



MODULE 5 FACILITATOR’S GUIDE: Healthy Conflict, Healthy Community

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MODULE GOALS

- To help individuals and groups to understand that conflict is an important part of growing and deepening as community.
- To help the group explore types of conflict and how specific types of conflict have value and when they can be obstructive to resolution.
- To raise awareness that avoiding or minimizing conflict creates opportunity for distrust, superficial relationships and even abusive behaviors within a community.

WELCOME AND BRIEF CHECK-IN (5 MINUTES)

CENTERING PRAYER (15 MINUTES)

Facilitator signals the beginning of prayer using a song, chime, or quiet invitation. When all are settled, read the following instructions.

- Choose a sacred word as the symbol of your intention to consent to God's presence and action within.
- Sit comfortably and with your eyes closed, settle briefly, and silently introduce the sacred word as the symbol of your consent to God's presence and action within.
- When you become aware of thoughts, return ever-so-gently to the sacred word.
- When I signal the end of the prayer period, remain in silence with your eyes closed for a couple of minutes as I read from our maxims and from scripture.

Facilitator signals the end of silence using a song, chime, or a quiet invitation. After a few beats of silence, read the following:

Maxim 51: Give all the happiness you can to those who give you a great deal of unhappiness, and give it willingly.

Maxim 52: Interpret all things from the best possible point of view.

Scripture: Romans 12:4-11

For as in one body we have many parts, and all the parts do not have the same function,
so we, though many, are one body in Christ* and individually parts of one another. Since we have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us exercise them: if prophecy, in proportion to the faith;
if ministry, in ministering; if one is a teacher, in teaching;
if one exhorts, in exhortation; if one contributes, in generosity; if one is over others, with diligence; if one does acts of mercy, with cheerfulness.
Let love be sincere; hate what is evil, hold on to what is good;
love one another with mutual affection; anticipate one another in showing honor.
Do not grow slack in zeal, be fervent in spirit, serve the Lord.

SHARING THE STATE OF THE HEART (20-30 MINUTES)

Enter into a quiet, contemplative sitting position to reflect on these questions; then briefly share what has been given to you during this time of reflection.

- How has God been revealed to you since our last gathering?
- How has that changed you?

Facilitator brings Sharing the State of the Heart to closure, honoring what has been shared.

POWER GRAB (10 MINUTES)

Items needed:

- 1 broadsheet of newspaper per four people (need not be blank)

Facilitator asks everyone to break into groups of four. Each group should stand or sit as needed, as each group is given one large sheet of paper. The facilitator reads the following:

Each of you take one corner of the sheet of newspaper in your right hand. Place your left hand behind your back. The newspaper should now be suspended between you by its four corners.

This sheet of newspaper represents power. Now that you as an individual have this power in your hands, on my count of three, your goal is to personally have the largest piece of paper, however you need to get it. 1...2...3...GO!

After the activity dies down, the Facilitator calls everyone back together and asks the following questions:

- The newspaper represented power. Who has the largest amount of power?
- How did you obtain that largest amount of power?
- How does it feel to have the largest amount of power?
- Who has the least amount of power? Why?
- How does it feel to have little or no power?
- Why do you think we responded the way we did when we saw this piece of paper as power?

The facilitator plays the video for Module 5.

VIDEO FOR MODULE 5 (20 MINUTES)

WHAT'S YOUR STYLE? (45 MINUTES)

Items needed:

- Copies of [Conflict Management Styles Quiz](#) handout for each participant
- Copies of [Types of Conflict](#) handouts for each participant
- Pen or Pencil for each participant

Purpose of the exercise:

To help participants understand the conflict style she is most comfortable with or which she uses most often. Through this understanding the participant will gain awareness when the style is helpful or possibly obstructive and when others might be engaging in a different conflict style. This awareness can be used to help all work toward resolution.

Facilitator reads the following: Over the past four sessions, we have explored how personal understanding of the charism, worldviews, stereotyping, and types of listening inform and influence our relationships with others. No matter how good our intentions during times of conflict, when loss of power feels imminent, we often resort to habits and practices that are most comfortable to us. Indeed, our western culture pushes us to win and gain power.

Compromise can be seen as weak. During times of stress, we often turn to what we know versus what we aspire to do. This exercise is an opportunity for us to explore what our personal conflict style is and to understand contexts in which that helps resolve conflict and when it can be obstructive to resolution.

Facilitator distributes the Conflict Management Styles Quiz and asks everyone to take five minutes to complete them individually. Once completed, participants may sit in silence and reflect on what they have learned or affirmed about themselves. When everyone is done, split the group into pairs for sharing using the following questions:

- What type of conflict style(s) scored highest for you?
- Do you think this reflects you accurately, why or why not?
- How do you believe others perceive your conflict style?
- How does this impact your personal relationships and being in community?
- What are your general feelings when you encounter conflict, either personally or in groups?

