

# Working with Conflict

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# Objectives

Participants will be able to:

1. Define conflict in the workplace.
2. Anticipate potential outcomes resulting from conflict.
3. Identify contributing factors and types of conflict in the workplace.
4. Recognize personal style/approach to situations involving conflict.
5. Compare and contrast various strategies for conflict.
6. Examine strategies for conflict resolution.
7. Steps on “How to fight fair”.

# Conflict

## What's the definition of conflict?

- Is all conflict bad?
- Are there benefits?
- Why is conflict resolution important?

# Conflict style profile

1. Complete the conflict style profile.
2. When you are done with page one, raise your hand.
3. The scoring sheet will be provided, and you'll transfer your scores to the scoring sheet.
4. Finally, rank your top three conflict styles.

Source: Sybil Evans, Conflict Styles, Published by Amherst Educational Publishing, 1998. Available at [www.loyola.edu/dwlrc/maincon.html](http://www.loyola.edu/dwlrc/maincon.html).

# Conflict Styles

**Cautious**

**Seeking**

**Strong**

**Peaceful**

**Calm**

**Feeling**

**Compromising**

**Solution-focused**



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# The Product of Conflict

In a study of 775 employees across industries:

- 28% lost time avoiding the instigator.
- 53% lost work time worrying about the incident.
- 37% believed their commitment to the organization declined.
- 22% decreased their effort at work.
- 10% decreased the amount of time they spend at work
- 46% contemplated changing jobs
- 12% actually changed jobs to avoid the instigator.
- Only 25% were satisfied with the way their organization handled the situation.

# Organizational Costs

Between 30-42% of a manager's time is spent dealing with conflict. Unresolved conflict can have major organizational impact:

- Employee attitudes/interactions
- Increasing complaints and legal actions
- Retention and recruiting
- Productivity

# Outcomes of Conflict

- Lost time
- Decline in organizational commitment
- Decreased work effort and time spent at work
- Change of employment
- Improved satisfaction and commitment
- Improved collegiality
- Improved efficiency, processes and/or systems



# Contributing Factors of Conflict

## ORGANIZATIONAL FACTORS

- Organizational change
- Diverse employee groups
- Strategic and operational disagreement

## INTERPERSONAL FACTORS

- Lack of common understanding
- Goal conflict
- Poor communication skills
- Unclear or unfamiliar expectations
- Power play and manipulation

# The Types of Conflict

Task Conflict

vs.

Relationship Conflict



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# The Types of Conflict

Substantive Conflict

vs.

