



BDR™ Glossary of Strategic Dispute Resolution

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This glossary is provided by MCL & Associates, Inc. (MCL) in support of its training manual and accompanying modules for *Resolving Disputes with Your Boss: Six Practical Strategies for Resolving Conflict at Work*.

It defines the key terms, phrases, and concepts used throughout the Business Dispute Readiness (BDR)™ strategic conflict-resolution approach, emphasizing practical workplace meaning rather than academic abstraction. The definitions are designed to promote shared understanding, reduce misinterpretation, and support consistent, defensible application of the strategies presented.

Some entries reflect established ideas from psychology, negotiation, organizational behavior, and systems theory, while others represent original constructs developed within the BDR framework. Where terms may be used differently in other contexts, the definitions here reflect their specific meaning within the strategic approach to conflict resolution used in this program.

This glossary is cumulative and will continue to expand as additional strategic conflict-resolution concepts emerge. Its purpose is to provide a shared lexicon for practitioners, educators, and the general public to discuss, analyze, and act upon the realities of workplace conflict and beyond.

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BDR™ Glossary of Strategic Dispute Resolution

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Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
Accountability by Design	The practice of structuring decisions, agreements, and follow-through so expectations, standards, and meaning—anchored in agreed-upon Fairness Standards—remain clear, traceable, and defensible over time, without relying on goodwill, memory, or post-hoc enforcement. See also: Fairness Standards; Fairness Alignment	BDR Framework
Accountability Without Defensiveness	Taking responsibility for impact or error without justification, blame-shifting, or emotional escalation.	BDR Framework
Accountability Without Defensiveness	Taking responsibility for impact or error through factual acknowledgment and corrective intent, without justification, blame-shifting, or emotional escalation.	BDR Framework
Active Harm Reduction	The deliberate and ethically grounded practice of limiting foreseeable psychological, reputational, relational, or organizational damage when conflict cannot be safely resolved under existing power, timing, or legitimacy constraints. Active Harm Reduction emphasizes responsible judgment, proportional restraint, and impact awareness—prioritizing the prevention of escalation, irreversible exposure, or compounding harm over persuasion or immediate resolution. Within the BDR framework, it often results in a Strategic Stabilization Point and operates under the No Guarantees Law, recognizing that disciplined action can reduce risk without assuring outcomes. Active Harm Reduction functions as a strategic anchor for decision-making under constraint, guiding ethical choices when resolution is unsafe or unavailable. See also: Strategic Anchors. See also: Strategic Anchors; Strategic Stabilization Point; No Guarantees Law; Strategic Judgment Under	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	Constraint; Protective Non-Engagement	
Adaptive & Situational Leadership Group	A leadership style group characterized by flexibility in approach, where decisions, expectations, and tolerance for inquiry shift based on context, urgency, and perceived capability of others. Engagement conditions can vary widely from one situation to the next, requiring careful reading of behavioral signals, timing, and legitimacy before acting or questioning. See: Leadership Style Group.	BDR Framework (adaptive leadership; situational judgment — applied)
Adaptive Response	A deliberate adjustment in behavior or strategy based on changing conditions, power dynamics, or new information rather than fixed rules or habits.	BDR Framework
AI as a Preparation Tool	The use of AI to clarify thinking, rehearse tone, surface assumptions, and test phrasing—while recognizing that AI cannot read power signals, interpret asymmetry, carry consequences, or determine readiness. AI supports reflection but does not replace human judgment.	BDR Framework
Alignment Before Action	The principle that agreement on how a problem is defined must be established before solutions, proposals, or corrective action can safely be introduced.	BDR Framework
Alignment of Interests	The process of identifying and connecting individual, organizational, or systemic objectives so that cooperation becomes rational rather than adversarial.	BDR Framework (informed by GRIT; Superordinate Goals; Principled Negotiation; SPIN)
Alignment Risk	The risk created when behavior appears compliant on the surface but masks disagreement, disengagement, or strategic withholding; distinct from escalation risk.	BDR Framework
Applying Tools and Tactics Without Strategy	The application of documentation, questioning, escalation, or frameworks	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	in the absence of defined success criteria—such as agreed-upon fairness standards or outcome goals—resulting in activity that records or attempts to manage situational pressure without advancing resolution.	
Approach Without Crossing	Engaging another person near a boundary without intruding on role, authority, or identity, allowing presence without provoking defensiveness.	Adapted from Bryant Wedge
Appropriate use of AI (Artificial Intelligence)	The ethical rule concerning the appropriate and responsible use of AI to slow thinking, test assumptions, and rehearse tone and framing—without outsourcing judgment, authority, or responsibility for consequence.	BDR Framework (AI ethics — applied)
Assumption Testing	The act of verifying beliefs or interpretations before reacting, often through structured questioning, to avoid escalation driven by misreading or guesswork.	Negotiation / Conflict Theory
Assumption Testing	The disciplined practice of verifying beliefs, interpretations, or expectations before reacting, typically through structured questioning, to prevent escalation driven by misreading or guesswork.	BDR Framework
Awareness Chain	The sequence by which a person moves from trigger to response: Trigger → Awareness → Causality → Meaning → Pause → Response, increasing clarity and judgment at each step.	BDR Framework
Behavioral Consistency	Repeated, reliable follow-through over time as the primary mechanism of trust repair.	Psychology / Trust Research
Behavioral Indicators	Observable leadership behaviors that directly determine whether inquiry or engagement is safe in the moment, such as responses to questions, handling of trade-offs, and tolerance for clarification. See: Leadership Style Groups; Adaptive & Situational Leadership Group; Visionary & Transformational Leadership Style Group; Ineffective or Extreme Leadership Style Group;	BDR Framework (risk signaling — applied)

