

Understanding and Managing Conflicts

Oregon Adult Care
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Gaining Competency

- 0 Self Awareness
- 0 Awareness of others
- 0 Self Management – Skill building
- 0 Relationship management

Building competency by having a good read of the situation and choosing what action is the most appropriate for each situation

When Communication Breaks Down...

0 Exercise in small groups



***Everyone who crosses
our path is our teacher***

Why Communication Fails?

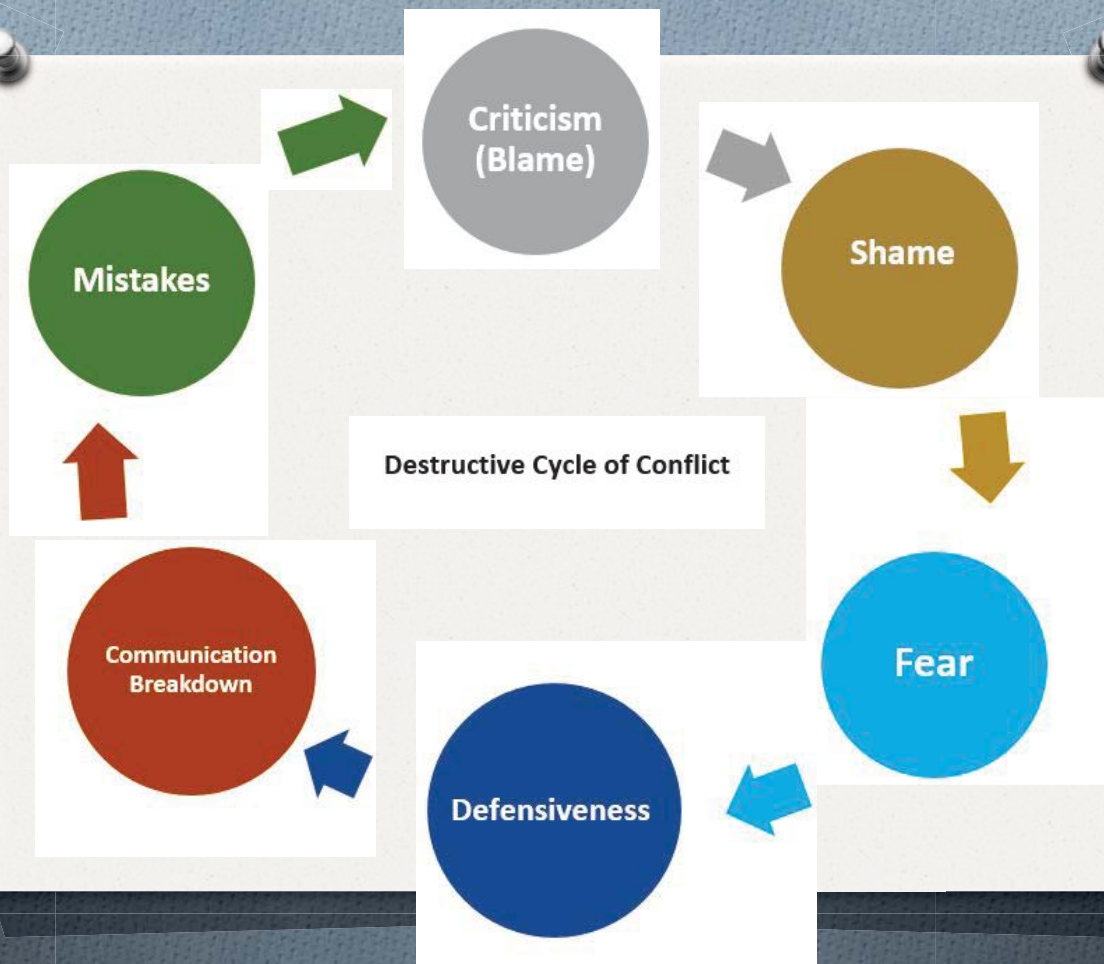
- o Different interpretation of facts
 - o Make assumptions
 - o Speculate
 - o Different values (cultural, etc.)
 - o Different working styles
 - o Judgements
 - o Misunderstanding
 - o Different angles of seeing things
 - o Poor listening/learning skills
- o **CREATE NARRATIVES**

When out of balance:

- o Become more self absorbed
- o Don't listen
- o Give contrary messages
- o Judge, react
- o Fight harder
- o Become submissive
- o Try to be good
- o Accommodate
- o Avoid the other person

Facts get distorted when feelings are involved

0 Confusion (language of emotions)



Defining Conflict

Conflict occurs when we perceive that one or more of our ***values***, ***needs***, or an aspect of our ***identities*** is challenged, threatened or undermined.



