

Teamwork, Communication, and Conflict Management



Charge Nurse Development Day
March 2008

Learning Objectives

Following the module “Teamwork: Communication and Conflict Resolution,” participants will demonstrate the following knowledge and skill as demonstrated by practice activities and on a post-test:

- Identify the elements in the model for team effectiveness,
- Recognize the impact of conflict on a team,
- Determine their own preferred mode for handling conflict, and
- Select the appropriate use of the various conflict modes, based on the situation.



Your Team at Work

1. Draw a picture of your “team” at work.
2. Describe the members to your table mates
3. Discuss the following questions:
 - What conditions promote good teamwork?
 - What barriers exist that prevent good teamwork?

TEAM

What is a work team?

What are the characteristics of an effective work team?

GRPI Model for Effective Teams

G - Goals

- Clarity about the main purpose of the team
- Agreement on the desired results
- Understanding of the main tasks
- Agreement on the standards and expectations
- Clarity of priorities and deadlines
- Understanding of boundaries

R - Roles

- Acceptance of a team leader
- Understand all members' roles
- Individual responsibilities
- Shared responsibilities
- Clear boundaries
- Identify and fill gaps

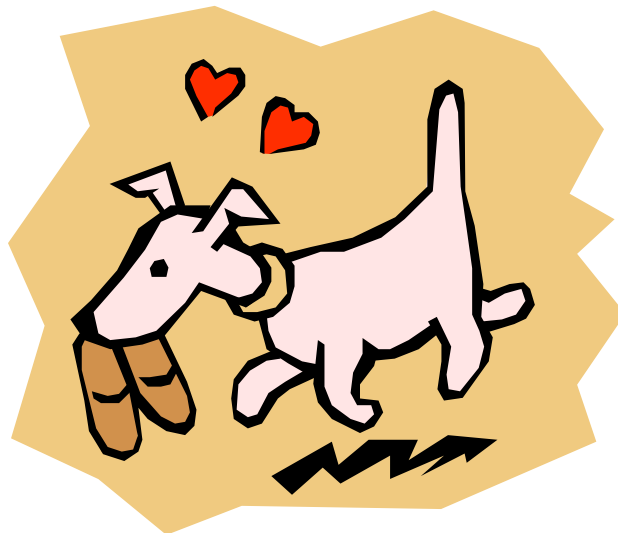
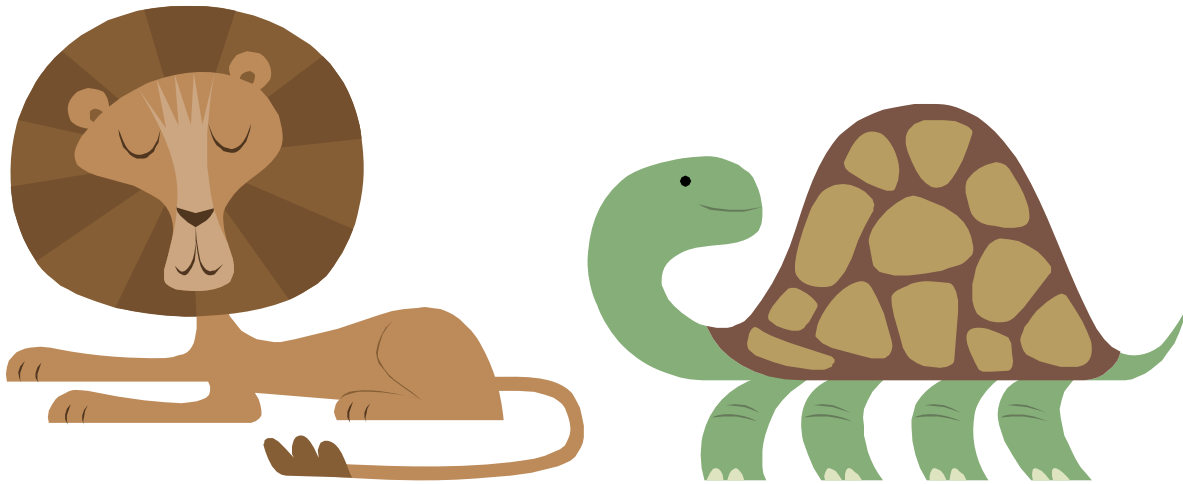
P – Process

- Team processes
 - How decisions are made
 - How the team solves problems and resolves conflict
 - Communication
- Work processes
 - Procedures
 - Work flow

I – Interpersonal relationships

- Relating with the other team members
- Trust
- Sensitivity and flexibility with each other
- Good communication
- Collaboration in problem solving
- Effective methods for dealing with conflict

**When faced with conflict,
which animal are you?**



Conflict-Management Style Survey

Marc Robert

Date _____

Instructions: Choose a single frame of reference for answering all 15 items, in this case, use work-related conflicts.