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	Directive & Task-Focused Leadership Group; Supportive; People-Focused Leadership Group; and Dark Leadership Style Group.	
Behavioral Signal	How leadership actions communicate expectations about inquiry, initiative, and safety more strongly than stated values or policies.	Organizational Behavior
Behavior-Based Risk Assessment	The disciplined evaluation of how observable leadership behavior alters escalation risk, tolerance for inquiry, and exposure to consequences—without inferring intent, personality, or motivation.	BDR Framework (risk analysis; conflict theory — applied)
Boundary Clarification	The deliberate, forward-looking act of naming and setting a clear limit on behavior, process, or engagement—without assigning blame—in order to stabilize risk, prevent escalation, and preserve credibility under conditions of pressure or unequal power.	BDR Framework (informed by Bryant Wedge; boundary theory; Nonviolent Communication principles)
Boundary Crossing	Any action—intentional or unintentional—that moves beyond implicit or explicit limits of role, authority, time, or personal space.	Psychology / Boundary Theory
Boundary Management	The strategic practice of recognizing, respecting, and deliberately navigating organizational, interpersonal, and role-based limits.	BDR Framework
Boundary Navigation	Timing, pacing, and framing engagement so boundaries are crossed only when psychological safety permits.	BDR Framework
Boundary Recognition	The ability to identify role, authority, emotional, or identity limits before acting or speaking.	BDR Framework
Business Dispute Readiness (BDR)™ Manual	The copyright-protected training materials authored by Mark Lefcowitz and published by MCL & Associates, Inc., providing the structured framework, language, and strategies used throughout the program.	BDR Framework / Trademarked IP
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Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
Clarification Without Resistance	Seeking explanation, standards, or boundaries without challenging authority or motivation.	BDR Framework
Clarifying Questions	Neutral, non-accusatory questions used to surface facts, expectations, priorities, or constraints before forming conclusions.	Negotiation / Communication Theory
Clarifying Questions	Neutral, non-accusatory questions used to surface facts, expectations, priorities, or constraints before forming conclusions or taking action.	BDR Framework (SPIN-informed)
Clarity Before Interpretation	Verifying meaning and expectations before inferring intent.	BDR Framework
Cognitive Load	Mental strain caused by stress, urgency, ambiguity, or competing demands that degrades judgment.	Psychology
Collaborative Problem Definition	Jointly establishing what problem is being solved before attempting solutions.	Negotiation / Systems Theory (applied)
Composure	The disciplined ability to remain steady and self-regulated under pressure to protect judgment and credibility.	BDR Framework
Conditional Trust	Trust granted provisionally and maintained only so long as behavior remains consistent and credible.	Psychology / Trust Theory
Conflict Risk Signal	A commonly repeated phrase, metaphor, or pattern of language that signals elevated conflict risk by normalizing defensiveness, power struggle, or inevitability of loss rather than problem-solving. Conflict risk signals often surface early and reflect how participants are framing the situation before positions harden or escalation occurs. These patterns are commonly referred to as organizational culture or cultural norms. Example: Phrases such as “This is just how things work around here,” “You’re either with us or against us,” or “Someone is going to take the fall” signal constrained options, reduced inquiry legitimacy, and rising escalation risk.	BDR Framework (organizational meaning — applied)
Consequences Horizon	How far-reaching or long-tail the consequences of a decision may be.	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
Consistency Over Intensity	The principle that steady behavior builds trust more effectively than dramatic gestures.	Psychology / Trust Research
Constraints Before Initiative	Identifying limits and risks before volunteering effort or solutions.	BDR Framework
Contemporaneous Record / Notes	Documentation created at or near the time events occur to preserve accuracy and good-faith evidence.	Legal / Procedural
Contemporaneous Record / Notes	Documentation created at or near the time events occur to preserve accuracy and good-faith evidence of what was directly observed, said, or decided. Contemporaneous records support credibility, verification, and defensibility by anchoring later interpretation to timely, first-hand observation rather than memory or inference.	BDR Framework (evidentiary discipline — applied)
Context-Dependent Legitimacy	Legitimacy determined by timing, tolerance for inquiry, and leadership posture—not only by content.	BDR Framework
Contribution Without Permission	Offering ideas or direction that intrudes on role boundaries and increases resistance.	BDR Framework
Controlled Communication	A disciplined approach to structuring the tone, timing, pacing, phrasing, and sequence of interaction in order to reduce defensiveness, manage escalation risk, and preserve legitimacy and credibility—particularly under conditions of pressure or unequal power. Controlled Communication emphasizes restraint, precision, and intentional sequencing over emotional expression or completeness. See also: Strategic Anchors.	BDR Framework (Burton; Wedge — applied)
Credibility	The perception that an individual is reliable, truthful, and professionally grounded.	Organizational Behavior
Credibility	The demonstrated continuity of reliable, consistent, and professionally grounded behavior over time, such that actions and decisions can be reasonably traced, evaluated, and defended—particularly under pressure, ambiguity, or third-party review.	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	Credibility is established through observable conduct, ethical restraint, and documented follow-through rather than intent, explanation, or position.	
Credibility Exposure	The degree to which an action places reputation or trust at risk.	BDR Framework
Credible One-Sided Gestures	Small, independently taken, low-risk actions or communications intended to reduce tension and signal reliability without requesting or implying reciprocity.	Osgood (GRIT) → adapted in BDR
Credible One-Sided Gestures	Small, independently taken, low-risk actions intended to reduce tension and signal reliability without requesting, implying, or expecting reciprocity.	Charles Osgood (GRIT) → adapted in BDR
Dark Leadership Style Group	A leadership style group characterized by patterns of control, manipulation, fear induction, or self-protective behavior, where tolerance for inquiry is low and interpretation risk is high. Engagement under this group often carries asymmetric consequences, requiring heightened restraint, documentation discipline, and exposure management. See: Leadership Style Group.	BDR Framework (dark leadership research; power dynamics — applied)
Defending Position vs. Defining Process	The shift point between escalation and cooperation.	BDR Framework
Defensibility	The capacity for a decision or action to be reasonably justified over time.	Legal / Organizational Reasoning
Defensible Pathway	A sequence of actions that can be reasonably explained if later questioned.	BDR Framework
Defining Success	The deliberate act of articulating what outcome completion, safety, or adequacy means in a given situation—by identifying outcome goals, fairness standards, and evaluation criteria— <i>before</i> action, escalation, or commitment occurs.	BDR Framework (Project Management — applied)
Directive & Task-Focused Leadership Group	A leadership group characterized by emphasis on output, deadlines, task completion, and accountability, where tolerance for inquiry narrows as execution pressure increases and	BDR Framework (organizational behavior; authority dynamics — applied)

