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LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Identify the underlying sources of conflict to effectively address the situation
2. Identify five different conflict styles and how to engage in them to constructively address conflict
3. Understand how and when to utilize ombuds services for navigating complex situations

AGENDA:

Conflict Basics for Leaders

What is conflict and conflict competence

Keys For Constructively Managing Conflict

3 Step Framework

1. Cool down: Managing your reaction and others' reactions
2. Slow down: Conflict analysis & GRPI
3. Engage constructively: Conflict styles, HEAR, and other strategies

CONFLICT

“Conflict may be defined **as a struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals.**”

Constructive vs. Destructive Conflict

Constructive Conflict	Destructive Conflict
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Occurs when it is safe to honestly disagree• Focuses on problem-solving, not attacking people• Is kept between the parties – not spread to others• Is resolved and strengthens relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Feels unsafe• Is often allowed to fester• Affects others• Divides (people choose sides)• Damages relationships

CONFLICT COMPETENCE

“Conflict competence is the ability to develop and use **cognitive, emotional, and behavioral** skills that **enhance productive outcomes of conflict** while reducing the likelihood of escalation or harm. The results of conflict competence include improved quality of relationships, creative solutions, and lasting agreements for addressing challenges and opportunities in the future. As with all competencies, **people can learn ways to improve, change, and develop.**”

Runde, C. E., & Flanagan, T. A. (2010). *Developing your conflict competence: A hands-on guide for leaders, managers, facilitators, and teams*. San Francisco, Jossey-Bass.

The Three Step Framework

1. Cool Down (Emotional skills)
2. Slow Down (Cognitive skills)
3. Engage Constructively (Behavioral skills)

Davis, M. H., Capobianco, S., & Kraus, L. A. (2004). *Conflict Dynamics Profile (CDP)* [Database record]. APA PsycTests. <https://doi.org/10.1037/t05628-000>

Runde, C. E., & Flanagan, T. A. (2008). *Building conflict competent teams*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.

COOL DOWN: HOT BUTTONS

These behaviors are the ways other people may act that make you especially irritated or upset. Circle the behaviors that particularly bother, irritate, annoy, or anger you.

<p>Micro-Managing</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Excessively monitoring others ○ Constantly checking work of others 	<p>Unappreciative</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Failing to give credit to others ○ Seldom praising good performance
<p>Overly Analytical</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Perfectionists ○ Overanalyzing things ○ Focusing too much on minor issues 	<p>Aloof</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Isolating themselves ○ Not seeking input from others ○ Hard to approach
<p>Unreliable</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Missing deadlines ○ Can't be counted on 	<p>Self-Oriented</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Thinking they are always correct ○ Not considering impact on others
<p>Abrasive/ Hostile</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Arrogant behavior ○ Sarcastic or mocking ○ People losing their tempers ○ People becoming angry ○ Yelling at each other ○ Silence, shunning 	<p>Untrustworthy</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Exploiting or taking advantage of others ○ Taking undeserved credit ○ Being dishonest ○ Disclosing partial information

Adapted from Runde, C. E., & Flanagan, T. A. (2008). *Building conflict competent teams*. San Francisco; Jossey-Bass.

COOL DOWN: MANAGE OTHERS' EMOTIONS

Managing Other Peoples' Emotions:

- Change your posture. If you are sitting, sit on the same side of the table
- Slow down and use silence
- Summarize the other person's concerns
- Acknowledge the other person's difficulty and/or feelings
- Take responsibility for your part of the problem
- Be accountable for helping to solve the problem
- Apologize if appropriate

