



EQUESTRIAN
QUEENSLAND

Conflict Management & Resolution, and Assertiveness

- Conflict defined.
 - Conflict Management and Resolution.
 - Conflict Management Styles.
 - Engaging the affected party.
 - Communication during Conflict.
 - Assertiveness.
 - Moving on from conflict.
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It is hoped that by sharing conflict management, conflict resolution, and assertiveness skills with you, you will feel more confident and comfortable entering into uncomfortable situations in both your Equestrian and private lives.



ROOM 
PSYCHOLOGY

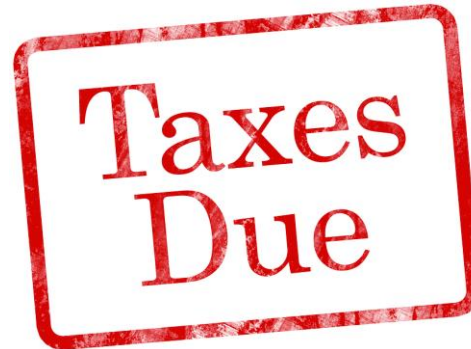
Conflict Defined

PowerPoint Presentation By Damien Stewart

Three Certainties

Perhaps there are only three certainties in life:

- Death.
- Taxes.
- Conflict.



What is Conflict?

Conflict is defined as:

“A form of interaction between parties that differ in interests, perceptions or preferences”.

“A struggle or contest between people with opposing needs, ideas, beliefs, values, or goals ... and often results because of miscommunication between people with regards to these personal constructs”.

Conflict has 2 dimensions:

- Content (Task, substantive, issue driven) –
 - Moderate levels of content conflict where individuals disagree about how to solve an issue, or task, are beneficial as they stimulate discussion and debate resulting in improved outcomes.
- Relational (Affective, emotional) –
 - Impedes optimal performance, loyalty, satisfaction, and commitment. Can also lead people to be irritable, negative, resentful, and suspicious.

Content conflicts are generally much easier to repair than relational conflicts.

Conflict May Occur:

- Within a person (Intrapersonal).
- Between 2 people (Interpersonal).
- Between members of a group (Intragroup).
- Between Groups (Intergroup).



What leads to Conflict?

Conflict is likely to arise when:

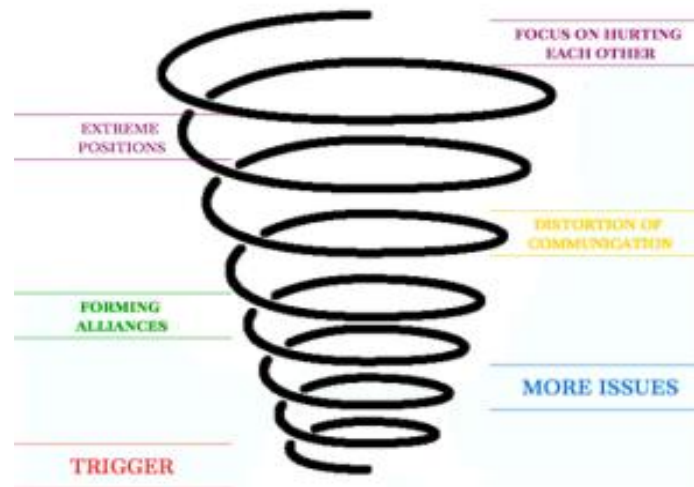
- There are philosophical & attitudinal differences.
 - There is misunderstanding.
 - There are divergent goals.
 - There are power imbalances.
 - There is role conflict.
 - People or groups perceive that others have taken some action that has a negative impact on their interests.
 - Obsessive passion is greater than harmonious passion (Individualistic v Collectivist).
-

Perhaps what you can see is that within the causes of conflict also lie the clues for its resolution:

- There are philosophical & attitudinal differences.
 - There is misunderstanding.
 - There are divergent goals.
 - There are power imbalances.
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Conflict Escalation

- Conflicts escalate when defensive aggression by one group makes the other group suspicious and promotes counter-aggression. The initial group then responds with further counter aggression and so on.
- The conflict escalates when each group responds with an ever increasing cycle of defense and aggression.

