

# Communication and Conflict Management: Solving the Puzzle

A Workshop for Professionals



# Myths about Conflict



- **Conflict is a sign of a bad relationship.**
  - Conflict happens normally.
- **Conflict means lack of concern or caring.**
  - The more one cares about someone or something the more likely conflict will occur.
    - **Conflicts heal themselves.**
      - Conflict must be addressed to be resolved, time alone will not do the job.
    - **Conflicts must be resolved.**
      - Most of the time this is true. Conflict can only be truly resolved if a mutual desire for resolution exists. Conflict does not always have to be resolved immediately.

# Conflict is Normal

- **Clarifying Confusion About Conflict**

Conflict is when two or more values, perspectives and opinions are contradictory in nature and haven't been aligned or agreed about yet, including:

1. Within yourself when you're not living according to your values;
2. When your values and perspectives are threatened; or
3. Discomfort from fear of the unknown or from lack of fulfillment.

Conflict is inevitable and often good, for example, good teams always go through a “form, storm, norm and perform” period. Getting the most out of diversity means often-contradictory values, perspectives and opinions.

- **Conflict is often needed. It:**

1. Helps to raise and address problems.

2. Energizes work to be on the most appropriate issues.

3. Helps people “be real”, for example, it motivates them to participate.

4. Helps people learn how to recognize and benefit from their differences.

Conflict is not the same as discomfort. The conflict isn't the problem - it is when conflict is poorly managed that is the problem.

- Conflict occurs when individuals or groups are not obtaining what they need or want and are seeking their own self-interest. Sometimes the individual is not aware of the need and unconsciously starts to act out. Other times, the individual is very aware of what he or she wants and actively works at achieving the goal.

# About Conflict:

- Conflict is inevitable;
- Conflict develops because we are dealing with people's lives, jobs, children, pride, self-concept, ego and sense of mission or purpose;
- Early indicators of conflict can be recognized;
- There are strategies for resolution that are available and DO work;
- Although inevitable, conflict can be minimized, diverted and/or resolved.

# Conflict is a problem when it:

- 1. Hampers productivity
- 2. Lowers morale.
- 3. Causes more and continued conflicts.
- 4. Causes inappropriate behaviors.

# Recognizing Signs of Conflict

- Poor communication
- Seeking power
- Dissatisfaction with management style
- Weak leadership
- Lack of openness
- Change in leadership

# Conflict indicators:

- Body language
- Disagreements, regardless of issue
- Withholding bad news
- Surprises
- Strong public statements
- Airing disagreements through media
- Conflicts in value system
- Desire for power
- Increasing lack of respect
- Open disagreement
- Lack of candor on budget problems or other sensitive issues
- Lack of clear goals
- No discussion of progress, failure relative to goals, failure to evaluate the superintendent fairly, thoroughly or at all.

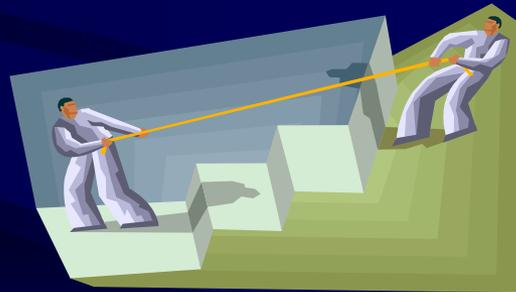
# Conflict is destructive when it:

- Takes attention away from other important activities
- Undermines morale or self-concept
- Polarizes people and groups, reducing cooperation
- Increases or sharpens difference
- Leads to irresponsible and harmful behavior, such as fighting, name-calling

# Conflict is constructive when it:

- Results in clarification of important problems and issues
- Results in solutions to problems.
- Involves people in resolving issues important to them
- Causes authentic communication
- Helps release emotion, anxiety, and stress
- Builds cooperation among people through learning more about each other; joining in resolving the conflict
- Helps individuals develop understanding and skills