SLOW DOWN

Conflict Analysis

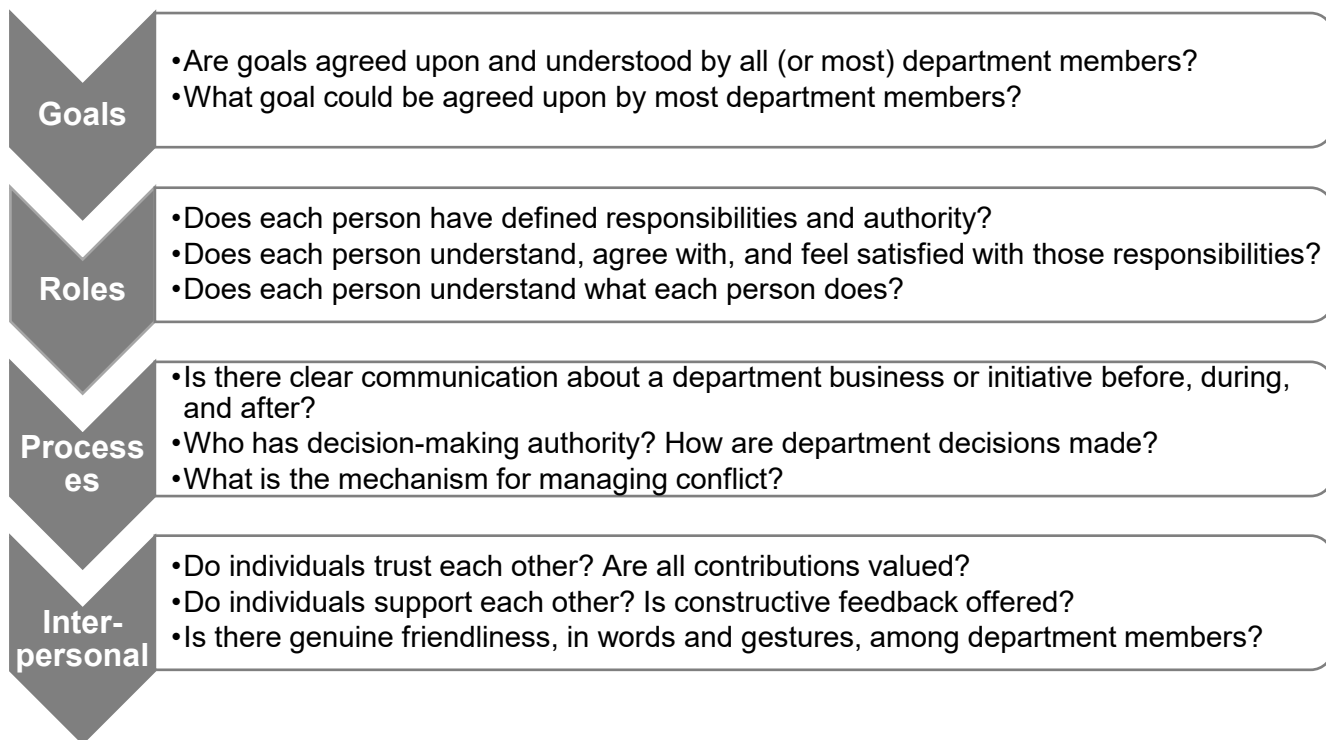
What's going on?

- Consider context, positions and interests, and contributing factors
- Consider GRPI model to assess the source of the conflict
- What's already been done