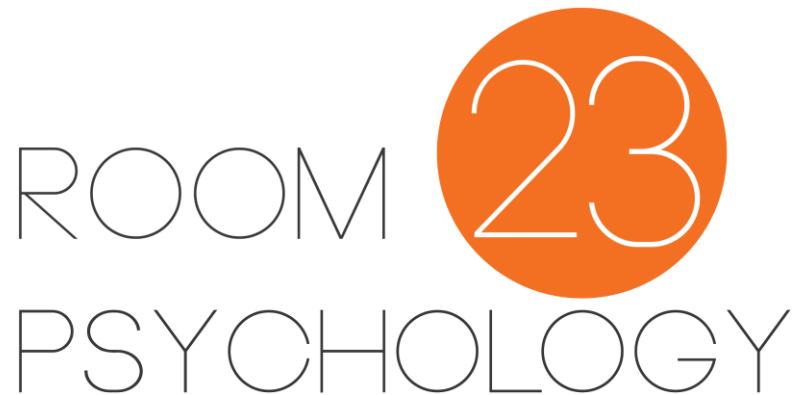


Benefits of Conflict

There are definitely negative aspects of conflict, but there are also positive aspects to conflict. Conflict can facilitate:

- Understanding.
- Tolerance of differences.
- Learning.
- Personal/ Group growth and development.
- Diffusion of further conflict or more serious conflict.
- Learning to be comfortable with being uncomfortable.

“You don’t have to have victims to have a victory” Dan Zadra



Conflict Management & Resolution

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In any conflict situation we have 3 options:

- Confront it;
- Manage it; or
- Ignore it.



Not all conflict can be resolved, but learning how to manage conflict can decrease the odds of nonproductive escalation.

Learning to manage conflict is integral to high-performance environments.

Conflict Management and Conflict Resolution are not the same thing!

Definition & Aim of Conflict Management

Definition:

- Strategies employed to accommodate tensions, minimise the dysfunctions of conflict, & enhance learning & effectiveness of those involved.

Aim:

- Conflict management involves acquiring skills related to conflict resolution, self-awareness about conflict modes, conflict communication skills, & establishing a structure of conflict in your environment.
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Definition & Aim of Conflict Resolution

Definition:

- Implies elimination or termination of conflict.

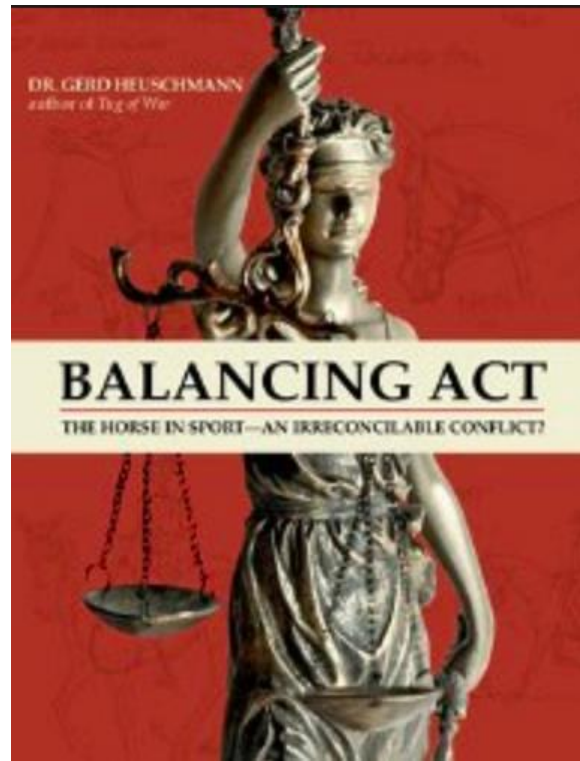
Aim:

- To constructively resolve difficulties and optimise positive outcomes.



