
Understanding & Managing Conflict

3 Types of Group Conflict

- Interpersonal
- Intragroup
- Intergroup

Key Features of Destructive Conflict

- Conflict spiraling
- Autistic hostility
- Perceptual distortion
 - Ultimate attribution error
 - Mirror image
 - Self-fulfilling prophecies
- Metaconflict
- Competitive goal structure (zero-sum)

Key Features of Constructive Conflict

- Motivates positive change
- Promotes trust, effective decision-making, equitable resource distributions, justice
- People behave respectfully, cooperatively, & rationally
- Differentiation
- Analytic Empathy
- Integrative Solutions (win-win) Both sides explain underlying motives and interests; seek creative solutions integrating these interests

Interpersonal Conflict

- Between 2 group members
- Can interfere with cohesion and productivity.
- Escalated by
 - Criticism and contempt
 - Defensiveness
 - Stonewalling

On a piece of paper, write down an unresolved interpersonal conflict

- Which features of destructive conflict characterize your conflict?
- Has the conflict been escalated by:
 - Criticism and contempt ?
 - Defensiveness?
 - Stonewalling?

Resolving Interpersonal Conflicts

- Avoid criticism/contempt
- Give stonewallers time to respond
- Deescalate by apologizing
- Restate other's position to prove listening
- Use integrative bargaining and constructive confrontation
- Seek mediation if needed

Constructive Confrontation

- Involves clarifying and exploring the issues, the needs of the participants, and their feelings.
- It's time when: you're avoiding the other person, the relationship has deteriorated, you're having trouble working together.

Planning & Tact make truth-telling possible

- Prepare: What responsibility do I have for the conflict and how can I acknowledge it?

Prepare

- How am I going to frame it in a way that won't create defensiveness?
- Consider person's self-concept
- Allow them to save face
- Avoid blaming "you" statements

Begin

- Start out by validating person & relationship
- Present as mutual problem to be solved and use integrative bargaining
- Use constructive controversy
- If they get defensive, don't take the bait and counterattack, instead reassure

Group Activity: 30 minutes

- Spend a few minutes writing out a script for a constructive confrontation with the person you described previously.
- Briefly share your situation with your group and role-play your constructive confrontation with your group.
- Your team members should provide feedback about your wording and paralanguage.

Conflict Resolution Styles

Dual-concern Model

5 styles vary based on concern
for own vs. other's outcomes

Accommodators

- Sacrifice own goals for others
- High in concern for others and low in concern for self

Avoiders

- Willing to let conflicts go unresolved or let others take care of them
- Low in concern for self and others

Compromisers

- Make concessions if other will
- Intermediate levels of concern for self and others

Collaborators

- Integrate needs of both parties; maximize interests of both
- High in concern for self and others

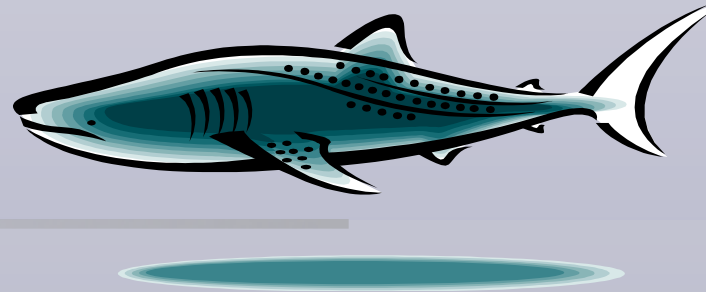
Competitors

- Maximize own outcomes at expense of others
- High concern for self and low concern for others

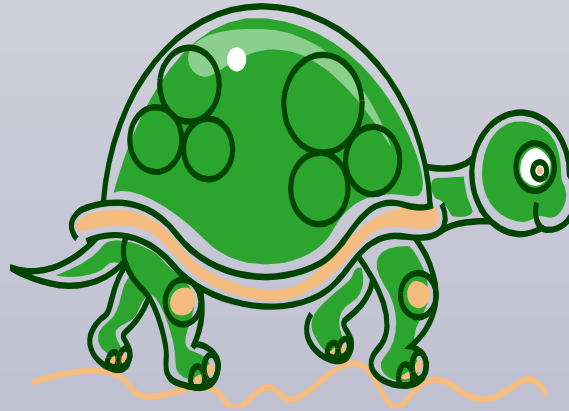
Johnson's conflict style typology

- Advantages and disadvantages depend on whether the goal is to achieve your goals, maintain a good relationship, or both
- Different styles appropriate/ inappropriate depending on the relationship

Shark: achieve their goals at expense of relationship



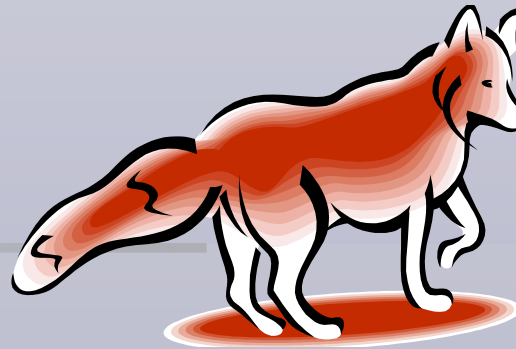
Turtles: give up their goals and the relationship by avoiding the person and the issue



Teddy Bears: give up their goals to maintain the relationship



Fox: give up part of his/her goals and part of the relationship to reach an agreement



Owl: negotiates to find a solution that meets both parties' needs and keeps the relationship positive



Culture & Gender

- People from collectivist cultures generally less confrontational, more avoidant, more accommodating.
- No significant gender differences; when found only 5%.

Conflict Style Questionnaire

Fill out your questionnaire and discuss the adv and disadvantages of your style with your group. Do you need to consider changes in your style?

Intragroup Conflict: Conflict involving 3 or more group members

- Usually short-lived but can spiral if group does not use constructive controversy.
- Often arise from disagreements about what/how to do or interpersonal conflicts.
- Harm multiple member relationships
- Entangle most of the group
- Turn into intergroup conflicts if group splits into factions

Solutions

- Introduce norms of constructive controversy
- Mediation
 - Skilled mediators seek integrative (win-win) solutions.
 - 3-stage process: setting the stage, problem solving, achieving a workable agreement.
 - Mediators should be neutral; personal relationships often result in triangulation.
- Resist temptation to enmesh other members in your interpersonal conflict

Intragroup Case Studies: Group Activity

Intergroup Conflict

Group Activity

Intergroup Conflicts

- Conflicts between groups.
- Perceptual distortion, ultimate attribution error, enemy imagery, autistic hostility aggravated by self-segregation, and spiraling typical
- Competition over scarce resources often cause (realistic conflict)
- Social identities (us vs. them; good vs. evil) play big role.

Intergroup Conflict Resolution

- Sometimes conflicting parties are not motivated until they reach “stalemate.”
- Mediation with integrative bargaining.
- Contact under the following conditions can reduce enemy perceptions and create cooperative climate where difference can be resolved:
 - equal status
 - superordinate goals
 - personal acquaintance
 - social support.

GRIT: Graduated Reciprocated Initiatives in Tension Reduction

- Party A announces intention to make conciliatory gesture, makes gesture, provides Party B with opportunity to reciprocate.
- Each side takes turns making increasingly cooperative gestures.

Group Activity

- How could GRIT be used by the United States to reduce tensions with Iran?