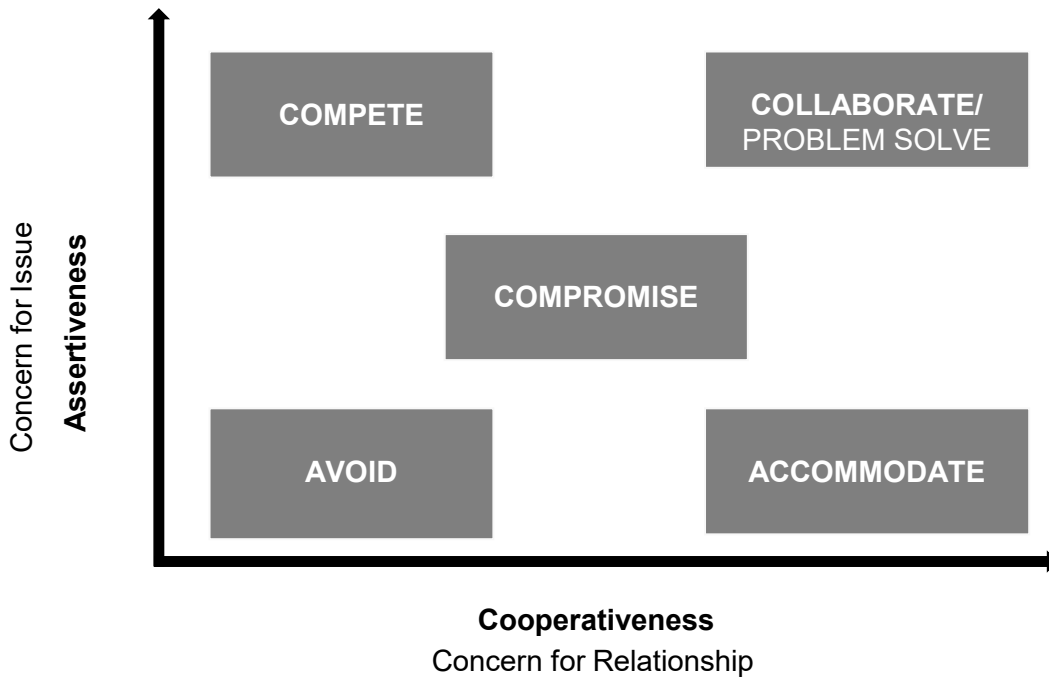
Consider the players

- Power
- Authority

A Structured Approach To Preventing, Detecting, And Diagnosing Conflict in Groups Goals, Roles, Processes, and Interpersonal Interactions



ENGAGE CONSTRUCTIVELY : THOMAS-KILMANN CONFLICT STYLES



Take a quick online assessment on your conflict style:

<https://www.usip.org/PUBLIC-EDUCATION-NEW/CONFLICT-STYLES-ASSESSMENT>

Conflict Style Examples

Competing

- It's very important to me that we get this right. That's why I think this plan is the best next step. What do you think?

Avoiding

- You make an interesting point, and I'd like to think about it more. How about we revisit this when we meet next?

Compromising

- I know we are short on time and we both need a solution. How about we figure out a solution that we can live with for now until we have time to come up with a more sustainable long-term solution?

Accommodating

- I see that this is important to you, and I can be flexible in the approach we take. Let's go with what you think is best.

Collaborating

- I respect you as a colleague, and I'm committed to working with you in a way that works for both of us. I'd like to hear your perspective and then share mine.

ENGAGE CONSTRUCTIVELY : CONFLICT STYLES COMPARISON

Style	Potential Strengths	Potential Challenges	Most Appropriate When
Avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Resolves” unimportant conflicts • Conserves limited resources • Allows time for reflection or managing emotions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does not address concerns • Possibly creates bigger issues out of smaller ones • Vulnerable to competition • Prolongs conflict 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue is not urgent or of lower priority than others • High emotions are high and a break is needed • Costs outweigh the potential benefits
Compete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Often quick and decisive; good in an emergency • Accomplishes tasks/goals • Enforces something that is unpleasant but necessary • Can help level the field with other “competitors” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overuse can damage relationships • Can feel aggressive to others • Not well suited to consensus building • Might miss important information/contributing factors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Protection from imminent danger is necessary • Accountability is necessary for serious offense (e.g., policy and/or law violation) • No time for interaction
Accommodate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prioritizes people over problems • Preserves harmony • Can build goodwill 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vulnerable to abuse • Inhibits innovation or growth • Reinforces bad habits • Can leave one’s own needs unsatisfied • Builds resentment 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue is not important to self • Relationship is more important than one’s own needs • Issues are of lopsided importance
Compromise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Breaks deadlocks • Resolves complex and/or multifaceted conflicts • Catch-all backup to other conflict styles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • May jeopardize principles, values, or long-term objectives • Focus on the strategy can detract from the issues • Prolonged negotiation can deplete trust 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue is important for all • There is limited time • Some progress is more important than stalemate
Problem Solve/ Collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helps build understanding • Prioritizes creative solutions • Often results in win-win outcomes • Ideal for building consensus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Time consuming • Requires willing participation from all sides • Can paralyze large group decision-making 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue is highly important to all • Interdependent relationship • Creative solution is needed • Constructive interaction is possible

ENGAGE CONSTRUCTIVELY

HEAR Framework

		Say this →	Not this →
H	Hedge your claims rather than using absolutes.	“In some situations...” “It seems like...”	“You always/never...” “You clearly...”
E	Emphasize agreement or common goals.	“I think we both want this program to be successful.”	“You are just in it for yourself...”
A	Acknowledge the other’s perspective.	“I understand that you are concerned about...”	“You were wrong when...”
R	Reframe to the positive.	“It’s helpful when you...” “It is important to me to...”	“It is so disrespectful when you...”

