Conflict to Mutual Goals: Foundational Mindset and Skills

AAPM Virtual Conference
July 14, 2020
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Outline of Session

1. Scope
   What contributes to workplace conflict?

2. Must Knows
   What must I know about engaging with conflicts?

3. Must Dos
   What must I do when engaging with conflict?
What contributes to workplace conflict?

• Definition
• Cost
• Triggers
“the perception by the parties involved of differences, discrepancies and incompatible wishes”

Conflict = New Learning + Relationship Building
Cost of Workplace Conflict

Average Employee Spends 2.8 hours/wk = $359 Billion

Replacement cost = 150% of the Lost Staff’s Annual Salary

25% of Employees → Illness, Absence

10% of Employees → Project Failure

Sources of Workplace Conflict

Self Focus (others act out of self interest)

Resource Depletion

Suboptimal Competence

Communication Breakdown

Dehumanization

Feeling Disempowered

Prior Difficult Relations

Complex Workflows

Resource Depletion

Breaking Norms

Individual

Interpersonal

Organization
Resource Depletion

- I am exhausted.
- I am going through a personal crisis.
- I haven’t taken time off.
Self Focus (others act out of self interest)

Resource Depletion

Suboptimal Competence

Communication Breakdown

Dehumanization

Feeling Disempowered

Prior Difficult Relations

Complex Workflows

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Breaking Norms

Individual

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Dehumanization

- My dignity and humanity were trampled upon.
- They ganged up on me.
- I was bullied.
Feeling Disempowered

- I spoke up but no one listened.
- The physician yelled at me in front of everyone.
- I had no voice in the decision.
What was the conflict about?
Who was involved?
Has the conflict been resolved or is it still ongoing?
What one word comes to mind when you think about this conflict?
Must Knows

2

What must I know about managing conflicts?

- Types of Conflict
- Role of Emotions
- Impact of Bias
Know Your Conflict

I didn’t know that. Thank you for letting me know.

I am familiar with the policy. How might it affect this situation?

Could we re-check whether that’s the most updated...
I didn’t know that. Thank you for letting me know.

Can we learn together?

Could we re-check whether that’s the most updated....
You hurt my feelings.

It's always about you.

No one gives a ( ) about me!
Workplace Conflict: Relationship

You hurt my feelings.

How dare you!

No one gives a ( ) about me!
Role of Emotions in Conflict

Emotion ≠ Noise
Role of Emotions in Conflict

Emotion

Data
Emotion

Values =

Honesty
Justice
Growth
Role of Emotions in Conflict

Thoughts

Behaviors

Emotions
Role of Emotions in Conflict

“Does my voice count?”

Sad, Invisible, Disappointed

“That’s not the point here.”
Stay Engaged
Sad, Invisible, Disappointed
Empowered

Does my voice count?
I am a valued member.

Remain Silent

Role of Emotions in Conflict

Empowered
Negative Emotion

MALADAPTIVE RESPONSE

ANGER:
I am mad at my boss because he won’t talk to me directly.

ACTING OUT:
Complaining, Yelling at Subordinates.

Reframing Statement

It’s up to me to get the feedback I need.

Negative Emotion

FEAR OF CONFRONTATION:
I don’t want to do this.

DENIAL:
Cancel the meeting.

Showing up puts me in charge and gives me some power.

Role of Emotions in Conflict
Impact of Bias

“Automatic associations, of which we may not be aware, that are difficult to control and may conflict with our professed beliefs and values.”

Impact of Bias

Bias

Conflict

Impact of Bias

Bias

Conflict

Impact of Bias

Bias

Conflict

Impact of Bias

Bias

Conflict
Reflection: Which of the Must Knows Will You Commit to Learning More About?

Task vs. Relationship Conflict
Role of Emotions
Impact of Bias
What must I do when engaging with conflicts?

- Pivot to Partnership
- Mind Your Power
- Steward Your Words
Pivot Personalizing into Partnership
Pivot Personalizing into Partnership

Destructive Conflict Management Path
- Past conflict
- Conflict handling style
- Upbringing
- Low emotional intelligence

Task
Feelings  Ego  Identity

Relationship

Retaliate
Ruminate
Pivot Personalizing into Partnership

Constructive Conflict Management Path

- Inquiry
- Mutual Goal
- Perspective Taking
- Reflect
- Re-engage

Relationship

- Feels
- Ego
- Identity

Task

Destructive Conflict Management Path

- Unrealistic Deadline
- Heavy Workload
- Denying Promotion

- Retaliate
- Past conflict
- Conflict handling style
- Upbringing
- Low emotional intelligence
What is your intentional strategy for pivoting towards partnership in the moment of potentially personalizing a conflict?
Mind Your Power

Having influence or control over the beliefs, behaviors and values of individuals, groups or institutions

Mind Your Power

“Psychological safety exists when people feel their workplace is an environment where they can speak up, offer ideas, and ask questions without fear of being punished or embarrassed.” (page 15)
Mind Your Power

Leader Inclusivity

- Introduce self by first name.
- Know team members’ names.
- Express curiosity towards others’ ideas.
- Admit one’s own mistakes.
- Exhibit vulnerability (“I don’t know.”)
- Apologize for behaviors.
- If there was an abrasive exchange with someone, check in with the individual.
He had had a habit throughout the twenty-seven years of making a narrow remark, which, like a plumber’s snake, could work its way through the ear down the throat, halfway to my heart.
Steward Your Words

INQUIRY

LISTENING
Steward Your Words

- Maximize my curiosity and interest in the other person’s perspectives.
- Access my ignorance and ask for information in the least biased and threatening way.

Why did you miss the deadline? I hear you but I disagree with... Thanks.
I will do what you say. Just do what I tell you to do. Sorry.
This is difficult me, too!

Curiosity Acknowledgment Appreciation Advocacy Empowerment Apology Mutual Support
Reflection: Which of the Must Dos Will You Commit to Applying in Your Lives?

Pivot Towards Partnership
Mind Your Power
Steward Your Words
Thank You!

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Recommended Books

- Stone D, Heen S. *Thanks for the feedback: the science and art of receiving feedback well (even when it is off base, unfair, poorly delivered, and frankly, you're not in the mood)*. Penguin; 2015.