

Resolving Conflict Rationally and Effectively



Road Map

- Define conflict and why it occurs
- Understand the positive and negative aspects of conflict
- Identify your individual conflict resolution style
- Review conflict resolution strategies that foster cooperation



Conflict: **What is it?**

“Conflict is a sharp disagreement or opposition of interests or ideas.”

- Employees become stressed
- Morale is lowered
- Decreased productivity
- Absenteeism
- Relationships – Strained and Damaged



Conflict: **What is it?**

- A conflict is more than just a disagreement
- Conflicts continue to fester when ignored
- We respond to conflicts based on our perceptions
- Conflicts trigger strong emotions
- Conflicts provide an opportunity for growth.

Conflict: **What is it?**

1. Conflicting Needs
2. Conflicting Work Styles
3. Conflicting Perceptions
4. Conflicting Goals



Conflict: What is it?

5. Conflicting Pressures
6. Conflicting Roles
7. Different Personal Values
8. Unpredictable or Unclear Expectation and/or Policies



^[1]Hart, Brett. (2000). Conflict in the workplace. *Behavioral Consultants, P.C.*

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Supporting Healthy Conflict



Conflict handled well can create great opportunities for teams to grow and flourish!

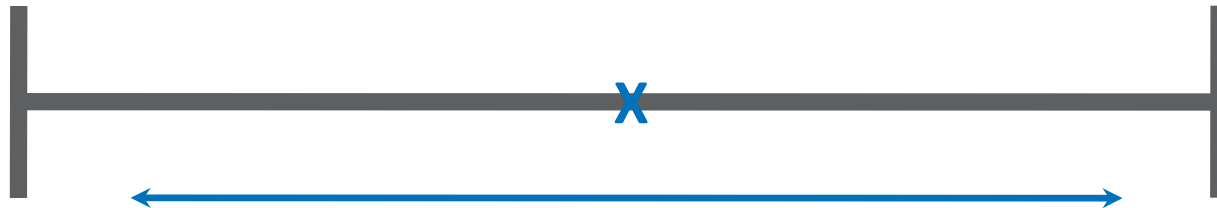
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Spectrum of Outcomes

Negative

Positive



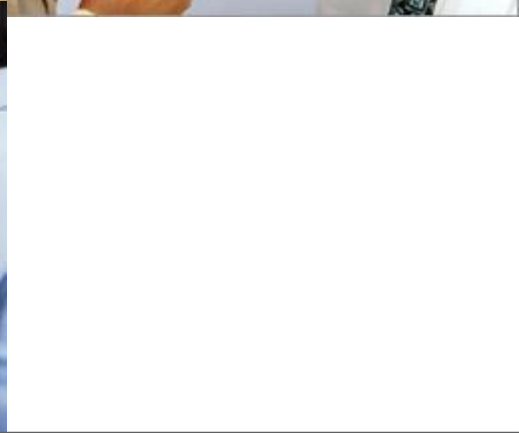
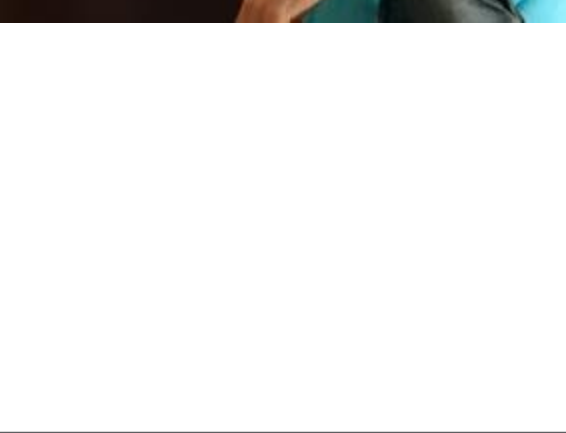
- Wasted time/energy
- Reduced efficiency
- Undermines trust
- Lowers morale
- Dissatisfaction
- Aggression
- Anxiety

- Personal growth
- Clarifies expectations, values
- Improve problem identification
- Improve solution generation
- Facilitates organizational change
- Improves relationships

