Conflict Management

Using the Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument

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Objectives

• Learn about self and others:
  – Your preferred style in interpersonal conflicts
  – A range of conflict modes
  – The conflict styles of others
  – Kinds of conflict situations
Discussion Question

What was your favorite class in medical school?

• Did everyone give the same answer?

• Why?

• What does that say about the ways conflict emerges and is experienced?
An Example of Conflict

*A Few Good Men* (1992)

- Rob Reiner film w/ Cruise, Nicholson and Moore.
- About court martial of 2 Marines charged with murder of unpopular fellow Marine at Guantanamo Bay Naval Base, near the sentry wall.
- Investigator suspects accused were carrying out a "code red."
A Few Good Men

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5j2F4VcBmeo&feature=related

1:51

"You Can't Handle the Truth"
An Example of Conflict
A Few Good Men

A Few Good Men  (1992)

- Handling the truth
- Handling conflicts
- Self- and other-awareness
THE CONFLICT MODE WORKSHOP

For use with the Thomas-Kilmann CONFLICT MODE Instrument

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Conflict is . . .

any situation in which your concerns or desires differ from those of another person
Diary Page

Describe two recent conflict situations:

1. One in which you were satisfied with the outcome.

2. One in which you were less than satisfied.
Complete and Score the TKI

Objectives:

• Identify: individual conflict handling mode
• Determine: modes used most and least often
• Compare scores with managers in business and government

Step 1:

• Read and complete TKI, including
  – TKI Score Sheet (p 6)
  – TKI Graph (p10)
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<th>Competition (forcing)</th>
<th>Collaborating (problem solving)</th>
<th>Compromising (sharing)</th>
<th>Avoiding (withdrawing)</th>
<th>Accommodating (smoothing)</th>
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Total number of items circled in each column:

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### Graphing Your TKI Scores

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**Note:** Scores are graphed in relation to a norm sample consisting of 4,000 women and 4,000 men, ages 20 through 70, who were employed full time in the United States. Data were drawn from a database of 50,000 cases collected between 2002 and 2005 and were sampled to ensure representative numbers of people by organizational level and race/ethnicity.
Interpreting and Applying the TKI

Plot of Conflict Modes:

• Two dimensions:
  – X: Cooperativeness (satisfy others’ concerns)
  – Y: Assertiveness (satisfy own concerns)

• Five modes
Understanding the 5 Conflict Modes

Two aspects of conflict-handling modes

Assertiveness

Cooperativeness
Understanding the Conflict Modes

Two basic aspects of all Conflict-handling modes

- Cooperativeness (Others)
- Assertiveness (Self)
Five Conflict-Handling Modes

**COMPETING**
- "My way or the highway"
- Uncooperative

**COLLABORATING**
- "Two heads are better than one"
- Cooperative

**COMPROMISING**
- "Let’s make a deal"
- Cooperative to Uncooperative

**AVOIDING**
- I’ll think about it tomorrow
- Uncooperative

**ACCOMMODATING**
- It would be my pleasure
- Uncooperative to Cooperative
Competing

“My way or the highway”

- Taking quick action
- Making unpopular decisions
- Standing up for vital issues
- Protecting yourself
Collaborating

“Two heads are better than one”

- Integrating solutions
- Learning
- Merging perspectives
- Gaining commitment
- Improving relationships
Compromising

“Let’s make a deal”

- Resolving issues of moderate importance
- Reaching resolution with equal power and strong commitment
- Creating temporary solutions
- Dealing with time constraints
- Backing up competing/collaborating
Avoiding

“'I’ll think about it tomorrow”

- Leaving unimportant issues alone
- Reducing tensions
- Buying time
- Knowing your limitations
- Allowing others ownership
- Recognizing issues as symptoms
Accommodating

“It would be my pleasure”

- Showing reasonableness
- Developing performance
- Creating goodwill
- Keeping “peace”
- Retreating
- Maintaining perspective
The Five Conflict-Handling Modes

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

Each requires specific skills.

