

Conflict Management

Preparation

Review Reference Manual

Equipment, Materials, Supplies

- ☐ Newsprint, Easel, Markers, Masking Tape
- ☐ One set of broken squares (see exercise) for each small group

Exercise Preparation

- ☐ Review *Exercise 1: Conflict Management-Critical Incidents*
- ☐ Review *Exercise 2: Broken Squares*
 - ☐ Prepare sets of Broken Squares according to the exercise directions.
 - ☐ Make copies of the Broken Squares Observer/Judge Instruction Sheet, one for each group.

Room Arrangements

Participants should be seated at tables in groups of six people per table.

Overview

Purpose

The purpose of this module is to enable participants to help teams identify and manage conflict..

Objectives

At the end of this module participants will be able to:

- Describe the positive and negative aspects of conflict.
- Recognize the source of a disagreement.
- Determine when and how to apply five conflict management styles.
- Determine how to deal with resistance.

| Content | Time |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| Introduction | 2 minutes |
| Understanding Conflict | 18 minutes |
| Conflict Management Styles | 20 minutes |
| A Positive Approach to Resistance | 10 minutes |
| Broken Squares Exercise | 40 minutes |
| | Total time: 1 hour and 30 minutes |

Time/Materials Content/Activities

| | |
|-------------------------------|---|
| Introduction | DISCUSS the purpose, objectives, and overview of the module. |
| 2 minutes | Purpose |
| Slide 1 | TELL participants the purpose of this module is to enable participants to help teams identify and manage conflict. |
| Slide 2 | Objectives |
| | PREVIEW the objectives from page 1 of this module |
| Slide 3 | Overview |
| | PREVIEW the module contents. |
| Understanding Conflict | PRESENT AND DISCUSS the definition of conflict based on reference manual information. |
| 18 minutes | |
| Slides 4-6 | |
| | ASK participants to brainstorm the negative consequences of conflict. RECORD their responses on newsprint. |
| | ASK participants to brainstorm the positive consequences of conflict. |

RECORD their responses on newsprint.

Slides 7-10

ADD negative or positive consequences of conflict missing from their brainstorming, based on reference manual contents.

Goals of training in conflict management

EXPLAIN these are 4 goals when helping a team to learn to identify and manage conflict.

Slide 11

1. Dispel Negative Notions about Conflict

- **DISCUSS** the goal of recognizing the positive aspects of conflict based on reference manual information

2. Recognize Sources of Disagreement

- **DISCUSS** the sources of disagreement based on reference manual information
- **ASK** participants to give examples of each. Provide examples from reference manual if they cannot identify any.
 - Facts
 - Methods
 - Goals
 - Values

3. Adopt a variety of conflict management styles

- **EXPLAIN** that participants will learn about a number of conflict management styles in this module.

4. Express, appreciate, and manage resistance

- **EXPLAIN** why a team should value resistance and that they will learn about how to do this in this module.

Conflict Management Styles

20 minutes

Slides 12-23

INTRODUCE the exercise. (10 minutes)

- **ASK** participants to turn to the first page of *Exercise 1: Conflict Management* / or Figure 1 and 2 in *Conflict Management*.
- **REVIEW** each management style, its characteristic behavior, justification for use, and possible negative consequences.

Exercise 1: Conflict Management

- **EXPLAIN** that the purpose of this exercise is to determine when to use each conflict management style.

CONDUCT the exercise. (5 minutes)

- **DIVIDE** participants into 5 groups.
- **ASSIGN** one of the critical incidents for each group to discuss.
- **TELL** each group to choose one person to be the time keeper and one person to be the recorder.
- **TELL** participants to read their incident silently to themselves and choose the cause and management style they think is correct. Discuss their answer and seek consensus on their answer.

SUMMARIZE the exercise. (5 minutes)

- **ASK** the recorders for each group to read their incident and the agreed upon answers for the cause of the disagreement and the appropriate conflict management style.

PROVIDE feedback and additional information as needed.

**Positive
Approach to
Resistance**

10 minutes

Slides 24-30

PRESENT the steps in a positive approach to resistance, based on reference manual information

- Surfacing the resistance
- Honoring the resistance
- Exploring the resistance
- Rechecking the status of current resistance agreement

SUMMARIZE by stating the key points from the reference manual about dealing with resistance.

- The objective is to work with and reduce resistance – it is not possible to eliminate resistance..
- Write down what the resister says.
- Once the resistance is at a workable level, thank the resister and move on..

**Exercise 2:
Broken
Squares**

40 minutes

INTRODUCE the exercise.

