private, neutral setting and invite the coworker to a short one-on-one meeting with a collaborative framing: “I want us to work well together on this project—can we talk about how we communicate in meetings?”

During the conversation I use calm, concise I-statements to describe behavior and effect: “I notice I get interrupted during meetings, and that makes it hard for me to present my ideas.” I avoid labeling or blaming language and stick to facts and feelings. I follow each description with a specific request: “Could we try a meeting norm where each person finishes their thought before responses?” This approach aligns with emotional-regulation and social-skill strategies—naming

the emotion and behavior reduces escalation and opens space for problem solving (Mayer et al., 2004).

I invite the coworker's perspective and listen actively, paraphrasing to confirm understanding: "So you're concerned about meeting length and want faster decisions—did I get that right?" If the coworker deflects or minimizes, I redirect to the shared goal and propose a time-limited experiment: "Let's try a short rule for two meetings and see whether it helps our work." Framing the solution as a joint experiment reduces defensiveness and matches interest-based negotiation: focus on shared interests (project success, efficiency) rather than entrenched positions (who speaks more). I close the conversation by documenting agreed norms in an email and proposing a brief follow-up after two meetings to evaluate progress (Fisher & Ury, 1981).

2. Indicators of a healthy working relationship

Healthy working relationships rest on mutual respect, psychological safety, balanced participation, clear roles, and constructive feedback. In practice, I look for several concrete indicators:

• Equal airtime and turn-taking during meetings—team members complete their points without interruption.

• Active listening behaviors—paraphrasing, asking clarifying questions, and referencing others' contributions.

• Clear role clarity and accountability—each person knows deliverables and deadlines.

• Timely, specific feedback delivered respectfully; feedback is accepted and used to improve work.

• Psychological safety—team members voice concerns or dissent without fear of ridicule or retaliation.

These indicators support effective collaboration by improving idea flow, reducing rework, and increasing commitment to shared decisions. For example, when I shared a tentative schedule and received a paraphrased summary from my coworker, I felt heard and quickly adjusted the timeline based on their practical observations—these reduced later revisions and improved efficiency. Emotional intelligence plays a central role: self-awareness helps me notice frustration before it becomes tone or aggression, and empathy helps me understand why the coworker might rush or interrupt (Goleman, 1998). When those EI skills operate, teams maintain focus on outcomes rather than personalities.

3. Assessing the effectiveness of communication and conflict-resolution strategies

I assess both processes and outcome metrics. Process measures include observable behavioral changes (fewer interruptions, more turn-taking, respectful language) and self-reported perceptions (my sense of being heard; coworker's sense of efficiency). Outcome measures include meeting productivity (clear decisions made), quality of deliverables, and timeline adherence.

I collect simple, repeatable evidence: I note the number of interruptions per meeting for three meetings before and after the intervention, solicit brief written feedback from the coworker and another team member, and compare task completion rates. I also use short self-reflection

after each meeting: Did I stay calm? Did I use I-statements? Did I listen actively? These reflections map to emotional intelligence competencies (self-management, social awareness) and show whether I practiced the skills I intended (Mayer et al., 2004).

Finally, I evaluate whether the resolution addressed underlying interests. Using interest-based criteria, I ask: Did our agreed norms reduce the communication barrier? Did the coworker's concerns about efficiency get considered? If both sides report progress and project metrics improve, I consider my communication and conflict-resolution approach effective (Fisher & Ury, 1981).

4. Actions and outcomes that indicate progress

Concrete signs of improvement include:

• Reduced interruptions: measurable decline in interruptions per meeting and longer uninterrupted speaking turns.

• Explicit acknowledgement: the coworker asks clarifying questions and references my contributions in subsequent work (e.g., "As you suggested, I adjusted the timeline to…").

• Co-created norms in place: an agenda, time for individual updates, or a round-robin format.

• Positive behavioral changes: the coworker pauses before responding, allows others to finish, or signals nonverbally (hand raise).

• Improved deliverables and fewer revisions: milestones met on time, fewer clarification emails.

• Ongoing check-ins: a successful follow-up meeting where both parties agree the changes help.

When these outcomes appear, I reinforce them by thanking the coworker for the change, documenting the norms for the team, and continuing periodic check-ins. If progress stalls, I reapply interest-based problem solving and, if necessary, involve a neutral supervisor or mediator to keep the focus on project goals rather than personality conflict.

Conclusion

Addressing a coworker's interrupting and dismissive behavior requires preparation, emotional regulation, and a collaborative problem-solving attitude. By using clear I-statements, active listening, and interest-based negotiation, I create a structured, low-threat environment for change. I measure success through behavioral observations and project outcomes, visible reductions in interruptions, mutual acknowledgment of ideas, and improved deliverables signal progress. Centering emotional intelligence and shared interests helps transform conflict into productive collaboration (Mayer et al., 2004; Goleman, 1998; Fisher & Ury, 1981).

References

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