

Module 7: Conflict Management

Module 7

Conflict Management

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to:

- Define and diagnose team conflict
- Identify the outcomes of team conflict
- Describe productive uses of conflict behavior
- Explain constructive conflict resolution
- Apply principled negotiation techniques
- Describe the role of managed conflict

10/95 Team Skills and Concepts - Module 7, Viewgraph 1

Module 7: Conflict Management

As we have learned, team members must work together to promote successful outcomes. This is more easily said than done. Good communication, effective meeting techniques, balanced participation, appropriate tools, and an understanding how teams develop lay the foundation for success, but there are additional dynamics that promote winning teams. In this module, we will discuss some of the more difficult behaviors within teams and describe the management of conflict. Conflict in teams can and must be managed if teams are to reach their full potential.

Upon completion of this module, you will be able to:

- **Define and diagnose team conflict**

We will describe the basic types of conflict, and you will learn how to recognize the causes, symptoms, and associated behaviors of conflict in teams.

- **Identify the outcomes of team conflict**

We typically think of conflict as "negative." You will learn that there can also be a "positive" outcome of team conflict.

- **Describe productive uses of conflict behavior**

We will describe five different ways that people react in conflict situations— competing, avoiding, accommodating, collaborating, and compromising—and discuss how to use these behaviors productively.

- **Explain constructive conflict resolution**

There are some basic principles for constructively resolving many conflict situations. You will learn what they are and what they mean.

- **Apply principled negotiation techniques**

We will describe how principled negotiation is used to help conflicting parties reach win-win agreements, and you will have an opportunity to practice using this approach.

- **Describe the role of managed conflict**

Throughout the module we will discuss how effectively managed conflict can help process improvement teams make better decisions, and the role you may play as quality advisor or team leader in helping them.



"It's easy to get
the players.

Getting 'em to
play together—
that's the hard part."

Casey Stengel

10/95 Team Skills and Concepts - Module 7, Viewgraph 2

"It's easy to get the players. Getting 'em to play together—that's the hard part."

Casey Stengel might as well have been talking about TQL teams when he uttered these words. In most cases, members of your organization will be eager to participate in team efforts. It is important for the TQL coordinator and quality advisor to help ensure the first exposures to quality improvement teams are a positive experience.

Quality advisors and TQL coordinators have the "hard part" of getting teams to work together. Each team member brings to the team experience a set of concerns and expectations that may or may not be different from those of the rest of the team.

 **"DEFINE CONFLICT" EXERCISE NOTES**

Different backgrounds may cause one person to view conflict quite differently from another person. A behavior or an action that you think is disruptive to the team may be taken for granted as just another way of doing business by another team member. Sometimes individuals react differently to conflict because of their "thinking" or "feeling" preference for decision making, which we covered earlier in the course.

Conflict



- A fight or battle
- A controversy or quarrel
- Opposition between interests or principles (a conflict of interest; conflicting opinions)
- Discord of action, feeling, or effect (conflicting emotions)
- Interference of one event or activity with another (a conflict in schedule)
- A mental struggle arising from opposing demands or impulses
- A collision

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Conflict

As you can see from the definitions generated in the last exercise, there are many meanings for the word "conflict." These are some commonly used definitions—many of them may match yours. Some are almost painfully descriptive of the conflict that can stymie teams if not properly handled. Conflict of some type is almost inevitable in process improvement teams. This is a natural outcome of a process in which we encourage the expression of different views.

Causes of Conflict

- Different values, goals, and methods
- The tasking seems impossible
- Issues of group control
- Communication problems
- Functional loyalties
- Personality characteristics
- Status-seeking rather than team focus
- Frustration caused by lack of resolution

10/95 Team Skills and Concepts - Module 7, Viewgraph 4

Causes of Conflict

In order to decide how to deal with the conflict we know will eventually happen, we have to first understand what causes it.

■ Different values, goals, and methods

When we bring people together in teams, they bring with them a lifetime of experiences that have shaped their values. Since everybody's experiences are different, they have formed different opinions about what is important. For example, one person's basic work value might be timeliness; another's might be an error-free product. When these two people try to make a decision about action to improve a process, they will run into conflict about what should be done. Team members collecting and analyzing data may have different opinions about what tool or method to use, and this can cause conflict.

