TAG – YOU’RE IT!
Conflict Management Skills

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Objectives:

1. Identify the importance of managing conflict in the workplace.
2. Select 2 new techniques to apply back in your own worksite.
3. Acquire 2 new skills in assertiveness and self-management.
Conflict is inevitable throughout life
Facts

- Emotion, communication and conflict are present in all human interactions and impact each person differently.

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Conflict happens when any two people disagree on an issue.
Facts

- Habits rule!
- Patterns and styles - developed early in life.
  - These affect relationships, career and financial progress.
Facts

- Without the proper training, there is only a 14% chance of reaching a desired resolution to any type conflict.

http://www.defyingrightandwrong.com/conflict.htm
Facts

Without training, there is only a 4% chance of coming away from a debate, dispute or argument with a winning solution and a better, stronger relationship with the other person.

http://www.defyingrightandwrong.com/conflict.htm
What causes conflict in the workplace?

- Tension and Deadlines
- Overnight mergers
- Information Overload
- Downsizing
- Instant communication with multiple parties

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Increasingly complex

Administrators and human resource managers face the cost and challenge of employment-related disputes.
Your Role as Employee

- Sometimes you disagree with others...but it does not have to be win-lose.

- You can achieve more of what you want by effective **assertiveness**.
Common Areas of Disagreement

- Job performance and outcomes
- Dress code expectations
- Work shift scheduling
- Compensation for overtime in salaried positions
- Balance of “power”
- Motivation – this actually comes from within!!
Team Self-Assessment

- Low morale
- Varying loyalty
- High stress levels
- Unsolved gripes
- Team disputes
- Criticism
- Reactive managers
- High turnover
- Blame-Scapegoating
- Missed deadlines

- Lack of feedback
- Weak team identities
- Power struggles
- Non-team playing managers
- Open conflict
- Resentment
- Verbal abuse
- Physical violence
- Back-stabbing
Effects on Performance?
Self-Assessment: Do You...

1. Listen carefully to prevent misunderstandings?
2. Monitor your own work habits to understand and coordinate your actions with others?
3. Work with management when you can't solve problems on your own?
4. Provide suggestions for change and improvements in the workplace?

5. Offer as much information as possible about issues to minimize confusion and resentment?
Self-Assessment: Do You...

6. Clear the air in regular meetings to discuss legitimate grievances?

7. Participate in employee surveys?
Assertiveness: What Is It?

The ability to express oneself and to identify one’s rights without violating the rights of others
Assertiveness

- Assertive communication is appropriately direct, open, and honest communication that is self-enhancing and expressive.
  - Acting assertively allows individuals to feel self-confident and to gain the respect of others.

- It increases honest relationships, and helps individuals feel better about themselves and their self-control in everyday situations.
  - To feel in control allows a person to achieve more of what he or she is seeking from life, including relationships and career choices.
Assertiveness

- Assertive behavior often leads to conflict, since the rights or opinions of another person may be in direct opposition.

- This is *not* aggression, which may be interpreted as selfishness at the expense of others.
  - Assertiveness allows each person to express his/her thoughts, needs and concerns without forcing them on others.
Assertiveness

- Routine contact, communication, and interaction between physicians and dietitians are vital if medical nutrition therapy is to succeed
  – Boyhtari and Cardinal, 1997
Assertiveness

- In many cases, feedback and resolution of differing opinions is an important action plan when communications fall short of expectations

Assertiveness

- Competitiveness in the marketplace requires a personality that is assertive, confident, and able to handle conflict.

- Negotiation is a needed strategy to resolve conflict and a divergence of interests, real or perceived; effective communication of goals, needs, and wants has to take place (Anastakis, 2003.)

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Becoming More Assertive

- Be direct, honest, and open about feelings, opinions and needs.
- Make reasonable requests directly and firmly, and discuss goals or intentions directly and honestly.
- State points of view without apology or hesitancy. Being responsible for your own behavior builds self-esteem.
Becoming More Assertive

- Do not let friends, peers, or others impose their behaviors, values and ideas on you. Instead, communicate your ideas, thoughts and feelings. (Runaway Bride?)

- Avoid "why" questions; they allow the listener to be defensive.

- Recognize and respect the rights of friends, colleagues, family and strangers. Use "I" and "we" statements to express feelings, instead of blaming and or using finger-pointing "you" statements.
Becoming More Assertive

• Be honest when giving and receiving compliments. Accept compliments graciously and don't feel one is owed in return.

• Say no to unreasonable requests, using the word "no" and offering an explanation if so desired. Do not apologize and do not make up excuses.

• Paraphrase the other person's point of view to let him or her know that the request has been heard and understood.
Becoming More Assertive

- When communicating with others, use an appropriate tone of voice, body posture and good eye contact.

