





Conflict Management

June 12, 2025

Objectives

- Identify different types of conflict in the workplace
 - Discuss conflict avoidance and its repercussions
 - Discuss HR's role in managing conflict
 - Identify different types of progressive discipline
 - Define retaliation and discuss different types
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Ground Rules


1. Participation is key.
 2. Share problems, but focus on solutions.
 3. Focus on problems, not people.
 4. What is discussed in training, stays in training.
 5. Share the air and allow others to participate.
 6. Respect everyone's opinions and perspectives.
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Common Causes of Workplace Conflict



1. Conflicting priorities

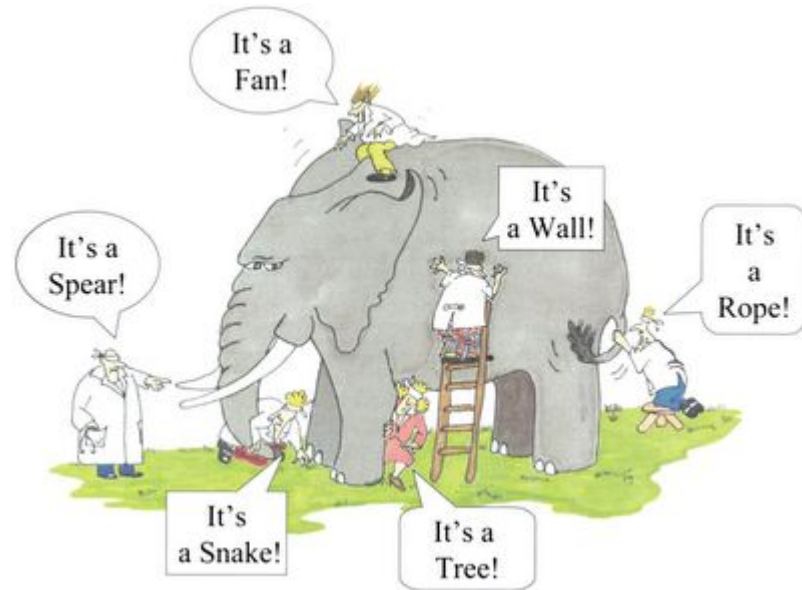
Differences in priorities may include or be influenced by...

- Budgets and resources
 - Incompatible goals
 - Reactions to operational and/or structural changes
 - Unclear or misunderstanding of expectations
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2. Conflicting perspectives

Our perspectives come from how we see and react to the world.
Differing perspectives may stem from different facets of our identity

- Age
- Gender
- Ethnicity
- Religion
- Political views
- Personality type



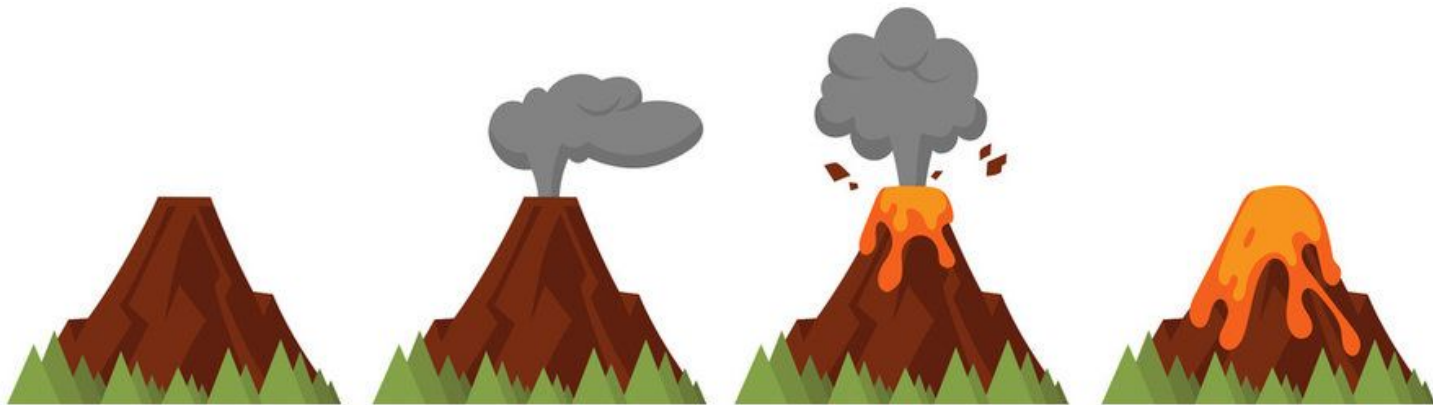
3. Conflicting assumptions

Assumptions come from a misinterpretation of someone else's intentions...something that you accept without question or proof.