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	authority governs consequences. See: Leadership Style Group.	
Discernment	Interpreting context, motive, timing, and power before acting.	BDR Framework
Documentation (BDR Framework)	The disciplined practice of creating accurate, proportionate, and timely records of decisions, direction, actions, and context so that intent, accountability, and good faith can be traced, evaluated, and defended over time. In the BDR framework, documentation is an ethical and strategic responsibility—not bureaucracy or narrative self-protection. In general, the closer documentation is created to the event it records, the greater its credibility and evidentiary weight when later reviewed.	BDR Framework
Documentation Before Adaptation	Recording direction or changes before modifying course.	Legal / Procedural
Documentation Before Adaptation	The principle of recording direction, assumptions, or changes before modifying course, to preserve accountability and prevent retroactive reinterpretation.	BDR Framework
Early Cues of Emotional Escalation	Physiological, verbal, or behavioral signals—such as rushed speech, tightened tone, or abrupt directives—that indicate rising risk of misinterpretation and escalation.	BDR Framework
Emotional Awareness	The ability to recognize and name one's physical, verbal, and emotional cues before they shape behavior.	Psychology (Emotional Intelligence)
Emotional Escalation	The amplification of conflict caused by unmanaged emotional reactions rather than substantive disagreement.	Psychology / Conflict Theory
Emotional Response vs. Deliberate Response	The distinction between reflexive reactions and intentional, disciplined behavior.	Psychology (Self-regulation)
Emotional Velocity	The rate at which emotional intensity escalates within an interaction, often exceeding the capacity for accurate reasoning or interpretation.	BDR Framework
Engagement Threshold	The point at which inquiry, clarification, or challenge shifts from acceptable to	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	risky based on leadership behavior and pressure.	
Engagement-Generated Near-Parity	A situational narrowing of power asymmetry that results from disciplined, standards-anchored engagement—such as the use of fairness criteria, controlled communication, and documented reasoning—rather than from formal authority or role equality.	BDR Framework (power dynamics — applied)
Ethical Self-Governance	Maintaining composure, fairness, and responsibility for impact when outcomes are uncertain.	BDR Framework
Event vs. Interpretation	The distinction between what objectively occurred and the meaning assigned to it.	Psychology (Cognitive bias / Attribution theory)
Expectations Before Agreement	Confirming evaluation criteria before committing to deadlines or ownership.	BDR Framework
Exposure	The personal and professional cost to an employee if engagement fails, including risk to credibility, reputation, effectiveness, or future influence—magnified by authority and visibility.	BDR Framework (risk and power dynamics — applied)
Exposure Awareness	Conscious evaluation of how words, timing, tone, or documentation may increase vulnerability to reinterpretation, scrutiny, or consequence under authority.	BDR Framework
Exposure Risk	The potential for an action or timing choice to increase vulnerability to political, reputational, or relational harm.	BDR Framework
Fairness Alignment	The explicit or implicit act of identifying and agreeing upon the fairness standard most appropriate to apply so that decisions and actions will be viewed as both legitimate and defensible. See also: Strategic Anchors.	BDR Framework
Fairness Criteria	Shared or defensible standards used to evaluate decisions or outcomes.	Negotiation / Conflict Theory
Fairness Standards	Social expectations regarding how people should be treated at work. See also: Strategic Anchors.	Organizational Behavior
Fairness Standards	Mutually shared cultural norms, mores, and accepted standards of business	BDR Framework (principled)

