



Let's talk: Engaging in the management of conflict

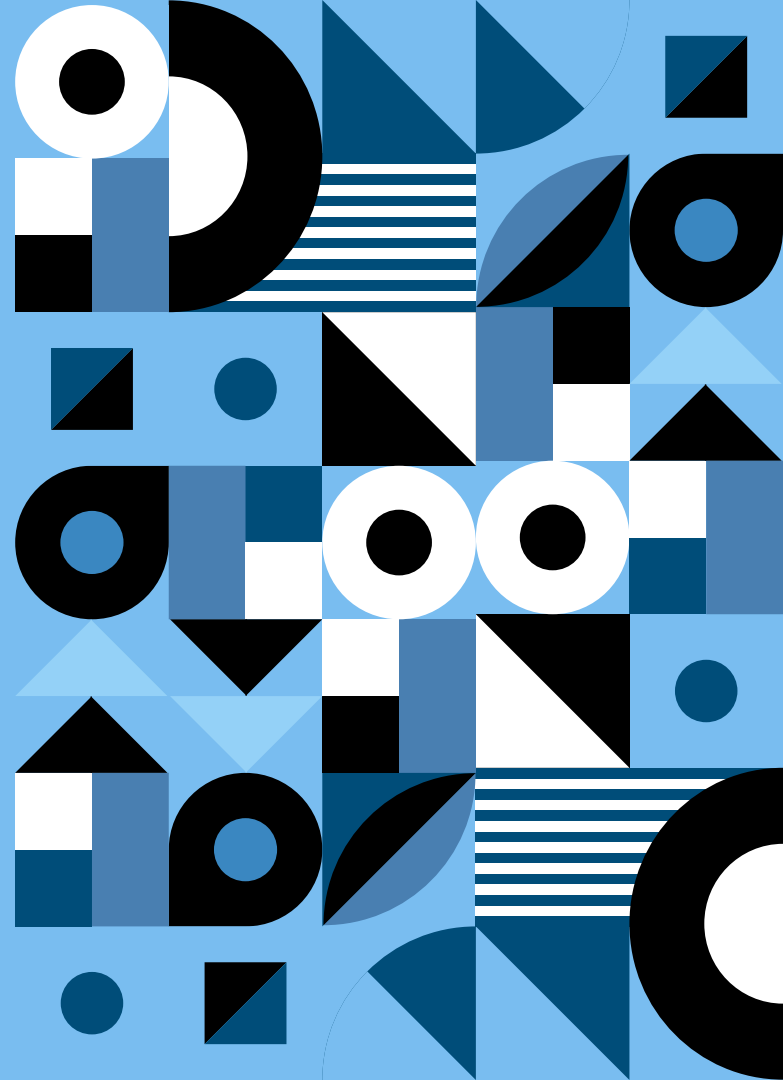
Association of Southeastern Research Libraries

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Learning outcomes

- ❑ Introduction/about
- ❑ Common ground
- ❑ Conflict
 - ❑ **Intrapersonal** (within self)
 - ❑ Interpersonal
 - ❑ **Intragroup** - within a group
 - ❑ **Intergroup** - between 2 or more groups
- ❑ Scenarios and solutions: A discussion
- ❑ Additional resources





Why organizational conflict management?

- ❑ Profession interest both as librarian and as OD consultant
- ❑ Generally avoided within the LIS field (my assumption)
- ❑ Idea I've been mulling over for a *while*
- ❑ *Not* Conflict Resolution (whole other ball of yarn)

Why organizational conflict management?

“Theories of organizations that do not admit conflict provide poor guidance in dealing with problems of organizational efficiency, stability, governance, and change, for conflict within and between organizations is intimately related as either symptom, cause, or effect....” ~Pondy, 1967



Definition- conflict

“The process which begins when one party perceives that another has frustrated, or is about to frustrate, some concern of [theirs]”.
~Kenneth W. Thomas, 1992

“An interactive process manifested in incompatibility, disagreement, or dissonance within or between social entities (i.e., individual, group, organization, etc)” ~M. Afzalur Rahim, 2014)



