Conflict Resolution
Dealing with Difficult People

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Purpose

The workshop will focus on conflict resolution and how you can learn to effectively deal with difficult situations and people.

You will learn how to address conflicts with colleagues in a calm and professional manner and to develop an appropriate approach for breaking down a conflict in order to find a suitable solution.

You will be able to describe the five conflict handling modes and strategies for dealing with conflict situations.
Define Conflict

Conflict can be understood as a process of expressing dissatisfaction, disagreement, or unmet expectations with another person, group, or organization.

Cohen, Davis, & Aboelata, 1998
Conflict Resolution

- Assertive Behavior
  - Takes the listener’s feelings and rights into account

- Aggressive Behavior
  - Self-serving behavior that does not take a listener’s feelings and rights into account

- Passive Behavior
  - Avoids conflict and internalizes frustration.

Beebe, Beebe, & Ivy, 2007
LADDER

Six stage process for handling problems assertively

• (L)ook at your rights and what you want
• (A)rrange a meeting
• (D)efine the problem
• (D)ecribe your feelings
• (E)xpress what you want clearly
• (R)einforce the other person by explaining the mutual benefits

by Martha Davis
LADDER - Scenario

• **(L)ook** at your rights and what you want, and understand your feeling about the situation – Do what you can to cut away the emotion and try and understand why you feel your rights are being violated.
  - What are you feeling in this scenario: **Not being listened to** – feeling embarrassed in front of your peers – feeling betrayed

• **(A)rrange** a meeting with the other person to discuss the situation.
  - Write down the way you would request a meeting: *I would like to speak with about something that is bothering me. When would be good time to meet?*

• **(D)efine** the problem specifically – keep the information objective and uncolored by emotion. Make sure your comments are correct and supported by facts.
  - Write down what you would say to define the problem: **The behavior of dismissing our project ideas are shutting down communication.**

• **(D)ecribe** your feelings so that the other person fully understands how you feel about the situation – do not attack or blame the other person for the problem (Explain how it affects you).
  - Write down what you would say to describe your feelings: *I feel frustrated and confused. Our working relationship is really important to me and being able to work together on our projects is essential.*

• **(E)xpress** what you want clearly and concisely – way what you want to happen to resolve the situation. Keep your message short, clear, direct, and unambiguous.
  - Write down what you would say to express what you want: *I would like to be able to discuss project ideas with you and the group and come up with a solution without arguing during our meetings.*

• **(R)enforce** the other person by explaining the mutual benefits of adopting your suggestion.
  - Write down what you would say to reinforce the benefits of collaborating together: *By us working together we can increase effectiveness and reduce our workload.*
The Thomas-Kilman Model

Case Study:
Using Thomas-Kilman Model

The following case gives an example of how conflict resolution style, communication skills, and intergroup dialogue interact to assist conflict resolution.

Avoidance  Accommodation  Compromise  Collaboration

ACTIVE LISTENING

Pay Attention
Show you are listening
Feedback
Defer Judgment
Respond
Case Study: Application

CASE #1

CASE #2
Dealing with Difficult People: What will you do?

Identify the issues in case #2

Identify strategies that you could use. Talk about the positives and negatives of each strategy.

Role play the situation. 1 member of the group should be the coordinator, 1 member of the group should be the other member, and the rest of the group should serve as observers. Remember to put yourself in the situation and try to respond as you would in life not on TV! Observers: write down what you observed. What went well? What didn’t go as well?

Discuss the role play: 1) what went well, 2) what could be improved 3) suggestions
References

- Davis, M. *Stress & Relaxation Workbook*. California, Harbinger Publications.
- http://www.mindtools.com
- Rothwell, D. J. *In Mixed Company: Small Group Communication*, Harcourt and Brace publishers
Questions?