Contingency Approach to Conflict Management

- There is no one right or wrong way to management conflict.
- Balance concerns of self with concerns of other.



At times, conflict arises due to issues within the policies, procedures, and guidelines of an organisation – The way we do things.

So let's have a look at how an organisation or even event staff can work towards minimising conflict.

Strategies for Managing Conflict in Organisations

- Improving Organisational Practices.
- Special Roles and Structure.
- Confrontation Techniques.
- Styles.



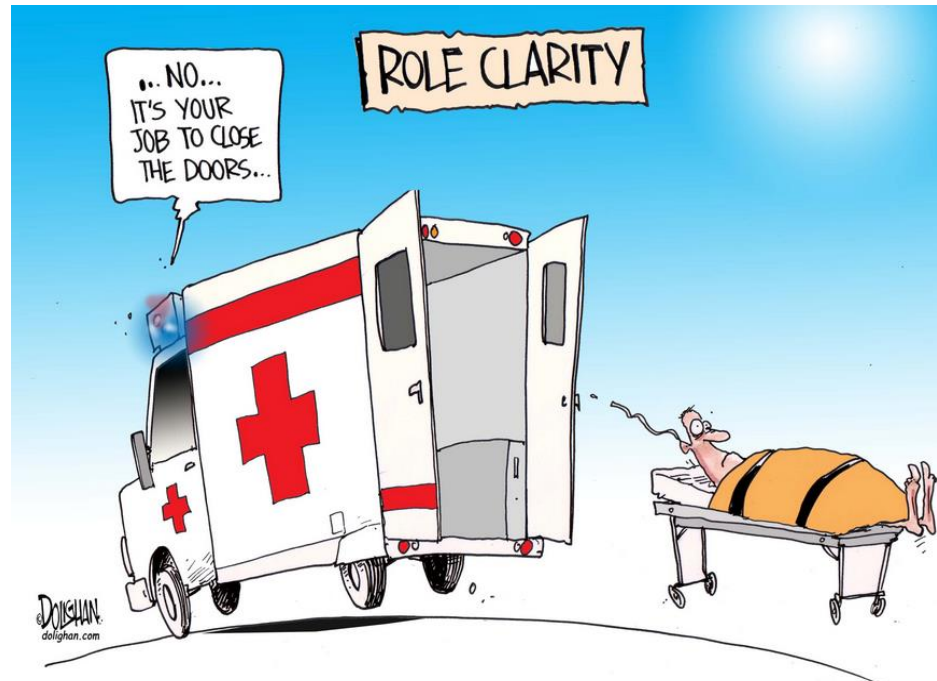
“Ready for your first lesson in conflict resolution?”

Improving Organisational Practices

- Establishing superordinate goals.
 - Reducing vagueness.
 - Minimising authority and domain related disputes.
 - Improving policies, procedures and rules.
 - Re-apportioning existing resources or adding new ones.
 - Altering communications.
 - Movement of personnel.
 - Changing reward systems.
 - Develop fair standards and procedures for resolving the conflict.
-

Special Roles & Structure

- Initiate structural changes as required.
- Create liaison functions.
- Appoint an integrator to resolve conflicts.
- Appoint a person to defuse conflicts who possesses problem-solving skills and who is respected by conflicting parties.