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	behavior used to evaluate decisions without relying on power or emotional assertion.	negotiations, SPIN, conflict theory; organizational norms—applied)
Functional vs. Dysfunctional Conflict	A distinction between conflict that produces progress and conflict that causes harm.	Organizational Psychology
Good Faith	Demonstrated intent to act honestly, reasonably, and cooperatively.	Legal / Ethical Doctrine
GRIT (Graduated Reciprocation in Tension-Reduction)	A strategy of initiating trust repair through unilateral, credibility-preserving gestures that invite—but do not require—reciprocal cooperation, originally developed for high-risk conflict environments.	Charles Osgood
Holding Pattern (Trust Context)	A deliberate period of disciplined, non-escalating behavior designed to prevent further trust loss until conditions support deeper repair or cooperation.	BDR Framework
Holding Pattern (Trust Context)	A deliberate period of disciplined, non-escalating behavior intended to prevent further trust loss until conditions support deeper repair or cooperation.	BDR Framework
Identity Threat	The sense that one's competence, status, or legitimacy is being challenged.	Psychology (Social identity / threat theory)
Ineffective or Extreme Leadership Style Group	A leadership style group marked by inconsistent, erratic, or exaggerated use of authority, where decision patterns, expectations, and responses lack reliability. Engagement risk is elevated due to unpredictability, shifting standards, or disproportionate reactions to routine inquiry or disagreement. See: Leadership Style Group.	BDR Framework (organizational behavior; risk analysis — applied)
Inquiry Intolerance	A condition in which questioning or clarification is consistently discouraged, penalized, or reframed as challenge—indicating low inquiry legitimacy and elevated engagement risk. See Inquiry Legitimacy.	BDR Framework (behavioral signals — applied)
Inquiry Legitimacy	The degree to which questioning, clarification, or problem framing by	BDR Framework (behavioral

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	others is recognized as appropriate and legitimate, rather than interpreted as resistance, incompetence, or threat. See Inquiry Intolerance.	signals — applied)
Instinct vs. Strategy	The contrast between reactive, threat-driven responses (fight, flight, freeze) and deliberate, paced decision-making that prioritizes risk reduction, timing, and defensibility.	BDR Framework (neurobehavioral response — applied)
Interpretation Control	Situations where leadership retains the ability to define meaning or narrative.	BDR Framework
Interpretation Gap	The space between what was said or done and how it was understood.	BDR Framework
Iterated Interaction	When behavior in one exchange shapes future exchanges.	Game Theory / Conflict Theory
Leadership Ambiguity Zone	The behavioral space where direction, expectations, and consequences are unclear.	BDR Framework
Leadership Matrix	A copyrighted decision-support tool owned by Mark Lefcowitz and published by MCL & Associates, Inc., designed to identify behavioral risk patterns and guide safer first-move decisions under authority and time pressure—without labeling leaders or predicting outcomes.	<i>Independent copyrighted work by Mark Lefcowitz; published by MCL & Associates, Inc. Registered with the U.S. Copyright Office as Conflict Resolution Strategies × Management Styles Matrix.</i>
Leadership Style Group	A classification of leadership behavior based on recurring, observable patterns that shape tolerance for inquiry, decision authority, and escalation risk—used to assess engagement conditions rather than diagnose personality or intent. See Adapt	BDR Framework (leadership behavior analysis — applied)
Legitimacy	The perception that a concern or decision is reasonable and organizationally grounded.	Organizational Behavior
Legitimacy	The condition in which a concern, request, or action is viewed as reasonable, appropriate, and grounded	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	in organizational purpose rather than personal preference or emotion.	
Legitimacy Through Restraint	The increase in influence that comes from knowing when not to push or intervene.	BDR Framework
Listening for Intent	Attending to purpose rather than reacting to tone or wording.	BDR Framework
Long-Arc Defensibility	The capacity for an action or decision to remain explainable, legitimate, and professionally credible if reviewed months or years later under changed conditions.	BDR Framework
Long-Arc Responsibility	Considering how conflict decisions will be interpreted and lived with over time.	BDR Framework
Micro-Signals of Reliability	Small, observable behaviors—such as meeting micro-deadlines, neutral tone, or concise updates—that accumulate into trust over time.	BDR Framework
Micro-Structures	Small, repeatable process elements that create predictability and coordination even when trust is low.	Organizational Behavior / Process Design
Micro-Structures for Cooperation	Small, shared process elements that prevent recurring conflict and support coordination.	BDR Framework
Misattribution	Assigning intent, motive, or meaning to others' actions without sufficient evidence.	Psychology (Attribution Theory)
Most Realistic Way Forward	The course of action that best balances ethical responsibility, exposure risk, timing, and long-arc credibility under existing constraints.	BDR Framework
Most Realistic Way Forward	The course of action that best balances ethics, exposure, timing, and credibility under existing constraints—prioritizing survivability over speed, certainty, or emotional satisfaction.	BDR Framework
Movement Before Clarity	Recognizing when leadership prioritizes progress over precision and requesting minimal actionable clarity.	BDR Framework
Mutual Dependency	The structural condition that makes cooperation rational when work continues over time.	Game Theory / Conflict Theory
Near-Parity	A condition of partial but unequal leverage in which both parties carry some accountability or exposure.	Conflict Theory / Power Dynamics (applied)
Near-Parity (Strategic Use)	The reduction of the practical effects of unequal power by anchoring	BDR Framework (power