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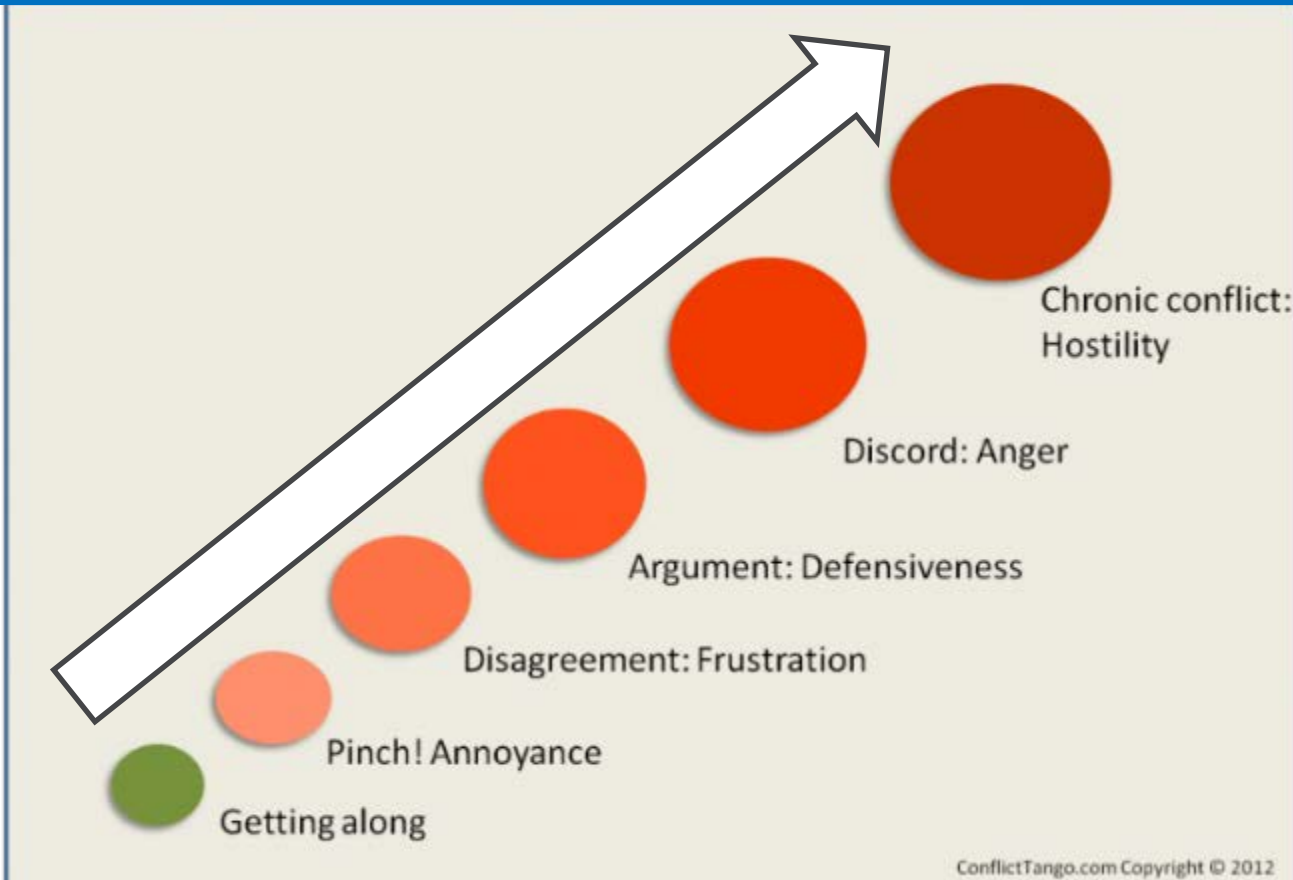
How Do You Handle Conflict?