These differences in values, goals, or methods can bog a team down indefinitely if there is no clear approach to resolving the conflict. Members may stubbornly argue for and cling to their personal beliefs. Often the member whose views are not supported becomes uncooperative and resistant by arguing and breaking team ground rules. They miss deadlines and constantly question the validity of the team decision they do not support.

■ **The tasking seems impossible**

Conflict often arises because the team thinks the job they have been given is impossible. And sometimes it is! Members become frustrated because they feel unable to meet the demands made of them. The tasking may be unclear or they may believe that they don't have enough time, the right expertise, or the right people to do the job. They take their frustrations out on each other or on the team leader or quality advisor. Every suggestion made seems impossible or at least one member feels that each suggestion will not satisfy the organization as a whole.

■ **Issues of group control**

Another potential cause of group conflict is the issue of control of the team, both in tasking and in membership. Leadership problems can develop in any type of team. They are most likely to occur during the "forming" stage, although you might not actually see them until "storming." It doesn't matter whether the team leader was elected or appointed, or who the leader is. Often it is the issue of responsibility that causes power struggles. Effective teamwork is built upon a foundation of trust, responsibility, and cooperation. Some members have specific role responsibilities, such as the team leader or quality advisor. If these responsibilities aren't taken seriously, or if team members don't trust the leader to handle these responsibilities, competition for authority and control can disrupt the whole group process.

■ **Communication problems**

Effective communication is one of the most important elements of effective teamwork. If information is not exchanged in a balanced, nonjudgmental way that everyone understands, members may start to argue or "shut down." This is especially common when tasking or procedures are unclear. People develop different expectations about how things should go and become frustrated when others see it differently or it's not just as they anticipated.

■ **Functional loyalties**

Team members may come from different functional areas of the command, so it's not unusual for them to have different ideas about the outcome of a process improvement effort. (That's why we use cross-functional teams—to get different viewpoints!) But people may also have strongly held loyalties to their different departments. These loyalties can put pressure on them to support certain views, which are different from those of other team members. For example, a team member from the accounting department may be most interested in cost savings, while the human resources member may be most concerned with job satisfaction. However, we are aiming for optimization of the system rather than any single function. As the team understands its charter and purpose, functional conflicts should be minimized for the greater good of the organization. But initially differences in functional views may cause conflict within the team.

■ **Personality characteristics**

One of the biggest sources of potential conflict (and team synergy!) is personality differences. Often, when team members approach an issue or problem from opposite positions, conflict over the "correct" approach will occur. In addition, most of us at some time or another will do things that cause conflict, such as trying to dominate, provoke, pacify, or avoid a team member. We don't necessarily do this on purpose; it's just our preferred way of dealing with the world.

- **Status-seeking rather than team focus**

Conflict is also generated when members concentrate on finding status within the team, rather than on the task at hand. When this happens, people are using the task issue as an opportunity to express their interpersonal concerns. They may attack each other on a personal level, form cliques, or take sides and refuse to focus on the issue. Ideas may be discounted before they are completely expressed, and as a result, the team makes very little progress toward consensus. They get stuck on minor points, or develop wanderlust because they are focusing on personal issues instead of the task.

- **Frustration caused by lack of resolution**

When conflict within a team is not resolved in some way, people can become angry, frustrated, and "stressed-out." All of this has a negative effect on self-esteem and their ability to relate effectively to other team members. As your command forms more teams, you may find that organizational boundaries are crossed, and people struggle even more with having to share authority, coping with change, and accepting the new way of doing business.

Whatever the cause, if we're going to resolve conflict, we need to be able to recognize it when it occurs. Let's take a closer look at some of the symptoms that will help us identify conflict within the team.

Symptoms of Conflict

- Members are impatient.
- Ideas are attacked before they are completely expressed.
- Members take sides.
- Comments are made with emotion.
- Anger and dislike are expressed.



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Symptoms of Conflict

Conflict is generally easy to recognize within a teamwork setting. Most of you probably have a fair amount of experience with it. Which of these symptoms have you seen?

■ **Members are impatient.**

Members become impatient with each other. They cut each other off in discussions, complaining that someone is either dragging their feet or moving on too quickly.

■ **Ideas are attacked before they are completely expressed.**

Before someone even has a chance to fully state their idea, someone else attacks it, listing reasons why the idea is "dumb" or won't work. They accuse each other of not understanding the real point—and sometimes they don't understand because they haven't listened.

