



SPACE LABS
HEALTHCARE

An OSI Systems Company

Conflict Management in the Workplace

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What is Conflict?



Psychology of Conflict

- A psychic struggle, often unconscious, resulting from the opposition or simultaneous functioning of mutually exclusive impulses, desires, or tendencies.

Reality of Conflict

- An incompatibility between two or more opinions, principles, or interest.
- Mental struggle resulting from incompatible or opposing needs, drives, wishes or external/internal demands
- A serious disagreement or argument, typically a prolonged one.

Merriam-Webster

What's the Big Deal?



85% of US employees regularly deal with conflict at some level spending an average of 2.8 hours per week dealing with it!

- 34% attribute it to increased stress
- 33% is caused by heavy workloads
- 29% deal with conflict almost constantly
- 27% have witnessed personal attacks
- 25% have seen it result in sickness/absence



70% of managers believe managing conflict to be critically important

- 31% think they handle it effectively – 78% of employees disagree!

Estimated \$359 billion in lost hours per year!

Poll



How many of you feel pretty confident in your ability to manage conflict right now?

What Would Help?



Understanding the causes of conflict...

- Knowing how to communicate effectively to resolve conflict, or avoid it in the first place
- Being able to deal with “difficult” personalities
- Thinking Win/Win

Causes of Conflict in the Workplace



- Personality clashes/egos
- Stress
- Excessive workloads
- Ineffective supervision and management
- Substandard performance
- Differences in beliefs/values (facts/perceptions)
- Competition for resources
- Non-compliance with policies and procedures
- Confusion/duplication with responsibility/authority
- Semantics (ambiguous words/tone)
- Passive aggressive behaviors
- Lack of communication
- Resistance/fear of change
- Generational Tensions
- Inconsistency
- Professional Disrespect
- Inner Conflict
- Lack of recognition
- Cultural Differences
- Negative Attitudes

Where do I Start?



That's a lot of
conflict...

**What can I do
about it?**

Conflict Management Skills



- Address problems quickly
- Assert feelings without blaming
- Brainstorm win/win solutions
- Compromise to accommodate
- Meet with all involved
- Creativity in problem-solving
- Designate sanctions for non-compliance
- Draw out perceptions and feelings
- Identify triggers to conflict
- Forgive transgressions
- Formalize agreements
- Active listening
- Separate person from the problem
- Show respect
- Add space between stimulus and response
- Use “I” message
- Model reasonable dialogue
- Ask clarifying questions
- Principled negotiation
- Set ground rules
- Know appropriate methods
- Willingness to receive feedback

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Conflict Can Be Destructive



Conflict Can Be Constructive



Could it be Me?



Emotional Self-Awareness



Reflective Brain

Conscious control centers

Reasoning

Problem solving

Communication



Reactive Brain

Emotion driven

Survival Mode

Fight or Flight



Emotional Self-Awareness



“

Whenever emotions conflict with thinking, emotion wins.

We are about as effective at stopping an emotion as stopping a sneeze.

- **Antonio Damasio**

”

“

Emotion leads to action, while reason leads to conclusions.

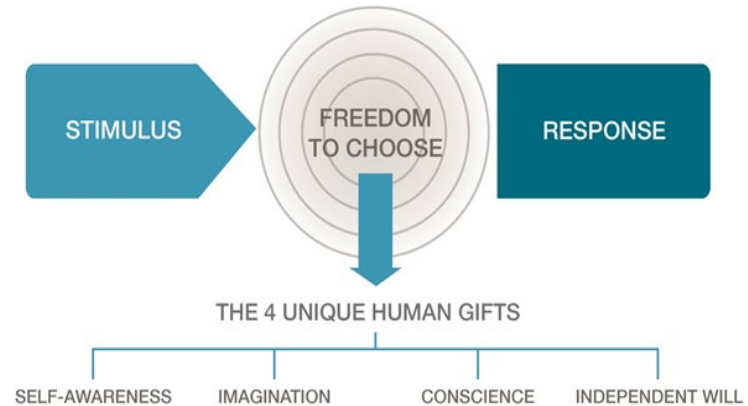
- **Donald Calne**

”