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	evaluation to objective standards, allowing influence and disagreement without challenging authority. See also: Strategic Anchors.	dynamics— applied)
Negative Reciprocity	When defensive behavior invites escalating defensiveness.	Game Theory / Conflict Theory
No Guarantees	A core warning that conflict-resolution strategies improve odds but do not promise outcomes.	BDR Framework
No Guarantees Law	A foundational principle of the BDR framework stating that no strategy, tactic, or tool can guarantee outcomes, compliance, fairness, or resolution in workplace conflict. Strategic actions improve odds and reduce exposure, but results remain contingent on power asymmetry, timing, interpretation, and the choices of others. See also: Strategic Anchors.	BDR Framework; a truism of life
Non-Escalating Pause	A deliberate interruption between trigger and response to reduce defensive or reputation-damaging behavior.	BDR Framework
No-Threat Re-Entry	Re-engaging after a boundary crossing in a way that minimizes identity, status, or blame threat.	BDR Framework
Observable Behavior	Actions or statements that can be directly seen, heard, or documented by the individual and used as defensible evidence for assessing risk, timing, and engagement safety. Observable behavior excludes hearsay, second-hand accounts, inferred motives, or character judgments, <u>but may be supported by near real-time sharing of contemporaneous records or notes that preserve what was directly observed.</u>	BDR Framework (evidentiary discipline — applied)
Observable Reliability	Visible, dependable behavior that restores credibility more effectively than assurances.	Psychology / Trust Research
Operational Compliance vs. Strategic Compliance	Distinguishing between doing what is asked and aligning with leadership interpretation and priorities.	BDR Framework
Operational Predictability	The use of consistent timing, clear updates, and follow-through to reduce	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	uncertainty and signal reliability, especially when trust is strained.	
Organizational Best Interest	A contested concept referring to what most effectively serves organizational goals and constraints.	Organizational Behavior
Outcome Goals	Explicit criteria that define when an issue is considered complete, safe to close, and defensible—distinct from personal preferences or negotiated concessions.	BDR Framework (superordinate goals, GRIT, SPIN — applied)
Participative & Collaborative Leadership Group	A leadership group prioritizing inclusion, shared decision-making, and consensus, creating high voice but increased risk of delayed decisions, diffuse accountability, and unclear ownership under pressure. See: Leadership Style Group.	BDR Framework (participative leadership; group dynamics — applied)
People Skills	An informal term often used to describe interpersonal behaviors such as politeness, empathy, or tact. Within the BDR framework, reliance on “people skills” alone is insufficient to manage conflict under unequal power, time pressure, or legitimacy constraints, and may obscure the need for structured strategy, timing, and defensible standards.	Informal self-help and social etiquette literature; e.g., Dale Carnegie, <i>How to Win Friends and Influence People</i> (1936).
Perceived Threat	A sense of risk to status, role, security, or identity that triggers defensive behavior.	Psychology
Perception-Based Risk	Risk created by how behavior may be interpreted within hierarchy and power asymmetry.	BDR Framework
Perception-Based Risk	Risk created not by the substance of an action, but by how behavior may be interpreted within hierarchy, timing pressure, or power asymmetry.	BDR Framework
Permission-Based Engagement	Gaining explicit or implicit consent before offering input, challenge, or direction.	BDR Framework
Phased Intercession	A staged approach to managing workplace conflict in which engagement is intentionally sequenced—beginning with stabilization and risk reduction, then moving to clarification, and only later to influence or negotiation—so each	BDR Framework (Burton; Osgood; Wedge — applied)

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	phase builds readiness, legitimacy, and psychological safety before advancing. Phased Intercession emphasizes timing, restraint, and proportional response to prevent escalation under pressure or unequal power.	
Positive Reciprocity	When cooperative behavior invites cooperative responses.	Game Theory / Conflict Theory
Power Asymmetry	An imbalance in authority, influence, or consequences between parties.	Organizational Behavior / Power Theory
Predictability Loop	A reinforcing cycle in which shared structure reduces uncertainty and increases cooperation.	Systems Theory (applied)
Predictable Coordination	Reliance on timing, handoffs, and expectations rather than persuasion or trust.	Organizational Behavior / Process Design
Principled Negotiation	A negotiation approach that focuses on addressing underlying interests rather than positions, using objective and mutually recognized fairness standards to guide decisions. Principled Negotiation separates people from the problem, explores options for mutual gain where feasible, and anchors outcomes in legitimacy rather than power, pressure, or concession trading. Within the BDR framework, it is applied selectively and conditionally, based on timing, power asymmetry, and tolerance for inquiry.	BDR Framework (Roger Fisher; William Ury — applied)
Process Protectionism	Defending existing workflows or control structures because change threatens authority, identity, or comfort.	BDR Framework
Protective Non-Engagement	Withholding action when engagement would increase exposure or reduce credibility.	BDR Framework
Psychological Readiness	The degree to which emotional stability, threat perception, and willingness to engage are sufficient to support substantive discussion.	BDR Framework
Psychological Safety	A condition in which people can speak without fear of retaliation or humiliation.	Organizational Psychology (Edmondson)

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
Psychological Safety Under Pressure	The degree to which people can speak honestly when stakes or visibility are high.	BDR Framework (derived from psychology)
Public vs. Private Conflict Setting	The effect of environment and audience on safety and defensiveness.	Organizational Behavior
Reactive Engagement	Acting under pressure or emotion without a guiding strategy.	BDR Framework
Realistic Conflict	A dispute grounded in objective competition over limited resources.	Conflict Theory
Reciprocity Momentum	The cumulative effect by which one good-faith act invites another.	Game Theory / Conflict Theory
Recordkeeping as Stewardship	Treating documentation as a responsibility to preserve fairness, continuity, and organizational memory rather than as a defensive or bureaucratic task. (Conceptual dimension of Documentation)	BDR Framework
Reliability	The demonstrated pattern of consistent, timely, and proportionate follow-through on commitments, communication, and expectations, such that others can reasonably anticipate behavior under both routine and pressured conditions. In the BDR framework, reliability is established through repeated observable actions rather than explanation or intent.	BDR Framework
Restraint	Withholding action when conditions are not safe, legitimate, or ready.	BDR Framework
Risk Interpretation Conflict	Disagreement over which risk matters most.	BDR Framework
Role Clarity	Shared understanding of responsibilities and decision rights.	Organizational Behavior
Role-Based Legitimacy	The authority to decide, question, or challenge that derives from one's formal role and responsibilities, rather than correctness, fairness, or personal influence. Role-based legitimacy is often a source of conflict in workplace situations involving overlapping roles and responsibilities, or when operations are constrained by the legitimate actions or decisions of others.	BDR Framework (organizational authority — applied)
Roles & Responsibilities	Formally and informally assigned duties and authority limits.	Organizational Behavior

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
Safe and Reversible Moves	Initial engagement actions designed to test receptivity without locking either party into defensive positions or irreversible commitments.	BDR Framework
Safe Praise (vs. Flattery)	Specific, relevant, non-transactional acknowledgment offered without expectation of return, used as a GRIT-aligned gesture to lower threat without appearing ingratiating.	BDR Framework (Trust Strategies)
Safe Praise (vs. Flattery)	Specific, relevant, non-transactional acknowledgment offered without expectation of return, used to lower threat without appearing ingratiating or manipulative.	BDR Framework
Scope Before Momentum	Defining what is inside and outside the work before accelerating effort.	BDR Framework
Selective Documentation Risk	The credibility and ethical risk created when records omit relevant context, alternative perspectives, or inconvenient facts, thereby distorting later interpretation.	BDR Framework
Sequencing Before Advocacy	Clarifying task order before promoting a position or solution.	BDR Framework
Shared Map of Reality	A mutually understood view of what is happening, what matters, and what risks are present.	BDR Framework
Shared Need Discovery / Alignment	The systematic process of identifying a specific, mutually valued objective that neither party can achieve independently, and using that shared need to reduce defensiveness and reopen cooperation.	Sherif (intergroup conflict) → adapted in BDR
Shared Problem Definition	Agreement on what the issue actually is.	Negotiation / Conflict Theory
Shared Process	A jointly understood way of coordinating work.	Organizational Behavior
Shared Purpose Re-Anchoring	Shifting conversation toward common goals to lower emotional threat.	BDR Framework
Shared Understanding Before Action	Ensuring both leadership and employee hold the same working definition of the task before acting.	BDR Framework
Signal-Based Decision-Making	Using observed leadership behavior rather than stated direction to guide decisions.	BDR Framework
Single-Perspective Problem Definition	Framing a problem based only on one party's view.	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
Situation, Problem, Implication, Need-Payoff (SPIN)	A structured questioning sequence used to move from assumptions to verified understanding by clarifying context (Situation), identifying issues (Problem), exploring consequences (Implication), and defining what would constitute a workable, legitimate, or defensible outcome (Need-Payoff). Within the BDR framework, SPIN is used to surface constraints, fairness standards, and decision criteria—not to persuade—so engagement remains legitimate, timely, and low-risk under pressure or unequal power.	Rackham — applied (SPIN Selling); BDR Framework
Situational Awareness	Perceiving and anticipating what is happening without determining what should be done.	Psychology / Human Factors
Situational Discernment	Interpreting awareness through power, exposure, legitimacy, and timing to decide what action is defensible.	BDR Framework
Situational Discernment	The ability to judge context, timing, authority, and risk before choosing whether—and how—to engage in a workplace conflict, prioritizing restraint and judgment over reflexive action.	BDR Framework (strategic judgment; adaptive leadership — applied)
Stability vs. Resolution	The distinction between containing conflict and restoring safety (stability) versus achieving agreement or reconciliation (resolution). Stability is treated as a legitimate ethical outcome under unequal power or high exposure.	BDR Framework
Stability vs. Resolution	The distinction between containing conflict and restoring safety (stability) versus achieving agreement or reconciliation (resolution). Stability is treated as a legitimate ethical outcome under unequal power or high exposure.	BDR Framework
Stabilization Outcome	A condition where risk is reduced and expectations clarified even if conflict is not resolved.	BDR Framework
Status-Dependent Consequences	Consequences that vary by who takes the action rather than by the action itself.	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
Strategic & Tactical Restraint	Strategic & Tactical Restraint includes disciplined evaluation of exception conditions—such as imminent harm, legal obligation, or irreversible organizational risk—that may justify proportionate action. Any departure from restraint must remain intentional, limited, and defensible, rather than reactive or emotionally driven. See also: Strategic Anchors; Active Harm Reduction; Strategic Judgment Under Constraint; No Guarantees Law	BDR Framework (conflict strategy; restraint — applied)
Strategic Anchors	Core concepts within the BDR framework that serve as stable reference points for judgment and decision-making under uncertainty, pressure, or unequal power. Strategic anchors help individuals orient behavior, assess risk, and select defensible actions when outcomes are unclear and guarantees are unavailable.	BDR Framework
Strategic Drift	A condition in which strategic intent erodes under pressure, causing an individual to disengage—often unintentionally—from deliberate strategy and from Controlled Communication disciplines, including tone modulation and tone–timing linkage. Strategic Drift is commonly triggered by urgency, visibility, or trust vulnerability under pressure, and results in reactive, assumption-driven engagement that increases escalation, misinterpretation, and exposure before strategy is consciously re-established.	BDR Framework
Strategic Exposure Management	Shaping participation and timing to limit reputational or interpretive vulnerability.	BDR Framework
Strategic Integration	The deliberate coordination of Phased Intercession, Controlled Communication, Superordinate Goals, GRIT, SPIN, and Principled Negotiation strategies—guided by fairness standards, timing, and restraint—so actions reinforce one	BDR Framework (Fisher & Ury; Rackham; Osgood; Burton; Shariff; Wedge — applied)

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	another toward a practical dispute resolution outcome.	
Strategic Judgment Under Constraint	<p>The disciplined ability to interpret situations through a strategic frame—considering power asymmetry, time pressure, exposure risk, legitimacy, and long-arc consequences—and to choose actions or restraint that remain ethical, defensible, and survivable when authority is unequal, timing is unstable, and outcomes are uncertain. Strategic Judgment Under Constraint emphasizes responsibility over correctness and governs when to act, when to pause, and how to sequence engagement so credibility and future options are preserved rather than consumed.</p> <p>This concept functions as a strategic anchor.</p> <p>See also: Strategic Anchors; Strategic & Tactical Restraint; Active Harm Reduction; No Guarantees Law Source: BDR Framework</p>	BDR Framework (judgment, ethics, power dynamics — applied)
Strategic Pacing	The intentional management of engagement tempo to protect credibility, accuracy, and psychological safety rather than matching urgency with speed.	BDR Framework
Strategic Reasoning Pathway	A four-step decision sequence—stabilization vs. resolution, risk interpretation, next defensible action, and long-arc defensibility—used to replace impulse with judgment.	BDR Framework
Strategic Restraint	Slowing tempo or delaying engagement when conditions are not ready for safe escalation.	BDR Framework
Strategic Stabilization Point	A condition in which conflict escalation is halted, exposure is reduced, expectations are clarified, and credibility is preserved—without requiring full resolution or agreement. Within the BDR framework, stabilization is treated as a legitimate and ethical outcome when achieved through Controlled Communication	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	and Phased Intercession, particularly under conditions of unequal power, time pressure, or limited tolerance for inquiry. See also: Strategic Anchors.	
Strategy vs. Tactics	Strategy defines the overall approach; tactics are individual actions used to carry it out.	Military / Strategic Theory (applied)
Strategy vs. Tactics vs. Tools	The distinction between an overall guiding approach (strategy), the situational actions used to execute it (tactics), and the instruments that support those actions (tools). Confusing these leads to reactive pressure management rather than durable resolution.	BDR Framework
Structural Misalignment	Breakdown caused by conflicting or missing workflow design.	Organizational Behavior / Systems Theory
Structured Questioning	Using purposeful questions to move from assumptions to verified understanding.	Negotiation / SPIN (Rackham)
Structured Questioning	A deliberate, purpose-driven sequence of questions that adapts in real time as clarity emerges, designed to replace assumptions with accurate understanding rather than persuade or interrogate.	BDR Framework; adapted from SPIN
Structured Questioning	The disciplined use of purposeful, sequenced questions to move from assumption to verified understanding, particularly under conditions of ambiguity, time pressure, or unequal authority.	BDR Framework (SPIN-informed)
Superordinate (Shared) Purpose	An external goal that reframes conflict away from personal positions.	Conflict Theory (Sherif)
Superordinate Goals	Shared objectives that are important to all parties and cannot be achieved independently, used to redirect conflict away from positional disagreement and toward cooperative effort. Within the BDR framework, Superordinate Goals are applied strategically to reduce threat, restore legitimacy, and enable coordination without requiring immediate agreement or concession.	Muzafer Sherif — applied within the BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
Superordinate Goals	Shared objectives that are important to all parties and cannot be achieved independently, used to redirect conflict away from positional disagreement and toward cooperation.	Muzafer Sherif
Supportive & People-Focused Leadership Group	A leadership group emphasizing relationships, psychological safety, and interpersonal climate, where reassurance and cohesion may substitute for operational clarity under pressure, increasing ambiguity risk. See: Leadership Style Group.	BDR Framework (organizational behavior; psychological safety — applied)
The High Price of Winning	Achieving a short-term or positional success that carries disproportionate long-term costs in credibility, trust, or future influence—particularly within ongoing or hierarchical relationships.	Negotiation theory (informed by Principled Negotiation; BDR framework application)
Time Pressure	Urgency that compresses decision-making and increases escalation risk.	Psychology / Organizational Behavior
Timing Before Persuasion	Confirming the right moment to raise concerns or propose alternatives.	BDR Framework
Timing Control	The deliberate regulation of when engagement occurs so that understanding keeps pace with emotion, preventing reactive escalation and reducing cognitive overload before decisions are made.	BDR Framework
Tone Modulation	The intentional adjustment of phrasing, intensity, neutrality, and pacing to reduce defensiveness, clarify intent, and preserve psychological safety—selected in light of power, timing, and exposure rather than habit, politeness, or rote.	BDR Framework (informed by communication skills & emotional intelligence)