- **Members take sides.**

Sometimes people form coalitions within the group, taking sides on issues, expressing disagreement, and refusing to consider other ideas. They really stall out when they dig into their positions so hard that they won't even listen to the leader's or quality advisor's suggestions. "Winning" becomes more important than finding the best answer.

- **Comments are made with emotion.**

When people start expressing their views with a lot of emotion, it may signal that they are feeling some conflict over an issue. This happens often when they have strong beliefs or something is very important to them, and they feel threatened because someone else views the situation differently.

- **Anger and dislike are expressed.**

Feelings of anger or dislike may be expressed in a very personal way—verbally or nonverbally, through body language, or through choice of words. This is usually pretty obvious. Most of us have experienced someone showing their anger or dislike for a person or situation.

In fact, for many of us, our experiences with conflict have so often involved anger and unpleasantness that we may have come to think of it as a "bad" thing. But conflict actually has a lot of potential for enhancing team efforts. Let's look at some of the positive outcomes of conflict.

Positive Outcomes of Conflict

- Increases energy and creativity
- Clarifies ideas
- Increases understanding
- Improves ground rules



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Positive Outcomes of Conflict

■ Increases energy and creativity

If we can recognize and handle it well, team conflict can produce some very positive results. If you think about it, conflict is actually a form of energy. Expressed in a way that isn't harmful to members' self-esteem or interpersonal relationships, this energy can generate some real creative thinking. As teams work out the conflict and examine opposing ideas, they may be more willing to shift paradigms and consider alternative ideas for process improvement.

■ Clarifies ideas

Misunderstandings often happen because of the language people use (or misuse). The conflict you get from these misunderstandings requires team members to discuss in more detail what they mean by a particular word or phrase. They develop operational definitions, as we talked about in data collection. They also start to practice more effective communication skills, and learn ways to clarify ideas more effectively.

- **Increases understanding**

Too often team members in conflict will try to avoid the issues that cause stress. But conflict that is managed allows them to express their differences, and they develop a better understanding of the issues and of each other.

- **Improves ground rules**

Finally, since a team usually establishes its ground rules at one of the first meetings, the rules don't always address all of their needs. As they begin to "storm," they recognize more or different rules or norms which will really help them work together effectively. The conflict that causes them to reevaluate how they will operate gives them an opportunity to improve their ground rules.

As we all know, conflict can also have some negative outcomes. Let's look at those.

Negative Outcomes of Conflict

- Decreased productivity
- Lack of communication
- Negative emotions about teamwork
- Poor decision making
- Dysfunctional working relationships
- Impaired process improvement



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Negative Outcomes of Conflict

■ Decreased productivity

When conflict is not addressed, it tends to fester. Team members start to focus on the arguments, positions, or emotions and forget about the task. Meetings drag on and on without any real progress because the team is too busy disagreeing to get anything done. They can't make a decision or reach consensus on anything. Some members may even become so disenchanted that they fail to carry out assignments between meetings.

■ Lack of communication

Some people will want to avoid getting involved in the argument. They prefer to stay on the sidelines where it's safe, so they just stop talking. Others may believe that knowledge is power, so they withhold information in order to gain the upper hand. Some people may even give out wrong information in order to make someone else look bad. If communication breaks down, the whole team loses.

■ **Negative emotions about teamwork**

Unresolved or unmanaged conflict can be very emotionally stressful for team members or even people working around them. It can be such a bad experience that people start to associate team efforts with a negative emotional state. Soon no one wants to be on any team.

■ **Poor decision making**

Sometimes members will withdraw, or just go along with the majority in order to reduce or avoid conflict. When they do, the team isn't getting the wide variety of viewpoints it needs to make the best decisions. Consensus is easy if no one disagrees, but it usually means the team hasn't considered all or even most of the alternatives. The quality of the team's decisions is almost certainly going to be lower.

■ **Dysfunctional working relationships**

If team conflict isn't dealt with constructively, it often creeps into the rest of the working environment and causes dysfunctional working relationships. Members may begin to avoid one another in the work place or "one-up" each other in a way that suboptimizes their department or the command as a whole.

■ **Impaired process improvement**

Obviously, any or all of these negative outcomes will hurt the process improvement efforts of the team. They can also give TQL in general a "bad name." People may lose faith in the whole idea of spending time and resources to study and improve processes. The naysayers will seize the opportunity to say, "See, TQL doesn't work."