Allocate 10 points among the four alternative answers given for each of the 15 items below.

Example: When the people I work with become involved in a personal conflict, I usually:

Intervene to settle the dispute.	Call a meeting to talk over the problem.	Offer to help if I can.	Ignore the problem.
3	6	1	0

Be certain that your answers add up to 10 points.

1. When someone *I care about* is actively hostile toward me, i.e., yelling, threatening, abusive, etc., I tend to:

Column 1	Column 2	Column 3	Column 4
Respond in a hostile manner.	Try to persuade the person to give up his/her actively hostile behavior.	Stay and listen as long as possible.	Walk away.

2. When someone *who is relatively unimportant to me* is actively hostile toward me, i.e., yelling, threatening, abusive, etc., I tend to:

Respond in a hostile manner.	Try to persuade the person to give up his/her actively hostile behavior.	Stay and listen as long as possible.	Walk away.

3. When I observe people in conflicts in which anger, threats, hostility, and strong opinions are present, I tend to:

Become involved and take a position.	Attempt to mediate.	Observe to see what happens.	Leave as quickly as possible.

4. When I perceive another person as meeting his/her needs at my expense, I am apt to:

Work to do anything I can to change that person.	Rely on persuasion and "facts" when attempting to have that person change.	Work hard at changing how I relate to that person.	Accept the situation as it is.

5. When involved in an interpersonal dispute, my general pattern is to:

Draw the other person into seeing the problem as I do.	Examine the issues between us as logically as possible.	Look hard for a workable compromise.	Let time take its course and let the problem work itself out.

6. The quality that I value the most in dealing with conflict would be:

Emotional strength and security.	Intelligence.	Love and openness.	Patience.

7. Following a serious altercation with someone I care for deeply, I:

Strongly desire to go back and settle things my way.	Want to go back and work it out – whatever give-and-take is necessary.	Worry about it a lot but not plan to initiate further contact.	Let it lie and not plan to initiate further contact.

8. When I see a serious conflict developing between two people *I care about*, I tend to:

Express my disappointment that this had to happen.	Attempt to persuade them to resolve their differences.	Watch to see what develops.	Leave the scene.

9. When I see a serious conflict developing between two people *who are relatively unimportant to me*, I tend to:

Express my disappointment that this had to happen.	Attempt to persuade them to resolve their differences.	Watch to see what develops.	Leave the scene.

10. The feedback that I receive from most people about how I behave when faced with conflict and opposition indicates that i:

Try hard to get my way.	Try to work out differences cooperatively.	Am easy going and take a soft or conciliatory position.	Usually avoid the conflict.

11. When communicating with someone with whom I am having a serious conflict, I:

Try to overpower the other person with my speech.	Talk a little bit more than I listen.	Am an active listener (feeding back words and feelings.)	Am a passive listener (agreeing and apologizing).

12. When involved in an unpleasant conflict, I:

Use humor with the other party	Make an occasional quip or joke about the situation or the relationship.	Relate humor only to myself.	Suppress all attempts at humor.

13. When someone does something that irritates me (e.g., smokes in a nonsmoking area or crowds in line in front of me), my tendency in communicating with the offending person is to:

Insist that the person look me in the eye.	Look the person directly in the eye and maintain eye contact.	Maintain intermittent eye contact.	Avoid looking directly at the person.

14. (Same situation as #13)

Stand close and make physical contact.	Use my hands and body to illustrate my points.	Stand close to the person without touching him or her.	Stand back and keep my hands to myself.

15. (Same situation as #13)

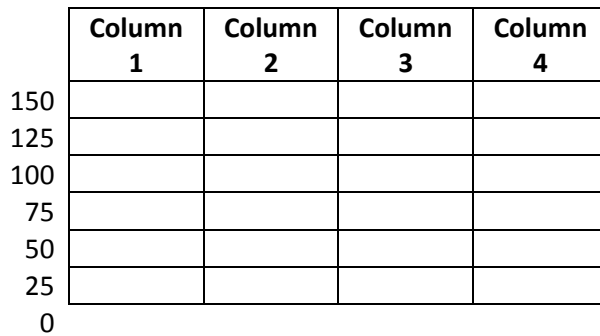
Use strong, direct language and tell the person to stop.	Try to persuade the person to stop.	Talk gently and tell the person what my feelings are.	Say and do nothing.

