

ABC Triangle ▲

Description of the Model: The ABC Triangle by Johan Galtung is a model used to understand and analyze conflicts. By using the ABC triangle, it is possible to examine how attitudes influence behaviors and how both relate to contradictions, seeking solutions that address all three dimensions for effective conflict resolution.

Galtung's model represents conflict as a triangle, with each corner representing a crucial dimension of conflict. These corners are:

- **A: Attitudes/Assumptions**
- **B: Behavior**
- **C: Contradictions/Context**

A: Attitudes

Description: This dimension represents the beliefs, perceptions, and attitudes that the actors have towards others and the conflict itself. It includes assumptions, prejudices, and ingrained ideas that influence how people see the conflict and the other actors involved.

Role in conflict: Attitudes and assumptions can fuel conflict if they are negative, stereotypical, or based on misunderstandings. They can also influence the perception of contradictions and behaviors. • Attitudes of openness, empathy, and respect reduce distorted perceptions, foster mutual understanding, and encourage a willingness to explore shared solutions.

B: Behavior

Description: This dimension involves the concrete and visible actions that actors take in the conflict. It includes actions, reactions, and strategies used to manage or exacerbate the conflict.

Role in conflict: Behaviors can manifest and amplify contradictions and attitudes. Hostile or aggressive behaviors can stem from negative attitudes and can intensify the conflict. • Behaviors such as active listening, emotional regulation, and nonviolent communication create a climate of trust and transform conflict into a constructive dialogue.

C: Contradictions

Description: Contradictions represent the real conflicts of interest, incompatibilities, and structural problems that underlie the conflict. These can include scarce resources, ideological differences, or territorial disputes.

Role in Conflict: Contradictions are the fundamental roots of conflict and are what make interactions between actors necessary. They provide the context in which attitudes and behaviors develop. • Contradictions, when openly recognized and explored without blame, can become opportunities for co-creating innovative solutions that consider the needs of all parties.

The ABC Model by Johan Galtung is a useful tool for understanding the dynamics of conflicts, but it has, as every model, **certain limitations** that are important to consider:

- **Over-Simplification:** the model may oversimplify the complexity of conflicts by reducing them to three main categories (attitudes/assumptions, behaviors, contradictions). The model may not be suitable for all types of conflicts or situations. In very complex or multi-dimensional conflicts, the model may not capture all the nuances.

- **Focus on Representation:** the model focuses more on how the conflict is represented and less on how it is emotionally experienced by the participants. Emotions and personal experiences can be essential for a deep understanding of the conflict.

Exercise

Let's practice at the **interpersonal level** of the conflict: think of a conflict that you have with another person and try to identify the 3 components of the ABC Triangle.

Do you have any ideas on how you could change your Attitudes and Behaviors in order to transform the conflict?