Now that we know the symptoms of conflict and understand the positive and negative outcomes it can have, let's talk about how to diagnose both productive and unproductive conflict when it occurs.

Conflict Identification

Productive	Unproductive
Team reaches decisions	Team is deadlocked
Cooperative climate	Competitive climate
Disagreement is a common problem	Disagreement is win-lose
Commitment to team goals	Commitment to individual goals
High esprit de corps	No esprit de corps
Members listen.	Members see own views
Disagreement on issues only	Personal attacks

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Conflict Identification

The quality advisor and team leader must be able to diagnose conflict in order to manage it effectively. They have to recognize it, identify the cause, and determine whether or not it is productive. On this chart we have outlined some behaviors we commonly see in productive and unproductive conflict.

Productive	Unproductive
<p>Team reaches decisions Members are able to reach decisions they are proud of and that satisfy the entire team.</p>	<p>Team is deadlocked It may be impossible to reach any decision because the team is continually deadlocked.</p>
<p>Cooperative climate Team members help each other, even when they disagree.</p>	<p>Competitive climate Team members compete to get "their way" when they disagree.</p>
<p>Disagreement is a common problem Members see disagreements as a symptom of a common problem, and are sincerely involved in solving it.</p>	<p>Disagreement is win-lose Members see disagreement as a game in which someone will win and another must lose.</p>
<p>Commitment to team goals Team members' actions demonstrate that, in spite of different approaches or ideas of what should be done, they are all working toward the same goals.</p>	<p>Commitment to individual goals Commitment of members is to their own individual goals instead of to team goals.</p>
<p>High esprit de corps There is a spirit of unity among members. "We are a team."</p>	<p>No esprit de corps There is no unity of effort among team members; members see themselves as a group of individuals, not a team.</p>
<p>Members listen Members listen to each other's ideas, and are open to considering the merits of opinions other than their own.</p>	<p>Members see own views Members only see their own perspective and dismiss the opinions of others.</p>
<p>Disagreement on issues only Disagreements center on issues, and are not seen (or intended) as personal attacks on each other.</p>	<p>Personal attacks Members resort to personal attacks (or view them as such) instead of focusing on issues.</p>

Basic Types of Conflict

- Within the individual
- Between individuals
- Between an individual and the team
- Between factions

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Basic Types of Conflict

Another important aspect of managing conflict is the need to recognize that there may be several types of conflict on process improvement teams. Another way of looking at this is that you must recognize *where* the conflict lies:

■ Within the individual

Sometimes when roles are not clearly defined or a member is not as knowledgeable of the process as others, the individual may feel some internal conflict. The person who is confused about roles or trying to learn more about the process struggles with needs or insecurities that aren't obvious to anyone else.

■ Between individuals

This is probably the most common type of conflict, and the easiest to spot. Two members feud because they have different goals, expectations, or approaches. Or they just have different personalities or don't communicate on the same wavelength.

- **Between an individual and the team**

When one member breaks the team's ground rules, conflict can also develop. The person might have said something or behaved in a way that the rest of the team finds unacceptable.

- **Between factions**

Once in a while, the team divides itself into opposing subgroups or factions over an issue. This type of conflict occurs most often with disagreements about major things: the approach to be used, tasking, or outcomes of the process improvement effort.



TYPES OF CONFLICT BRAINSTORMING EXERCISE NOTES

Most of the conflict behavior we have talked about so far is "negative." Believe it or not, these same "negative" behaviors may actually help the team to reach a positive outcome. Let's look at how that happens.

Conflict Behavior "Competing"



- Assertive and uncooperative
- Pursue own concerns at others' expense
- Power oriented; trying to win

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Conflict Behavior: "Competing"

On the surface, assertive, power-oriented behaviors would seem to be contradictory to the very idea of teambuilding. But think back to the chart we saw on conflict identification which described productive and unproductive behaviors. Some competitive behaviors might be turned into positive outcomes. What situations would warrant their use as a productive behavior?

■ Assertive and uncooperative

When decisive action is required or when the team is floundering, you may want someone to take charge. Assertive behavior coming from a commitment to team goals may push people to making necessary, hard decisions.