Conflict occurs

When one social entity

- ❑ Engages in an activity that is divergent with their needs or interests
- ❑ Have behavioral preferences that may be incompatible with another implementing their preferences
- ❑ Both entities want the same resource, which is in short supply, but high demand
- ❑ One possess attitudes, values, skills, and goals that are pertinent but are held exclusive to the other
- ❑ Has exclusionary behavioral preferences regarding joint action
- ❑ Is interdependent in the work or activity



Competition as subset of conflict

Situations of incompatibility lead to competition

- ❑ Once incompatibility, or disagreement is known, one or both entities involved may vie for their own goals and interfere with the goals of the other party
- ❑ Examples
 - ❑ Golf is a competitive sport
 - ❑ Football a conflictual sport
- ❑ Competitive behavior has rules and norms
- ❑ Conflictual behavior does not have agreed upon rules or norms



Threshold of conflict

- ❑ Just because there are differences between two individuals, does not mean conflict will occur.
- ❑ For conflict to occur there is a point of no return or threshold level of intensity
 - ❑ Where one or both individuals cannot ignore the issue
- ❑ Tolerance or awareness of conflict varies by individual



Organizational conflict classifications

- ❑ **Intrapersonal conflict** (self)- Intra-individual or intrapsychic conflict when member is required to perform work/roles that are not in alignment with expertise, interests, or goals
- ❑ **Intragroup conflict** (within a group)- Dyadic conflict between two or more members of the same organization
- ❑ **Intergroup conflict** (between 2+ groups) - interdepartmental between two or more units with the same organization



Intrapersonal conflict

- ❑ When a person is motivated to engage in two or more mutually exclusive activities
- ❑ Conflict occurs when there is a misalignment of skills, expertise or education to tasks or role(s)
- ❑ When this mismatch is significant between organizational demand and role expected to work
- ❑ Examples:
 - ❑ Should I save for retirement or get a new phone?
 - ❑ Delaying a hire because you can't decide between candidates.



Intrapersonal conflict - diagnosis

- ❑ Misassignment and goal incongruence - right person for the task/job? May not have appropriate expertise
- ❑ Inappropriate demand on capacity - individual cannot address all the demands of their work even when working at capacity
- ❑ Organization structure - has a influence with conflicting goals, policies, or delayed decisions
- ❑ Supervisory style - certain potential for conflict
- ❑ Position - job role where individual makes frequent outside contacts = more role conflict



Intragroup conflict

- ❑ Disagreement or differences between two or more entities within an organization particularly within team-based work
- ❑ Conflict occurs when members have different ideas of roles, functions, and goals that are to be addressed together
- ❑ Many different types of groups exist in organizations
- ❑ Sources of conflict include leadership style, task structure, group makeup including size & cohesiveness, as well as groupthink, external threats, and outcomes



Intragroup conflict - diagnosis

- ❑ Identify behavioral and structural sources of conflict
- ❑ Leadership style - a significant influence on all the other variables that affect conflict within a group
 - ❑ Manager treats members differently; favoritism
 - ❑ Members unite together against leader
 - ❑ Divided group due to differences in work interests, office space, status or rank
- ❑ Task structure - simple, routine task (clear, defined goals, & procedures) versus complex tasks that are not routine and undefined, unstructured
- ❑ Group composition - conflict less in homogeneous than with diverse group; but significant if roles are clearly articulated and streamlined
- ❑ Group size impacts group processes; larger the group, larger potential for conflict. Danger of subgroups with informal leaders can cause conflict with formal leader



Intragroup conflict - diagnosis

- ❑ Cohesiveness and groupthink - liability when individuals forced to conform to one mode of thinking/doing with majority
 - ❑ Censoring differing viewpoints to avoid conflict
 - ❑ Due to ingroup pressures, groupthink is the deterioration of moral judgements, mental efficiency, and reality
 - ❑ Victims of groupthink refrain from being too critical of subordinate, peers, and leadership
 - ❑ Refrain from conflict and prefer to be amiable, have common opinions on every issue
 - ❑ Have a “we-feel” atmosphere
- ❑ Eight symptoms of Groupthink (Janis, 1971)
 - ❑ Invulnerable - share same misconceptions
 - ❑ Rationale - ignore warnings and negative feedback
 - ❑ Morality - inherent belief of ingroup; ignore ethics and moral consequences
 - ❑ Stereotypes - leaders are enemy of groups
 - ❑ Pressure - individuals who disagree or voice doubt of group illusions
 - ❑ Self-censorship - no deviation from consensus;
 - ❑ Unanimity - agreement on majority views
 - ❑ Mindguards - against adverse information that might impact the ingroup