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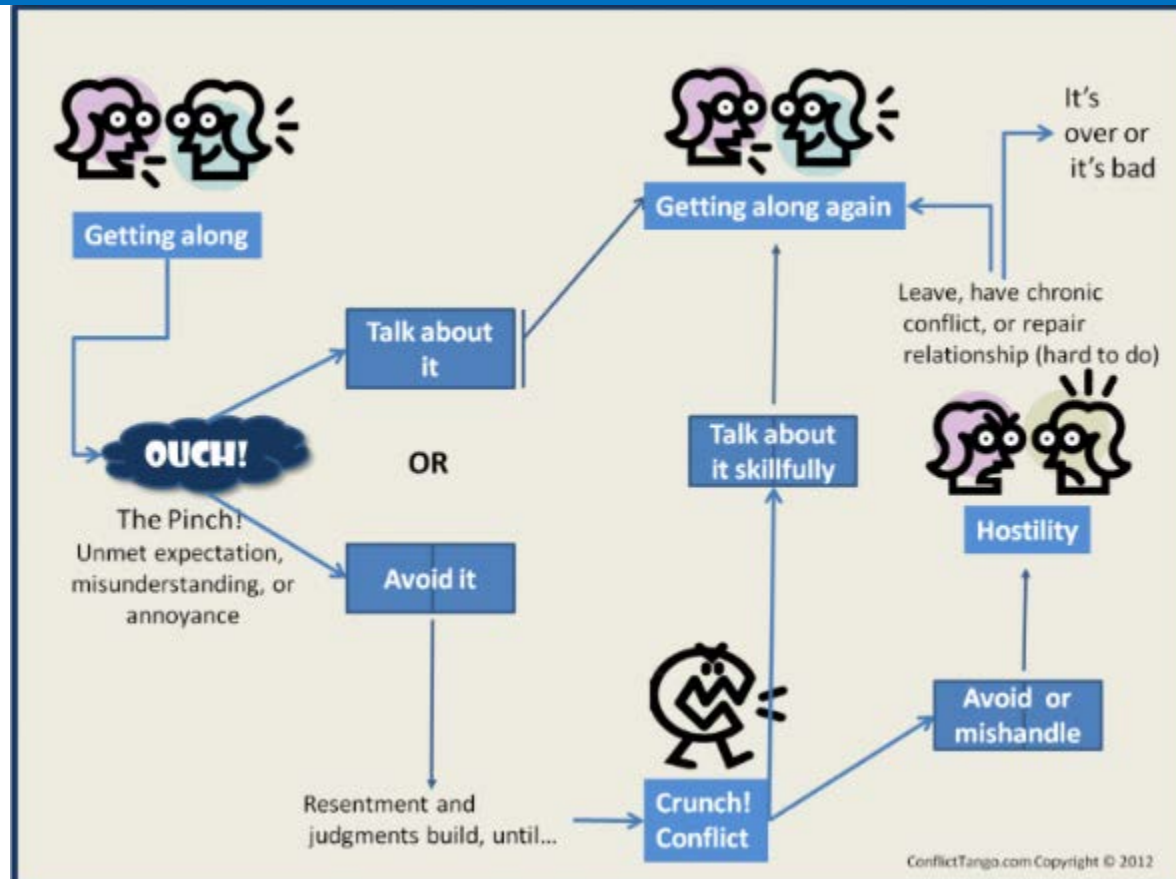
Conflict Escalation