- **Pursue own concerns at others' expense**

Sometimes the team needs to be protected from a team member who is taking advantage of the noncompetitive behavior in others. This protective behavior may look like pursuing an individual agenda, but the aim is to override the overbearing person for the benefit of the team.

- **Power oriented; trying to win**

Occasionally an unpopular course of action is needed, and it takes an assertive, power-oriented approach to make it happen.

Conflict Behavior "Avoiding"

- Unassertive and uncooperative
- Will not address the conflict
- Withdrawal



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Conflict Behavior: "Avoiding"

Unassertive people who withdraw from conflict can be the glue that holds a team together in times of stress. They won't be the ones leading the charge, but they may demonstrate a surprising degree of commitment to the task. When do you think "avoiding" might produce a positive outcome?

■ Unassertive and uncooperative

Sometimes unassertive behavior may be beneficial. For instance, it may not be worthwhile to pursue an issue that is too trivial, or the team may need to gather more data before they are ready to make a decision or to take action.

■ Will not address the conflict

Sometimes the damage that could be done by confrontation outweighs the benefits of conflict resolution. The refusal by some people to be drawn into the fray may give others a chance to cool off and refocus.

- **Withdrawal**

It may be appropriate to withdraw when others can resolve the conflict more effectively, or the issue is only a symptom of a deeper conflict.

Conflict Behavior "Accommodating"

- Unassertive and cooperative
- Opposite of competing
- Sacrifice own viewpoint in order to satisfy that of another



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Conflict Behavior "Accommodating"

When you see these three behaviors under "accommodating," how do you think you might turn them into positive outcomes? What situations would warrant their use as a productive behavior?

■ Unassertive and cooperative

When a team member (or leader) realizes they've been wrong about something, it is productive to become unassertive and cooperative.

■ Opposite of competing

If you recognize that continued confrontation will only damage the team, it is time to stop competing and start accommodating.

- **Sacrifice own viewpoint in order to satisfy that of another**

Normally you don't want team members to do this because all viewpoints should be represented. But if preserving team harmony is more important to the team's success at a particular point, then it may be the best way to handle the conflict.

Conflict Behavior "Collaborating"

- Assertive and cooperative
- Opposite of avoiding
- An attempt to find a solution by consensus



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Conflict Behavior "Collaborating"

When you see these three behaviors under "collaborating," how do you think you might turn them into positive outcomes? What situations would warrant their use as a productive behavior?

- **Assertive and cooperative**

If both sets of concerns are too important to compromise, then behavior that is assertive, yet cooperative, is appropriate.

- **Opposite of avoiding**

Collaborative behavior means getting involved, not avoiding. It is called for when you want to gain team commitment.

- **An attempt to find a solution by consensus**

There may be feelings among team members that have been interfering with team functioning. Many times the only way to explore those feelings is by helping the group work toward consensus because it requires thorough discussion of all ideas and alternatives.

Conflict Behavior "Compromising"

- The median between assertiveness and cooperativeness



- Finds a mutually acceptable solution that will partially satisfy all parties

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Conflict Behavior "Compromising"

When you see these behaviors under "compromising," how do you think you might turn them into positive outcomes? What situations would warrant their use as a productive behavior?

- **The median between assertiveness and cooperativeness**

When two individuals are strongly committed to different, opposing goals, you must balance assertive behavior with cooperation to resolve the conflict.

- **Finds a mutually acceptable solution that will partially satisfy all parties**

This may be the only route to achieve an acceptable settlement for some complex issues on which there is conflict. It's also an option when tasks have to be completed within certain time constraints.

As we have seen, all of the behaviors associated with conflict can be either productive or unproductive. The impact on the team depends on the situation in which they are used. It is important for the quality advisor or team leader to diagnose the situation carefully before deciding on action. It may be that one member's stubbornness and another's drop in participation are efforts to help the team find a win-win answer.

Conflict Assessment

- How does each team member define the issue?
- How do the parties pursue their objectives?
- Is each individual aware of the effect of his or her behavior on the other?
- Without intervention, what will happen to the team's performance?
- What is the win-win outcome?

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Conflict Assessment

In order to diagnose and decide on a course of action when dealing with conflict, you must gather some data. Asking yourself these questions may help.

■ How does each team member define the issue?

Is it a task issue or a personal issue? What does each person want? Is this issue just a symptom of some underlying problem or concern?

