



CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

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EXERCISE 1

MY CRITICISM LOG

Every individual has specific attitudes towards others and their personal characteristics, behaviour and etc. When we talk about the issues, which may raise the conflicts and involve an individual person in it, it should be admitted that this is also personal. For example, one individual cannot stand the unfair behaviour and always involves in conflicts in regards of it. On contrary, other individual may feel really neutral in regard of such issues and being able to ignore the same unfair behaviour. Some people hate being late and do not respect other, who is always late. On contrary, some of them are neutral for it and do not sees the reason to conflict if their friends or colleagues are late. Knowing yourself well helps to identify the issues, which drives one angry and ready to struggle, helps in managing those situations.

Wilmott and Hocker (2011) suggested a great task for a group work, helping to identify the main issues of social interaction, which drives individual towards conflicts. This task consists of two parts: individual preparation and small groups' discussions.

• Individual preparation for the task.

Please keep track of all the negative thoughts you have about people in your world over a few days. You don't need to track the type of relationship, who the other is, or anything else - just list the negative thoughts you have or comments you make. Some examples are "he is so rigid," "I can't believe how stupid she is," "he is so subservient to everyone," and "she is absolutely selfish“.

• Discussion in small groups.

In groups of 3-4 people, discuss with the group your main identity "themes" and how they predict with whom you will have conflict or struggles.

Please share your answers with your colleagues. Don't hesitate to read them aloud to others and don't worry about how it will sound (even though they are sometimes difficult to share).

Discuss with group members helping identify to every individual his/her two or three main "themes" for the criticisms of others. Most of people have two or three main identity dimensions that arise in criticisms of others. You should help to put these "themes" in non-judgmental or positive terms. For example, if person says such things about his colleagues such as "I doubt the wisdom of confiding in his insight," "she didn't do very well in university," "I just don't know how he became a professional given his inability to process all the details," and "he isn't very bright." These examples clearly identify the theme of "lack of intelligence".

Group should discuss not only the important "themes" of every individual, but also as well how they predict with whom that individual will have conflict or how such criticisms can effect conflict management process.

EXERCISE 2

HOT BUTTONS AND CONSTRUCTIVE RESPONSES TO CONFLICT

This activity will help participants to be aware of some of their emotional hot buttons, and to find more constructive ways to deal with conflict more effectively.

Directions:

A. For the next five minutes, you will have a chance to tell the other members of your group how to push their emotional hot buttons. Please write down as many specific things as you can. For example:

How to push my buttons . . . :

Rude tone; Know-it-alls; People who don't get to the point; "What you should do is . . ."; "You never/always . . ."; "Shut up!"

For group discussion, form small groups of four to seven see how many emotional hot buttons everybody can come up with.

Discussion Questions:

1. What are your usual responses to hot buttons and what can you do about it?
 2. What are some ways we can learn to recognize and to control our hot buttons when interacting with others?
 3. What happens if we push someone else's buttons?
- B. Please read descriptions of constructive responses to conflict (see text below) and compare your personal ways to deal with hot buttons.
- C. Question for final discussion: How does this activity can help you deal with conflict more effectively?



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Runde and Flanagan (2007) stress importance of appropriate actions for conflict competent leader behaviour. Our constructive responses to conflict can be analysed as active and passive constructive behaviours. You can analyse your personal behaviour or group conflict situations using these explanations:

Active constructive responses to conflict

Active Constructive Behaviours are responses to conflict that involve doing or saying things that reduce conflict tension, deescalate conflict and improve the conflict situation.

Perspective Taking has these components:

- Listening to the other conflict participant with the intent of understanding rather than debating
- Summarizing the other conflict participant's point of view about the conflict to his or her satisfaction
- Expressing empathy by identifying the other conflict participant's emotions and demonstrating understanding

Creating Solutions has these components:

- Identifying multiple potential solutions with other conflict participants (one potential solution is not enough!)
- Discussing the viability of potential solutions with other conflict participant
- Agreeing on solutions to try

Expressing Emotions has these components:

- Identifying and disclosing emotions to other conflict participant
- Open discussion about thoughts and feelings and their impact on the situation
- Casting no blame

Reaching Out includes these components:

- Making the first move to resume communicating with a other conflict participant
- Attempting to repair emotional damage caused during the conflict
- Offering an apology or making amends when warranted

Passive constructive responses to conflict

Passive Constructive Behaviours often are characterized by withholding comments or refraining from some action and often require very little overt effort, but they usually result in conflict de-escalation and the reduction of mutual tensions and harmful effects of conflict and can maximize opportunities for creative or innovative solutions in trying circumstances.

Reflective Thinking has these components:

- Taking the time to notice and analyse one's own and other parties' reactions during conflict
- Reviewing the immediate and potential ongoing impact of the conflict
- Thinking through alternatives for effectively responding to the conflict

Delay Responding has these components:

- Calling a time-out when one or both parties feel injured or downtrodden
- Suggesting a temporary disengagement from the conflict conversation to interrupt the flow of a conflict escalation cycle
- Creating a pause during the conflict when tensions are so high that the interaction becomes ineffective

Adapting includes these components:

- An optimistic mind-set that views conflict as inevitable and resolvable
- A willingness for flexibility by entertaining alternatives for resolution
- Being alert for changes that may show new opportunities for engaging in resolution dialogue.

