

Conflict and Confrontation

Class 1

There are two situations in which you may be involved with conflict:

- Your own conflict with other people
- Other people's conflict and they bring it to you.

It's best to deal with conflict situations right away – don't delay them, sweep it away or sweep it under the rug:

- Unless parties need a "cooling off" period
 - o Allows for more logical and rational thinking

Most people believe that THEY are right and the other parties are WRONG.

- Write out your arguments that prove you are RIGHT.
- Reflect and think about these.
- Are you open to other ideas?
- Is it possible that the other person might have a valid point?
- Can you take time to gather the facts (and your thoughts)?
- Practice what you want to say in your mind.
- Take some deep breaths and if possible you go to the other person, rather than letting them come to you
 - o This will make them less defensive.
- If the person is aggressive – ask them Why?
 - o Aggression is not about the conflict issue – it is about the "delivery" (words and body language)
 - o If the situation (emotions, words, and aggressive body language) does not calm down:
 - Tell the other person that you cannot have a rational discussion with them now
 - You will meet with them later when they are calmed down.

- People who are angry or upset often can't hear what you are saying in the first place.
 - You may need to repeat what you are saying in several different ways before they calm down enough to hear you.
- Avoid getting “sucked into” an argument with the other persons.
 - Arguing only distracts you from the real issue
 - The arguing sometimes takes on a life of it's own – and then you really can't even remember what caused things in the first place.
- Always remain calm.

Class 2

Several Different ways of handling conflict situations:

1. Avoidance

- This is only good if it is clear that the conflict is not worth the effort to resolve.
 - BUT – this can also lead to an escalation of the issue which may result in more problems later.

This tends to be a lose-lose situation.

2. Accommodation

- This is agreeing to something just to keep the peace – compromising your views
- This is a lose-win strategy
 - This often results in you becoming resentful and unsatisfied in the long run.

3. Compromise

- This is a “meeting in the middle”
 - Having found a solution which satisfies both parties
 - This is often the best solution when either

- time is short or
 - total agreement is impossible
- this is still a lose-lose strategy
 - The issues may need to be addressed again later.
 - If both parties have compromised, they will each gain something from this method.

4. Authoritarian

- This method is usually used by people in a position of power.
 - This way takes an advantage of the weakness of the other party's position.
 - This method uses little listening, discussion or information-sharing.
- This is a win-lose strategy where either party can be the winner or the loser.
- Good not to use this method very often – but sometimes in extremely difficult decisions it needs to be taken.

5. Collaboration

- In this model, both parties admit and agree that there is conflict. Both parties agree to discuss it calmly. What's really causing the problem here?
- This model has a downside though:
 - - it takes longer
 - It requires each party to be open and honest and able to prioritize and satisfy their own and the other's party's needs.
- Start by identifying what you do AGREE on.
 - This will build a bridge and a solid foundation to move on to the more troublesome areas.
 - Avoid personalizing the argument – it's about issues, not personalities.
- This is a win-win strategy

Class 3

Given this scenario, each small group will take the same story and resolve it using one of the following styles of conflict management.

1. Avoidance - lose-lose situation
2. Accommodation – lose-win strategy
3. Compromise - lose-lose strategy
4. Authoritarian – win-lose strategy
5. Collaboration - win-win strategy

Story Line:

The Difficult Client

It has been a difficult day as you sit in the front office at the housing authority, answering phones and trying to take messages and direct people to where they need to be. You just talked with two customers, who were a little irritated that their problems could not be solved quickly enough, but you calmed them down and they are waiting to talk to a supervisor about their problems. As you sit there just collecting your breath, you notice that someone is knocking on the counter next to your desk to get your attention. You look up and see a lady with a critical look on her face who immediately says to you “So I finally have your attention, do I? You can tell right now that she is not in a good mood and you think to yourself, “Not another upset person!” Then she says, “I’ve called several times and no one has answered the phone and all I’ve been getting is the run-around all week. The plumbing on my house is broken and needs to be fixed. How do I get people to do their jobs around here?” You now recognized the lady who is speaking. She is the sister of the most powerful person on the Tribal Council and you have heard that when she gets angry she tries to threaten the job of whoever she is mad at. You feel that feeling in your stomach that can’t quite decide how to you should feel: Angry? Afraid? Disrespected? And you know that you need to pay attention to her right now. So you ask her, “Who can I direct your questions to?” And she responds “Yea, like anyone here wants to help me.”

You realize that now you are on the spot so you speak up and

Working to Wellness - Handout

Conflict and Confrontation – how to manage this

Deal with conflict situations right away – don't sweep it under the rug.

Exception to the rule – when parties need a “cooling off” period or a “time out” to allow rational thinking.

- Have you ever taken a “time out” to calm down before jumping into something?
 - Does it work?
 - Does it help?
 - Was the outcome of the argument better or worse”

Most people think “they” are right and the other person is wrong.

- What do you think about this?

What can YOU do to remain calm when you are upset?

-

Ways of handling conflict situations:

1. Avoidance - lose-lose situation
2. Accommodation – lose-win strategy
3. Compromise - lose-lose strategy
4. Authoritarian – win-lose strategy
5. Collaboration - win-win strategy

Class 3

Given this scenario, each small group will take the same story and resolve it using one of the following styles of conflict management.