Stimulus vs. Response



Common Practice: React Emotionally

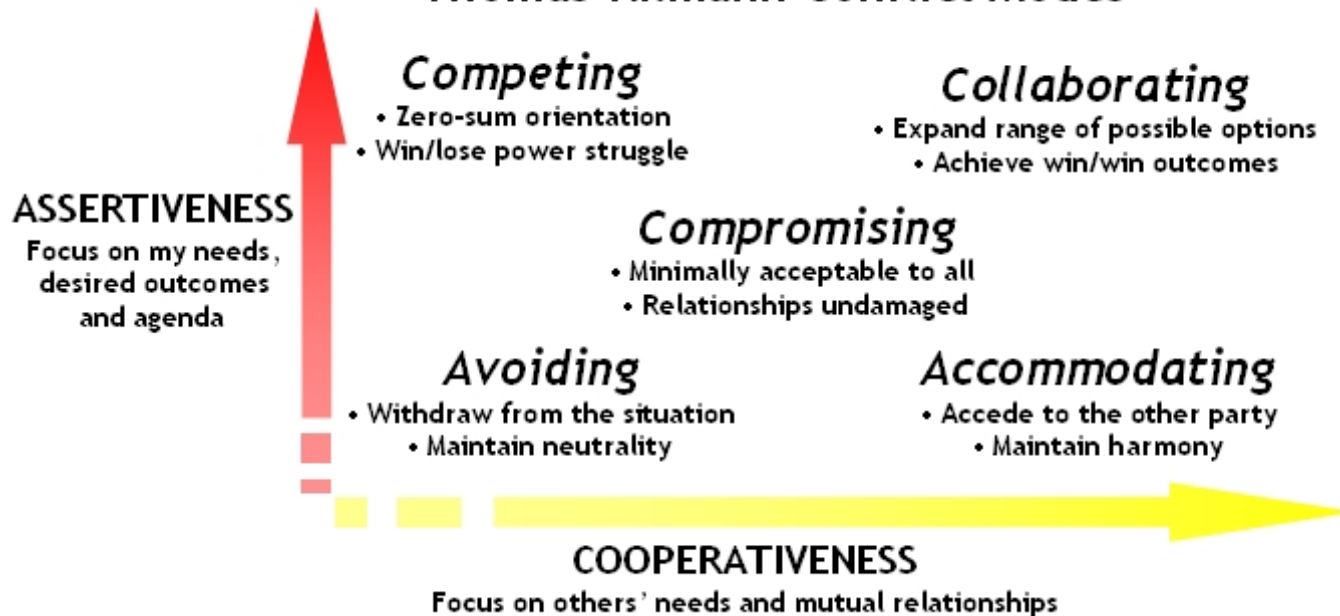


Highly Effective Practice: Exercise Freedom to Choose

Now that I'm Here, What's Next?



Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Modes



Skill 1 – Control Your Emotions



What strategies do you use for creating space between stimulus and response?

Active Listening (*Seek first to understand...*)

- Information – get a clear picture
- Affirmation – affirm, acknowledge, explore the problem
- Inflammation – Responding to complaint or attack on you

Active Listening - Information

Aim of the speaker: Get across what is wanted so there is no confusion

Task of the listener: Get details, confirmation, clarity

- Ask Questions
- Check Back
- Summarize

Collect information, avoid jumping to solutions

- Enquire about needs, concerns, hidden premise
- Does the speaker want a solution?



Question types:

- How do you see it all? (general)
- How much does that cost? (specific)
- If the they say “I can’t” ask “what happens if you do?”
- If they say “They always” ask “is there a circumstance in which they don’t?”
- If they say “it’s too many or too much” or “too little or too few” ask “compared to what?”

Active Listening - Information



Example:

Statement: “This machine doesn’t have as many features as our old one!”

Question: “What do you need it to do?”

Active Listening - Affirmation

Aim of the speaker: Talk about the problem

Task of the listener: Listen for understanding without the intent to reply, acknowledge what the speaker is feeling

Empathic Listening

- Reflect back without probing, judging or interpreting
- Ask clarifying questions
- Confirm and explore feelings if time and receptiveness is present

High emotion = engage empathic listening



- Control emotion, don't exhibit defensiveness
- Deal with speaker emotion, make sure they feel heard
- Acknowledge their side

Listener wants to get the speaker to confirm that they feel heard
e.g., “Yes, that’s what I said.”

As a listener, what can you change?

- Might need to change my approach
- Don't take the bait and retaliate
- Don't start justifying
- Don't act defensive
- Stay in active/empathic listening until speaker is calm
- Use phrases like, "it's making you really mad," "I can see how upset you are," "You feel like you reached your limit," "Have I got that right?" "So when I do ___ you get really frustrated with me."