- Tone of voice should be appropriate to the situation. Stand or sit at a comfortable distance from the other person.

- Gestures can be used to emphasize what is being said and the word "I" and "we" should be used in statements to convey your feelings.
Becoming More Assertive

• Ask for useful feedback. Then apply it in the next situation.

• Practice in different settings with different people until comfort is reached.

Adapted from:

http://ub-counseling.buffalo.edu/language.shtml

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Conflict Style

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Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument compares five distinct modes:

- **Accommodating**: Low assertiveness and high cooperativeness — goal: to "yield"

- **Avoiding**: Low assertiveness and low cooperativeness — goal: to "delay"
Conflict Style Inventory

Thomas-Kilmann, continued

- **Competing:** High assertiveness and low cooperativeness — goal: to "win"

- **Compromising:** Moderate assertiveness and moderate cooperativeness — goal: "find a middle ground"

- **Collaborating:** High assertiveness and high cooperativeness — goal: "find a win-win solution"
Knowing the styles can be viewed as an opportunity for growth and change in the work environment.

*HINT: Survey the whole team.*
The most useful style in most cases: **Collaboration.**
Where to start?

Recognize and maintain awareness of YOUR OWN feelings!
Harboring and suppressing your feelings will only perpetuate conflict; this inhibits you from dealing directly with the conflict in a constructive, problem-solving manner.

(Keil, 2000)
Three-Step Process for Preventing Disruptive Conflict

1. Promote harmony
2. Practice effective communication
3. Be prepared to negotiate
1. Promote Harmony

- Encourage open communication
- Encourage acceptance of others
- Become aware of brewing conflicts
- Realize that friendship at work is **NOT** your goal
- Empower yourself
- Stay relaxed; avoid hostility

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A hostile reaction often leads the other person to become defensive, blocking any attempt to work through and resolve the problem.

Keil, 2000

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2. Communicate Effectively

- Choose an appropriate time and place; plan ahead
- Give needed information
- Listen; don’t blame
- Watch what you say...avoid words like “never,” “always,” and “don’t”
- Work on a mutual solution

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3. Be Prepared to Negotiate

A GOOD Negotiator....

• Is diplomatic yet assertive
• Keeps details confidential
• Works toward incentives that persuade the opponent to see both sides

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Name Some Famous Negotiators

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Effective Conflict Negotiations

- Don’t bargain over positions
- Separate people from the problem
- Focus on interests, not positions
- Invent options for mutual gain
- Use objective criteria
Resolving Conflict:

WHO?

Identify WHO owns the problem

Who does the problem affect most?

Accept ownership of the problem if yours.
Resolving Conflict: WHAT?

Identify the problem – WHAT?

Prepare! Do your homework

Should the outcome be adequate or optimal? WHAT are you willing to settle for?

Be objective and rational and ACCURATE.
Resolving Conflict: WHAT?

- **Identify options**
  - We all perceive things differently
  - **WHAT** can we live with?

- **Anticipate responses**
  - **WHAT** do you think will happen?
Resolving Conflict: HOW?

- Stress collaboration
  - Not intimidation
  - HOW? Be hard on issues, soft on people!

- Focus on mutual interests, not an individual stance
  - Remember basic needs for respect, safety and security!
Resolving Conflict: HOW?

- Use tact and skill
- Explore areas of potential agreement
  - **HOW?** Listen for areas of common thinking
  - Identify where you agree and focus on that point of agreement
Resolving Conflict: WHY?

- Take time to reach mutual agreement
  - Best course of action at this time is ________________ and WHY?

- Conceding on less important points makes everyone a winner
  - Find the “so what” and let it go

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Keep the big picture in mind! Everybody can WIN
What About Emotional Intelligence???
The capacity for recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, for managing emotions well in ourselves and in our relationships.
Predictors of job performance

- IQ (cognitive ability) accounts for 10-15%
- EQ (social and emotional abilities) accounts for 85-90%
Components of EQ
Using Emotional Intelligence

- Identifying Emotions
- Using Emotions
- Understanding Emotions
- Managing Emotions
Your Job Success Matters!

The ability to solve problems and manage change plays an important role in job success.
Find Peace and Contentment

By learning and practicing these simple skills, ALL of your relationships will be more successful and growth-producing experiences.

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Where to Get More Information

- Internet – “conflict management” or “assertiveness” or “emotional intelligence”
- Colleges and Universities
  - Workshops
  - Courses
  - CE events
Thank you and Good Luck!
REFERENCES

Academy of Management:

http://www.aom.pace.edu/cmd/contents.htm


REFERENCES


Goleman D. Emotional intelligence © S. Escott-Stump
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