- **TELL** participants they will perform an exercise that may include a need to recognize and resolve conflict.
- **READ** with participants the group instructions for *Exercise 2: Broken Squares*.

CONDUCT AND SUMMARIZE the exercise as described.

Transition

REVIEW the module objectives and link them to the next module.

Exercise 1: Conflict Management

| MANAGEMENT STYLES | CHARACTERISTIC BEHAVIOR | JUSTIFICATION FOR USE |
|---|---|---|
| Avoiding | Non-confrontational. Ignores or passes over issues. Denies issues are a problem. | Differences too minor or too great to resolve. Attempts might damage relationships or create even greater problems. |
| Accommodating | Agreeable, non-assertive behavior. Cooperative even at the expense of personal goals. | Not worth risking damage to relationships or general harmony. |
| Competing (Win/Lose) | Confrontational, assertive, and aggressive. “Winning” is good; “losing” is bad. | Survival of the fittest. Must demonstrate superiority. |
| Compromising | Parties seek quick middle-ground position that provides partial satisfaction for both parties. Maintains good relationships. Aggressive, but cooperative. | No one person or idea is perfect. There is more than one way to do anything. |
| Collaborating or Problem-Solving (Win/Win) | Needs of both parties are legitimate and important. High respect for mutual support. Assertive and cooperative. | When parties openly discuss issues, a mutually beneficial solution can be found without anyone making a major concession. |
| Adapted from Maddux, R. B., <i>Team Building: An Exercise in Leadership</i> , Los Altos, California: Crisp Publications, 1992.. | | |

When to Use Different Conflict Management Styles

| STYLE | USE WHEN | POSSIBLE NEGATIVE CONSEQUENCES |
|--------------------------------|--|--|
| Avoiding | <p>Issue is trivial.</p> <p>No chance of success.</p> <p>Confrontation is damaging.</p> <p>Need to reduce tension.</p> <p>Need more information.</p> <p>Others can resolve conflict more effectively.</p> | <p>Decisions made by default.</p> <p>Unresolved issues.</p> <p>Self-doubt created through lack of esteem.</p> <p>Creative input and improvement prevented.</p> <p>Lack of credibility.</p> |
| Accommodating | <p>You are wrong.</p> <p>Issue vital to other person.</p> <p>“Credit” needed for more important issues.</p> <p>Competition hurts cause.</p> <p>Harmony is most important.</p> | <p>Too much deference decreases influence.</p> <p>Frustration increases as own needs are not met.</p> <p>Self-esteem undermined.</p> <p>Lose best solution.</p> |
| Competing | <p>Quick action is needed.</p> <p>Unpopular action is needed on important issue.</p> <p>One is right on vital issues.</p> <p>Someone taking advantage of noncompetitive styles.</p> | <p>Encourages “yes” people.</p> <p>Afraid to admit ignorance.</p> <p>Distorted perceptions.</p> <p>Reduced communication.</p> <p>Damage to relationship.</p> <p>Must always “sell” solution.</p> |
| Compromising | <p>Goals not worth disruption.</p> <p>Opponents strongly committed to different goals.</p> <p>Temporary solution needed.</p> <p>Quick solution needed.</p> <p>Other efforts have failed.</p> | <p>No one fully satisfied.</p> <p>Solution may be short-lived.</p> <p>May lose sight of larger issues or values by focusing on practicalities.</p> |
| Collaborating Consensus | <p>Decision is too important for compromise.</p> <p>Need to test assumptions or degree of understanding.</p> <p>Different perspectives must be merged.</p> <p>Need greater commitment.</p> <p>Mending hard feelings between members.</p> | <p>Time wasted on less significant issue.</p> <p>Decisions swayed by input from people unfamiliar with situation.</p> <p>Assumptions about trust may be unfounded.</p> |

Conflict Management - Critical Incidents

Instructions

Read the incident below and determine the source of the conflict:

- Facts
- Method
- Goals
- Values

Determine the style of conflict management you would use and discuss why you think it is the best.

- Collaboration/Consensus
- Compromising
- Competing
- Accommodating
- Avoiding

Incident 1

You are a Health Center Staff member and a team leader. The Clinical Officer has just returned after attending a training session in the US. He says that antibiotics should now be used for all cases of diarrhea in children under 5 years. The rest of the team knows that this isn't appropriate treatment here.

What's the source of this conflict?

What style of conflict management would you use?

Why?

Conflict Management - Critical Incidents

Instructions

Read the incident below and determine the source of the conflict:

- Facts
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Determine the style of conflict management you would use and discuss why you think it is the best.

- Collaboration/Consensus
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- Accommodating
- