

Conflict Competence for Faculty: *Practical Skills for Complex Situations*

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Ombuds Services



Individual Meetings



Mediation and Group Work



Workshops



Information Sessions



Trend Feedback

Strategically Navigate Conflict

Ombuds Are:

- Confidential
- Impartial
- Informal
- Independent

Always voluntary



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

What is conflict and conflict competence

Keys For Constructively Managing Conflict

3 Step Framework

1. Cool down: Manage reactions
2. Slow down: Conflict analysis & GRPI
3. Engage constructively: Conflict styles, HEAR, and other strategies

What is Conflict?

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

What makes faculty
conflict unique?

Common Faculty Concerns

- Merit reviews
- Hiring
- Grad student issues
- Curriculum consideration
- Teaching and service assignments
- Space distribution
- Scholarly expectations
- Disruptive behavior

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.***”

Scenario 1

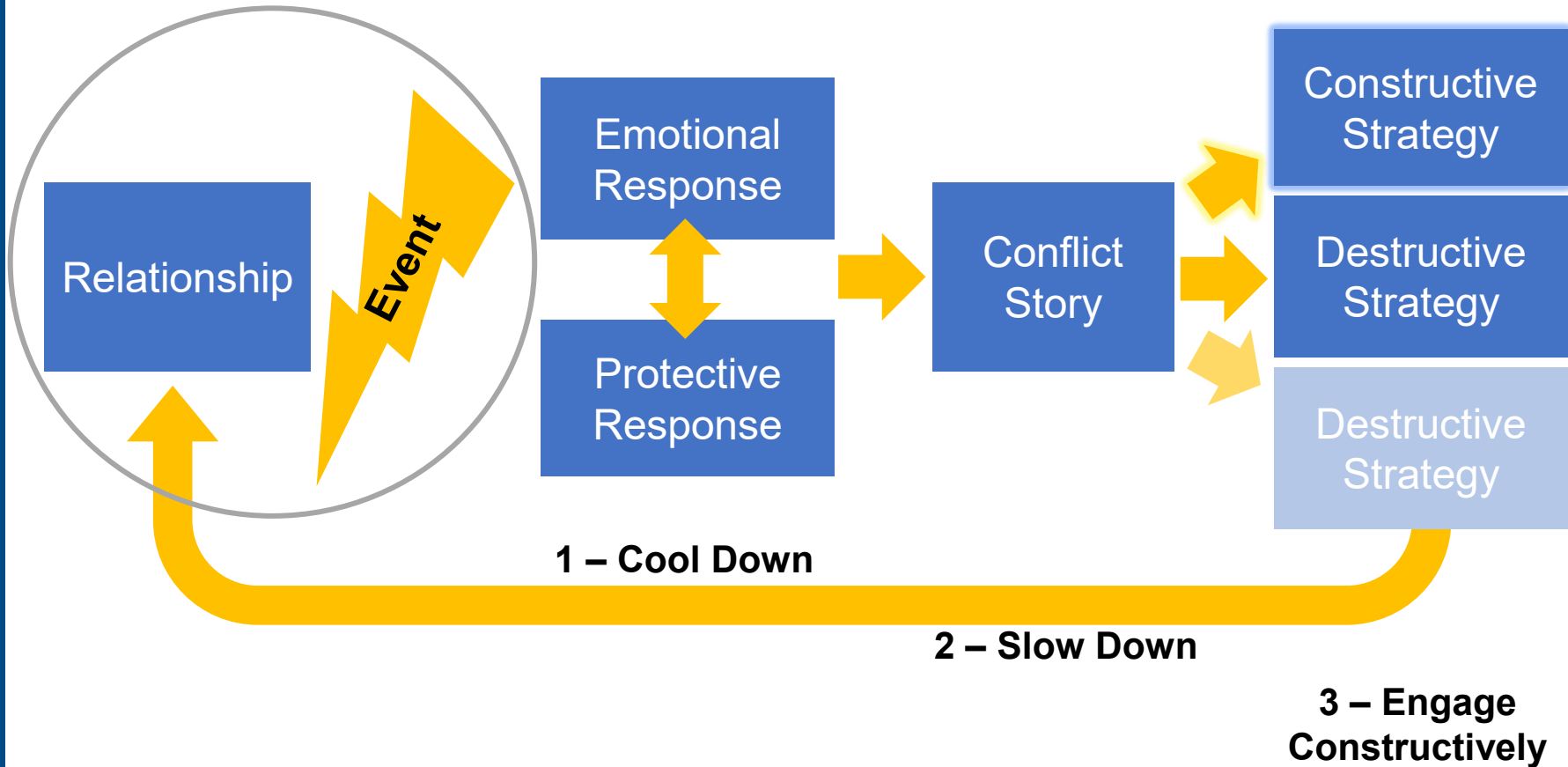
As a faculty member, you have gone above and beyond in service to your department over the past several years, including sitting on a number of committees. You generally have good relationships with your colleagues, including Anita, who chairs a committee that you've been part of and contributed significantly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

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Conflict Timeline



Cool Down: Know Your Hot Buttons

- Hot buttons are behaviors others do that irritate you or make you angry/off-balance
- Knowing your hot buttons can help you shift from destructive to constructive communication
- Managing emotional reactivity is important because emotions are contagious to others

Goals

- Shift from being emotionally reactive to emotionally responsive and expressive
- Develop compassionate empathy

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Cool Down: Assume the Best

VIEW OF THE OTHER: GRAY LENS

Overly emotional

Closed-minded, argumentative

Know-it-all, arrogant

Stalling

Aggressive, demanding, pushy, controlling

Manipulative

Flattering, insincere, not trustworthy

Gossipy, interfering

Passive, cowardly

Anti-social, cold, loner

VIEW OF THE SELF: PINK LENS

Passionate

Committed

Knowledgeable, confident

Thorough, thoughtful

Strong, decisive, bold, action-oriented

Strategic

Friendly, supportive, eager to please

Sociable, team-building

Cautious, realistic

Reserved, shy, polite

Cool Down: Managing Others' 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

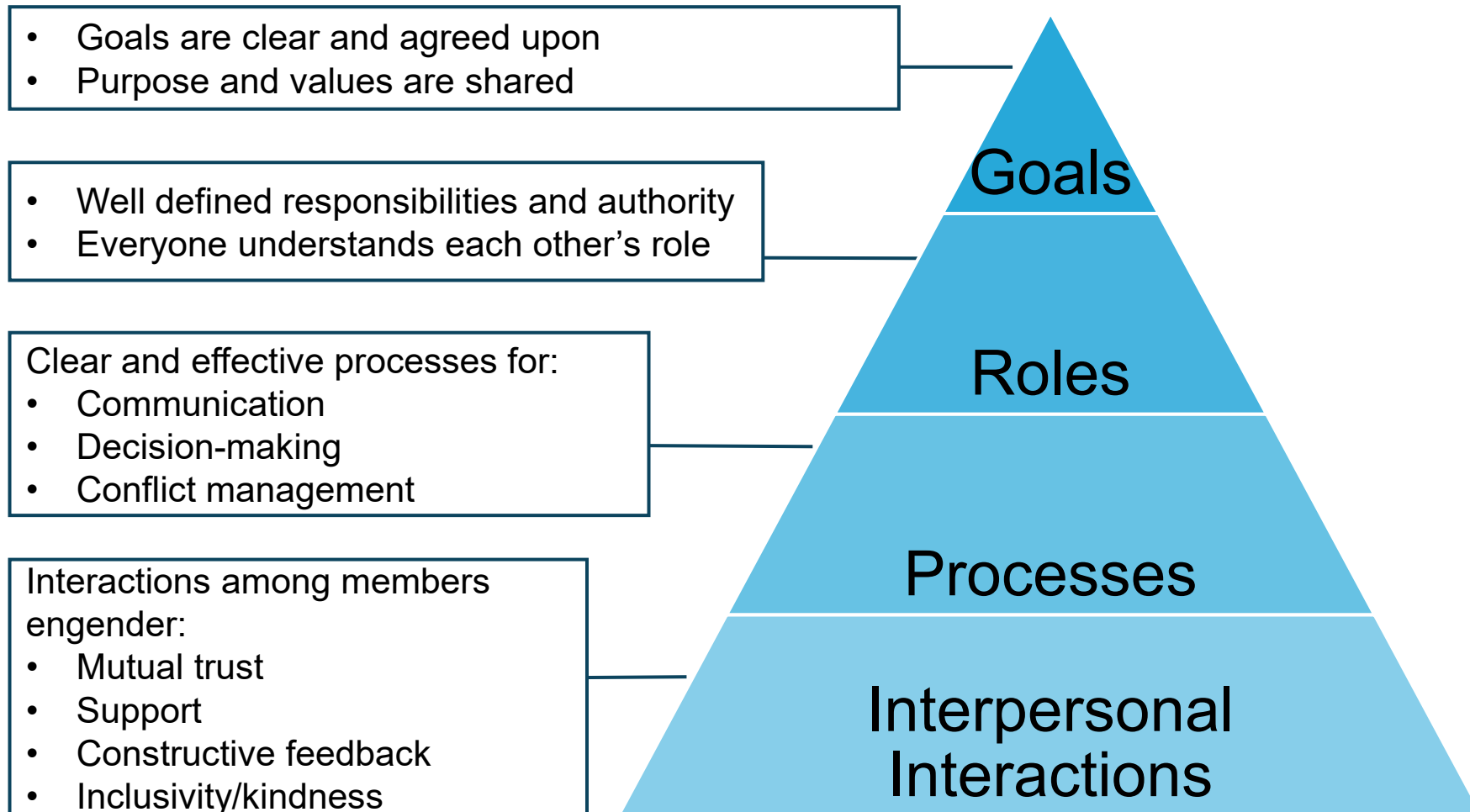
What's going on?