Confrontation Techniques

- Aim at finding a mutually acceptable and enduring solution through collaboration and compromise.
 - Involves amicability, intercession, bargaining, negotiation, & mediation, based on the premise that there is a solution that can be accepted by all parties.
 - A process of defining the problem, searching for alternatives, evaluating the alternatives, deciding by consensus, and ultimately implementing the best alternative.
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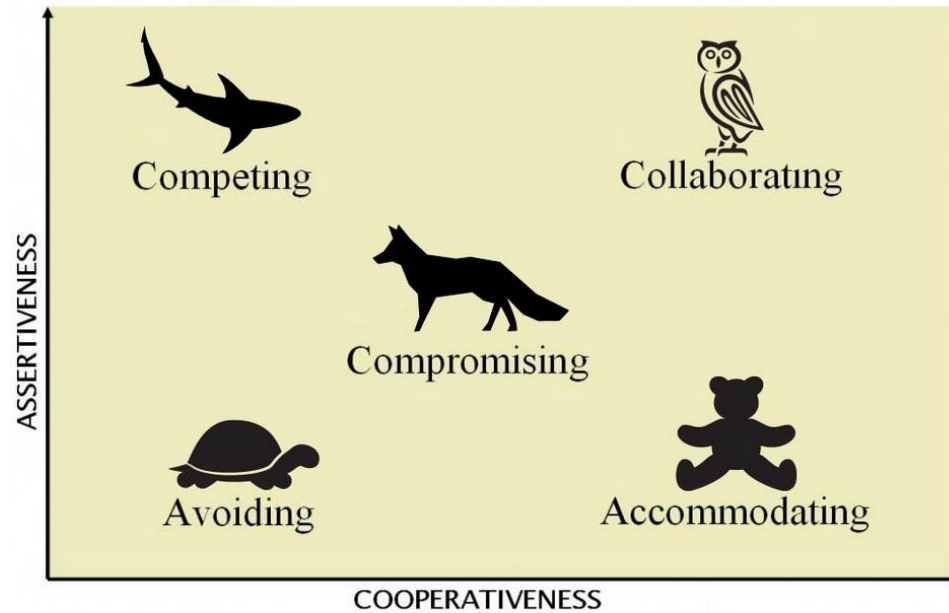


Conflict Management Styles

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Conflict Management Styles

- There are 5 widely agreed upon conflict management styles.
- The 5 styles are mediated by two dimensions:
 - Assertiveness (ie, the extent to which an individual tries to satisfy their own concerns).
 - Cooperativeness (ie, the extent to which an individual attempts to satisfy the others concerns).



Competing or Forcing

- Both assertive and uncooperative.
- Characterised by trying to win at the other persons expense.
- Appropriate when quick, decisive action is necessary, or when the issue is vital and backing down is not an option.
- Forcing: Using formal authority or other power you possess to satisfy your concerns without regard to the concerns of the party that you are in conflict with.
- Repair of the relationship might be necessary after using a forcing strategy.



Key Actions if Forcing is Required

- Focus on the situation, issue or behaviour rather than the person.
- Identify the reasons for your actions & be specific (Refer to facts, results, & observations).
- Describe the impact of the situation or issue.
- Be firm about what needs to happen.
- Acknowledge the other person's position, but refrain from arguing.
- Discuss ways to implement the required outcome.
- Set an action plan, and clarify accountability and consequences.
- Set a time limit for compliance.

Accommodating

- Opposite of competing, is unassertive and cooperative.
- When an individual is accommodating they neglect their concerns in order to satisfy those of the other party.
- Useful when the issue is more important to the other party than to you, when you are outmatched and losing, or when consideration of a better position is necessary.



Accommodate

Compromising

- At the midpoint for assertiveness and cooperativeness.
- The objective is to find a mutually acceptable solution that satisfies all parties. This might mean splitting the difference, engaging concessions or seeking the middle ground.
- Useful to achieve temporary settlements of outstanding issues or where goals are moderately important but not worth the disruption involved in using more assertive styles.



- Both unassertive and cooperative.
- Does not address the conflict and may take the form of sidestepping, ignoring, or withdrawal.
- Appropriate when the issue is trivial, where you have no opportunity to satisfy your needs or where deferral gives more time for vital consideration.



