Module 1:

Conflict Management

**Module 1: Conflict Management**

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# Module Overview

This module introduces Conflict and its causes, it also examines the mechanisms available to reduce conflict and the use of Assertive communication.

## Module Learning Objectives

Upon completing this module, you will be able to:

* Define Conflict
* Understand Killman’s 5 Conflict style
* Identify strategies for Conflict Management
* Understand Assertive communication its advantage and disadvantage
* Utilize basic mediation skills
* Utilize basic negotiation skills

# Exercise #1: Impressions of Conflict

**Instructions:**

1. Write a word that comes to mind when you reflect on the words “conflict” using the blank flash cards and markers provided to you.
2. Be prepared to share your answers with the class.
3. You may also take notes in the space below.

**Notes on Impressions of conflict**

# DEFINITION OF CONFLICT

* Antagonism between people, such as between workers and management, between supervisors and supervisees etc. (Dictionary of Hum Res & Person Mgmt.)
* CONFLICT exists in a relationship when the aspirations of parties cannot or are perceived not to be capable of being achieved simultaneously, or when parties’ values, needs or interests diverge or are perceived to diverge. Two or more parties have an unresolved controversy

**CAUSE OF CONFLICT**

## 

1. **Conflicting resources**.- We all need access to certain resources – whether these are office supplies, help from colleagues, or even a meeting room – to do our jobs well. When more than one person or group needs access to a particular resource, conflict can occur.
2. **Conflicting styles**.- Everyone works differently, according to his or her individual needs and personality. For instance, some people love the thrill of getting things done at the last minute, while others need the structure of strict deadlines to perform. However, when working styles clash, conflict can often occur.
3. **Conflicting perceptions**.- All of us see the world through our own lens, and differences in perceptions of events can cause conflict, particularly where one person knows something that the other person doesn't know, but doesn't realize this.

If your team members regularly engage in "turf wars" or gossip, you might have a problem with conflicting perceptions. Additionally, negative performance reviews or customer complaints can also result from this type of conflict.

Make an effort to eliminate this conflict by communicating openly with your team, even when you have to share bad news. The more information you share with your people, the less likely it is that they will come up with their own interpretations of events.

Different perceptions are also a common cause of office politics. For instance, if you assign a project to one person that normally would be someone else's responsibility, you may unwittingly ignite a power struggle between the two. Learn how to navigate [**office politics**](http://www.mindtools.com/pages/article/newCDV_85.htm) http://www.mindtools.com/images/tooltip/reading-plus-grey.gif , and coach your team to do the same.

4. **Conflicting Goals** -Sometimes we have conflicting goals in our work. For instance, one of our

managers might tell us that speed is most important goal with customers. Another manager

might say that in-depth, high-quality service is the top priority. It's sometimes quite difficult to reconcile the two! Whenever you set goals for your team members, make sure that those goals don't conflict with other goals set for that person, or set for other people.

5. **Conflicting pressures**.- We often have to depend on our colleagues to get our work done.

However, what happens when you need a report from your colleague by noon, and he's

already preparing a different report for someone else by that same deadline?

Conflicting pressures are similar to conflicting goals; the only difference is that conflicting pressures usually involve urgent tasks, while conflicting goals typically involve projects with longer timelines. If you suspect that people are experiencing conflict because of clashing short-term objectives, reschedule tasks and deadlines to relieve the pressure.

6. **Conflicting roles**. - Sometimes we have to perform a task that's outside our normal role or responsibilities. If this causes us to step into someone else's "territory," then conflict and power struggles can occur. The same can happen in reverse – sometimes we may feel that a particular task should be completed by someone else.

Conflicting roles are similar to conflicting perceptions. After all, one team member may view a task as his or her responsibility or territory. But when someone else comes in to take over that task, conflict occurs.

If you suspect that team members are experiencing conflict over their roles, explain why you've assigned tasks or projects to each person. Your explanation could go a long way toward remedying the pressure.

7. **Different personal values**.- Imagine that your boss has just asked you to perform a task that conflicts with your ethical standards. Do you do as your boss asks, or do you refuse? If you refuse, will you lose your boss's trust, or even your job?

When our work conflicts with our personal values like this, conflict can quickly arise.

8. **Unpredictable policies**- When rules and policies change at work and you don't communicate that change clearly to your team, confusion and conflict can occur.

In addition, if you fail to apply workplace policies consistently with members of your team, the disparity in treatment can also become a source of dissension.

**Conflict Manifestation** –

The following sets out some ways that conflict manifest itself in the work place.