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

Consider the players

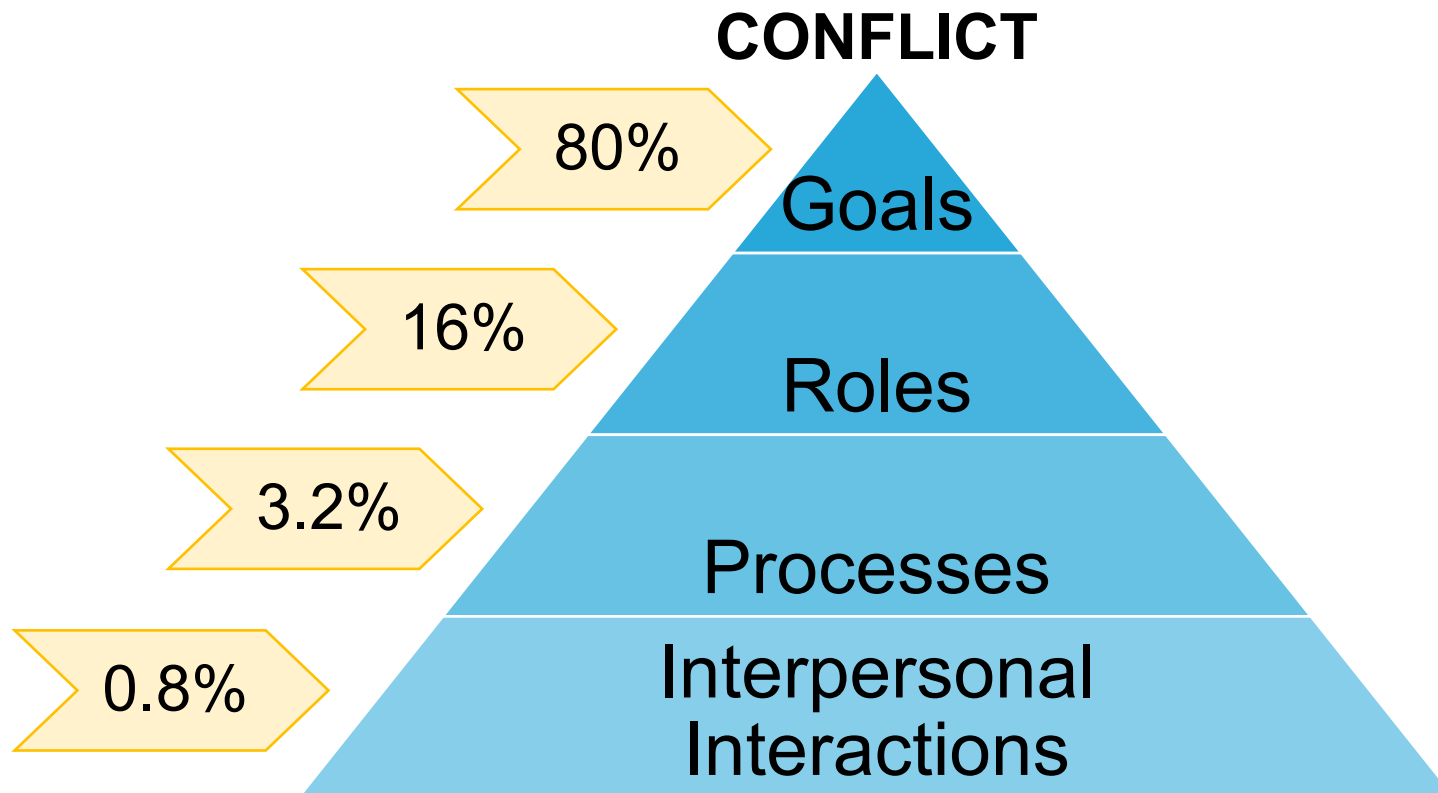
- Power
- Authority

Goals, Roles, Processes, and Interpersonal Interactions (GRPI)



Slow Down: Consider GRPI

Ambiguity, misunderstanding, disagreement, and misalignment



Raue, S., Tang, S., Weiland, C., & Wenzlik C. (2013). *The GRPI model - An approach to team development* [White paper]. Systemic Excellence Group. <https://hsrc.himmelfarb.gwu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?referer=&httpsredir=1&filename=0&article=1017&context=elearning&type=additional>

Slow Down: Consider GRPI

Goals

- Are goals agreed upon and understood by all (or most) department members?
- What goal could be agreed upon by most department members?

Roles

- Does each person have defined responsibilities and authority?
- Does each person understand, agree with, and feel satisfied with those responsibilities?
- Does each person understand what each person does?

Processes

- Is there clear communication about a department business or initiative before, during, and after?
- Who has decision-making authority? How are department decisions made?
- What is the mechanism for managing conflict?

Inter-personal

- Do individuals trust each other? Are all contributions valued?
- Do individuals support each other? Is constructive feedback offered?
- Is there genuine friendliness, in words and gestures, among department members?

Scenario 1 Discussion

- 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?