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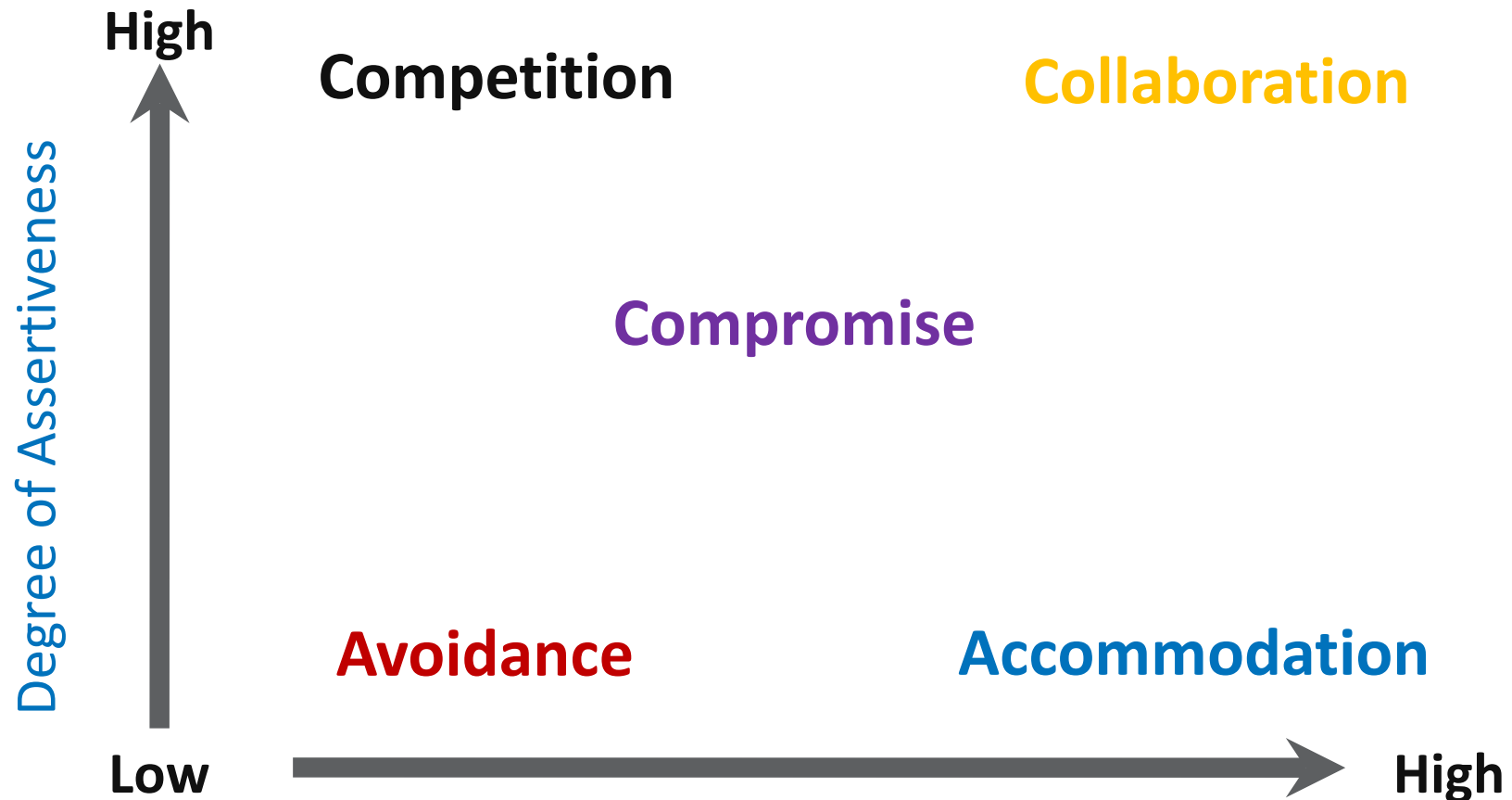
Managing Conflict at the Pinches



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Conflict Resolution Styles



Avoidance

Making an active decision to not handle the conflict. Best used for situations that are not work related and should be solved through another means.

Avoidance

Used Primarily for:

- Unimportant or non-work related issues.
- Buying time until a resolution can be reached.
- When the issue is trivial and there is no hope of a resolution.
- In an emotionally charged situation where you need to give someone time and space to calm down.

Pros – Does not escalate the conflict

Cons – Unaddressed/unresolved problems; unaddressed resentment and anger

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Competition

Power-oriented mode through unilateral decision making. Appropriate for managers/leaders when unilateral decisions need to be made.

Competition

Used Primarily for:

- Situations that involve quick action.
- Instances where there is no compromise or debate.
- Making hard or unpopular decisions.
- When being right matters more than preserving the relationship with the other party.
- When one's position, authority, or rights are being challenged.
- When implementing strategic change and strong, confident leadership needs to be demonstrated.

Pros – Goal oriented; quick

Cons – Breeds hostility, doesn't promote relationships

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Accommodation

Cooperating to a high-degree even at your own expense. This style can actually work against your own goals, objectives, and desired outcomes.

Accommodation

Used Primarily for:

- Maintaining relationships and peace in the workplace
- When issues matter more to the other party
- Gaining “clout” for more important issues in the future

Pros – Relationships maintained

Cons – Breeds anger/resentment; exploits the weak

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Compromise

Middle of the road for reaching a resolution that involves a “win” on both sides of the table.