1. Avoidance - lose-lose situation
2. Accommodation – lose-win strategy
3. Compromise - lose-lose strategy
4. Authoritarian – win-lose strategy
5. Collaboration - win-win strategy

Story Line:

The Difficult Client

It has been a difficult day as you sit in the front office at the housing authority, answering phones and trying to take messages and direct people to where they need to be. You just talked with two customers, who were a little irritated that their problems could not be solved quickly enough, but you calmed them down and they are waiting to talk to a supervisor about their problems. As you sit there just collecting your breath, you notice that someone is knocking on the counter next to your desk to get your attention. You look up and see a lady with a critical look on her face who immediately says to you “So I finally have your attention, do I? You can tell right now that she is not in a good mood and you think to yourself, “Not another upset person!” Then she says, “I’ve called several times and no one has answered the phone and all I’ve been getting is the run-around all week. The plumbing on my house is broken and needs to be fixed. How do I get people to do their jobs around here?” You now recognized the lady who is speaking. She is the sister of the most powerful person on the Tribal Council and you have heard that when she gets angry she tries to threaten the job of whoever she is mad at. You feel that feeling in your stomach that can’t quite decide how to you should feel: Angry? Afraid? Disrespected? And you know that you need to pay attention to her right now. So you ask her, “Who can I direct your questions to?” And she responds “Yea, like anyone here wants to help me.”

You realize that now you are on the spot so you speak up and

Ways of Handling Conflict Situations Handout

Handout

Class 3

Given this scenario, each small group will take the same story and resolve it using one of the following styles of conflict management.

1. Avoidance - lose-lose situation
2. Accommodation – lose-win strategy
3. Compromise - lose-lose strategy
4. Authoritarian – win-lose strategy
5. Collaboration - win-win strategy

Story Line: The Difficult Client

It has been a difficult day as you sit in the front office at the housing authority, answering phones and trying to take messages and direct people to where they need to be. You just talked with two customers, who were a little irritated that their problems could not be solved quickly enough, but you calmed them down and they are waiting to talk to a supervisor about their problems. As you sit there just collecting your breath, you notice that someone is knocking on the counter next to your desk to get your attention. You look up and see a lady with a critical look on her face who immediately says to you “So I finally have your attention, do I? You can tell right now that she is not in a good mood and you think to yourself, “Not another upset person!” Then she says, “I’ve called several times and no one has answered the phone and all I’ve been getting is the run-around all week. The plumbing on my house is broken and needs to be fixed. How do I get people to do their jobs around here?” You now recognized the lady who is speaking. She is the sister of the most powerful person on the Tribal Council and you have heard that when she gets angry she tries to threaten the job of whoever she is mad at. You feel that feeling in your stomach that can’t quite decide how you should feel: Angry? Afraid? Disrespected? And you know that you need to pay attention to her right now. So you ask her, “Who can I direct your questions to?” And she responds “Yea, like anyone here wants to help me.”

You realize that now you are on the spot so you speak up and

Ticket 1

Welcomed group this morning. After brief check in went on to discuss conflict management and confrontation skills. Discussed the importance of actually dealing as immediately as possible with conflict situations and not “sweeping it under the rug” so as to avoid stress buildup and later anger problems associated with the conflict. Discussed how important it might be to use a “cooling off” period in order to engage good thinking and to gather correct information to resolve the conflict. Also talked about how important it is to be reflective about our own biases and prejudices and to be as open as possible to other ideas and perspectives. Groups members able to offer their own experience when using this techniques in a positive manner helped them, and times when they just barged into conflict without thinking and the negative outcomes this entailed.

Individual Note:

Client more shy today but able to share with group examples of positive conflict management and also examples where they “blew it” in managing conflict. Seemed to find the group helpful and interesting.

Plan:

- Continue work on positive work skills such as conflict resolution and assertive communication.
- Continue work on support of sobriety needs.

Ticket 2

Welcomed group this morning. Brief check in to see how folks were doing with jobs and personal relationships. Went on to continue group work around conflict management and confrontation skills. Group members discussed strategies they have used to remain calm and objective in conflict situations. Went on to discuss ways of handling conflict:

1. Avoidance
2. Accommodation
3. Compromise
4. Authoritarian
5. Collaboration

Individual Note:

Client less shy today. Able to relate to topic and ask good questions. Past behavior seems to indicate client prefers to avoid or just accommodate to others (especially partner’s) opinion. Does not like conflict.

Plan:

- Continue exploring positive work skills and assertive communication techniques.
- Continue support of sobriety and recognition, positive management, and assertive behaviors toward “triggers.”

Ticket 3

Welcomed group this morning. Brief check in to see how folks were doing with jobs and personal relationships. Went on to continue group work around conflict management and confrontation skills. Group members discussed strategies they have used to remain calm and objective in conflict situations. Went on to discuss ways of handling conflict:

1. Avoidance

2. Accommodation
3. Compromise
4. Authoritarian
5. Collaboration

Group members then divided up to discuss a scenario and work together to illustrate one of the above 5 management styles for conflict and confrontations.

Individual Note:

Client seemed to work well with others in small groups. Seemed to enjoy the exercise and was an active part of the team assignment.

Plan:

- Continue exploring positive work skills and assertive communication techniques.
- Continue support of sobriety and recognition, positive management, and assertive behaviors toward "triggers."