Scoring Instructions

Step	Action
1	Add your scores vertically, resulting in 4 column totals. Fill in the column totals in the chart below
2	Total your scores for column 1 and 2 and fill in total for Score A. Total your scores for column 3 and 4 and fill in total for Score B.
3	Darken in the bar graph to reflect your totals for each column.

Total Column 1	Total Column 2	Total Column 3	Total Column 4
Score A	Score B		

Bar Graph of Total Scores for Each Column



Interpretation

Column	Description
1	<p>Aggressive/Confrontive (Competing) High scores indicate a tendency toward “taking the bull by the horns” and a strong need to control situations and people. Those who use this style are often directive and judgmental.</p> <p>The opposite of accommodating: One uses whatever seems appropriate to win one’s own position.</p>
2	<p>Assertive/Persuasive (Collaborating) High scores indicate a tendency to stand up for oneself without being pushy, a proactive approach to conflict, and a willingness to collaborate. People who use this style depend heavily on their verbal skills.</p> <p>The opposite of avoiding: One works with the other person to find a solution that fully satisfies both one’s own concerns and those of the other.</p>
3	<p>Observant/Introspective (Accommodating) High scores indicate a tendency to observe others and examine oneself analytically in response to conflict situations as well as a need to adopt counseling and listening modes of behavior. Those who use this style are likely to be cooperative, even conciliatory.</p> <p>One seeks to satisfy the other person’s concerns at the expense of one’s own.</p>
4	<p>Avoiding/Reactive (Avoiding) High scores indicate a tendency toward passivity or withdrawal in conflict situations and a need to avoid confrontation. Those who use this style are usually accepting and patient, often suppressing their strong feelings.</p> <p>A person neglects his or her own concerns as well as those of the other person by not raising or addressing the conflict issue.</p>
	<p>Compromising (intermediate in cooperativeness and assertiveness) One seeks an expedient middle-ground position that provides partial satisfaction for both parties.</p>

Score	Description
A	If significantly higher than Score B (25 points or more), may indicate a tendency toward aggressive/assertive conflict management.
B	If significantly higher than Score A (25 points or more), may indicate a more conciliatory approach.

Conflict

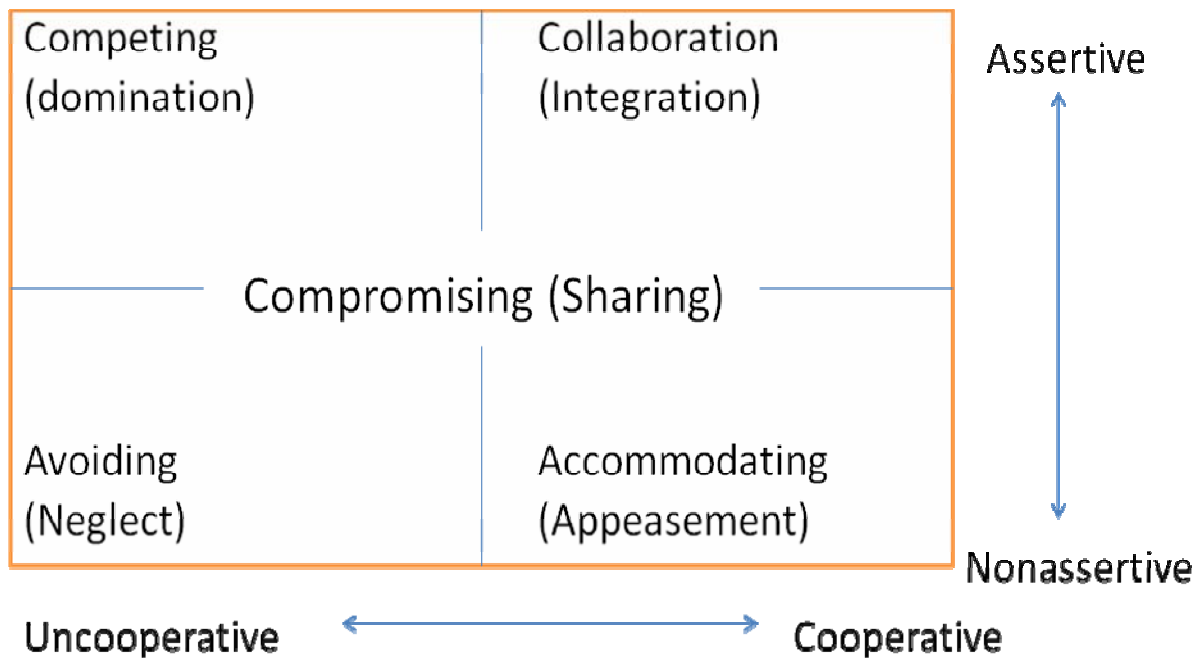
- Definition of conflict:
 - The process which begins when one party perceives that the other has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of his.
- Conflict itself is not harmful.
- Depends on how one handles and responds to the conflict
- Two general impulses:
 - Assertive – satisfy personal concerns
 - Non-assertive – satisfy the concerns of others