■ How do the parties pursue their objectives?

Do the team members hear each other's perspective? Do they keep campaigning for their own ideas, or do they stop to listen to the opposite point of view?

- **Is each individual aware of the effect of his or her behavior on the other?**

How do they react to each other? Does something one says cause the other to shut down? Open up? How does the speaker respond to that behavior?

- **Without intervention, what will happen to the team's performance?**

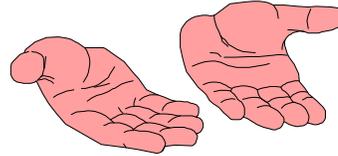
If no one steps in to resolve the conflict, what will be the long- and short-term effects on the team?

- **What is the win-win outcome?**

Can you help the members who are in conflict find a solution that will satisfy everyone's concerns? What is it?

Constructive Conflict Resolution Principles

- Rationality
- Understanding
- Communication
- Reliability
- Noncoercive influence
- Acceptance
- Goodwill



10/95 Team Skills and Concepts - Module 7, Viewgraph 16

Constructive Conflict Resolution Principles

Some basic principles to observe in constructive conflict resolution include:

■ Rationality

Even when the other party acts emotionally, try to balance your emotions with reason. Articulate your position clearly, factually, and calmly. Be specific, do not generalize.

■ Understanding

Try to understand the other party even when he or she doesn't understand you. Ask clarifying questions. Search for the basis of the conflict. Is it facts, values, methods, or goals?

■ **Communication**

Consult with the other party before deciding on matters that may affect him or her. Sharing information encourages communication and reduces the level of conflict.

■ **Reliability**

Do not deceive the other party, even if he or she is trying to deceive you. Practice personal integrity. Divulge any and all relevant facts.

■ **Noncoercive influence**

Even if the other party is trying to coerce you, neither yield to this coercion nor try to coerce back. Be open to persuasion and try to persuade the other party. Present your position rationally, clearly, and nonthreateningly.

■ **Acceptance**

Accept the other party and his or her ideas as worthy of your consideration, even if you and your concerns are rejected. Be willing to learn from them.

■ **Goodwill**

Do only those things that are good for the relationship and good for both parties, whether or not your actions are reciprocated. Work to ensure the worth and dignity of each party. Demonstrate your good faith.

These are some basic guidelines that will help team members resolve conflict whatever their approach may be, whether they are collaborators, compromisers, etc. They also apply to a quality advisor or team leader who is helping teams manage conflict. Traditional negotiating techniques might be viewed as positional bargaining using a soft or hard approach. An alternative method is that of principled negotiation, or negotiation on the merits of the issue. The chart that follows provides a comparative illustration of each.

Negotiating Techniques

TRADITIONAL		WIN-WIN
Soft Approach	Hard Approach	Principled Approach
We are friends	We are opponents	We are problem-solvers
I just want us to agree	I want to win	We want a mutually beneficial outcome
I'll change my position to accommodate you	I'm not budging from my position	Let's identify our interests
I think this is the example they will accept	This is the only answer I will accept	Let's develop several options to choose from
I think I'll agree to this	This is the only thing I can agree to	Let's identify our needs and criteria
I'll give in if I have to	I'll pressure them until they give in	Let's compare our criteria to the options

As we can see, the principled approach to negotiation is the preferred method and is the one that will get us to the desired win-win outcome.

We are now going to learn how to apply principled negotiation techniques to help teams reach win-win agreements. Principled negotiation has four key features: people, issues, options, and criteria. In principled negotiation, you need to separate people from problems, focus on issues not positions, explore options by generating a variety of solutions, and determine criteria by defining and setting objective standards.

The win-win philosophy encourages a flexible approach allowing both parties in a conflict to find a solution that is mutually agreeable. Resolution focuses on the areas of common interest instead of on the differences. Sometimes resolution means accepting the differences to form agreement on those issues on which there is common ground. In win-win conflict resolution, all parties are encouraged to listen actively to the opposing view's ideas and to gather information that gives them a full understanding of that view. They need to be able to actually "hear" what the other party is saying. Then discussions focus on issues, not positions. It helps them make rational, fact-based- not personal- or position-based decisions.