Tone-First Interpretation	Reacting to emotional tone before meaning.	BDR Framework
Tone–Timing Linkage	The interdependent relationship between how something is communicated and when it is communicated, such that effective influence requires tone and timing to be aligned with readiness, power dynamics, and exposure conditions.	BDR Framework
Transition, not Closure, Principle	A corollary of the No Guarantees Law and the principle of lifelong learning,	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	<p>holding that the objective of training is the transfer of improved judgment, responsibility, and decision discipline rather than the delivery of final answers, fixed rules, or permanent resolution. Within the BDR framework, learning is measured by a practitioner's ability to apply strategic anchors under changing conditions—not by certainty, completion, or closure.</p> <p>See also: Strategic Anchors; No Guarantees Law; Strategic Judgment Under Constraint</p>	
Trust Erosion	Gradual weakening of confidence caused by inconsistency or unmet expectations.	Psychology / Trust Theory
Trust Erosion Signals	Early indicators that trust is weakening, including tone shifts, hesitation, shortened communication, fatigue-driven errors, or emotional compression.	BDR Framework
Trust Erosion Signals	Early indicators that trust is weakening, including tone compression, hesitation, reduced communication, fatigue-driven errors, or increased defensiveness.	BDR Framework
Trust Rebuilding	Restoring confidence through consistent, observable behavior.	Psychology / Trust Theory
Trust Repair Cycle	Accountability, steadiness, and time working together to rebuild trust.	Psychology (applied)
Trust Stabilization	A condition in which trust has ceased to deteriorate and communication becomes more predictable and less reactive, even though full trust has not yet been restored. Stabilization limits further damage and creates a holding pattern where dialogue can safely resume.	BDR Framework (Trust Strategies)
Trust Stabilization	A condition in which trust has ceased to deteriorate and interaction becomes more predictable and less reactive, even though full trust has not been restored. Stabilization limits further damage and creates conditions where dialogue can safely resume.	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
Unequal Accountability	Consequences distributed unevenly across hierarchy.	BDR Framework
Unilateral Initiatives / GRIT (Graduated Reciprocation in Tension-Reduction)	A conflict-reduction strategy involving small, unilateral, credibility-preserving actions intended to lower tension and signal good faith, while inviting—but not requiring—reciprocal cooperation. Originally developed for high-risk conflict environments, GRIT initiatives within the BDR framework are deliberately low-risk, reversible, and timed to test whether conditions for safer engagement and trust rebuilding are emerging under pressure or unequal power.	Charles Osgood — applied within the BDR Framework
Unrealistic Conflict	A dispute driven by misinterpretation or perceived threat rather than objective incompatibility.	Conflict Theory / Psychology
Unsatisfactory Outcomes	Identifiable risks, consequences, or conditions that make the current situation untenable and create legitimate urgency for change. Naming unsatisfactory outcomes stabilizes urgency and redirects conflict toward problem-solving.	BDR Framework
Unsatisfactory Outcomes	The foreseeable negative result of a choice, action, or communication that may or may not be successfully avoided.	BDR Framework
Urgency vs. Importance	The distinction between time pressure and substantive priority, emphasizing that urgency does not justify sacrificing tone, accuracy, or credibility.	BDR Framework
Validation of Meaning	The practice of confirming one's understanding of meaning, intent, or concern through the use of low-key probing questions, before responding or acting, in order to avoid misinterpretation and assumption-driven escalation.	BDR Framework
Verification	Confirming facts or interpretations before acting.	Negotiation / Communication Theory
Verification Before Reaction	The disciplined practice of confirming facts, assumptions, and intent before responding, preventing escalation	BDR Framework

Term / Phrase	Definition	Source
	driven by misinterpretation or emotional inference.	
Visionary & Transformational Leadership Style Group	A leadership style group characterized by emphasis on vision, change, inspiration, and future-oriented goals, where engagement is often welcomed but may prioritize aspiration over feasibility. Under pressure, tolerance for inquiry may narrow if questions are perceived as resistance to the vision rather than contribution to execution. See: Leadership Style Group.	BDR Framework (leadership theory; organizational change — applied)
Wait for Contact	Allowing the other party to invite engagement rather than forcing entry.	Adapted from Bryant Wedge
Wedge's Rules for Crossing Social Boundaries	A framework for approaching and re-entering across boundaries without triggering threat.	Adapted from Bryant Wedge
Written Tone Discipline	The practice of ensuring written communication conveys neutrality, proportionality, and clarity, recognizing that written tone carries permanence and heightened escalation risk.	BDR Framework