# Verbal abuse

# Intimidation

# Work to rule

# Assaults

# Low productivity

# Excessive absence

# Insubordination

# Withdrawal of benefits/recognition

# Exercise #2:– Reviewing Cause of conflict

**Instructions:**

1. Each question is followed by a series of possible answers or choices. Read each question and decide and indicate which answer or choice is best suited by circling the appropriate letter.
2. Be prepared to share your answer with the class
   * + 1. Which of the following is not a cause of conflict?
3. Conflicting roles
4. Conflicting pressure
5. Conflicting feelings
6. Different Personal Values
7. Conflict Manifest itself via….
8. Intimidation
9. Assault
10. Excessive Absence
11. All of the above
12. **True** or **False**

Conflicting roles are similar to conflicting perception

# Killman’s 5 Conflict Styles

**The Five Conflict Styles**

(Thomas/Killman, 1972 with further descriptions and analysis by Bonnie Burrell, 2001)

**The Competing Style** is when you stress your position without considering opposing points of view. This style is highly assertive with minimal cooperativeness; the goal is to win. The competing style is used when a person has to take quick action, make unpopular decisions, handle vital issues, or when one needs protection in a situation where noncompetitive behavior can be exploited. To develop this style you must develop your ability to argue and debate, use your rank or position, assert your opinions and feelings, and learn to state your position and stand your ground.

Overuse of this style can lead to lack of feedback, reduced learning, and low empowerment. This can result in being surrounded by “Yes-Men”. People who overuse the competing style often use inflammatory statements due to a lack of interpersonal skills training. When overuse is taken to an extreme the person will create errors in the implementation of the task by withholding needed information, talking behind another person’s back (or “back-stabbing”), using eye motions and gestures designed to express disapproval, and creating distractions by fiddling or interrupting. Overuse of this style can be exhibited through constant tension or anger and occasional outbursts of violent temper.

Under use of the competing style leads to a lowered level of influence, indecisiveness, slow action, and withheld contributions. When the competing style is underused some emergent behaviors people exhibit include justifying the behaviors, demanding concessions as a condition of working on the problem, threatening separation as a way of making others give in, and launching personal attacks.

**The Avoiding Style** is when you do not satisfy your concerns or the concerns of the other person. This style is low assertiveness and low cooperativeness. The goal is to delay. It is appropriate to use this style when there are issues of low importance, to reduce tensions, or to buy time. Avoidance is also appropriate when you are in a low power position and have little control over the situation, when you need to allow others to deal with the conflict, or when the problem is symptomatic of a much larger issue and you need to work on the core issue. To develop skills in this style use foresight in knowing when to withdraw, learn to sidestep loaded questions or sensitive areas by using diplomacy, become skillful at creating a sense of timing, and practice leaving things unresolved.

Overuse of the avoidance style can result in a low level of input, decision-making by default, and allowing issues to fester, which can produce a breakdown in communication between team members. This can inhibit brainstorming sessions from being productive and can prevent the team from functioning. People who overuse avoidance feel they cannot speak frankly without fear of repercussions. The overuse of conflict avoidance can often be a result of childhood experiences, past work-related incidents, and negative experiences with conflict resolution. Behaviors associated with the overuse of avoidance include being silent, sullen, and untruthful when asked if something is wrong being. A milder form of avoidance behavior is when the team member procrastinates about getting work done and deliberately takes an opposing point of view inappropriately during a decision-making situation, or is timid, withdrawn, or shy. Extreme behaviors can occur when avoidance is overused. A person begins to be negative, critical and sarcastic. Other extreme avoidance behaviors include becoming passive aggressive by being late and not paying attention at meetings. It also lends a greater importance to this style as compared to the other styles because you have devoted such a disproportionate amount of time to the style.)

Under use of the avoidance style results in hostility and hurt feelings. In addition, work can become overwhelming because too many issues are taken on at once, resulting in an inability to prioritize and delegate. When avoidance is underused a team member may deny that there is a problem and allow their hurt feelings to prevent communication.

**The Compromising Style** is finding a middle ground or forgoing some of your concerns and committing to other's concerns. This style is moderately assertive and moderately cooperative; the goal is to find middle ground. The compromising style is used with issues of moderate importance, when both parties are equally powerful and equally committed to opposing views. This style produces temporary solutions and is appropriate when time is a concern, and as a back up for the competing and collaborating styles when they are unsuccessful in resolving the situation. Compromising skills include the ability to communicate and keep the dialogue open, the ability to find an answer that is fair to both parties, the ability to give up part of what you want, and the ability to assign value to all aspects of the issue.

