Conflict Management Tips

What is the conflict?
Identify what conflict is happening and why. You need to discover the root of the problem.

Who is involved?
Look at the conflict and determine if it is with specific individuals within the organization or the entire organization as a whole.

Styles of Conflict Management
1. **Accommodating** – Individuals cooperate to a high-degree, and it may be at your own expense, and actually work against your own goals, objectives, and desired outcomes. This approach is effective when the other party is the expert or has a better solution.

2. **Avoiding** - Individuals simply avoid the issue. They aren’t helping the other party reach their goals, and aren’t assertively pursuing their own. This works when the issue is trivial or when you have no chance of winning. It can also be effective when the issue would be very costly. It’s also very effective when the atmosphere is emotionally charged and you need to create some space.

3. **Collaborating** – Individuals partner or pair up with the other party to achieve both of goals. This is how you break free of the “win-lose” paradigm and seek the “win-win.” This can be effective for complex scenarios where you need to find a novel solution. This can also mean re-framing the challenge to create a bigger space and room for everybody’s ideas. The downside is that it requires a high-degree of trust and reaching a consensus.

4. **Competing** – This is the “win-lose” approach. You act in a very assertive way to achieve your goals, without seeking to cooperate with the other party, and it may be at the expense of the other party. This approach may be appropriate for emergencies when time is of the essence, or when you need quick, decisive action.

5. **Compromising** – This is the “lose-lose” scenario where neither party really achieves what they want. This requires a moderate level of assertiveness and cooperation. It may be appropriate for scenarios where you need a temporary solution, or where both sides have equally important goals.

*Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument*

Steps to move forward:
- Ask for assistance from your faculty or staff advisor.
- Meet with specific individuals or with the group.
- Initiate the problem solving process:
  - Clarify the issue
  - Discuss each individual’s wants and needs
  - Decide on a solution together
  - Discuss how the solution will be implemented
  - Develop the process to evaluate the solution.
  - Discuss how problems with the solution will be handled.
- Build trust among the group.
- Maintain confidentiality.
- If you still need help, the Leadership and Service Center would be glad to offer advice or guidance.

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