Workplace safety - antecedents

- ❑ Psychological safety in workplace begins with
 - ❑ Leader behavior including accessibility, invited input
 - ❑ Trust and respectful interpersonal relationships
 - ❑ “Practice fields” (Senge, 1990) - a deliberate practice. Managers and leaders don’t have a space to practice this work and debrief actions and engage in reflect. Create offline practice fields
 - ❑ Pilots have simulators; surgery team have dry runs
 - ❑ Organizational context support - increase team effectiveness
 - ❑ Emergent group dynamics - interplay of roles and “characters” assumed in typical work relationships
 - ❑ Role assumed i.e. senior coworker maybe seen as a “father figure”



Intergroup conflict

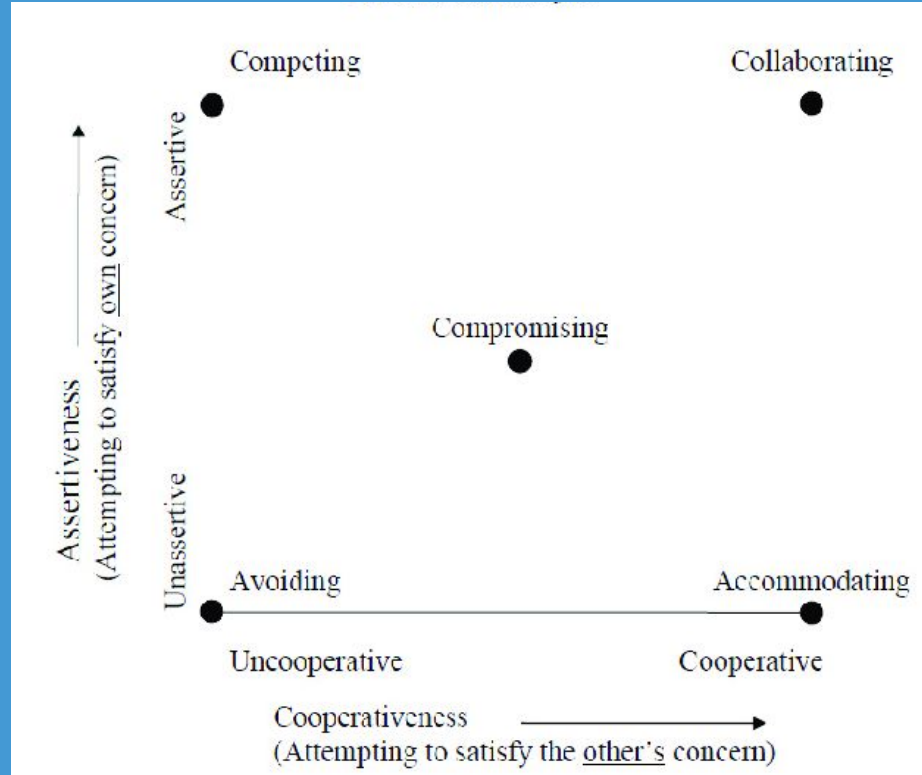
- ❑ Collective incompatibility between two or more divisions or units
- ❑ Also known as interface conflict (Blake & Mouton, 1984)
- ❑ Structure of modern organizations mean that conflict will exist
- ❑ Structure with similar functioning groups or work (functional groups) avoids duplication and maximizes effort
- ❑ Conflict can arise when these group come together to arrive at a larger goal
 - ❑ Example -classic organizational conflict: staff and faculty



Intergroup conflict - diagnosis

- ❑ Rahim organizational Conflict Inventories
- ❑ Conflict matrix that help locate intergroup conflict with assistance of leadership and heads of units - share existing conflicts
- ❑ National norms - n/a since no data points exist for LIS
- ❑ Task or pooled interdependence - groups independent except during organizational goals
- ❑ Complex interdependencies= conflict
- ❑ Jurisdictional ambiguity - authority, responsibility of work or property

Managerial grid



A TAXONOMY FOR THE MANAGEMENT OF ORGANIZATIONAL CONFLICT*

Measurement	Analysis
Intrapersonal	
Diagnosis <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Source<ol style="list-style-type: none">a. Missassignment and goal incongruenceb. Inappropriate demand on capacityc. Organization structured. Supervisory stylee. Position2. Amount of conflict	<ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Relationship between sources and amount of conflict
Intervention <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Role analysis	
Results <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Moderate amount of conflict2. Greater individual effectiveness	

Rahim, Afzalur, and Thomas V. Bonoma. "Managing organizational conflict: A model for diagnosis and intervention." Psychological reports 44.3_suppl (1979):1340-41.