**10% of conflicts is due
to difference in opinion
and 90% is due
to wrong tone of voice**

-Ma. Maria
YANILAVIÖRÖTURBLR

Skill 2 – Use Empathic/Active Listening



“I have never in my life seen a worse product...”

“I have been at this job for more than 20 years, and I don’t think I need to be here.”

“I” Messages



- Used to state your case without putting others on defense
- Describes how you see or feel about an issue
- Delivered not to force action but to state what you need

An “I” Message



is not...

- about being polite “soft” or “nice”
- a resolution

is...

- a conversation starter
- about being clear in communication

What to expect from an appropriate “I” statement

- Unlikely to do harm
- A step in the right direction
- Certain to change the current situation in some way
- Can open up possibilities you may not yet see

“I” Message



When... I hear a voice raised at me

I feel... threatened and get defensive

What I would like... is to discuss this issue with you without either of us feeling defensive.

“I” Message



Rephrase the following statements:

1. You make me angry!
2. You never listen to me.
3. You're always giving out incorrect information.
4. You always act helpless when an issue comes up.

Poll

What is your confidence level in creating
“I” messages?

Recognizing “Difficult” Personalities

- The “Bulldozer” - Abusive, abrupt, pushy
- The “Exploder” – Outbursts filled with rage
- The “Complainer” – Finds fault with everything
- The “Clam” – Silent, “yes” or “no”, grunt
- The “Wet Blanket” – “It won’t work”
- The “Know-It-All” – Expert on all matters
- The “Staller” – Habitually indecisive

The “Bulldozer”



- Time to run out of gas
- Don't worry about being polite
- Forcefully; no apologies
- Don't cut down
- Negotiation



The “Exploder”



- Gain self-control
- Neutral phrase
- Serious
- Private setting

The “Clam”



- Open-ended questions
- Wait for response
- Extra time
- Comment on what is happening

The “Wet Blanket”



- Be alert
- Optimistic but realistic
- Don't argue
- Don't offer solutions
- Raise questions



The “know-it-all”



- Be prepared
- Listen and paraphrase
- Don't over-generalize
- Watch your responses

The “Staller”



- Be open
- Acknowledge past problem
- Give support – deadlines
- Assign responsibility



Pre-empting Conflict



- Acknowledge known concerns
- Address and acknowledge emotion
- Reaffirm the path to communication
- Project confidence
- Establish “parking lot” up front

Preparing for Conflict



- Adjust your frame of mind
- Consider your counterpart's viewpoint
- Look at Big Picture/organizational context
- Prepare you message for different scenarios
- Choose the right time and place
- Express your feelings ahead of time

Conflicts With Customers



- Identify problems - Active/Empathic Listening
- Focus on solutions - Separate the person from the problem
- Clarify – Ask clarifying questions
- Get help – bring parties together/collaboration
- Check for satisfaction
- Follow up

Conflict Resolution: Win/Win Approach



There are two people in a kitchen. There is only one orange left and both of them want it.

What would you expect as the solution?

Conflict Resolution: Win/Win Approach



What if they compromise and cut the orange in half?

One person now goes to the juicer and starts squeezing but the orange is too small to add the flavor she wanted. The other, with some difficulty, begins to grate the rind of the orange to flavor a cake.

What could have been different?

Win/Win Approach



Premise: I want to win and I want you to win too

Approach: Focus on underlying needs

How to: Probe below the surface with questions like

- Why does that seem to be the best solution to you?
- What's your real need?
- What's the outcome or result that you want?

Strategies

- Recognition of individual differences and desired outcomes
- Openness to adapting your position based on new information
- Attack the problem, not the people

Case Study



During a training session, a customer continuously complains and speaks out against everything (including the training itself)

What would be the appropriate method(s) for dealing with her?

What skills would you employ?

Case Study



A co-worker is giving a presentation and providing information that is incorrect. How do you re-direct?

What would be the appropriate method(s) for dealing with her?

What skills would you employ?

Case Study



A misunderstanding or misinterpretation of information causes your customer to attack you verbally

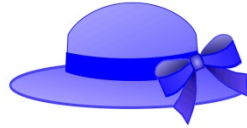
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Conflict Resolution: Creative Responses



Perfection Hat



- Right or wrong?
- Do I measure up?
- Life is a
- I

Promotes
Winners and Losers

- Take chances
- I have to be right
- Low self-esteem!

Discovery Hat



- Exploration
- Possibilities
- Acceptance
- In

Promotes
Winners and Learners

- Esteem
- Enthusiasm

THANK YOU!

