



WISCONSIN
UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON



WISCONSIN

UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON

Conflict Resolution Skills for the Clinical Setting: An Overview

Harry Webne-Behrman

UW-Madison Office of Human Resources

HR Communities of Practice Office

608-262-9934

Harry.webnebehrman@wisc.edu



Agenda

- Definitions & Terms
- Important conflicts to address
- Conflict Management Process Overview
- Application: Case Studies in the Clinical Setting
- Synthesis/ Putting it into Practice

Focus Question: *“What is conflict, and how is it managed in a clinical setting?”*



Building from our experience...



*Recall a time when you worked through a conflictive, challenging issue **successfully**...or witnessed others doing so:*

- What happened?*
- How did people feel as a result?*
- What did you learn from that experience that you have brought forward with you?*



What is Conflict?

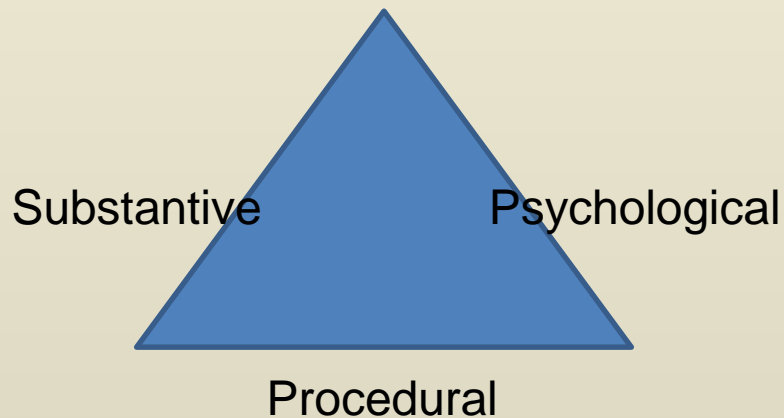


- In conflict, the parties *perceive a threat* to their needs, interests, or concerns
- They perceive finite resources, limited options, and limited solutions
- People respond to the perceived threats, rather than to an “objective” reality



Needs in Negotiation

- Substantive needs = the “stuff” of the conflict...
- Procedural needs = having a fair and well understood process... “Ground Rules”
- Psychological/ Relational needs = trust, honesty, safety, security, integrity





Reflection: Key Sources of Conflict

Some things to keep in mind...

- What are some important conflicts that you face in your setting?
- How do they tend to be addressed?
- How is leadership provided to effectively address these situations?
- Barriers/ challenges:
 - Personal
 - Interpersonal
 - Structural/ systemic challenges



The Key Skills of Conflict Resolution

- Active Listening
- Assertive Communication
- Flexibility in Problem Solving
- Collaborative Negotiation
- Managing Impasse



****For leaders... Facilitating the best expression of these skills...*



Three Stages... 8 Steps:

- **Prepare to Engage and Negotiate**
 - Self-Awareness and Care (ongoing)
 - Clarify true concerns of the conflict
 - Have a “safe space” to talk; establish “ground rules”
- **Understand the Issues**
 - “Seek First to Understand” – Hear all Perspectives
 - Assert Clearly and Specifically
 - Identify the ‘true agenda’ for the discussion
- **Work Through the Issues**
 - Problem-solve with Flexibility
 - Navigate Impasse with Respect and Curiosity
 - Build Sustainable Agreements



Step #1: Take Care and Take Stock!

- Understand your strengths, challenges, and styles
 - Know your “hot buttons”
- *How might I ‘center’ myself as I approach this conversation?*



Leadership Questions: How do we take care of ourselves in our work environment? What resources exist to support a healthy organization?



Step #2: Understand Your Needs Threatened by the Conflict

- Clarify substantive, procedural, and psychological needs
- Identify desired outcomes from negotiation
- Look at BATNA, WATNA, and MLATNA
(Best, Worst, and Most Likely Alternatives to a Negotiated Agreement)

Leadership Questions: How well do we understand the needs of people engaged in conflicts? What spaces exist to improve that understanding?



Step #3: Identify a Safe Space for Negotiation

- Consider privacy, neutral location
- Utilize third parties (mediators, facilitators, advocates), as appropriate
 - There are times when you may be that 3rd party!
- Establish “ground rules” to support a collaborative negotiation process

Leadership Questions: How might we create spaces that support this type of dialogue? Who might be good candidates to serve as 3rd parties to assist the process?



Step #4: Active Listening

Dedicate yourself to fully understanding the other person, and demonstrate that commitment

Non-verbal messages

- Body Language
- Tone of voice
- Eye contact
- Removing distractions





Active Listening

- Verbal responses:
 - Encouraging
 - Clarifying
 - Restating
 - Reflecting
 - Summarizing
 - Validating



Leadership Question: In what ways do I model 'active listening' in order to encourage it in others?



Step #5: Assertive Communication

- Express your needs to the other party
- Identify specific desired outcomes together
- Understand your BATNA, WATNA, and MLATNA (as alternatives)

→ *Continue to listen with respect*

Leadership Questions: Do I clearly convey what I expect from others? Do I express myself with respect and openness?