Compromise

Used Primarily for:

- Resolving issues of moderate to high importance.
- Finding a solution that involves equal power and strong commitment on both sides.
- Situations where a temporary fix may be needed.
- When there is a high cost of one party winning out over the other.

Pros – Good for complex situations without simple solutions; all parties equal

Cons – All parties give up something; no one is ever really satisfied; not optimal

Collaboration

Problem solving model. A individual using this style is seen as cooperative and assertive, seeking the possible solution between parties.

Collaboration

Used Primarily for:

- Gaining support from the opposing party
- Using the different perspectives as an opportunity to learn
- Improving relationships through collaboration
- Maintaining good relationships and respect between opposing parties

Pros – Creates mutual trust; maintains positive relationships; builds commitment

Cons – Time and energy consuming; not quick

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What is Most Important: Goal or Relationship?

Guide:

- Goal high and Relationship low = **Competition**
- Goal low and Relationship high = **Accommodation**
- Goal secondary and Relationship secondary = **Compromise**
- Goal and Relationship low = **Avoidance**
- Goal and Relationship are both high = **Collaboration**

Conflict Resolution Model



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ABC(D) Model

ABC(D) Model

- **Achieve rapport**
 - Establish trust
 - Explain your role in the interaction
 - Make the other party feel comfortable
 - Find an appropriate time and place to meet
 - Begin on an even playing field

ABC(D) Model

ABC(D) Model

- Achieve rapport
- Boil down the issues
 - Listen carefully, ask questions
 - Get the “whole” story
 - Address fears which might keep others from moving towards a solution

ABC(D) Model

ABC(D) Model

- Achieve rapport
- Boil down the issues
- Clarify their wants
 - Don't make assumptions
 - Ask clarifying questions
 - Ask “what if” questions
 - Find out what their interests and goals are

ABC(D) Model

ABC(D) Model

- Achieve rapport
- Boil down the issues
- Clarify their wants

- Develop a game-plan
 - Collaborate
 - Brainstorm possible solutions - be creative
 - Be clear about responsibilities