When it seems that most pairs have finished sharing, Facilitator calls the group back to the larger circle and invites them to respond to the following questions.

- What did you learn about yourself?
- When might these various styles come in handy or be obstructive?
- What skills do you think are needed when you encounter conflict?
- What do you think is at the root of most conflict?
- Once you understand what is at the root, how would you choose to respond? Why?
- What are the challenges we have as a community regarding conflict?
- What do we need to better navigate conflict when it occurs?

Facilitator closes the discussion and invites the group to re-center with silence.

IMAGINE A WORLD/COMMUNITY (60 MINUTES)

Items needed:

- Large newsprint or flipchart paper for every three or four people
- Painter's tape
- Markers
- Colored pencils

Facilitator asks the group to split into groups of three or four, then reads the following:

Imagine a community where conflict is accepted and acknowledged as an essential part of growth and life. When asked, members say they are very happy and feel safe in this community. Outsiders notice that disagreements of all types are resolved and members seem to have an inner light. Even when members experience conflict outside of the community something different is noticed about their presence and way of engaging. Outsiders who have not experienced this type of community are eager to know:

- How does this community address conflict?
- Are all levels of conflict addressed in the same manner?
- How are all parties treated and received?
- What happens when pain and wounds run deep?
- How is healing and reconciliation achieved?
- How long does it take?
- How did the community create such a way to handle conflict?

As a small group, draw, chart, and/or write about how this process might look.

Facilitator checks in with each group after 30 minutes. When enough time has passed for group sharing, she calls the groups back to the larger circle. Facilitator asks the groups to briefly present their findings of how their community handles conflict, then asks all the following questions:

- Thinking of the process your group imagined, has anyone lived or experienced a process like that? Was/is it sustainable?
- If you have not experienced a community like this, how would we make it possible?
- What obstacles do we think prevent us from such a community? How do we overcome those obstacles?
- Do we want to overcome those obstacles, or are we comfortable with how things are?

Facilitator closes the discussion and invites the group to re-center with silence.

GUIDED DISCUSSION FROM THE READINGS (45 – 60 MINUTES)

From the silence, speak only if you feel called to respond to any of the excerpts and queries below. This is not a time for conversation, but for a deeper sharing of understandings revealed. Once someone has shared, allow for space, then others can continue to speak if

prompted by the Spirit. After all have shared, if there is time and the group feels compelled, more discussion may be desired.

Facilitator reads the following:

- Pope Francis advises,

“Conflict cannot be ignored or concealed. It has to be faced. But if we remain trapped in conflict, we lose our perspective, our horizons shrink, and reality itself begins to fall apart. In the midst of conflict, we lose our sense of the profound unity of reality.”

How do I remain open to the reality that conflict will occur and engage in a way that deepens my relationships and allows for growth?

- Maxim 51 advises us to give all the happiness we can to those who give us a great deal of unhappiness, and give it willingly. Maxim 52 tells us to interpret all things from the best possible point of view.

When feeling threatened or in conflict with others, do I assume they have good intentions, or do I expect falsehoods and untruths? Am I willing to give them happiness?

- Walter Brueggemann writes, “Quite clearly, the one thing the dominant culture cannot tolerate or co-opt is compassion, the ability to stand in solidarity.”

When in conflict, am I willing to model Jesus, who could “give voice to the very hurt that had been muted”, and allow “newness to break through?”

- Do I trust the Holy Spirit to accompany us through the conflict to live into the Kingdom here on earth?
- Am I willing to model healthy conflict within our small community so it may be a powerful witness to the world?

GATHERING THE GRACES

(5-10 minutes) Reflect on the following questions:

- What have I heard?
- What am I learning?

- What difference will it make for me tomorrow and the day after that and beyond?
- What difference does it make for us as the community of St. Joseph?

Each participant may share ONE brief awareness/learning from today's process.

Take a few minutes to record in your journal:

- What awareness has the group gained during this time?
- What wisdom needs to be recorded and carried into the next session?

CLOSING PRAYER

Facilitator invites everyone to reflect silently for a moment on what they have experienced during this time together. Choose a group member to read the following.

Reader: Lord make me an instrument of your peace.

Where there is hatred,
Let me sow love;
Where there is injury, pardon;
Where there is doubt, faith;
Where there is despair, hope;
Where there is darkness, light;
And where there is sadness, Joy.

O Divine Master grant that I may
Not so much seek to be consoled
As to console;
To be understood,
As to understand;
To be loved as to love.
For it is in giving that we receive,
It is in pardoning that we are pardoned.
And it is in dying that we are
Born to eternal life.