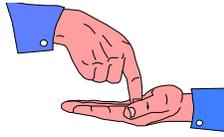
A win-win attitude among all parties is necessary to have an outcome in which everybody wins. If one party thinks win-lose or lose-lose, it won't work. In conflict situations many people think, "How can I get what I want Principled negotiation changes that to, "How can we both get what we want?" The key to win-win agreements is being able to abandon selfish positions.

When negotiations based on the principled approach are successfully completed, decisions can be made in the best interest of process improvement.



PRINCIPLED NEGOTIATION ROLE PLAY EXERCISE NOTES

Each of us has our own perception of the world. This perception is based on our personalities and experiences, which are probably different from everyone else's. It is our unique perceptions that create the dynamics for both team conflict and team synergy. Effective teams encourage diversity of views and resolve conflicts through the win-win approach of emphasizing areas of common interest and benefit for the organization.



Final Pointers

- Maintain an open atmosphere
- Keep conflict resolution inside the team
- Examine past conflict behaviors
- Consider the consequences

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Final Pointers

- **Maintain an open atmosphere**

To manage conflict constructively, a team has to establish and maintain an open atmosphere in which members feel comfortable and accepted when they express their ideas. Conflicting views can be discussed, but never in a way that makes people feel they are being personally attacked or laughed at. Remember to focus on the issue, not the person.

- **Keep conflict resolution inside the team**

It is also important to keep conflict issues and constructive criticisms inside the team. The grapevine is very effective for bringing comments made outside the team back to team members, and it can destroy the team effort. Many teams find it helpful to have a rule that what is said within the team, stays within the team. This helps establish a trusting working environment.

- **Examine past conflict behaviors**

Another thing to remember when you intervene to help teams resolve conflict is that you have to consider how the team has dealt with conflict in the past. Have they avoided conflict altogether? Are some members extremely competitive? Does one always look for the middle ground of compromise? In deciding how and when to help the team resolve conflict, you need to consider how, when, and by whom these behaviors have been used in the past. This will allow you to identify conflict resolution strengths and weaknesses within the team, and make informed decisions about how to help the team come to resolution.

- **Consider the consequences**

Team members constantly evaluate and react to each other's behavior and to that of the team leader or quality advisor. Before deciding on a course of action (or inaction) as the team leader or quality advisor, you should carefully consider the consequences. What effect will the conflict have on the team in the short and long term? What effect will your actions have?

Summary

- Define and diagnose team conflict
- Identify the outcomes of team conflict
- Describe productive uses of conflict behavior
- Explain constructive conflict resolution
- Apply principled negotiation techniques
- Describe the role of managed conflict

10/95 Team Skills and Concepts - Module 7, Viewgraph 18

Summary

We have to recognize that we live in a stressful environment, and stress itself can cause conflict. The DON is in an era of "rightsizing" that will mean finding ways of providing quality products and services with fewer resources. That is why the TQL approach to process improvement teams is so important to us now. As we have learned, conflict is a natural occurrence, especially when we ask for a diversity of ideas to improve processes. When we add this to an already stressful environment, we realize the importance of learning how to manage conflict effectively. In this module we have explored several approaches to conflict management which will help you work with teams. This study has not been exhaustive, however. You may want to study other theories and tools as you continuously improve your conflict management skills. In this module you have learned how to:

- **Define and diagnose team conflict**

We described the basic types of conflict, and you learned how to recognize its causes, symptoms, and associated behaviors.

- **Identify the outcomes of team conflict**

We typically think of conflict as "negative." You learned that there can also be a "positive" outcome of team conflict.

- **Describe productive uses of conflict behavior**

We described five different ways that people react in conflict situations: competing, avoiding, accommodating, collaborating, and compromising; and discussed how to use these behaviors productively.

- **Explain constructive conflict resolution**

There are some basic principles that are effective for constructively resolving many conflict situations. You learned what they are and what they mean.

- **Apply principled negotiation techniques**

We described how principled negotiation helps conflicting parties reach win-win agreements, and you had an opportunity to practice using this approach.

- **Describe the role of managed conflict**

Throughout the module we discussed how effectively-managed conflict can actually help process improvement teams make better decisions, and the role you may play as quality advisor or team leader in helping them.

As we have seen, there are many positive sides to conflict when we manage it constructively. The process of finding resolution when team members have very different views is what gives us really good decisions for improving processes. Effective teamwork happens when people have heartfelt differences but put them on the table openly and honestly for discussion and consensus-building.

NOTES
