

Five Ways of Handling Conflict

1. Enforcement
2. Avoidance
3. Conciliation
4. Collaboration
5. Compromising

Diagnosing Conflict

Conflict Intensity Scale

| Code | Identity | Description | Strategy |
|--|----------------------|---|---|
| 1.0-1.9 | Low-Grade | People will say there is nothing wrong but it does not feel right to you | Escalate the conflict to the point where it can be identified and dealt with. |
| 2.0-2.9 | Problem-To-Be-Solved | An issue exists that needs resolution. Disputants focus on resolving the problem. | Collaboration: explore options and frame a solution |
| 3.0-3.9 | Debate | The goal is to persuade the other side. Emotions start to cloud the issues. Personalities are blurred with problems. Intermittent anger may be present. May see inappropriate humor. | Legislative form |
| 4.0-4.9 | Win/Lose Competition | The fight is on. Win at the expense of the other side. Factions are formed. Clandestine caucuses | |
| 5.0-5.9 | Fight/Flight | Marked by hostility in the form of verbal and sometimes physical abuse. Problems are no longer the focus. Persons become the issue. The "other" becomes the enemy. The goal is to harm. | |
| 6.0-6.9 | Search and destroy | Total breakdown of communication. Misinformation or disinformation is rampant. The "other" is evil. Emotions may be steely cold. | |
| 7.0-7.9 | Annihilation | The total destruction of the "other." | Run for cover |
| <p>The most appropriate cases for mediation fall into the range of 1.0 through 5.9. The mediator must intervene at the highest level and address the conflict first at this level and then try to de-escalate.</p> | | | |

The Healthy Vs. Unhealthy Conflict Index

| | Unhealthy | Healthy |
|----------|---|--|
| 1 | Conflict is viewed as wrong or sinful | Conflict is inevitable and provides a chance to grow |
| 2 | The disputants quickly mix people and problems together | Able to see the difference between people and problems. Focus is on the issues. |
| 3 | Communication is diminished. People talk about each other behind their backs. Form coalitions with like-minded people. | Open communication is the norm. The healthier, the more we look one another in the eye, the more we speak directly to one another, the more we listen. |
| 4 | The grievance list is long. Principles not only address the issue at hand but what has transpired 20 years ago. Grievances grow by the day. | The grievance list is short. Principles address the issue at hand. |
| 5 | Conflict has reactive interaction. | The atmosphere is interactive. There is a give and take, an exchange of ideas, a spirit of cooperation and openness. |
| 6 | The disputants tend to ignore the problems and deny what is going on. | The parties acknowledge the existence of a problem and the need to solve it. |
| 7 | Need to solve the problem too quickly. Disputants are very solution-oriented. | Resolution takes as much time as is needed. Parties take time to go through the journey together, to experience the pain, to acknowledge it, and to come out together on the other side. |

Taxonomy of Conflict

| | Identity | Description |
|----------|-------------------------|--|
| 1 | Substantive Conflicts | Involve commodities, resources and “things.” |
| 2 | Psychological Conflicts | Intra-psyche disruptions. There may be an emotional problem that creates conflict. It is self-generated. It |
| 3 | Relationship conflicts | Found in inter-personal relationships. Jonathan and Linda are having marital difficulties. There are three parties Jonathan, Linda and their relationship. If reconciliation is to occur, then the relationship must be treated not just the people. |
| 4 | Information Conflicts | Different parties within a system have access to different data. No one has the same set of facts. |
| 5 | System Conflicts | Created by poor structures. A structure can create barriers between people, power imbalances or destructive behavioral interactions. |
| 6 | Value Conflicts | Occur at a fundamental level in the way people view the essence of life. The conflict comes out of different philosophies, world views and ethics. |

In every conflict situation, it is important for the mediator to apply this taxonomy. Often a conflict will combine several of these six types of conflict.

15 "If another member of the church sins against you, go and point out the fault when the two of you are alone. If the member listens to you, you have regained that one. 16 But if you are not listened to, take one or two others along with you, so that every word may be confirmed by the evidence of two or three witnesses. 17 If the member refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if the offender refuses to listen even to the church, let such a one be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector. 18 Truly I tell you, whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven. 19 Again, truly I tell you, if two of you agree on earth about anything you ask, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. 20 For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

The Process by which Christians are called upon to resolve their conflict outside the court system.

1. People in conflict are to come together on a one-on-one basis to strive to work out their problems.
2. If step one fails, they are to bring witnesses to the dispute in order to resolve their differences.
3. If step two also fails, they are to bring their dispute to the church body so that a resolution can be reached.

Four Skills of an Effective Mediator

1. Listen for inquiry only. Ask questions to learn. Questions are always open ended.
2. Paraphrase for clarity and to be corrected. Use your own words, "What I'm hearing you say . . ."
3. Acknowledge the persons worth and feelings
4. Problem are solvee through process and not through giving answers.

Agenda

1. Introduction
2. Party #1 lay out problem followed by the summarization of party #1 problem.
3. Party # 2 lay our problem followed by the summarization of party #2 problem.
4. Issue identification
5. Generation and evaluation of alternatives (form a habit of agreement)
6. Selection of appropriate alternatives
7. Conclusion

Definition

Mediation: A neutral, impartial third party is invited to facilitate a resolution to issues the disputing parties place on the table. The mediator has no decision making authority in the dispute. The resolution is crafted by the parties and must be a resolution with which they can live.

Emerging Definition

Mediation: A third party who facilitates a resolution to issues the disputing parties place on the table. The resolution is crafted by the parties and must be a resolution with which they can live.

NOTES:

Why do people stay engaged in conflict when the conflict is resolved? You can never resolve conflict. The best you can do is manage it. In mediation the goal is to resolve a dispute, not manage the conflict. Discover namable problems to be solved.

Conflict is a verb. It is continuing and active.

Dispute is a noun. It is something that can be solved.

A *conflict* is dynamic (on-going) in which concerns, needs, interests, or positions are opposed to one another.

1. Conflict is fluid. It moves, changing like energy or the flow of a stream
2. Conflict is created when one or more persons perceive that it is operative.

A *dispute* is a crystallized conflict problem (more tangible) which offers the possibility of settlement.

1. A dispute is more solid than the dynamic of conflict. Unlike conflict which can be “managed,” a dispute can be “settled.”
2. Typically, a dispute is more or less tangible. It can be identified and named, and it is solvable—usually.

Arbitration: I’m going to make the decision for you because you can’t.

Convergent:

Divergent:

Triangulate:

Ground Rules

1. No interruptions while other people are talking
2. No put-downs, no disparaging remarks.
3. No name-calling or blaming allowed in the room.

Conflict