All: Amen

CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES QUIZ

We each have our own way of dealing with conflict. The techniques we use are based on many variables, such as our basic underlying temperament, our personality, our environment, and where we are in our professional career. However, by and large, there are five major styles of conflict management techniques in our tool box. In order to address conflict, we draw from a collaborating, competing, avoiding, harmonizing, or compromising style of management. None of these strategies is superior in and of itself. How effective they are depends on the context in which they are used.

Each statement below provides a strategy for dealing with a conflict. Rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 4 indicating how likely you are to use this strategy.

1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Always

Be sure to answer the questions indicating how you *would* behave rather than how you think you *should* behave.

		Your response
1	I explore issues with others so as to find solutions that meet everyone's needs.	
2	I try to negotiate and adopt a give-and-take approach to problem situations.	
3	I try to meet the expectations of others.	
4	I would argue my case and insist on the merits of my point of view.	
5	When there is a disagreement, I gather as much information as I can and keep the lines of communication open.	
6	When I find myself in an argument, I usually say very little and try to leave as soon as possible.	
7	I try to see conflicts from both sides. What do I need? What does the other person need? What are the issues involved?	
8	I prefer to compromise when solving problems and just move on.	
9	I find conflicts challenging and exhilarating; I enjoy the battle of wits that usually follows.	
10	Being at odds with other people makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious.	
11	I try to accommodate the wishes of my friends and family.	

12	I can figure out what needs to be done and I am usually right.	
13	To break deadlocks, I would meet people halfway.	
14	I may not get what I want but it's a small price to pay for keeping the peace.	
15	I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself.	

How to score the Conflict Management Quiz:

As stated, the 15 statements correspond to the five conflict resolution styles. To find your most preferred style, total the points in the respective categories. The category with the highest score indicates your most commonly used strategy. The one with the lowest score indicates your least preferred strategy. However, if you are a leader who must deal with conflict on a regular basis, you may find your style to be a blend of styles.

Style	Corresponding Statements	Your Total
Collaborating	1, 5, 7	
Competing	4, 9, 12	
Avoiding	6, 10, 15	
Harmonizing	3, 11, 14	
Compromising	2, 8, 13	

THE FIVE CONFLICT MANAGEMENT STYLES, IN BRIEF

Collaborating Style

Problems are solved in ways in which an optimum result is provided for all involved. Both sides get what they want and negative feelings are minimized. "By jove, we've got it!"

Pros: Creates mutual trust; maintains positive relationships; builds commitments.

Cons: Time consuming; energy consuming.

Competing Style

Authoritarian approach. "I'm right and you just need to see the 'truth'."

Pros: Goal oriented; quick.

Cons: May breed hostility.

Avoiding Style

The non-confrontational approach. "Problem, what problem?"

Pros: Does not escalate conflict; postpones difficulty.

Cons: Unaddressed problems; unresolved problems.

Harmonizing Style

Giving in to maintain relationships. "Whatever makes you happy."

Pros: Minimizes injury when we are outmatched; relationships are maintained.

Cons: Breeds resentment; exploits the weak.

Compromising Style

The middle ground approach. "I'll concede this if you concede that."

Pros: Useful in complex issues without simple solutions; all parties are equal in power.

Cons: No one is ever really satisfied; less than optimal solutions get implemented.

FIVE COMMON STYLES OF CONFLICT¹

Competing

Uses:

- When quick, decisive action is vital – e.g., emergencies.
- On important issues where unpopular courses of action need to be implemented – e.g., cost cutting, enforcing unpopular rules, discipline.
- On issues vital to community welfare when you know you're right or risks too high.
- To protect yourself against people who take advantage of noncompetitive behavior.

If you scored High:

- Are you surrounded by "yes" women? (If so, perhaps it's because they have learned that it's unwise to disagree with you, or have given up trying to influence you. This closes you off from information.)
- Are others afraid to admit ignorance and uncertainties to you? (In competitive climates, one must fight for influence and respect – which means acting more certain and confident than one feels. The upshot is that people are less able to ask for information and opinion – they are less able to learn.)

If you scored Low:

- Do you often feel powerless in situations? (It may be because you are unaware of the power you do have, unskilled in its use, or uncomfortable with the idea of using it. This may hinder your effectiveness by restricting your influence.)
- Do you have trouble taking a firm stand, even when you see the need? (Sometimes concerns for other's feelings or anxieties about the use of power cause us to vacillate, which may mean postponing the decision and adding to the suffering and/or resentment of others.)

Collaborating

Uses:

- To find an integrative solution when both sets of concerns are too important to be compromised. Hi risk and high need.
- When your objective is to learn – e.g., testing your own assumptions, understanding the views of others.
- To merge insights from people with different perspectives on a problem.

¹ Source: Reginald (Reg) Adkins, PhD, Elemental Truths, <http://elementaltruths.blogspot.com/2006/11/conflict-management-quiz.html>

- To gain commitment by incorporating other's concerns into a consensual decision.
- To work through hard feelings which have been interfering with an interpersonal relationship.