Collaborating

- Opposite of avoiding and is both assertive and cooperative.
- When collaborating, individuals actively work with others to achieve a mutually acceptable solution.
- Appropriate when the other party is willing to collaborate, where an integrative solution is necessary or the concerns of both parties are too important to be compromised.



By being collaborative, an integrative solution might be reached that benefits both sides. Integrative solutions:

- 1) Focus attention on interests rather than positions.
- 2) Develop rapport and trust between conflicted parties.

One study found that 50% of people in a conflict did not realise when they had shared interests completely compatible with each other and 20% failed to reach agreement despite their interests being completely compatible.

However...

Collaboration would appear to be a win/ win situation for everybody, however:

- Collaborating takes time and might not suit the situation.
- If time is precious and you have the power to impose your will, forcing might be the most appropriate choice.



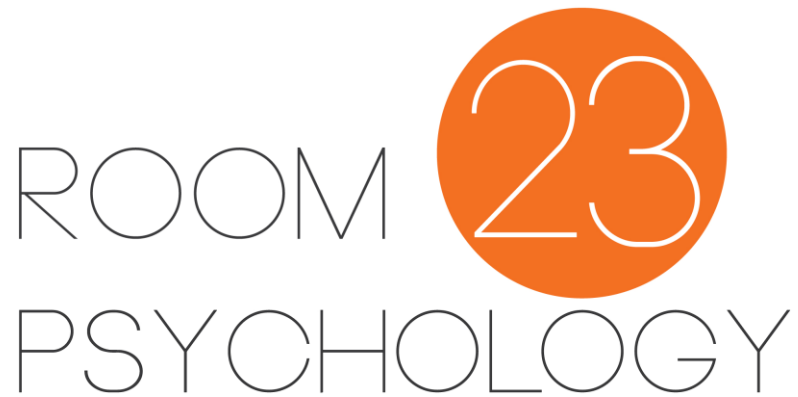
Preferred Conflict Management Styles

- Most people have a preference for up to 3 of these styles.
- All are appropriate in particular situations.
- It is worth considering how to use non-preferred styles for when circumstances demand their use.



Considerations in Choosing Conflict Management Strategies

- **Time pressure:** If there were never any time pressures, collaboration might always be the best approach to use.
 - **Issue importance:** The extent to which important priorities, principles or values are involved in the conflict.
 - **Relationship importance:** How important it is that you maintain a close, mutually supportive relationship with the other party.
 - **Relative power:** How much power you have compared to how much power other party has.
 - **Consequences:** What are the consequences of engagement or non-engagement in the conflict.
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Engaging the Effected Party

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How do people respond to Conflict?

Fight, flight, or freeze:

- **Flight** – We want to get away from the conflict.
- **Fight** – We are ready to take on anyone who comes our way.
- **Freeze** – We don't know what to do.

FIGHT



FLIGHT oohlala!



FREEZE



When in Conflict

- In any situation in which we are performing a “managerial role”, conflict is inevitable & unavoidable.
 - Escalation is always preferred to de-escalation.
 - Separate the people from the problem. Stick to the issue not the personality.
 - Deflect the muck, acknowledge, bring it back to the issue.
 - Evaluate the issues & options using objective criteria.
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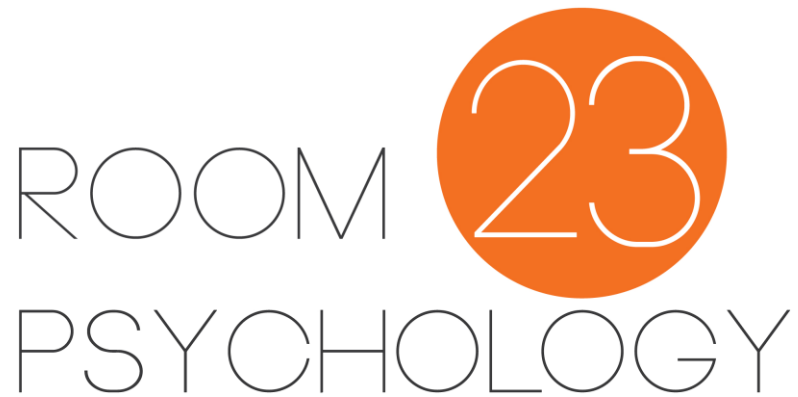
Approaching the Affected Party