“We each view the world through a framework based on our life experiences and might assume others experience things the same way we do.” - SHRM, 2025

4. Conflicting tolerances

- We all have different comfort levels when it comes to conflict.
- Some are more confrontational whereas others are avoidant.
- When conflict is *avoided* it does not mean it just disappears...instead it lingers until it becomes a larger issue.



Bullseye Activity


1. How does your ability to resolve conflict affect you in your job?
2. How does a team member's ability to resolve conflict impact the team?
3. How does a team's ability to resolve conflict impact the organization?



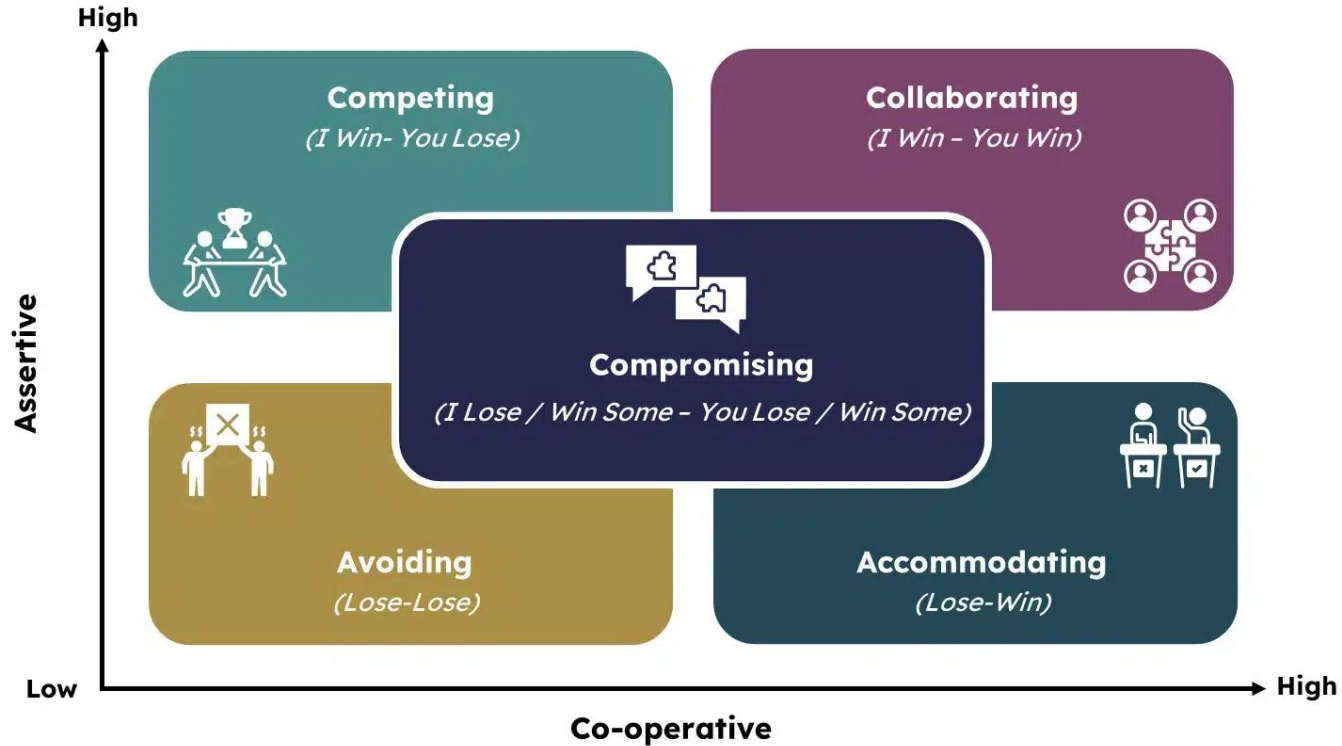
Conflict Management Strategies



Before You Begin...Understand Who You're Working With: Personality Types

- Dominance: Likes challenges, freedom, immediate results and rewards, bluntness, brevity, and capable leaders.
 - Compliance: Avoids risks, likes thorough research and quality work, and embraces cooperation.
 - Inducement: Enjoys recognition and meeting people, as well as things that are new, different or unusual.
 - Steadiness: Likes stability, predictability, titles, the feeling of belonging and repeated affirmation.
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Strategies For Conflict Management



Strategies for Conflict Management

1. Compromising – “Let’s make a deal.”

This type is good at finding temporary solutions to a conflict, especially when dealing with time constraints, even if the solution is not ideal.