Reference: Thomas , K.W.(1976). "Conflict and Conflict Management"

Five Modes for Reacting to Conflict

1. Competing
2. Collaborating
3. Accommodating
4. Avoiding
5. Compromising (when score A and B are fairly equal)

Reference: Thomas and Kilmann (1974)



Reference: "Conflict and Conflict Management," by Kenneth Thomas, 1983.

Conflict Mode Relativity and Versatility

- None of the modes are inherently superior
- Depends on the situation and circumstances
- Most people use all styles, but are most comfortable with one or two
- Most people benefit from being flexible
- Versatility improves negotiating skills and ability to cope with many types of conflicts

Notes:

Guidelines for Using Conflict Management Styles

Best times to use a style

When to compete	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When quick, decisive action is needed • On important issues for which unpopular courses of action need implementing • On issues vital to company welfare when one knows one is right • When protection is needed against people who take advantage of noncompetitive behavior
When to collaborate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised • When the objective is to test one's own assumptions or better understand the views of others • When there is a need to merge insights from people with different perspectives on a problem • When commitment can be increased by incorporating others' concerns into a consensus decision • When working through hard feelings that have been interfering with an interpersonal relationship
When to compromise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When goals are moderately important but not worth the effort of potential disruption of more assertive modes • When two opponents with equal power are strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals • When temporary settlements are needed on complex issues • When expedient solutions are necessary under time pressure • If a back-up mode is needed when collaboration or competition fail
When to accommodate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When one realizes one is wrong • When the issue is much more important to the other person • When "credits" need to be accumulated for issues that are more important • When continued competition would only damage the cause • When preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are especially important • When subordinates need to develop and to be allowed to learn from mistakes
When to avoid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When an issue is trivial • When there is no chance of getting what you want • When the potential damage of confrontation outweighs the benefits of resolution • When one needs to cool down, reduce tensions, and regain perspective and composure • When one needs to gather more information • When others can resolve the conflict more effectively • When the issue seems symptomatic of another fundamental issue

Potential negative consequences of a style

Competing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Eventually being surrounded by “yes” people • Fear of admitting ignorance or uncertainty • Distorted perceptions • Reduced communication • No commitment from the other person • Having to keep “selling” or policing the solution during implementation
Collaborating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too much time spent on an insignificant issue • Ineffective decisions made from input from people unfamiliar with the situation • Unfounded assumptions about trust
Compromising	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No one is fully satisfied • Short-lived solution • A cynical climate through perception of a sell-out • Losing sight of the larger issues, principles, long-term objectives, values, and the company welfare by focusing on practicalities
Avoiding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decisions made by default • Unresolved issues • Energy sapped by sitting on issues • Self-doubt created through lack of esteem • Creative input and improvement prevented • Lack of credibility
Accommodating	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decreased influence, respect, or recognition by too much deference • Laxity in discipline • Frustration as own needs are not met • Self-esteem undermined • Relinquished best solution

Practice Activity

- Think of a situation at work where conflict has or is occurring.
- Select the best style for dealing with the conflict.
- Identify the styles to avoid.
- Discuss the situation with your table partner and why you selected the style to use.

Commitment Form

Name _____

Date _____

Based on what I learned today, I plan to

Do more of the following:

Do less of the following:

Try the following new ideas or behaviors:

Signature

References

G.R.P.I. Model for Team Effectiveness. Based on the work of M. Plovnik, R. Fry, and I. Rubin

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Basic Reactions to Conflict. K. W. Thomas, 1965. Conflict and Conflict Management. *Handbook of Industrial and Organizational Psychology (vol. 2)*. Chicago: Rand McNally.

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