- Power with – Success is not achieved at the expense of others and the goal is preserving the relationship.
- Those who believe their goals to be cooperative have been found to work for mutually acceptable solutions.
- We want to preserve confidence, trust, and respect, and optimise performance, development and



Recruiting the Other

- **Reconcile interests** - You might choose to focus on interests and approach the dispute as a problem to be solved together.
 - **Focus on the shared interests** - Can we frame language in a way that aims to find a mutually beneficial solution?
 - **Transactional analysis** – What is at stake for the other?
 - **Empowerment** – People feel empowered when they are encouraged to take responsibility. Removing decision making relegates people to that of responding to environments and instruction but do not engage proactively.
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Communication During Conflict

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Researchers across a number of disciplines have recognised a strong link between communication & conflict:

- Communication is the primary means by which needs are satisfied or frustrated.
 - Communication behaviour, both verbal and non-verbal, often creates conflict.
 - Communication reflects conflict.
 - Communication is the vehicle for productive or destructive management of conflict.
-

Communication Skills

- The essence of conflict resolution & conflict management is the ability to communicate effectively. People who have & use effective communication skills will resolve their conflicts with greater ease & success.
 - Making a conscious choice in how we approach conflict we are more likely to be productive in managing & solving the problem at hand.
 - Greater intentionality in the way we approach conflict will likely lead to more effective conflict management.
-

Verbal & Non-Verbal Communication

- One study suggested 2/3's of communication is non-verbal.
- Another suggested: 7% verbal, 38% vocal, & 55% facial.
- When verbal and non-verbal communication are incongruent, the receiver of the communication instinctually questions the credibility, sincerity and honesty of the communicator, and consequently nonverbal communication is given credence.

"The single biggest problem in communication is the illusion that it has taken place."

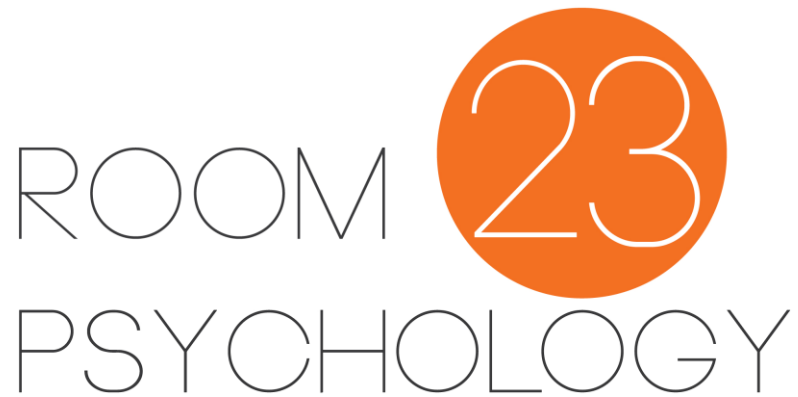
- George Bernard Shaw



An autonomy-supportive approach provides choice, rationale for tasks, and opportunities for taking initiative:

- Give non-controlling feedback;
- Avoid controlling behaviours;
- Prevent ego involvement; &
- Acknowledge feelings and perspective.
- Listen and acknowledge. Dismissal is likely to lead to further conflict.





Assertiveness

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Assertiveness is not aggression:

- “Feelings of anger or antipathy resulting in hostile or violent behaviour, readiness to attack or confront”.

Assertiveness refers to:

- The honest and straightforward expression of a person’s thoughts and feelings in a socially appropriate way that does not violate or infringe on the rights of others (Connelly & Rotella, 1991; Lazarus, 1973).
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Assertiveness cont...

