CONFLICT TRAINING
Office of Experiential Learning &
Office of Student Services
College of Education

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Georgia Botanical Gardens, Athens, Georgia
Learning Outcomes

As a result of this session, participants will be able to:

• Deepen their understanding of conflict behavior styles and strategies to manage conflict.
• Identify and describe the costs and benefits of each conflict style.
• Improve your ability to alter habitual responses to conflict as needed to increase the likelihood of productive outcomes.
• Reflect on what is understood about how our brains work to become adept at managing conflict effectively.
How do we understand conflict?
Conflict is always bad.

☑ Conflict is a **natural** and **essential** part of life and can be the source of **energy** and **creativity**.
Conflict does not always result in a “win-lose.” “Win-win” can be used to solve problems.
Those messages you received in the past impact the way you respond to, feel about, and think about conflict all of your life.
How do we respond to conflict?
What’s your Style?

Calm vs. Storm

How do we respond to conflict?
Conflict Styles

- Force
- Collaborate
- Avoid
- Accommodate

How do we respond to conflict?
How do we develop skills to manage conflict?
How the Brain Works, Part 1

Challenge Mental Models

“Mental models are deeply engrained assumptions, generalizations, or even pictures or images that influence how we understand the world and how we take action.”

Peter Senge, The Fifth Discipline
Perceptions

• Perceptions are generated when you interpret reality after you have
  • taken in data or stimulus
  • filtered out
  • selected
  • organized, and
  • defined what you have experienced.

• This is all based on your
  • Knowledge
  • Needs
  • Beliefs
  • Values
  • Assumptions
  • Attitudes.
The Ladder of Inference

- I take actions based on my beliefs
- I adopt beliefs about the world
- I draw conclusions
- I make assumptions based on the meanings I added
- I add meanings [Cultural and Personal]
- I select “Data” from what I observe
- Observable “data” and experiences

Action
Beliefs
Conclusions
Assumptions
Meanings
Select
Observe

Reflexive Loop
Our beliefs influence what we observe
Reflection

• Become aware of your own thinking and reasoning.
• Ask yourself, “How have I arrived at this conclusion?”
• Say to the other person, “Explain to me how you see it that way.”

ASK:
• What has led me to think or feel this way?
• Why didn’t I say what I was thinking?
• What assumptions am I making about…?
• What are the costs to me of acting this way?
• What are the costs to the organization of me acting this way?
• What are the benefits?
• What prevents me from acting differently?
Inquiry

• Seek to understand others’ thinking and reasoning in a non-adversarial way.
• Use open-ended questions to push down the ladder.
• Inquire to learn, not to persuade

ASK:

• questions to clarify
  • ”What did you mean when you said...?”
  • “Can you help me understand how you see it?”

• Avoid
  • leading questions: “Don’t you think that...?”
  • argumentative questions: “Isn’t it true...?”
  • advocacy masked as a question: “Isn’t that a stupid idea?”
How the Brain Works, Part 2

Physiological Model

OVERARCHING ORGANIZING PRINCIPLES: The Brain

• Minimizes threat and maximizes rewards.
• Treats certain social and relational needs the same as survival needs (food, water, shelter)
  • Activates primary rewards / threats circuitry of the (e.g.: a perceived threat to one’s status activates similar brain networks as a threat to life).

• Picture of lizard brain
Social and Relational Needs/Interests

David Rock’s **SCARF** Model of What the Brain Wants:

- **S**tatus-relative importance to others
- **C**ertainty-ability to predict the future
- **A**utonomy-a sense of control over events
- **R**elatedness-a sense of safety with others
- **F**airness-perception of fair exchange between people
Putting it all together: Reflections

• What have you been doing that you will CONTINUE because it is working for you and for others?
• What will you STOP doing that you have identified as unproductive?
• What will you START doing that is new?