Overuse of the compromising style leads to loss of long-term goals, a lack of trust, creation of a cynical environment, and being viewed as having no firm values. Overuse of compromise can result in making concessions to keep people happy without resolving the original conflict.

Under use leads to unnecessary confrontations, frequent power struggles, and ineffective negotiating.

**The Collaborating Style** is when the concern is to satisfy both sides. It is highly assertive and highly cooperative; the goal is to find a “win/win” solution. Appropriate uses for the collaborating style include integrating solutions, learning, merging perspectives, gaining commitment, and improving relationships. Using this style can support open discussion of issues, task proficiency, equal distribution of work amongst the team members, better brainstorming, and development of creative problem solving. This style is appropriate to use frequently in a team environment. Collaborating skills include the ability to use active or effective listening, confront situations in a non-threatening way, analyze input, and identify underlying concerns.

Overuse of the collaborating style can lead to spending too much time on trivial matters, diffusion of responsibility, being taken advantage of, and being overloaded with work. Under use can result in using quick fix solutions, lack of commitment by other team members, disempowerment, and loss of innovation.

**The Accommodating Style** is foregoing your concerns in order to satisfy the concerns of others. This style is low assertiveness and high cooperativeness; the goal is to yield. The accommodating style is appropriate to use in situations when you want to show that you are reasonable, develop performance, create good will, keep peace, retreat, or for issues of low importance. Accommodating skills include the ability to sacrifice, the ability to be selfless, the ability to obey orders, and the ability to yield.

Overuse of the accommodating style results in ideas getting little attention, restricted influence, loss of contribution, and anarchy. People who overuse the accommodating style exhibit a lack of desire to change and usually demonstrate anxiety over future uncertainties. One of their main desires may be to keep everything the same. When accommodating is overused certain behaviors emerge. Some of these emergent behaviors include giving up personal space, making "me" or other victim statements, being overly helpful and then holding a grudge, and speaking in an extremely quiet almost unintelligible voice. Under use of the accommodating style can result in lack of rapport, low morale, and an inability to yield. When the accommodating style is underused a person may display apathy as a way of not addressing the anger or hurt, and make statements full of innuendo and double meanings.

# Exercise #3: Match the Animals with the conflict styles,

**Instructions:**

1.Match the Animals with its corresponding response style and indicate one feature of this style

2.Be prepared to share your response

**Activities:**

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|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Animals** | **Conflict Styles** |
| [http://tse1.mm.bing.net/th?&id=JN.dR%2bjroM6SIv0Oqm6QoH2nA&w=300&h=300&c=0&pid=1.9&rs=0&p=0](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=sheep+drawing&view=detailv2&&id=E050205CEBA3A8D194F01016303DE51B113623DD&selectedIndex=14&ccid=n5PWSCXp&simid=608040887316384725&thid=JN.dR+jroM6SIv0Oqm6QoH2nA) | Compromising |
| [http://tse1.mm.bing.net/th?&id=JN.lZDpl9%2bCpAHT9F0SG45rKA&w=300&h=300&c=0&pid=1.9&rs=0&p=0](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=owldrawings&view=detailv2&&id=9CCA60BB94480969E4EA9C5E8158F9D0C14AD19E&selectedIndex=19&ccid=KJdf1kJ3&simid=608013476834840128&thid=JN.lZDpl9+CpAHT9F0SG45rKA) | Aggressive |
| [http://tse1.mm.bing.net/th?&id=JN.ET9RXLcig%2b/ityHBYTpmdA&w=300&h=300&c=0&pid=1.9&rs=0&p=0](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=fox+drawings&view=detailv2&&id=B24883F96DF2EBBC20B10FCC2F31AE91049AE162&selectedIndex=0&ccid=NMoyRC72&simid=608007876192895385&thid=JN.ET9RXLcig+/ityHBYTpmdA) | Collaborative |
| [http://tse1.mm.bing.net/th?&id=JN.mZaRyPn0nTLk81nso8GM6A&w=300&h=300&c=0&pid=1.9&rs=0&p=0](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=shark+drawings&view=detailv2&&id=E06501A2EF0AF9FBD37DF9622AD2B4D46F577E08&selectedIndex=224&ccid=KE/1EeQp&simid=608013889155040264&thid=JN.mZaRyPn0nTLk81nso8GM6A) | Avoidance |
| . [http://tse1.mm.bing.net/th?&id=JN.pA9ZARES651B36zXiHkM3Q&w=300&h=300&c=0&pid=1.9&rs=0&p=0](http://www.bing.com/images/search?q=ostrich+drawings&view=detailv2&&id=BA0BD2BE54CB40CD3C8FC37D3B75926523CCBEEE&selectedIndex=1&ccid=XrWuHMA8&simid=608004616318093904&thid=JN.pA9ZARES651B36zXiHkM3Q) | Accommodating |

Approaches to tackling conflict and Assertive communication (Please see Slides)

# MEDIATION

There are 6 steps to a formal mediation:

1) introductory remarks,

2) statement of the problem by the parties,

3) information gathering time,

4) identification of the problems,

5) bargaining and generating options, and

6) reaching an agreement.

