Community, Civility, Conflict Styles & Communication

Voices of the Staff

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STUDENT LIFE
OFFICE OF STUDENT
CONFLICT RESOLUTION

Framing

- Explore the intersection of civility & conflict in community.
- Societal trends in community conflict.
- Consider our own understanding of conflict.
- Examine tools for civil discourse through conflict.

Build trust, create constructive change,
reduce violence, and increase justice.

Learning Outcomes

- Through participating in this dialogue participants will be more confident in…
  - their understanding of societal trends influencing conflict and community.

  - their understanding of core conflict concepts and competencies.

  - Their understanding of concrete tools to consider when seeking to build trust and change through conflict.

What is a conflict?

- **Task 1:** Write down 2-3 things that come to mind when you hear the word conflict.
- **Task 2:** Share your thoughts with at least one other neighbor.

Take Note of similarities and differences between your thoughts and those of others
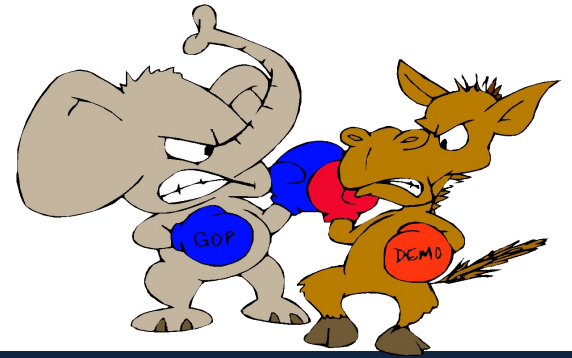
One definition...

Conflict is an **expressed** struggle between at least two **interdependent** parties who **perceive** incompatible goals, scarce resources, and interference from others in achieving their goals. (Wilmot & Hocker)
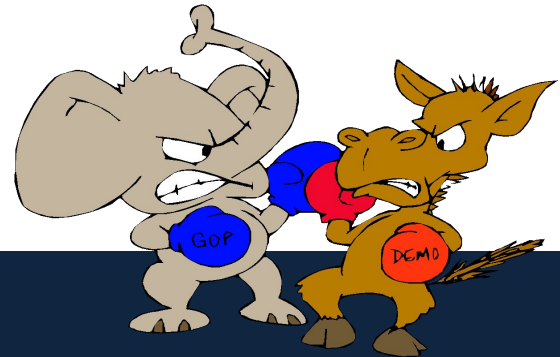
So conflicts are bad? No!

- Conflict is a natural and healthy process and often is necessary for making progress and dealing with injustice.

- Our goal is not to eliminate conflict, but rather transform the way it is expressed from destructive forms into constructive forms.
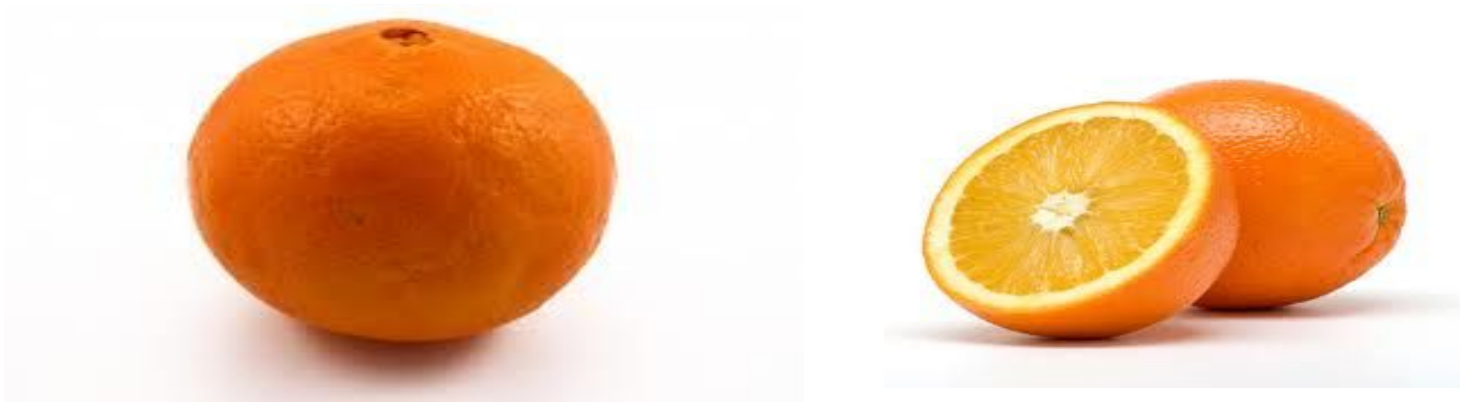
Sesame Street: Conflict

[Conflict on Sesame Street](#)

The Orange Dilemma

Conflict Styles Inventory

Directing/Competing		**Collaborating/Problem-Solving**
"We're doing it my way, period."		"How can we both get what we want?"
(I win / You lose)		(I win / You win)
	Compromising	
	"Let's split the difference and meet halfway."	
	(I win some and lose some / You win some and lose some)	
Avoiding		**Accommodating/Harmonizing**
"Just forget about it. I'm fine."		"Whatever you want..."
(I lose / You lose)		(I lose / You win)

Focus on Personal Agenda — (More) ↑ / ↓ (Less)

← (Less)   Focus on Relationship/Cooperativeness   (More) →

Conflict Styles

- Realize that we all approach conflicts in different ways.

- Recognize when you might be talking to someone of a different style.