2. Collaborating – “Two heads are better than one.”

This type is skilled at relationship-building, merging different perspectives and winning commitment from others.

3. Competing – “My way or the highway.”

This person takes quick action, makes unpopular decisions, stands up for vital issues and protects themselves.

Strategies for Conflict Management

4. Avoiding – “I’ll think about it later.”

This type wants to avoid tension, and so is adept at sidestepping issues or buying time before making decisions.

5. Accommodating – “It would be my pleasure.”

This person is reasonable, wants to create goodwill and keep the peace, and tends to retreat if pushed by others.



Conflict Avoidance


What is it?

Why do we do it?

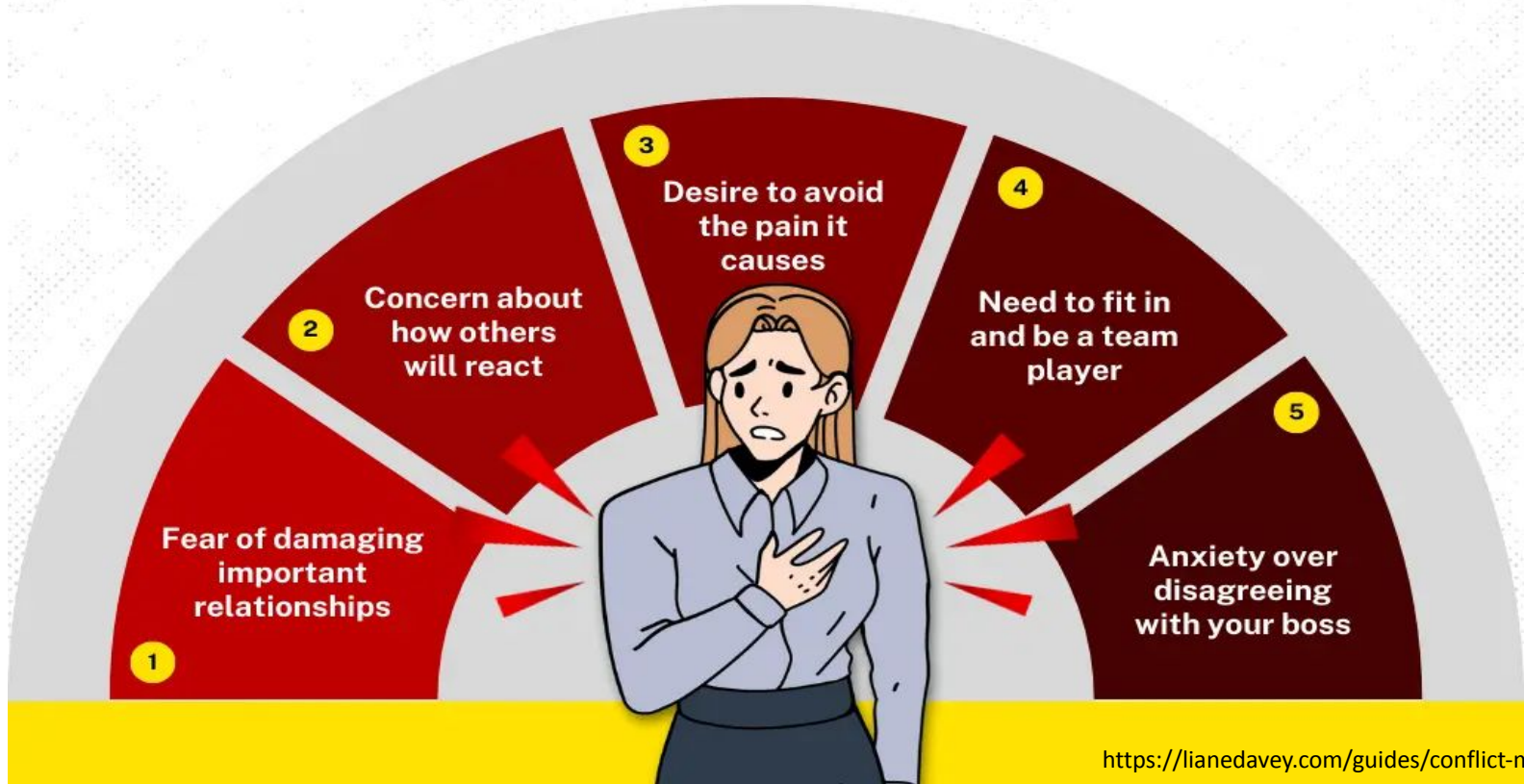
Why does it matter?




What is conflict avoidance?