Step #6: Problem Solving

- Focus on underlying interests and needs
- Take one issue at a time
- Generate several possible solutions
- Clarify criteria for evaluating options
- Stay flexible! There *are* solutions out there!

Leadership Questions: How flexibly do we approach challenging issues... are we open to new approaches and innovative solutions?



Step #7: Managing Impasse

- Set aside the issue and “name the impasse”
- Review definition of the problem
- Shift from substantive to procedural needs
- Reiterate “ground rules”
- Look at BATNA...
- Consider a structured break
- Treat the impasse with respect

*Leadership Question: Do we treat impasse with respect or try to minimize it or abandon the process? **This is one of the core challenges...***



Hallmarks of a Good Agreement

- Patiently address all key issues
- Review the agreement for clarity
- Look for “Hallmarks” of a good agreement
 - Fair
 - Balanced
 - Realistic
 - Responds to Needs of the Conflict
 - Specific *Enough*
 - As self-enforcing as possible
 - Future-oriented

Leadership Question: Can we support group members to work through the tough issues that get us bogged down?



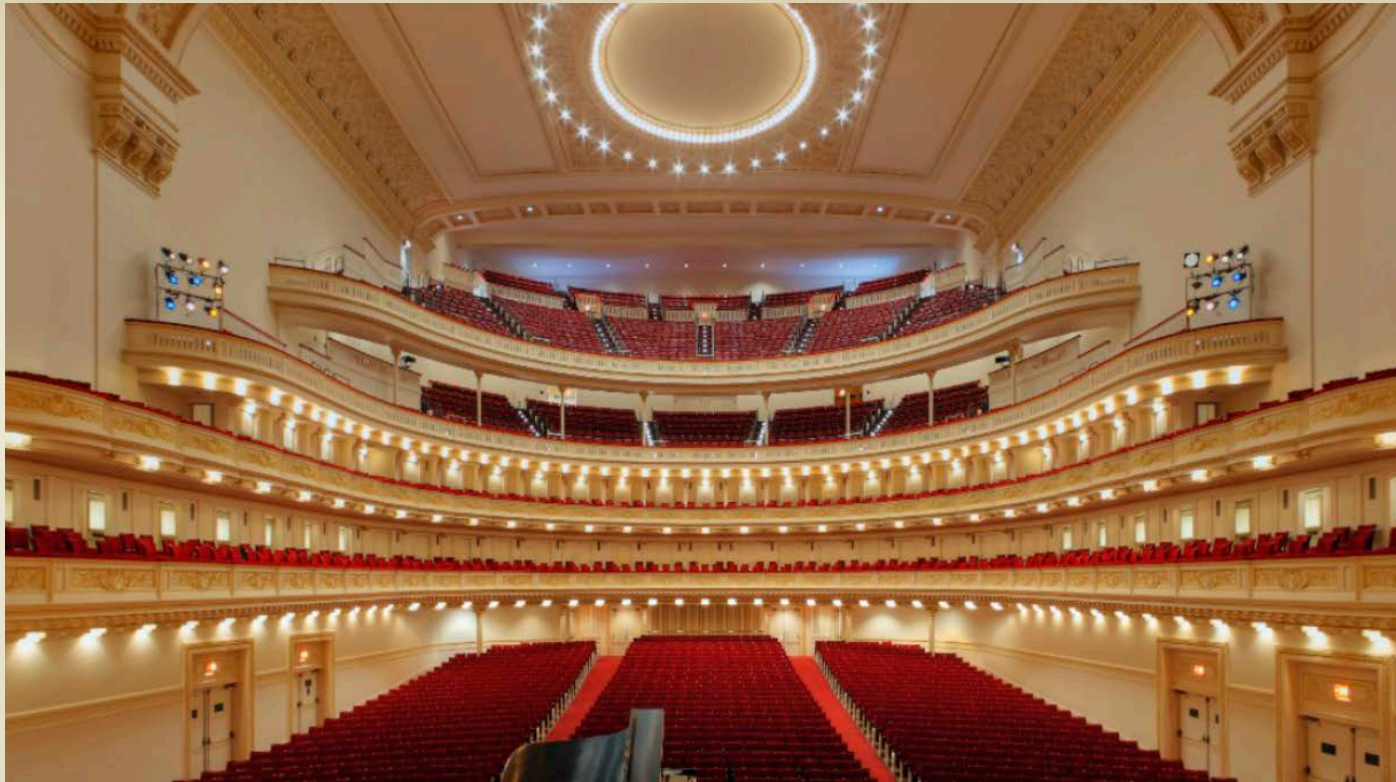
Implement and Evaluate

- Do all you can to implement the Agreement
- Arrange a time to meet together and review the Agreement:
 - Did we follow through with the agreement?
 - Is it working? How can it be improved?
 - Are there any additional areas of concern?





Practice!





For additional information...

- Contact Harry at UW-OHR, 262-9934 or harry.wiebnebehrman@wisc.edu
- Visit the Conflict Resolution Skills Site: <http://www.ohrd.wisc.edu/onlinetraining/resolution/index.htm>