EXERCISE 3

INTERVIEW

In order to gain for knowledge how ability to identify the conflict style may be used in practice, please engage in the fulfilment of this task oriented towards job interview experience.

Direction: In small groups, develop a list of interview questions that you will use for potential new hires. These questions should give you a sense of how this person responds to conflict and how well she or he will fit into your team's environment. Compare lists of different groups.

In addition to designing appropriate interview questions, discuss what other sources of information will provide clues as to how this person deals with problem solving and teamwork?

Questions for further discussion:

Although the conflict management strategies usually are used as an individual-level tool, we often see analogous behaviours within teams and even entire organizations. Which style best describes the unit in which you study? Why? Which style best describes your organization as a whole? How does your individual style fit in with those in your study environment?



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EXERCISE 4

“THE DOGGIE DISCONTENT”

This activity will help you to identify conflict management styles and conflict related roles.

McCorkle and Reese (2018, p.130) suggest such an exercise for developing skills to identify the most evident styles in concrete situation. The case is presented below:

Before Tess and Molly became roommates, Tess made sure that Molly would be fine with her lovable little dog Gretel, a five-year-old schnauzer. After about two months, Molly met Tess at the door, obviously upset:

Molly: “We need to talk. I hate living here! I can’t stand your dog anymore. She jumps on me and the house smells like a dog. I like some animals, but I hate your dog!” Tess: (Shocked). “You knew about Gretel when we moved in. She’s a schnauzer for God’s sake—they love everybody. It’s not like she’s a pit bull and going to attack you. What did you expect?” Molly: “I was hoping the apartment wouldn’t allow dogs.” Tess: “I wouldn’t have moved in with you then. I could never live without Gretel.”

Molly: “I think you should get rid of her.” Tess: “That is not going to happen! You knew I had a dog. And I don’t have the money to move. You got yourself into this situation, so you figure a way out of it.”

Molly left the apartment and slammed the door. Gretel, sensing something was wrong, walked over to comfort Tess.

Directions:

- A. Please read presented case to identify conflict management styles participants use in this situation. Discuss dynamics and efficiency of different styles.
- B. Please read description of supervisor related roles (see table 1). 5-8 participants of group can choose different roles and try to solve conflict in role play using different ways. After completing role plays a group discussion should be provided to explore strengths and weaknesses or challenges of different roles in conflict.

Table 1. Supervisor conflict – related roles (based on Chavez Rudolph)

CONFLICT RELATED ROLES	How this role may be defined?	(This is someone who...)	For what purpose is this role intended? (Intended Outcome)
Rule Enforcer	One who knows and informs others about applicable rules, policies, procedures, laws, etc. and gives	A violation or potential violation is seen and a duty is felt to prevent or	To inform in an effort to gain compliance with applicable rules, policies, procedures, laws, etc. and/or to prevent or

	people clear expectations about how to comply with them.	correct violations to the extent possible.	correct violations. (Note: This may require the administration of consequences.)
Mediator	Neutral party who assists others in the resolution of their conflicts by providing a structured process to help them reach agreements.	Leader does not have a vested interest in the outcome other than to see agreements reached between conflicting parties. This could be chosen because the leader wants the process by which disputing parties interact to be effective (i.e., manageable, productive, respectful).	To help others reach agreements to resolve their disputes The best decision will come from the disputing parties making the decision themselves.
Arbitrator	Decision-maker who determines how a conflict will be resolved	Leader has delegated decision making authority and/or content area knowledge and utilizes authority to resolve a conflict, especially when time is limited.	To make a decision to resolve a conflict
Facilitator	Leader helps groups identify issues and make decisions by providing a process for discussion.	A group needs assistance in identifying issues and making decisions but doesn't need the kind of tightly controlled process provided by mediation.	To allow group members to have input and to help a group make decisions about how they will be resolved. Participation and buy-in are important.
Negotiator	Leader by helping all parties (including her/himself) to identify interests and options to achieve a "win-win" outcome.	Leader cares about both the content and the relationship(s) involved in the dispute.	To gain the cooperation of others to resolve disputes in a mutually satisfactory manner
Coach	Leader educates or advises disputing parties about options and	Leader sees the need for a disputing party to be more effective in negotiating with others or when the	To assist and advise a disputing party to negotiate more



	strategies for negotiating effectively.	disputing party wants to be more effective in negotiating with others.	effectively when conflicts arise.
Referral Agent	Leader listens to disputing party and then with the disputing party determines the appropriate individual, department, agency, etc. most able to assist with his/her particular need.	Leader does not have expertise in the content area and/or additional information is needed by the disputing party to resolve his/her conflict. This role may be especially called for when a disputing party needs emotional support and a counsellor is called for -- which in regards to conflict, in most cases, is not an appropriate role for leader.	Assist the disputing party to obtain the needed services necessary to resolve the conflict or to obtain support while working through the conflict.
Investigator	Leader makes inquiries, conducts research, etc. in order to obtain additional information necessary to resolve a conflict.	Leader or disputing parties require additional information, or additional information would be helpful, in order to resolve a conflict.	Obtain additional information. (Note: Often times the leader will serve in an investigator role and then move into one of the other roles listed above.)
Shuttle diplomat	Serves as a “go between” in an attempt to resolve conflicts between two parties.	Parties in conflict do not wish to occupy the same physical space simultaneously or you determine that for safety reasons it is best for the two parties not to occupy the same physical space simultaneously.	To help others reach agreements to resolve their disputes

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