**Introductory Remarks**

The mediator will wait until both parties are present and then make introductions. The physical setting will be controlled so that no party feels threatened. Most mediators will ask that if children are present, they wait outside. The mediator will then give an opening statement. This outlines the role of the participants and demonstrates the mediator’s neutrality. Some mediators will make comments about what they see as the issue and confirm the case data if briefs have been pre-submitted. Next, the mediator will define protocol and set the time frame for the process. There will be a review of the mediation guidelines and the mediator will briefly recap what it is that he has heard as the issues. The opening statement during the introductory remarks will set out the ground rules for the mediation. These ground rules are what help the mediation move along smoothly. The mediator will usually ask that if attorneys are present, they can confer, but the clients should speak for themselves. Parties should not interrupt each other; the mediator will give each party the opportunity to fully share their side of the story.

**Statement of the Problem by the Parties**

After the opening statement, the mediator will give each side the opportunity to tell their story uninterrupted. Most often, the person who requested the mediation session will go first. The statement is not necessarily a recital of the facts, but it is to give the parties an opportunity to frame issues in their own mind, and to give the mediator more information on the emotional state of each party. If there are lawyers present who make the initial statement, the mediator will then ask the client to also make a statement. The rationale behind the statement of the problem is not a search for the truth; it is just a way to help solve the problem.

**Information Gathering**

The mediator will ask the parties open-ended questions to get to the emotional undercurrents. The mediator may repeat back key ideas to the parties, and will summarize often. This helps the mediator build rapport between the parties, especially when a facilitative style is used.

**Problem Identification**

This might also be part of other segments. The mediator tries to find common goals between the parties. The mediator will figure out which issues are going to be able to settle or those that will settle first.

**Bargaining and Generating Options / Reaching an Agreement**

Methods for developing options may include group processes, discussion groups or sub groups, developing hypothetical plausible scenarios, or a mediators proposal where the mediator puts a proposal on the table and the parties take turns modifying it. However, the most commonly used method is the caucus.

Once the participants are committed to achieving a negotiated settlement, the mediator will propose a brainstorming session to explore potential solutions. This can lead to a final agreement, which diffuses the conflict and provides a new basis for future relations.

The mediator may decide to hold private sessions with both parties in order to move the negotiations along. This caucus session will be confidential. The caucus provides a safe environment in which to brainstorm and surface underlying fears. The goal of the session is to find some common ground by exploring lots of options, and to bring about possible solutions for the parties to think about. Parties can also entertain alternative solutions to their problems without committing themselves to offer the solutions as concessions

## Negotiation

## Strategies

Negotiation can take a wide variety of forms, from a trained negotiator acting on behalf of a particular organization or position in a formal setting, to an informal negotiation between friends. Negotiation can be contrasted with [mediation](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Mediation), where a neutral third party listens to each side's arguments and attempts to help craft an agreement between the parties. It can also be compared with [arbitration](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Arbitration), which resembles a legal proceeding. In arbitration, both sides make an argument as to the merits of their case and the arbitrator decides the outcome. This negotiation is also sometimes called positional or hard-[bargaining](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bargaining) negotiation.

Negotiation theorists generally distinguish between two types of negotiation. Different theorists use different labels for the two general types and distinguish them in different ways.

### Distributive negotiation

Distributive negotiation is also sometimes called positional or hard-bargaining negotiation. It tends to approach negotiation on the model of haggling in a market. In a distributive negotiation, each side often adopts an extreme position, knowing that it will not be accepted, and then employs a combination of guile, bluffing, and brinkmanship in order to cede as little as possible before reaching a deal. Distributive bargainers conceive of negotiation as a process of distributing a fixed amount of value.

The term distributive implies that there is a finite amount of the thing being distributed or divided among the people involved. Sometimes this type of negotiation is referred to as the distribution of a "fixed pie." There is only so much to go around, but the proportion to be distributed is variable. Distributive negotiation is also sometimes called *win-lose* because of the assumption that one person's gain results in another person's loss. A distributive negotiation often involves people who have never had a previous interactive relationship, nor are they likely to do so again in the near future. Simple everyday examples would be buying a car or a house.

