

Leveraging Arbinger's Tools to Tackle Challenging Issues



Participants of Arbinger's training workshops often give us the following feedback: They leave the workshop inspired and committed to working with an outward mindset...but then they return to work and the conundrums, decisions, and issues that need to be addressed *now*. "How can I practice outward mindset with all these demands on my time?" they ask.

One of the most effective ways to practice outward mindset is to apply a tool from the workshop to the issue at hand. Not only does this help you practice without adding to your to-do list; it can (and usually does) resolve the issue faster, better, or more effectively than otherwise.

Building on this notion, the *Implement: Leveraging the Tools to Tackle Challenging Issues* breakout session at the Arbinger Training Summit 2018 introduced three case studies to help participants explore when and how to apply the tools from the **Developing and Implementing an Outward Mindset** workshop. In small groups, session participants discussed which tool they would apply to each situation, and why.

Here are the three scenarios. While this post suggests an Arbinger tool that could be applied in each situation, others are equally applicable and were part of the conversations in

the Summit breakouts. If you're familiar with the Arbinger tools, we invite you to consider what others might be used in each case.

Case Study 1: A six-member team is struggling. They often compete over resources, complain about each other, and refuse to help each other.

Tool: While any number of tools could improve this situation, *resolving collusions* comes to mind as a particularly useful one. The purpose of this tool is to help us stop blaming others by opening our eyes to how we might be contributing to the problem. How does it work? It's a diagram that lays out our actions and feelings and invites us to explore how these might produce reactions in others. It helps us realize that we're likely provoking the very behavior we dislike!

By completing the *resolving collusion* diagram, this team recognizes how they are all contributing to the problems in their office. Of course, this is only be a first step. Other tools should follow to help this team move beyond recognition and accountability and toward creating a better culture and environment.

Case Study 2: To say that the implementation of this organization's new financial management system is not going well would be an understatement. Both the implementation team and the business team are at odds over this new change. According to the implementation team, the business team is not following procedures that are now required by the new system. According to the business team, the implementation team simply doesn't understand how the business actually works and have imposed unreasonable procedures.

Tool: In this scenario, there are two teams who are trying their best to do a good job—but simply don't understand the objectives of the other team. The tool *meet to learn* could be helpful to resolve this issue. With *meet to learn*, individuals

come together and get really curious about one another. They essentially interview each other (one at a time) about their roles, objectives, needs, and challenges. With this new curiosity and knowledge, they are then better positioned to be more helpful to one another.

If the implementation and business teams applied this tool, they would come to understand each other's perspective. The implementation team might recognize some unnecessary steps they'd added to the procedure and eliminate them. The business team might see how this new system makes the organization more efficient. With this understanding, they would naturally want to follow the new procedures. Neither team would consider the other a hindrance anymore, but a help instead.

Case Study 3: An organization must cut its expenditures by 25%. The leadership is meeting soon to formalize a plan regarding the new budget.

Tool: The leadership of this organization has an especially difficult task ahead. Applying the tool *start in the right way* would likely help them do just that—start in the right way. This tool is especially helpful whenever individuals are faced with a situation where it would be easy to become inward—and budget cuts certainly qualify.

Essentially, this tool asks individuals to assess how they would approach the situation at hand with an inward mindset and with an outward mindset.

For the leadership of this organization, an inward mindset might predispose them to vie for their department at the cost of another. This competition for resources might cause leadership to overlook or dismiss the jobs many employees would lose. Worse, the organization's best interests might be overlooked or undermined in favor of certain departments' interest.

By contrast, if the leaders resolve to start with an outward

mindset, they might be open to the needs and objectives of other departments. They would remember that individuals, people who matter like they matter, will be affected by their decisions. They would also want to serve the organization's objectives and mission.

While these are only three examples, Arbinger tools can be applied to any variety of situations.

How have you used an Arbinger tool? Share your story with us on [Facebook](#), [LinkedIn](#), or [Twitter](#).