- Assertiveness is a learned social skill that takes time, practice, and patience to learn to do well.
- For every instance in which a void is left by our lack of assertiveness, others will fill that space with their own assertiveness.
- We all dislike confrontation.



We tend to have difficulty with assertiveness due to:

- **A lack of confidence** - it takes courage to be assertive.
 - **Vulnerability** - standing up for ourselves carries with it the risk of negative consequences.
 - **Interpersonal concerns** - being hesitant to speak up for fear of hurting someones feelings.
 - **Lack of awareness** - failure to learn when assertiveness is required.
 - **Intimidation** - Assertiveness can be difficult when speaking to power.
 - **Socio-cultural influences** – Indigenous people, Asian people, particularly to an authority figure.
-

How to be Assertive

Use the DESC approach:

- Describe
- Express
- Specify
- Consequences



- Describe the situation as you see it.
- Paint a verbal picture of the other person's behaviour or the situation to which you are referring.

Examples:

- “What I see happening is _____”
- “When you _____ I feel _____”.

- Express your feelings regarding the other person's behaviour or the situation you have just described.

Examples:

- “When you do _____, it makes me feel _____”.
- “I get angry and frustrated when you talk behind my back”.

- Specify what changes you would like to see take place.
- How will things be if/ when the other complies.

Example:

- “I would prefer you give me feedback in a more constructive, less degrading manner”.
 - “ I would appreciate it if you did not talk behind my back”.
-

Consequences


- State the consequences the other can expect if your reasonable request is not complied with.
- But you must follow through.
- Example: “If you don’t do _____ I’m going to _____.”



Final Words on Assertiveness

- When someone displays the behaviour/ changes we are looking for, acknowledge it in a positive manner.
 - Remember assertiveness is about standing up for ourselves. It does not guarantee the other will comply. However, we feel empowered by speaking up, therefore enhancing self-esteem, self-worth, & self-confidence.
 - As assertiveness can be confronting, it is an opportunity for learning to be comfortable in an uncomfortable situation.
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Debriefing & Moving On

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Performance Analysis

- **GOOD** - What did I, we, you do well?
- **BETTER** - What could I, we, you have done better?
- **HOW?** - How can I, we, you do it better?

Ensure feedback is:

- Stated Positively.
 - Helpful and reasonable.
 - 1 – 3 Items only.
-



A Process for Error Recovery: The 5 F's

- **F**inish
- **F**rustration
- **F**ix
- **F**orgive/ **F**orget
- **F**ocus/ re**F**ocus



Once everything is over:

- Check in with each other as to how everyone is feeling.
- Go over any check lists to ensure everything has been done.
- Each person describe their roles.
- Keep a journal of learnings: What went well, what didn't go so well?
- Limit the time of the debrief.



Six Steps to Effective Decision Making

- 1) **Define the problem** – What is the issue & what outcome are we hoping to achieve?
 - 2) **Generate alternative solutions** – Think of all the possible solutions to the problem and write them down.
 - 3) **Evaluate alternatives** – Give each alternative a rating in terms of achievability, reasonableness, and known timeframes. Explore the positive & negative aspects of each option. Give each option a score out of ten.
 - 4) **Select the best alternative** – Having rated each alternative, select the solution you gave the highest rating to & the solution that appears most reasonable.
 - 5) **Implement the plan** – Put the plan into action.
 - 6) **Review and revise the plan** – Once we have implemented the plan, think about how it went. Did it solve the problem? Do we need to consider other options? Perhaps we can implement one of the other solutions on our list. What's next?
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Relaxation Techniques

- Take some deep breaths.
- Mindfulness: What can I see, hear, smell, taste, touch?
- Take a walk around the complex/ Block.
- Debrief with a trusted other.
- Write down the experience and file it away.
- A pleasant thought.



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Thank you for listening
to this presentation

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information.

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Thank you for watching