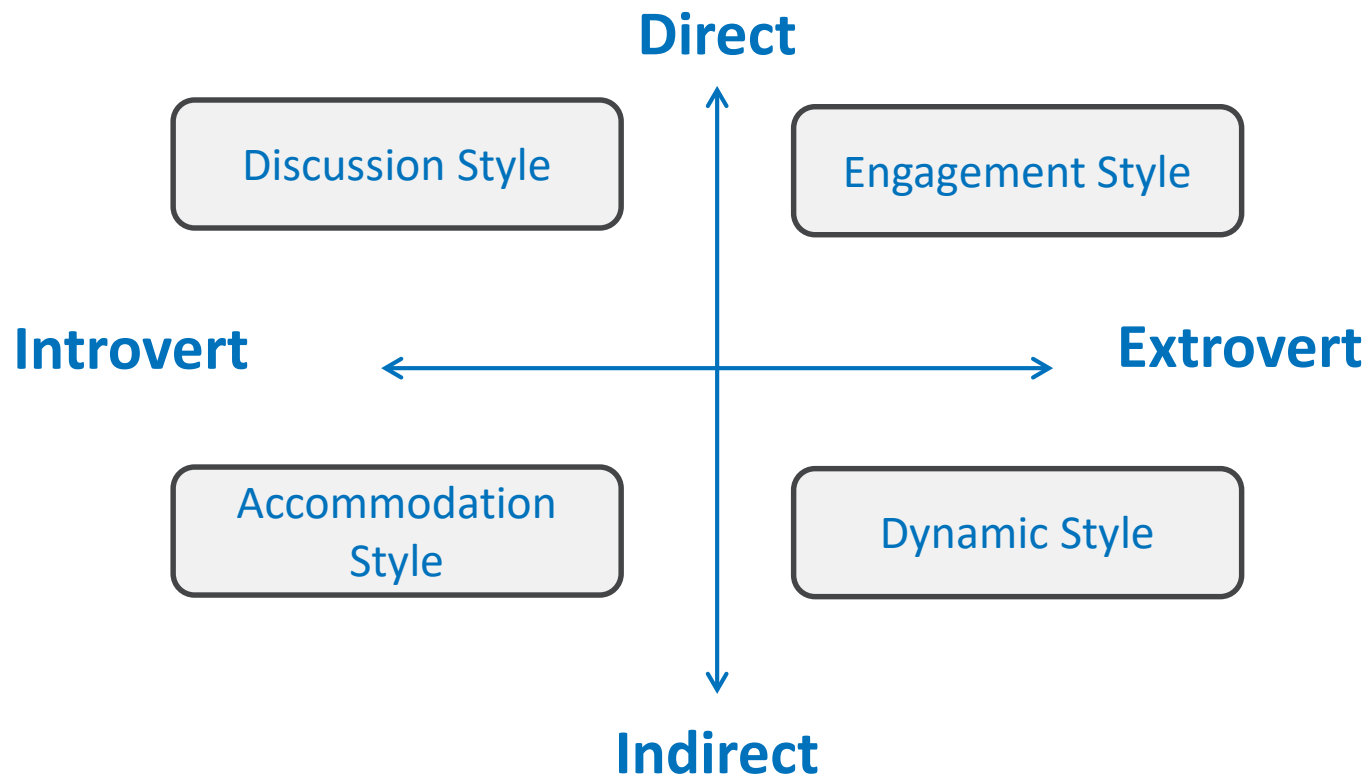
Conflict and Communication



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Conflict Communication Styles



Interest Based Rational Approach (IBR)

1. Make sure that good relationships are the priority.
2. Keep people and problems separate.
3. Pay attention to the interests that are being presented.
4. Listen first; talk second.
5. Set out the "Facts".
6. Explore options together.

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Building the Bridge

1. Affirm the relationship

- *I wanted to talk to you because...*

2. State the facts

- *I noticed...*

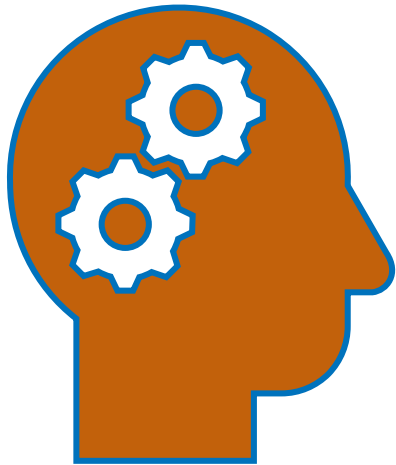
3. Ask for help in understanding

- *Can you help me understand why...*

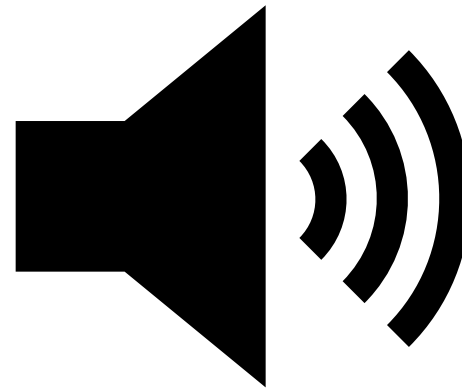
4. State what you want

- *I'd prefer if in the future you would...*

Two Keys to Effective Communication during Conflict



Speak smartly



Listen actively

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Speak Smartly

Speak about yourself, not the other person

- “I-statements” as opposed to “you-statements”
- "I felt let down," rather than
- "You broke your promise,"

Avoid conflict escalating words

- Your Fault
- Should
- You
- Always/never
- Can't

Listen Actively

- Maintain eye contact
- Ask clarifying questions
- Listen to what is felt as well as to what is spoken through non-verbal cues
- Note your posture – keep it open and inviting.
- Reframe what hear by paraphrasing. "What I'm hearing is" and "Sounds like you are saying"
- Don't interrupt the other person
- Validate the other persons feelings

Summary

- Understand conflict
- Positive & negative aspects of conflict
- Reviewed conflict resolution styles and how/when they are to be applied
- Discussed conflict resolution strategies and how to effectively communicate



Additional Resources



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