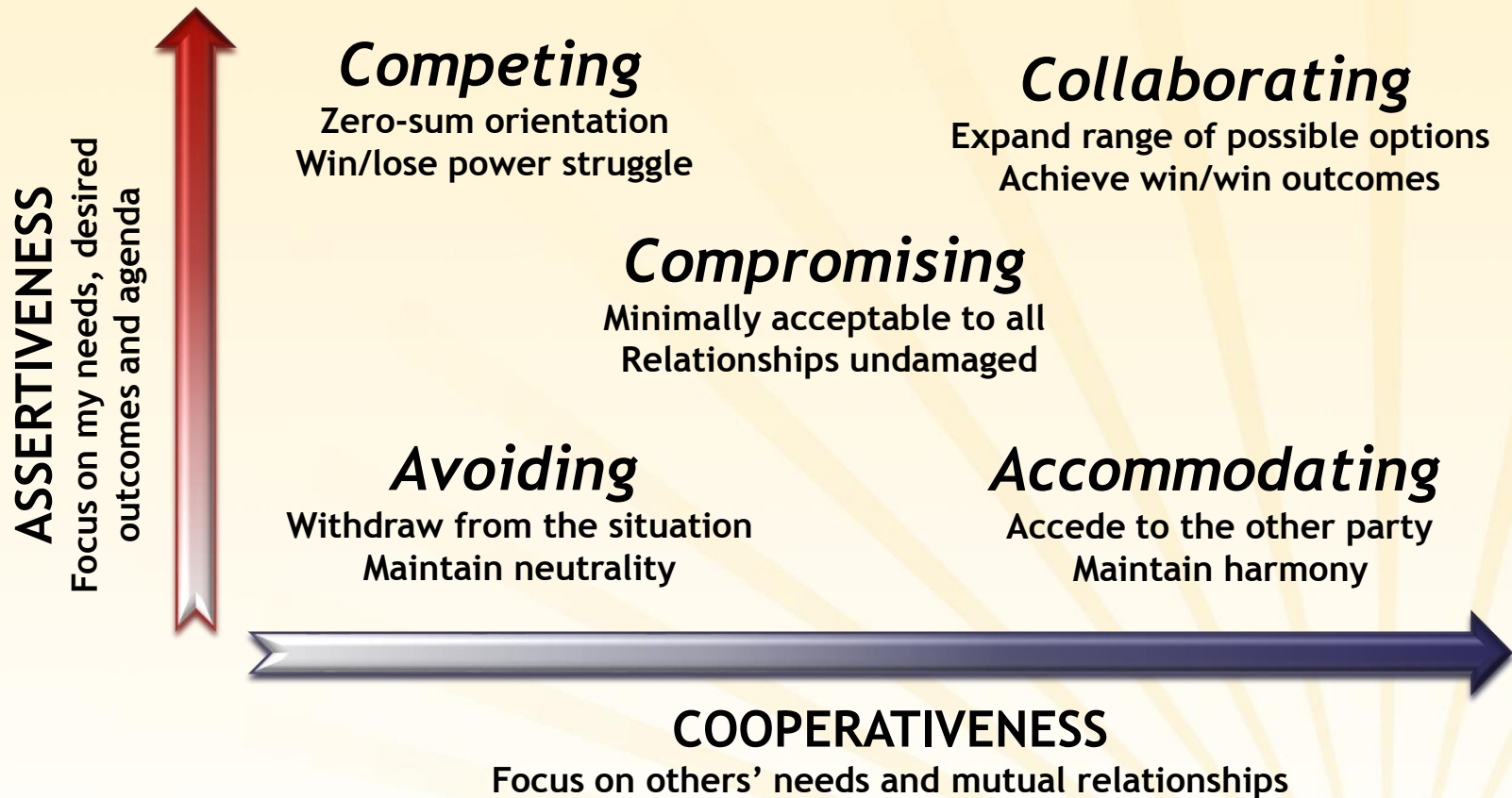
Affective Conflict



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Consider how you and  
those around you respond  
to conflict.

# Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Modes



(Thomas & Kilmann, 1974)



# Case Study



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# Dr. Rose and Dr. Buckley

Dr. Rose and Dr. Buckley work on solutions for curing diseases and ending world hunger, respectively. The key to solving both problems is an ingredient in Pyro, produced by NASA and grown only once a year during scheduled space missions. In order for both doctors to solve their problems, an agreement has to be reached between them and NASA, and they must determine a win-win solution for themselves!

# Dr. Rose and Dr. Buckley

Review the role-play provided to you. Feel free to share all you like, but do not read the other person's scenario.

Raise your hand when you think you have a **win-win solution.**

- How did you eventually resolve the conflict, or was it even resolved?
- In what ways does this exercise parallel your current work environment?
- What insights can you take back to your day-to-day job environment?

# What would you do?



(Thomas & Kilmann, 1974)

# Conflict Resolution

- Be proactive
- Recognize conflict early
- Define the problem
- Actively listen
- Seek a solution
- Remain calm
- Seek Commitment
- Plan an approach
- Intervene as soon as drift occurs
- Describe the behavior
- State what you want
- Consider what they would want



# When emotions run high...

- Determine your goal and focus on it
- Speak to who is present
- Avoid name-calling and blaming
- Beware of self-righteousness

# Tools for Dealing with Conflict

- Unified vision
- Systems thinking
- Presence
- Inquiry
- Conscious conversation
- Dialogue
- Bridging
- Innovation

# How to Fight Fair

- Attack the problem, not the person.
- Work towards solving the problem, not changing the person.
- Work on one problem at a time, no problem piling.
- Agree ahead of time to remain professional no matter what.

# Final thoughts...

# References

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