If you scored High:

- Do you spend time discussing issues in depth that do not seem to deserve it? (Collaboration takes time and energy – perhaps the scarcest organizational resources. Trivial problems don't require optimal solutions, and not all personal differences need to be hashed out. The overuse of collaboration and consensual decision-making sometimes represents a desire to minimize risk by diffusing responsibility for a decision or by postponing action.)
- Does your collaborative behavior fail to elicit collaborative responses from others? (The exploratory and tentative nature of some collaborative behavior may make it easy for others to disregard collaborative overtures, or the trust and openness may be taken advantage of. You may be missing some cues that indicate the presence of defensiveness, strong feelings, impatience, competitiveness, or conflicting interests.)

If you scored Low:

- Is it hard for you to see differences as opportunities for joint gain – as opportunities to learn or solve problems? (Although there are often threatening or unproductive aspects of conflict, indiscriminate pessimism can prevent you from seeing collaborative possibilities and thus deprive you of the mutual gains and satisfactions which accompany successful collaboration.)
- Are others uncommitted to your decisions or policies? (Perhaps their own concerns are not being incorporated into those decisions or policies.)

Compromising

Uses:

- When goals are moderately important, but not worth the effort or potential disruption of more assertive modes.
- When two opponents with equal power are strongly committed to mutually exclusive goals – e.g., as in labor-management bargaining.
- To achieve temporary settlements to complex issues.
- To arrive at expedient solutions under time pressure.
- As a backup mode when collaboration or competition fails to be successful.

If you scored High:

- Do you concentrate so heavily upon the practicalities and tactics of compromise that you sometimes lose sight of larger issues – principles, values, long-term objectives, or community welfare?

- Does an emphasis on bargaining and trading create a cynical climate of gamesmanship? (Such a climate might undermine interpersonal trust and deflect attention away from the merits of the issues discussed.)

If you scored Low:

- Do you find yourself too sensitive or embarrassed to be effective in bargaining situations?
- Do you find it hard to make concessions? (Without this safety valve, you may have trouble getting gracefully out of mutually destructive arguments, power struggles, etc.)

Avoiding

Uses:

- When an issue is trivial, of only passing importance, or when other more important issues are pressing.
- When you perceive no chance of satisfying your concerns – e.g., when you have low power or you are frustrated by something which would be very difficult to change (national policies, someone's personality structure, etc.)
- When the potential damage of confronting a conflict outweighs the benefits of its resolution.
- To let people cool down – to reduce tensions to a productive level and to regain perspective and composure.
- When gathering more information outweighs the advantages of an immediate decision.
- When others can resolve the conflict more effectively.
- When the issue seems tangential or symptomatic of another more basic issue.

If you scored High:

- Does your coordination suffer because people have trouble getting your inputs on issues?
- Does it often appear that people are "walking on eggshells?" (Sometimes a dysfunctional amount of energy can be devoted to caution and the avoiding of issues, indicating that issues need to be faced and resolved.)
- Are decisions on important issues made by default?

If you scored Low:

- Do you find yourself hurting people's feelings or stirring up hostilities? (You may need to exercise more discretion in confronting issues or more tact in framing issues in non-threatening ways. Tact is partially the art of avoiding potentially disruptive aspects of an issue.)

- Do you often feel harried or overwhelmed by a number of issues?
(You may need to devote more time to setting priorities – deciding which issues are relatively unimportant and perhaps delegating them to others.)

Harmonizing

Uses:

- When you realize that you are wrong (or less experienced or knowledgeable)– to allow a better position to be heard, to from others, and to show that you are reasonable. 8"
- When the issue is much more important to the other person than to yourself – to satisfy the needs of others, and as a goodwill gesture to help maintain a cooperative relationship.
- To build up social credits for later issues which are important to you.
- When continued competition would only damage your cause – when you are outmatched and losing.
- When preserving harmony and avoiding disruption are especially important.
- To aid in the managerial development of subordinates by allowing them to experiment and learn from their own mistakes.

If you scored High:

- Do you feel that your own ideas and concerns are not getting the attention they deserve? (Deferring too much to the concerns of others can deprive you of influence, respect, and recognition. It also deprives the organization of your potential contributions.)
- Is discipline lax? (Although discipline for its own sake may be of little value, there are often rules, procedures, and assignments whose implementation is crucial for you or the organization.)

If you scored Low:

- Do you have trouble building goodwill with others?
(Accommodation on minor issues that are important to others is a gesture of goodwill.)
- Do others often seem to regard you as unreasonable?
- Do you have trouble admitting it when you are wrong?
- Do you recognize legitimate exceptions to rules?
- Do you know when to give up?