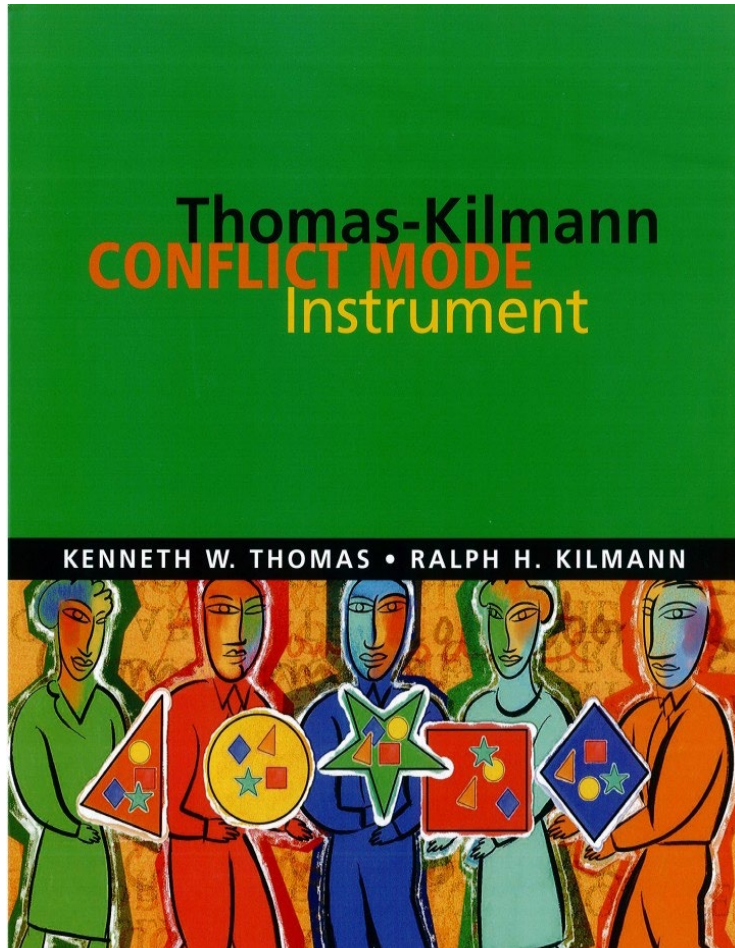
Handout Page 8-9

Engage Constructively

Create the conditions for problem solving

- Consider which conflict approach will most be most effective in the situation
- Use HEAR for conversational receptiveness
- Considerations regarding email