Each can be most appropriate – depending on the situation.
Competing Skills

• Arguing or debating
• Using rank, position, or influence
• Asserting your opinions and feelings
• Standing your ground
• Stating your position clearly
Over and Under Use of Competing

- Lack of feedback, reduced learning
- Low empowerment
- Surrounded by “yes people”
  - Restricted influence
  - Indecision, delayed action
  - Withholding of contributions
Collaborating Skills

• Ability to listen, understand, and empathize
• Nonthreatening confrontation
• Input analysis
• Identifying underlying concerns
Over & Under Use of Collaborating

- Too much time on trivial matters
- Diffused responsibility
- Work overload
- Lack of commitment
- Low empowerment
- Loss of innovation
Compromising Skills

- Negotiating
- Finding a “middle ground”
- Making concessions
- Assessing value
Over & Under Use of Compromising

• Loss of big-picture perspective
• Lack of trust
• Cynical climate
  • Unnecessary confrontations
  • Frequent power struggles
  • Inability to negotiate effectively
Avoiding Skills

- Withdrawing
- Sidestepping
- Sense of timing
- Ability to leave things unresolved
Over & Under Use of Avoiding

- Lack your input
- Decisions by default
- Festering issues, climate of caution
  - Hostility/hurt feelings
  - Work overload—too many causes
  - Lack of prioritization/delegation
Accommodating Skills

• Forgoing your desires
• Selflessness
• Obedience
• Ability to yield
Over & Under Use of Accommodating

- Overlooked ideas
- Restricted influence
- Loss of contribution
- Anarchy

- Lack of rapport
- Low morale
- By-the-book reputation
- Inability to yield
The Five Conflict-Handling Modes

- Competing
- Collaborating
- Compromising
- Avoiding
- Accommodating

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Diary Page Review

Describe two recent conflict situations:

1. One in which you were satisfied with the outcome.

2. One in which you were less than satisfied.

Would you approach the same situations differently now?

Insights?
The Five Conflict-Handling Modes

COMPETING

COLLABORATING

COMPROMISING

AVOIDING

ACCOMMODATING

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"Encouraging dissent is a good way of finding out who the traitors are."

Source: Harvard Business Review
The Five Conflict-Handling Modes

COMPETING

COWABOBATING

COMPROMISING

AVOIDING

ACCOMMODATING

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Conflict Management Chief Resident

- Dr X is a chief resident is rounding with 3 trainees.
- They are in the room of Ms J, a patient with metastatic ovarian cancer.
- Dr X prepared the trainees for a difficult conversation with Ms J, and has closed the patient’s door for privacy.
- The group was in Ms J’s room for 15 minutes, discussing her prognosis and her end of life wishes; and the conversation was coming to a close.
- Dr Y flung the door open, walked to Ms J, and began to probe her neck for a site to place a line.
You are a junior faculty member, three years out of fellowship who does 90% clinical work.

You love seeing patients. But you want to broaden your professional opportunities by developing an educational innovation.

Your boss has said she wants you to assume more administrative responsibilities to improve clinical efficiency.

You are anxious, and are preparing to ask your boss for some project time.
Conflict Management
Mid-Level Faculty

• You are a mid-level faculty member who has been working in the department for 10 years. You are always available, first to offer to help others, very productive, well-respected and get along with everyone.

• You are aware that at times you take over projects because otherwise the projects may risk not getting done.

• A new junior faculty member (not so junior) is hired to work with you. She is smart, articulate and eager to make her mark.

• The new faculty member knows you are always in control and are successful. She wants to find her own niche.
• You are the division chief at a community hospital affiliated with an academic medical center. You know that morale is low; you have just had 2 promising faculty members leave.

• You are getting a lot of pressure for productivity. At this point, you want to avoid meeting with anyone until you can develop a strategy.
Conflict Management Case
Coffee Lover

• You are the unit supervisor and a coffee lover. Your staff is concerned that the location of the office coffeemaker reduces productivity.

• The coffeemaker is just outside your office door and several yards from the staff work area.

• The staff feels the time it takes to visit the coffeemaker slows work flow. They have a proposal to move the coffeemaker to a more central location, but need your approval to submit a work order.
Insights?