Adapted from: Nora Delaney November 22, 2021. (2021, November 22). Simple tools to disagree better this Thanksgiving. Harvard Kennedy School. <https://www.hks.harvard.edu/faculty-research/policy-topics/decision-making-negotiation/simple-tools-disagree-better>

Yeomans M., Minson, J., Collins, H., Chen, F., & Gino, F. (2020). Conversational receptiveness: Improving engagement with opposing views. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes*, 160, 131–148.

Engage Constructively: Suggestions

Start neutrally

We see this differently...We seem to be on different pages...I am confused about...

Speak to the issue, not the person

I would like to discuss how we are communicating... I want to share with you some concerns I have about X issue...

Reflect understanding of their perspective

From what I understand you think we should go in the other direction because....
Did I understand this correctly?

Speak to their interests/preferences/goals

You have mentioned before that x is important to you and I want to discuss some barriers to that end and explore options that might help us achieve x...

Provide hopeful, positive, future focused solution-oriented framing

I am hoping we can get on the same page...I would like to explore ways we might work together more effectively...

SCENARIOS

Scenario 1

As a faculty member, you have gone above and beyond in service to your department over the past several years, including sitting on a number of committees. You generally have good relationships with your colleagues, including Anita, who chairs a committee that you've been part of and contributed significantly to over the past several years.

However, Anita has been very demanding of your time and excessively critical of your contributions. You've responded professionally to her despite her rude communication, which you feel is especially important since Anita has close relationships with many faculty in the department.

Recently, you have reduced your participation in the committee to focus your effort on a new program you're starting. You've just heard from another colleague that Anita has been saying you're uncollaborative, and she doesn't want to chair the committee anymore because of it.

Scenario 2

A longstanding, senior faculty member in your department, Stewart, holds quite a lot of power in the department. He has said some fairly offensive things over the years, but you have tended to avoid directly engaging him on these comments.

However, during a recent merit review process, Stewart made references to identity characteristics of the colleague up for review. Not only are you concerned for your colleague's advancement, but since you are also preparing your packet for a promotion, you are also concerned about how your own process might be affected by Stewart.

Scenario 3

Faculty colleagues Lena and Philip both joined the department within the past few years. They have helped each other as they've navigated their careers in the department. Lena has valued Philip's scholarship – she even collaborated with him on a course she taught last year that touched on his subdiscipline.

Lena has become increasingly concerned about the direction in which some faculty are trying to steer the department. Lena has tried to counter this direction by raising key questions and concerns in department meetings. However, Philip has shut down nearly all of her ideas in recent departmental discussions about changes to the master's program requirements. Lena has just learned from a student that Philip advised the student not to take the course that Lena consulted Philip on. Lena now avoids Philip and keeps quiet in faculty meetings.

SCENARIO DISCUSSION

Scenario 1

- How could you use these cool down tools to manage emotions in the scenario?
- What area of GRPI is the source of the conflict?
- What additional information might you need to accurately assess the source of the conflict?
- How might the source of the conflict inform how you manage the conflict?

Scenario 2

- What conflict handling style might work best?
- What would using that style look like?

Scenario 3

- How might you use HEAR to engage constructively in this conflict?

Other Questions to Consider

- What conflict style might you use?
- How would you implement this style?
- How might you use GRPI to address factors in the conflict?
- What are some identity or power dynamics that could be part of the scenario? How might this change how you approach the situation?
- Who would you approach and what specifically would you say to start a constructive conversation about the concern?

REFERENCES AND RESOURCES ON CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

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Resources

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