Intragroup

Diagnosis

1. Source
 - a. Leadership style
 - b. Task structure
 - c. Group composition and size
 - d. Cohesiveness and groupthink
 - e. External threats
 - f. Outcome of conflict
2. Amount of conflict
3. Conflict-handling styles

Intervention

1. Team building
2. Role negotiation
3. Transactional analysis
4. Structural changes

Results

1. Moderate amount of conflict
2. Better interpersonal competence of group members
3. Greater group effectiveness

1. Relationship between sources and amount of conflict
2. Relationship between sources and conflict-handling styles of group members

Intergroup

Diagnosis

1. Source
 - a. System differentiation
 - b. Task interdependency
 - c. Dependence on scarce resources
 - d. Jurisdictional ambiguity
 - e. Separation of knowledge from authority
2. Amount of conflict
3. Conflict-handling styles

1. Relationship between sources and amount of conflict
2. Relationship between sources and conflict-handling styles of intergroup members

Intervention

1. Intergroup problem solving
2. Confrontation
3. Organization mirroring
4. Structural changes

Measurement

Analysis

Intergroup

Results

1. Moderate amount of conflict
 2. Greater synergy in intergroup activities
 3. Better interpersonal competence of the intergroup members
-



Let's talk: Scenarios

- ❑ Strategic planning
 - ❑ Intrapersonal, intragroup, and intergroup
- ❑ Meeting spaces
 - ❑ Intrapersonal, **intragroup**, and intergroup



Additional resources - assessments

- ❑ **Rahim Organizational Conflict Inventories** - measure three independent dimensions of organizational conflict: Intrapersonal, Intragroup, Intergroup
- ❑ **Conflict Dynamics Profile** - certified trainer provides an assessment of your conflict behaviors, is an excellent resource to increase self-awareness and improve conflict management skills.