Break & Conflict Styles Assessment



Tips:

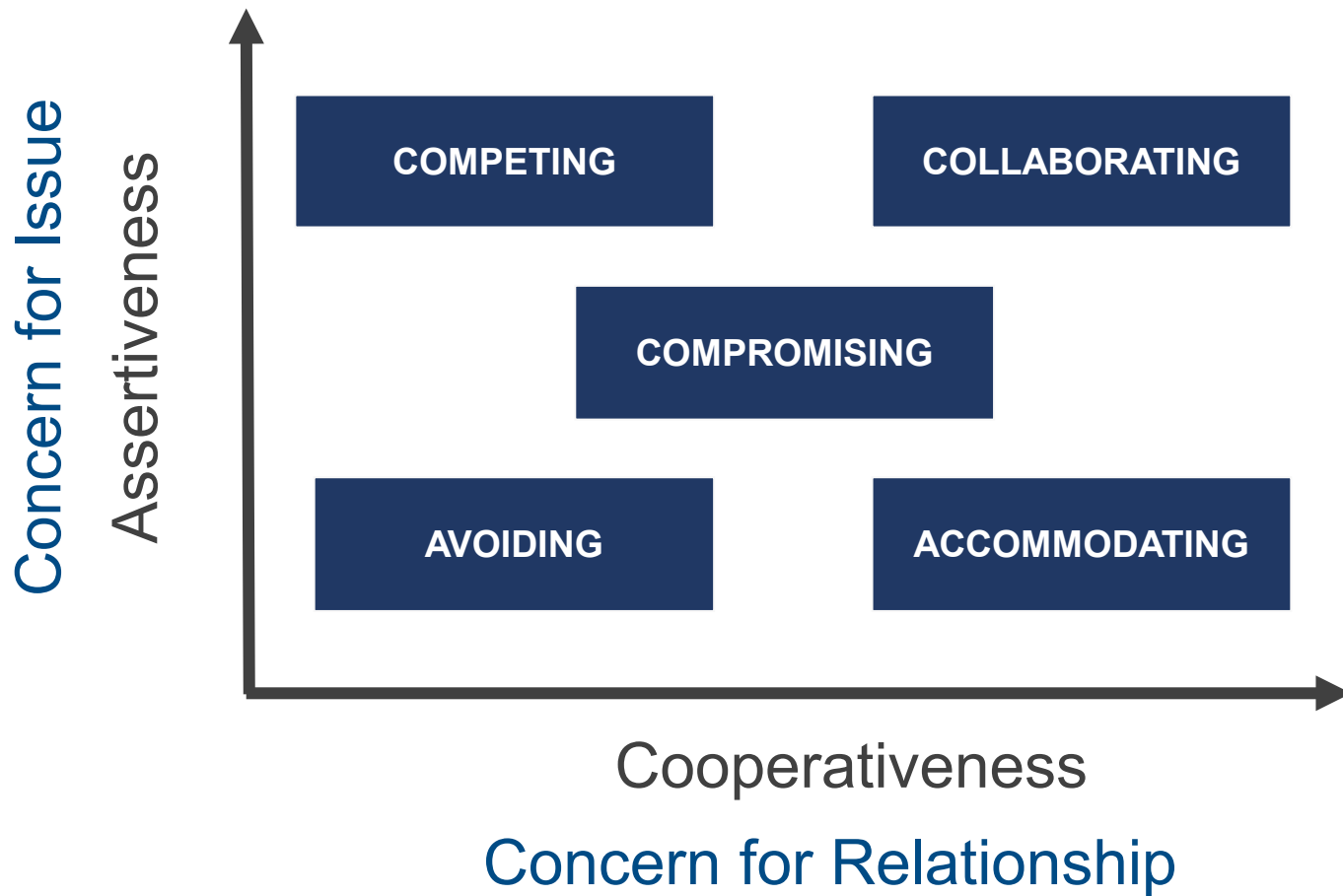
- Think of yourself at work
- The quicker the better
- Go with your gut
- If you don't like either option, pick the one that is a little better
- Don't judge the answers

