



Chaplain's Life Enrichment Program

Conflict Management

How to recognize and work productively with differences

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Conflict Management

How to recognize and work productively with differences

- Conflict is neither good nor bad . . .
It's inevitable!
- All unresolved conflict weakens relationships
- All unresolved conflict decreases productivity & lowers performance

Most conflicts are . . .

- Minor
- Easily handled
- Overlooked *(without harm to people and issues)*
- Avoidable! *(if)*
 - *Courtesies are extended*
 - *Explanations are provided*
 - *a service oriented behavior/attitude is displayed*
- Time bound

Conflict can be . . .

- Difference of opinion or approach
- Competing interests & goals
- To further hidden agendas
- Value conflicts
- Unclear/unspoken
- Space needs - *“Keep your distance”*
 - *“Do not disturb - refueling!”*

Goal of this Workshop . . .

How to handle conflicts constructively

Constructive fighting is a skill which:

- Reduces tension & frustration
- Live with fewer inhibitions and no lies
- Enhances teamwork
- Free to grow - become more productive, creative
- Perform better
- Feel less guilty about negative emotions
- Face fewer unpleasant surprises
- Improves communication
- Worry less about the past which cannot be changed
- Feel less vulnerable

Positive effects of conflict . . .

- Raises different points of view
- Surfaces innovative
- Hones ideas that need development
- Taps the resources of all participants

Symptoms of underlying conflict

Individual

- Avoidance
 - *absenteeism, hiding out, yes-ing the boss*
 - *self-centeredness*
 - *hiding behind the rules*
- Repression
 - *ill health, escapist drinking, irregular productivity, low satisfaction, irritability*
- Reactive
 - *flashes of anger, non-cooperation, rumors*
 - *stealing and destruction, counter organizations, strikes*

Symptoms of underlying conflict

Inter-Group

- Competition
- Rigidity
- Appeals to superiors for decisions
- Decreased rate of interaction
- Low trust
- Suspicion
- Hostility

Conflict vs. Job Performance

- Productivity is GREATEST with a MODERATE amount of conflict.
- Productivity is LOWEST when:
 - There is no conflict (laissez-faire attitude)
 - There is too much conflict (high anxiety, tension)
- Bell shaped curve

Common but unhealthy

- Kitchen Sink Fighting
- Laundry List
- Mt. Vesuvius

Conflict resolution strategies

- Avoidance
 - *repress emotions*
 - *look the other way*
 - *run, quit, etc.*
- Defusion
 - *downplay*
 - *cool off*
- Confrontation
 - *power and force*
 - *negotiation*

Conflict Resolution

- **Compromise**

- *Neither party gets everything he or she wants, but gets something.*
- *Each gives up something. Often quite satisfactory to each.*
- **This resolution is “part-way” for each.**

- **Capitulation**

- *One partner gives in to what the other wants. This works well when the issue is relatively unimportant to one partner.*
- **This resolution is “one way.”**

Conflict Resolution

- **Co-existence**
 - *Partners agree to disagree.*
 - **This resolution is “both ways.”**
- **Collaboration**
 - *Partners work together to understand the real issues behind the difference and search for a resolution that meets the needs of both.*
 - **This resolution is “both ways.”**

Conflict Styles

1. Placator - *Yield-lose*

low personal goals, high relationship goals

2. Detached - *Lose-leave*

low personal goals, low relationship goals

3. Tough Battler - *Win-lose*

high personal goals, low relationship goals

4. Problem Solver - *Win-win*

high personal goals, high relationship goals

How a fight escalates

Issue --> Personality --> Relationship

1. Fight over a specific issue
escalates to
2. Personality level
which escalates to
3. Relationship level
"I want a divorce!"

Healthy fighting techniques

- Choose what conflicts to address and what to let go
- Stick to the subject
- Deal in potential, not the past
- Don't use the "silent treatment"
- Attack the problem, not the other
- Never say "*you never*" or "*you always*"
- Offer solutions with constructive criticism
- Don't try to force the other person to be your carbon copy
- Be humble - you could be wrong
- Be willing to apologize
- Let the conflict end when it's over

Bad fighting techniques

- **uninvited character analysis**
- **stereotyping**
- **let down partner's expectations**
- **change the subject**
- **attack your partner's Achilles' Heel**
- **passive aggressive styles**
- **create disorder --> crisis maker**
- **physical force - never acceptable**

Sample technique for confronting

1. Set a time & place to talk
2. State your intentions & expectations
for the outcome of this meeting
3. State the event
4. State your feelings about the event &
end your statement with a question

Sample technique for confronting

5. Explore all relevant information

- *facts*
- *interpretations*
- *feelings*

6. Repeat your partner's view of the event

7. Explore solutions that would satisfy both of you

8. Offer "*fair exchange*" proposals

9. Test your agreement & commitment

"Give it a try"

Fair Fighting Techniques

1. **Timing - *set aside a time to discuss the issues***
2. **Stick to the issue**
3. **Choose flexible terms**
4. **Be realistic**
5. **Be responsible**
6. **Affirm your spouse**
7. **Don't analyze**
8. **Be supportive**
9. **Take time limited cooling off periods**
10. **Compromise**
11. **Don't manipulate**
12. **Avoid money-control tactics**
13. **Model behavior you want your children to adopt**
14. **Be consistent**
15. **Practice**

Dirty Fighting Techniques

1. Timing - *pick the wrong time and place*
2. Escalation
3. Brown bagging
4. Over generalize
5. Cross-complain
6. Interrupt your partner
7. Ask why
8. Blame
9. Pull rank
10. Don't listen, dominate
11. List injustices
12. Label
13. Mind read
14. Fortune-telling
15. Sarcasm
16. Avoid responsibility
17. Leave
18. Reject compromise
19. Personalize
20. Play the martyr
21. Use money
22. Use children
23. Use relatives
24. Give advice
25. Get even
26. Use terminal language
27. Be inconsistent
28. Harbor grudges



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In Summary

Conflict management is an
ART
which can be learned.