The Art of Conflict Resolution
Welcome!

Introduction
Learning Objectives

• Discuss why conflict is inevitable

• Connect conflict management styles with a variety of personality types

• Understand how to resolve conflicts better

• Discuss the importance of Active Listening

• Learn effective communication strategies
Why Does Conflict Exist?

• Differences in perceptions
• Differences in values
• Differences in power
• Differences in opinions
• Personality clash
• Rule breaking
Is All Conflict Bad?

- Can be opportunity for growth or learning
- Inspires creativity
- Can bring up alternative ways of thinking and behaving we had not considered before
- Can challenge us to value differences
- Can improve communication
Factors Influencing Conflict

- Personal values, motivations, and beliefs about conflict
- Relational history and degree of trust
- Significance of the issue
- Social context in which conflict occurs
- Third party involvement
Types of Conflict

• Simple
  – Disagreement about issues or when neither party can get desired results without the other party achieving his/her desired result

• Ego-based
  – Focus on psychological attack and self-protection

• Pseudo-conflict
  – Arguing when two parties actually agree or are creating conflict where none actually exists
The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

• Constructive conflict
  – Collaborative in nature
  – Mutually respectful, open discussion
  – Builds cohesiveness

• Destructive conflict
  – Manipulative strategies
  – Passive-aggressive responses
  – Polarized communication styles
When Are We Likely to Respond Poorly to Conflict?

- When we are tired
- When we are stressed
- When we are in a hurry
- When we feel attacked
- When we are caught off guard
- When we are overwhelmed
- When a hot button has been triggered
- When we are feeling unappreciated
The Role of Communication

- Attitude is reflected in use of verbal language and body language
- Use phrases that lead to a collaborative effort
- Examine the situation from third-person perspective
- Take responsibility for your contribution to the conflict and the corresponding solution
Why is There so Much Miscommunication?

Six things happen in a conversation
• What I said
• What you said
• What I thought I said
• What you thought I said
• What I thought you said
• What you thought you said
Conflict Management Styles

- **Aggressive**
  - Mind set is that one person loses and the other gains
  - May perceive that there are not enough resources for both

- **Passive**
  - Mind set is that it is easier to just give in
  - May be fearful of conflict or just prefer to avoid conflict altogether
More Conflict Management Styles

• Assertive
  – Operates from a mind set of mutual respect

  – Strives for both parties to work together to ensure that important needs are met

  – Often works in conjunction with collaboration so that each party identifies important needs, takes time to constructively understand the other’s point of view, brainstorm together, and takes mutual responsibility for the solution
More Conflict Management Styles

• Symmetrical
  – Shares similar style with partner

• Complementary
  – Each party uses a very different style with partner
Adapting to Personality Styles

• Style effectiveness varies according to the specific interpersonal dynamics

• Consider the strengths and the pitfalls of combining your style with the other party

• Learn from previous experiences
The Rational Communicator

- May perceive conflict as being an objective discussion of the facts
- May be viewed as being cold by other types of communicators
- More likely to be convinced when giving sound reasons as to the benefits of a particular approach
The Relational Communicator

• May perceive conflict as being an expression of the relationship

• May be concerned about the psychological, emotional and relational implications of the conflict itself as well as how each party is treating one another

• May be focusing on the subtle messages such as nonverbal cues in addition to the language
The Avoider

• May have had previous experiences that lead to fearing conflict

• May be concerned that dealing with the conflict may create more problems than the issue itself

• May be afraid of how the other party will react emotionally
The Fighter

- Anger may stem from an accumulation of annoyances or when the issue is extremely important

- May use polarizing language that can escalate the conflict

- May be unaware of the true intensity being expressed
The Emotional Roller Coaster

• May fear a loss of control from oneself or from the other party

• May feel that the relationship is threatened by the existence of conflict

• May be exacerbated by unresolved family of origin issues and/or an extremely high need for approval
Five Essential Competencies to Raise Emotional Intelligence

- **Self-Awareness** - Knowing one’s internal states, preference, resources and intuition
- **Self-Regulation** - Managing one’s internal states, impulses and resources
- **Self-Motivation** - Emotional tendencies that guide or facilitate reaching goals
- **Empathy** - Awareness of others’ feelings, needs and concerns
- **Effective Relationships** - Adeptness at inducing desirable responses in others

Goleman 1998
Addressing Conflict Strategy #:1 Know your hot buttons

- What are the situations that provoke me?
- What are the feelings I experience most at work?
- How do I express those feelings?
- What is the worst thing a co-worker/client/supervisor can say to me that would bother me?
Strategy #2: Avoid being Insensitive

• Avoid these:
  – Calm down
  – That’s not my problem
  – Just shut up for a minute!
  – You’ve got to be kidding!
  – You’re making a big deal out of nothing
  – Like You’re perfect!
Strategy #3: Clearing the A-I-R

**Appreciate**
Explicitly tell others you want to hear their point of view
“I appreciate the opportunity to discuss this problem with you”

**Inquire**
The other person has the floor – be an active listener
“Let me make sure I understand your position:…”

**Respond**
Now you have the floor
“Now that I have a sense of your point of view, let me explain where I’m coming from”

*Workplace Wars and how to end them*- Kenneth Kaye, 1994
Tips for Constructive Conflict Resolution

• Control internal chatter that leads to an escalation of emotion, contempt and hostility

• Remember to take time to paraphrase the other party’s sentiments in neutral language to insure correct understanding

• Use “I” statements and avoid generalizations and accusations

• Strive for mutually acceptable solutions
Scenario:
You have developed a reputation around the office as someone who really knows their stuff. Unfortunately, another co-worker has begun to come to you with every little problem she has to solve instead of figuring it out on her own, or going to the supervisor. It interrupts your work schedule, but you don’t want to be rude when you feel you can be helpful.

What do you do?
Thank You!

Questions?