Conflict Styles Assessment



<https://www.usip.org/public-education-new/conflict-styles-assessment>

Engage Constructively : Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument



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.

Scenario 2 Discussion

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.

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

Engage Constructively : Conversational Receptiveness

	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: Delaney, N. (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. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.obhdp.2020.03.011>

Scenario 3 Discussion

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.

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

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A Note About Email Communication

So many conflicts are escalated through email.

- Think before you hit send
- Tone is read into emails
- Precision and thoughtfulness of words and what is included is important
- Take conflicts that are escalating into phone calls, zoom chats, in-person discussions
- For contentious issues, consult a trusted resource
- Think before you hit send (Yes, I know it's on here twice).

Feedback and Upcoming Workshops!

Thank you for your participation today. Please help us continue to improve our workshops by scanning the QR codes below

Thank you!

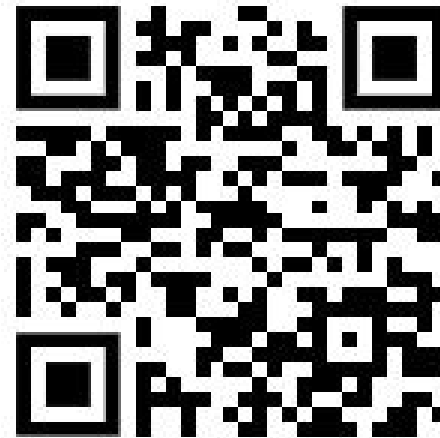
Feedback:

<https://airtable.com/appdwzHdgErhklaUp/shryO9Oyan95lwRrL>



Upcoming workshops:

<http://ombuds.ucdavis.edu/events>



**Conflict Competence for Faculty:
*Practical Skills for Complex Situations***

Lauren Bloom & Lindsey Ensor

Ombuds Office

Come with a problem. Leave with a plan.

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For additional information, please visit our website: ombuds.ucdavis.edu

A note about email: To protect confidentiality, the Ombuds does not keep records. The best way to schedule is by phone, but if you choose to email we do not retain the email or respond to content.

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