Additional resources

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- ❑ O'Connor, Kathleen M., et al. "What we want to do versus what we think we should do: An empirical investigation of intrapersonal conflict." *Journal of Behavioral Decision Making* 15.5 (2002): 403-418.
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- ❑ Rahim, M. Afzalur. "Toward a theory of managing organizational conflict." *International journal of conflict management* 13.3 (2002).
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- ❑ Thomas, Kenneth W. "Conflict and conflict management: Reflections and update." *Journal of organizational behavior* (1992): 265-274.
- ❑ **Trudel, Jeannie, and Thomas G. Reio Jr.** "Managing workplace incivility: The role of conflict management styles—antecedent or antidote?." *Human resource development quarterly* 22.4 (2011): 395-423.
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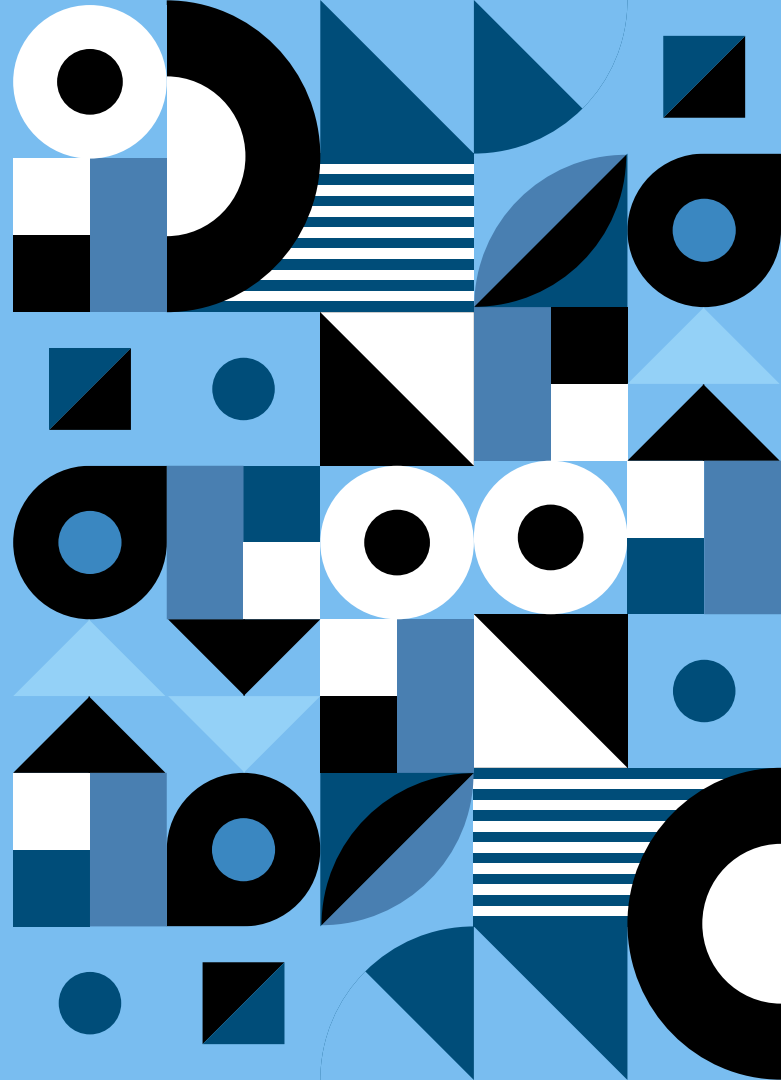
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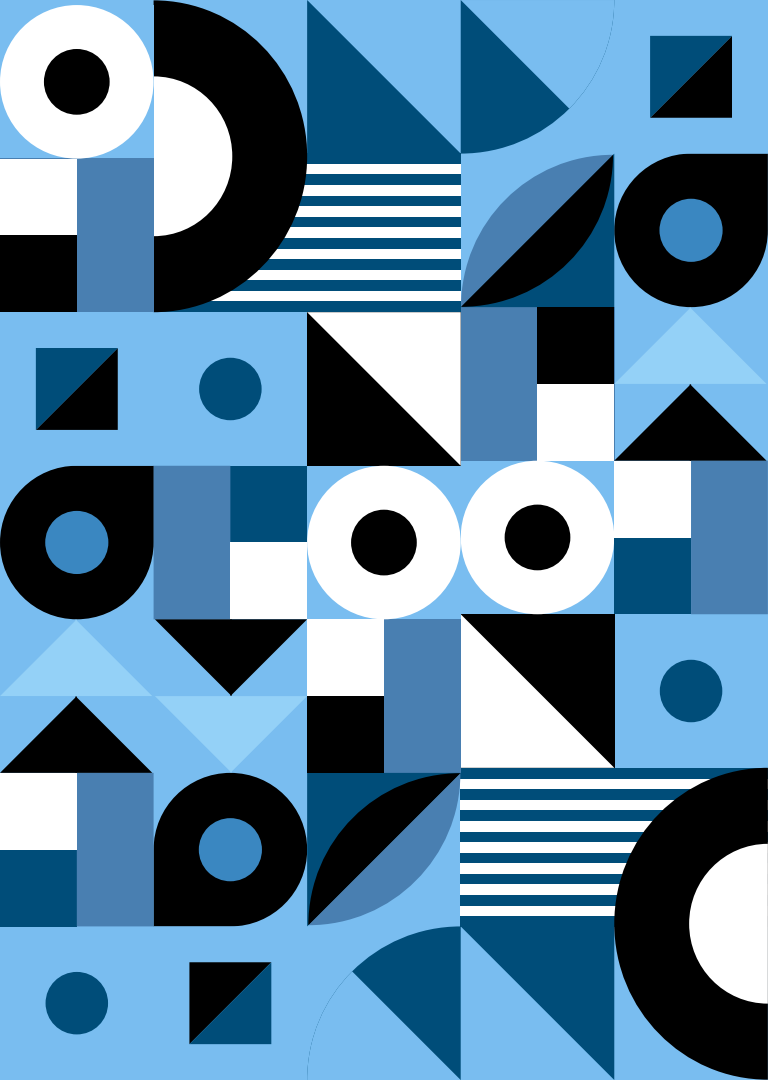
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