Needs and Values

Needs

Values

The Neuroscience of Conflict

Brain during conflict:

- ✓ Amygdala acts as "smoke detector"
- ✓ Floods with cortisol and adrenaline
- ✓ Fight, flight, freeze response
- ✓ Long term exposure = health problems: depression, insomnia etc.
- ✓ Corpus Callosum "the bridge"

Lizard brain



Left brain functions

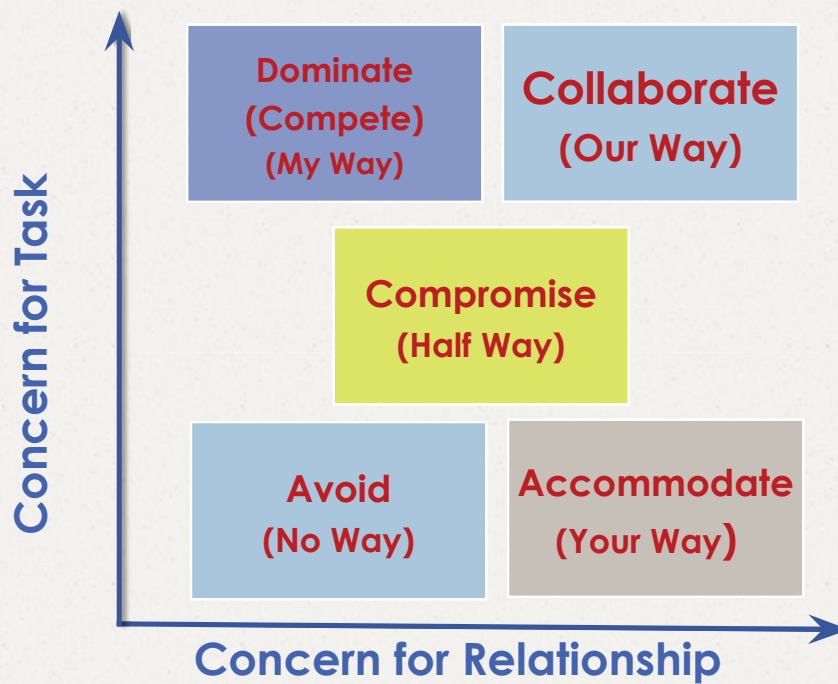
- Analytic thinking
- Logic
- Language
- Rationality
- Objectivity
- Reality-based



Right brain functions

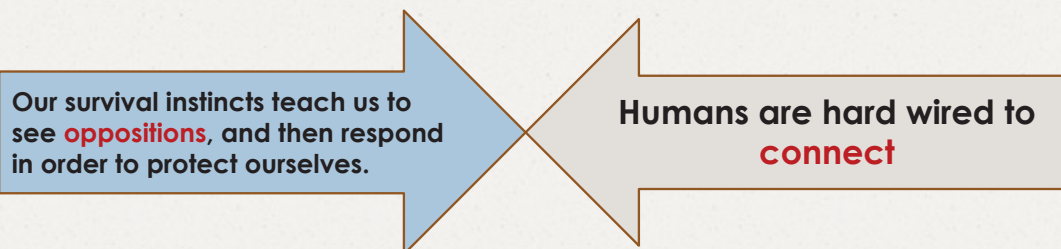
- Intuition
- Creativity
- Impulsivity
- Risk-taking
- Fantasy-based

Conflict Response Styles



Biological Responses

Conflicts trigger both biological reactions. The mind's role is to mitigate between these two forces.