### Negotiation styles

Kenneth W. Thomas identified 5 styles/responses to negotiation. These ﬁve strategies have been frequently described in the literature and are based on the dual-concern model.The dual concern model of [conflict resolution](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Conflict_resolution) is a perspective that assumes individuals' preferred method of dealing with conflict is based on two themes or dimensions

1. A concern for self (i.e. [assertiveness](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Assertiveness)), and
2. A concern for others (i.e. [empathy](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Empathy)).

Based on this model, individuals balance the concern for personal needs and interests with the needs and interests of others. The following five styles can be used based on individuals’ preferences depending on their pro-self or pro-social goals.These styles can change over time, and individuals can have strong dispositions towards numerous styles. 1. Accommodating: Individuals who enjoy solving the other party's problems and preserving personal relationships. Accommodators are sensitive to the emotional states, body language, and verbal signals of the other parties. They can, however, feel taken advantage of in situations when the other party places little emphasis on the relationship. 2. Avoiding: Individuals who do not like to negotiate and don't do it unless warranted. When negotiating, avoiders tend to defer and dodge the confrontational aspects of negotiating; however, they may be perceived as tactful and diplomatic. 3. Collaborating: Individuals who enjoy negotiations that involve solving tough problems in creative ways. Collaborators are good at using negotiations to understand the concerns and interests of the other parties. They can, however, create problems by transforming simple situations into more complex ones. 4. Competing: Individuals who enjoy negotiations because they present an opportunity to win something. Competitive negotiators have strong instincts for all aspects of negotiating and are often strategic. Because their style can dominate the bargaining process, competitive negotiators often neglect the importance of relationships. 5. Compromising: Individuals who are eager to close the deal by doing what is fair and equal for all parties involved in the negotiation. Compromisers can be useful when there is limited time to complete the deal; however, compromisers often unnecessarily rush the negotiation process and make concessions too quickly.

### Types of negotiators[[edit](https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Negotiation&action=edit&section=9)]

Three basic kinds of negotiators have been identified by researchers involved in The Harvard Negotiation Project. These types of negotiators are: **Soft bargainers**, **hard bargainers**, and **principled bargainers**.

* **Soft**. These people see negotiation as too close to competition, so they choose a gentle style of bargaining. The offers they make are not in their best interests, they yield to others' demands, avoid confrontation, and they maintain good relations with fellow negotiators. Their perception of others is one of friendship, and their goal is agreement. They do not separate the people from the problem, but are soft on both. They avoid contests of wills and will insist on agreement, offering solutions and easily trusting others and changing their opinions.
* **Hard**. These people use contentious strategies to influence, utilizing phrases such as "this is my final offer" and "take it or leave it." They make threats, are distrustful of others, insist on their position, and apply pressure to negotiate. They see others as adversaries and their ultimate goal is victory. Additionally, they will search for one single answer, and insist you agree on it. They do not separate the people from the problem (as with soft bargainers), but they are hard on both the people involved and the problem.
* **Principled**. Individuals who bargain this way seek integrative solutions, and do so by sidestepping commitment to specific positions. They focus on the problem rather than the intentions, motives, and needs of the people involved. They separate the people from the problem, explore interests, avoid bottom lines, and reach results based on standards (which are independent of personal will). They base their choices on objective criteria rather than power, pressure, self-interest, or an arbitrary decisional procedure. These criteria may be drawn from moral standards, principles of fairness, professional standards, tradition, and so on.

Researchers from The Harvard Negotiation Project recommend that negotiators explore a number of alternatives to the problems they are facing in order to come to the best overall conclusion/solution, but this is often not the case (as when you may be dealing with an individual utilizing soft or hard bargaining tactics) (Forsyth, 2010).

### Bad faith negotiation

When a party pretends to negotiate, but secretly has no intention of compromising, the party is considered to be negotiating in [bad faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bad_faith). [Bad faith](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Bad_faith) is a concept in negotiation theory whereby parties pretend to reason to reach settlement, but have no intention to do so, for example, one political party may pretend to negotiate, with no intention to compromise, for political effect.

# Exercise #4: Negotiation Case – Ugli Eggs

**Instructions:**

1 Place your-self in groups of two and Negotiate the Case provide.

2. Be prepared to share with the Class

# Module Summary

In this module you were introduced to Conflict and its causes, you also examined the mechanisms available to reduce conflict and the use of Assertive communication.

In this module you also learned:

* Define Conflict
* Understand Killman’s 5 Conflict style
* Identify strategies for Conflict Management
* Understand Assertive communication its advantage and disadvantage
* Utilize basic mediation skills
* Utilize basic negotiation skills