- “I’ll think about it later” strategy.
 - Method to avoid tension, sidestepping issues, and buying time to make decisions.
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What Causes Conflict Avoidance?



Why does it matter?

- Increased stress
 - Mistrust in organization
 - Decrease in overall performance
 - Absenteeism
 - Turnover
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10 Steps to Resolving Conflict


Schedule a meeting to address the problem, preferably at a neutral place.

1. Set ground rules. Ask all parties to treat each other with respect and to make an effort to listen and understand others' views.
2. Ask each participant to describe the conflict, including desired changes. Direct participants to use "I" statements, not "you" statements. They should focus on specific behaviors and problems rather than people.
3. Ask participants to restate what others have said.
4. Summarize the conflict based on what you have heard and obtain agreement from participants.
5. Brainstorm solutions. Discuss all of the options in a positive manner.
6. Rule out any options that participants agree are unworkable.
7. Summarize all possible options for a solution.
8. Assign further analysis of each option to individual participants.
9. Make sure all parties agree on the next steps.
10. Close the meeting by asking participants to shake hands, apologize and thank each other for working to resolve the conflict.


Role Play Scenario: The Project Deadline Dispute



Debrief and Discuss

1. What were the underlying interests of Alex (VP) and Jamie (Director)?
 2. How did Taylor (team member) help de-escalate the situation?
 3. What conflict resolution strategies were used?
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Takeaways

1. Listen first. Let each person share their perspective.
 2. Identify and understand each other's interests.
 3. Seek collaborative solutions.
 4. Document agreements and follow up.
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I've tried everything!
What now?



HR is here to help!

Not every conflict requires HR intervention...In fact, we hope that employees and supervisors are empowered and trusted to handle conflict at the level it is happening.


Channels for additional support if needed:

- Employee - employee issues → Supervisor
- Employee - supervisor issues → Vice President/Dean

....But we do realize that some situations can be a little complex, and we are happy to help provide guidance at any step of the way.




HR is here to help!

- Not every concern that is brought to HR needs to be a formal complaint!
 - HR is here to...
 - Be a sounding board
 - Provide guidance
 - Conduct investigations (if requested, or warranted in extenuating circumstances)
 - “HR is not your friend” misconception....we are not your enemy! Our job is to help **you**.
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Forms of Progressive Discipline

1. Verbal warning
2. Written warning
3. Work Improvement Plan
4. Suspension with or without pay
5. Termination

** The University does not guarantee that one type of discipline shall precede another*



Retaliation

- What it is is
- What is it *not*
- What to look for and where to report



What is Retaliation?

“Retaliation occurs when an employer (through a manager, supervisor, administrator or directly) fires an employee or takes any other type of adverse action against an employee for engaging in protected activity.

An adverse action is an action which would dissuade a reasonable employee from raising a concern about a possible violation or engaging in other related protected activity. Retaliation can have a negative impact on overall employee morale.”


Examples of Retaliation

1. Excessively Negative Performance Review
 - a. History of positive reviews
 - b. No change in work routine or productivity
 - c. No record of disciplinary actions or warnings
2. Being transferred to a less desirable position
3. Threaten to make, or actually make reports to authorities (such as reporting immigration status or contacting the police)
4. Verbal or physical abuse

Examples of Retaliation

5. Increase scrutiny/micromanagement
6. Spread false rumors, treat a family member negatively (for example, cancel a contract with the person's spouse)
7. Make the person's work more difficult (for example, punishing an employee for by purposefully changing their work schedule to conflict with family responsibilities).

Retaliation protection does not mean a free pass!

- Retaliation is serious and can even be illegal if it is discriminatory in nature...but it does not mean employees are off the hook for poor work performance!
 - You are still responsible for your job duties, therefore, action *can* still be taken for poor performance and/or behavior.
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Want to learn more about retaliation?

Complete the “Recognizing and Avoiding Retaliatory Behavior” module on United Educators platform! (15 minutes)

https://learn.ue.org/uticauniversity/learn/courses/64/recognizing-and-avoiding-retaliatory-behavior?hash=3d698a2affcb1bac52b5e442ff9a162b1d9f5faf&generated_by=65421



Questions?



THANK



Resources

Department of Labor - [Retaliation](#)

Equal Employment Opportunity Commission - [Retaliation](#)

Kapable

- [Thomas Kilmann Conflict Model](#)

Liane Davey

- [Your Ultimate Guide to Embracing Healthy Conflict](#)

Society for Human Resources Management

- [Managing Workplace Conflict](#)
- [Understanding Personality Types Can Help Resolve Conflicts](#)

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Feedback