Listening Techniques

- ❖ Validate (Being present)
- ❖ Empathize (Compassion & understanding)
- ❖ Clarify (Understanding things from his/her point of view)
- ❖ Summarize (Paraphrase for accuracy)
- ❖ **Use open – ended questions**



Open Ended Questions

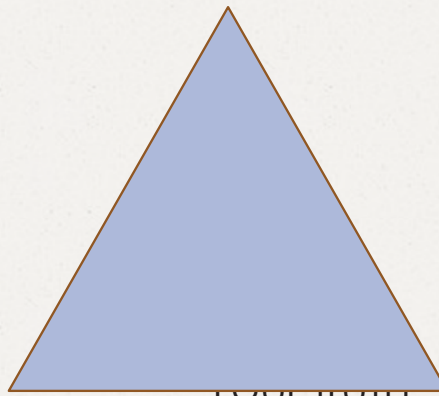
- o "What is your perspective on this?"
- o "What is your understanding of why I reacted/responded the way I did?"
- o "How do you interpret my intentions?"
- o "Is there something that you want me to understand that I have not yet?"
- o "What do you think would be the first step you could try?"
- o "What do you propose would work for us so we can understand each other better?"
- o "Do you have any ideas for me of how I can communicate better?"



The Truth Triangle

Higher level of solutions

My truth



Your truth

Collaborative Approach to Negotiating Conflict

- 0 Focus on the problem, not the person
- 0 State your concern using I statements
- 0 Listen to understand
- 0 Assert yourself
- 0 Create a collaborative solution that integrates everyone's ideas and needs

Focus on the problem, not the person

- 0 "Looks like we need to understand the issues between us better, I wonder what is your perspective on this?"
- 0 "What do you think is contributing to this?"
- 0 "I can see how you did not realize that what you said would have the impact it did." "What do you think about it now?"
- 0 "I respect your hard work and I am trying to also understand your thoughts about this issue because it is not clear to me how you came to this decision?"
- 0 "I have tried this approach before and it didn't work. I would like to suggest a change in how this is done...."

State your Concerns

- 0 "I feel that I have been out of the loop in the communications you have had with the Consultant. That leaves me unsure of where you are in the project. Is there a reason why I am not being cc'd on these emails lately?"
- 0 "I would like to revisit our department's agreement that when people leave their desks for a period of time, other than the normal breaks, that everyone knows how long they will be gone. It came to my attention that you forget to do it. What do you think?"
- 0 "I have a concern with the responses I hear when you are on the phone with customers. I would like us to talk about it. Is this a good time? I would like to hear about your experience with some of the more difficult customers and see if I can be of help."

Listen to understand

- 0 "I hear what you are saying, but I am not clear why this is a priority right now, can you explain?"
- 0 "What is it that you need from me right now that will help you complete this project?"
- 0 "How does what I said/did create a problem for you?"
- 0 "Can you give me a specific example?"

Assert Yourself

- 0 "Based on your input, let me look into it some more and I will get back to you with the answer by..."
- 0 "I can see how this affects you, you could write your suggestions down and I can present them to the agency...but I don't know if they will be able to make these changes, but we can try..."
- 0 "This is all I can do about...I will get back to you if things change."
(If you can follow through with that commitment to get back with the person.)
- 0 "This aspect is not something I have control over...I can do XYZ..."
- 0 "I am handling a large number of cases right now and won't be able to get back to you quickly enough, here is what I can do..."
- 0 "We might not be able to intervene in this situation...how would you continue to...?"

Create a Collaborative Solution

- 0 "How can we work together to assure that this misunderstanding doesn't happen again in the future?"
- 0 "I would rather not give you more directions at this point, trusting your judgement and problem solving ability. Can we agree to meet once a week to go over the project rather than communicate daily? Do you have other ideas?"
- 0 "What do you suggest would be a good way for us to communicate so we don't leave too many things unclear or misunderstood?"
- 0 "I would like to propose that we continue to explore different ways to.....would you like to do it by email since we are both very busy? Do you have other ideas of how we can continue the conversation?"

Collaborative Approach

"In the long history of humankind (and animal kind too) those who have learned to collaborate and improvise most effectively have prevailed."

Charles Darwin



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