# Models for Understanding Conflict



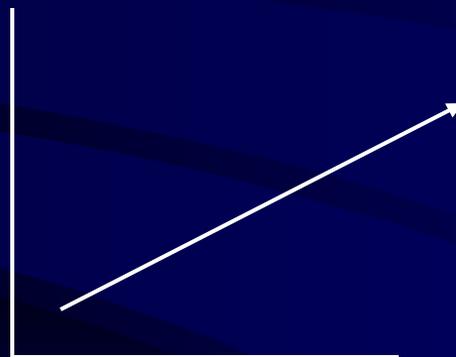
# The Conflict/Tension Model

- Relationships cannot handle the building tension over conflict and the tension causes a "break" one way or the other. The "break" can be healthy or unhealthy based upon how a person chooses to handle the conflict.
- Steps of Conflict Tension Model
  1. Awareness of conflict
  2. Emotional Reaction to the conflict
  3. Getting even, hiding, or resolving
  4. Reconciliation or termination gestures.

# The Conflict Self-Interest Model

- The level of conflict increases in proportion to the amount of self-interest. The more important the personal goal the greater the desire to protect, defend or attack in the conflict situation.

- **Conflict**



**Self-Interest**

# The Approach-Avoidance Spectrum Model

- Some people like conflict and chaos, while others will do anything to avoid it. This model recognizes that different people approach conflict in different ways, but recognizing that conflict is normal and can be managed brings about healthier resolutions.

# Conflict Management Styles

High

Relationship

Teddy  
Bear



Accommodate



Owl

Collaborate

Fox

Turtle



Avoidance

Compromise

Shark



Compete

Low

Goal

High

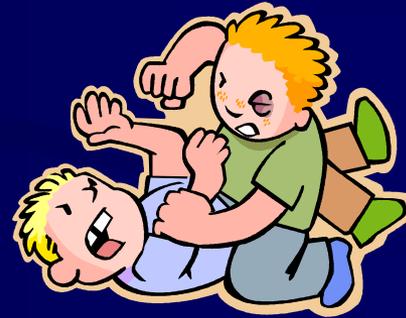
# How to Achieve Win/Win



- **Distinguish interests from positions**
- **Create options which satisfy everyone's interests.**
- **Find mutually acceptable standards**
- **Deal realistically with the constraints of negotiating.**
- **Consider the alternatives to agreement.**
- **Listen for what is useful.**

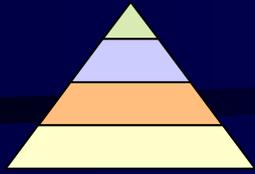
# Poor Ways to Deal with Conflict

- Fighting Dirty
- Ostracizing/Retreating
- Whimpering
- Intimidating
- Escalating Language

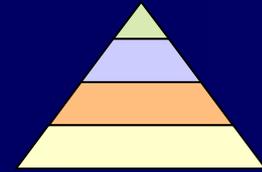


# Who Owns the Problem?

- Whoever has the problem with the way things are is the person who should propose possible solutions. .
- The problem could be yours, mine, or ours.
- If the problem is mine, then I need to propose possible solutions.
- If the problem is yours then you should propose possible solutions.
- If the problem is ours, then we need to solve it together.



# Levels of Conflict



- **Level one:** parties are able to address their feelings, their needs, their questions, are open to suggestions, value each other and trust an agreement can be reached. Negotiation is possible.
- **Level two:** parties are "touchy". It is better to concentrate on "facts of the case". Parties are prone and sensitive to overstatement and extreme positions. Parties want a resolution but trust is low. Mediation is used in this case.
- **Level three:** parties are hardly trusting each other at all. Battle lines are drawn; The other person is viewed as the enemy. Arbitration or adjudication is used here.

# Effective Listening Skills

- 1) Focus on the person.
- 2) Let the other person talk.
- 3) Clear up misunderstandings.
- 4) Listen for areas of agreement.
- 5) Attempt to understand the other persons point of view.
- 6) Provide good and timely feedback.
- 7) Avoid expressing inappropriate or disproportionate emotions.
- 8) Ask for information to clarify the others persons position or opinion.
- 9) Summarize your understanding of the other persons information by repeating what you heard in your own words.
- 10. Evaluate the message only after you fully understand it and the intent in which it has been delivered.



Gracias

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Köszönettel

Thank You For Participating!

Bedankt

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Grazie

Merci

Vielen Dank

Obrigado!

Please fill out an evaluation before you leave!

Teşekkürler



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