Culture & Conflict

- All cultures experience conflict, however, not all cultures approach conflict the same way.

Q: In a society where culture and conflict intersect, how might we increase our own awareness, engage in civil discourse, and produce constructive change in ourselves and for others?

Culture & Conflict

- High Power Distance / Low Power Distance
- Collectivism / Individualism
- Assertive / Nurturance
- Long Term Orientation / Short Term Orientation
- High Uncertainty Tolerance / Low Uncertainty Tolerance
- High Context (indirect) / Low Context (direct)
- Polychronic Time / Monochronic Time
- Meritocracy / Ascription

Ladder of Inference

- We all have…

  – assumptions, stereotypes, triggers

  – our own view of the world

  – glimpses about the "other" but not a full picture

It is important to understand how we construct our beliefs:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KJLqOclPqis

experience -> observations -> filtering -> assign meaning -> assumptions -> conclusions/emotions -> adjust beliefs -> act

Toolbox: How might I build my own conflict Competencies?

Positions vs. Interests (& Needs)

- **Position** – what you *say* you want
- **Interest** – what you *really* want

- **Interests** are underlying desires, which may also relate to fundamental needs & values.
- Where **positions** are incompatible, interests may not be.

  – Position: *I have to have the car today.*
  – Interest: *I have to get to work today.*

  – Position: *We have to find a time we can meet together.*
  – Interest: *I'd like to work collaboratively to develop our plan.*

CLARA Method

– When engaging with others, often the best thing we can do is listen, and to affirm what is being said.
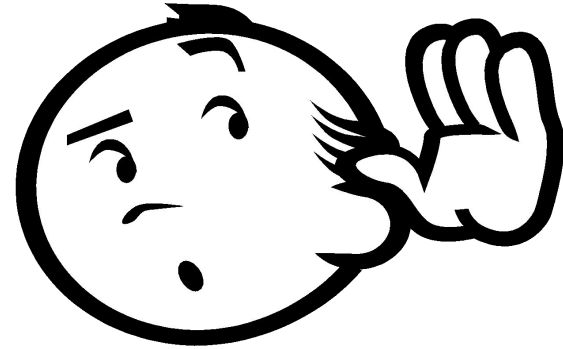
C - Center

L - Listen

A - Affirm

R - Respond

A - Add

CLARA Method

Listen

– Listen with an intent to understand. Listen for underlying principles, cultural values, emotions, and issues behind what is being said.

Affirm

– Affirm the principles or issues in what was said, or simply the feelings or emotions that were expressed. Affirming is not agreeing, it's **acknowledging or recognizing** what is shared.

Respond

– Respond to the issues that were raised and the underlying needs behind them. Ask Questions!

Add

– Add information to the conversation. **After seeking to understand, seek to be understood.**

Compassionate Communication

- Based on the idea that all human beings have the capacity for compassion and only resort to violence or behavior that harms others when they don't recognize more effective strategies for meeting needs. (Kashtan & Kashtan)

Non-Violent Communication

- Non-violent communication proposes that if people can identify their needs, the needs of others, and the feelings that surround these needs - harmony can be achieved. (Fullerton, 2009)

- Non-violent communication should include an observation, a feeling, a need, and a request all in one statement.

Non-Violent Communication

- **Observations**
  - See / Hear / Notice
  - Objective descriptions
  - E.g.: I notice that it's 2:00 AM and the TV is still on, as opposed to… It's ridiculously late and you're still blaring the TV.
  - Observations are not assessments.

Non-Violent Communication

- **Feelings**
  - I feel
  - Wonderful / Miserable
  - Feelings are not thoughts
- **Needs**
  - Because I need
  - Universal Requirements
  - E.g.: space, respect, harmony, order, etc.
  - Needs are not strategies

Non-Violent Communication

- **Requests**
  - Would you be willing to…? / Can we…?
  - Connection Action
  - Requests are not demands

"I" Statements

- "I feel _____, when you ____, because _____."

- "What I'm hoping we might try is _____."

- Example:

"I noticed that it's 2am and the TV is still on. I feel <u>wound up</u> when you <u>have the TV on past 11pm</u>, because <u>I can't fall asleep and if I don't sleep I will be exhausted tomorrow during class</u>. I was hoping that <u>in the future you could watch TV on your laptop with headphones past 11pm</u>?"

Platinum Rule

- Many of us have heard of the **Golden Rule** – to treat others how you want to be treated. This is great practice. However, we all have individual needs and preferences.

- Try practicing the **Platinum Rule** – treat others how *they* want to be treated, and this may prevent many conflicts!

Key Takeaways for Conflict

- Be clear about your interests
- Uncover interests behind positions
- Communicate your expectations
- Seek to understand others
- Listen and ask questions
- Acknowledge and affirm
- Find common ground
- Problem solve

Resources available in our community

- **OSCR Conflict Resolution Pathways**- such as conflict coaching, mediation and restorative justice circle processes
- **Dean of Students**- provides crisis and care management/community support
- **Ombuds**- provides assistance resolving institutional conflicts for students
- **FASAP**- counseling and coaching for faculty and staff
- **UHS Wellness Coaching**- student service based on the UM wellness model
- **CAPS**- short-term counseling for a broad range of concerns
- **UHS BASICS**- Brief Alcohol Screening and Intervention for College Students
- **CAPS ASAP**- Confidential Assessment of Substance Abuse Patterns

About Us!

100 Student Activities Building
Monday-Friday 8 AM – 5 PM
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- Consultations
- Conflict Resolution Services
- *The Statement*
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Questions?

Thank You

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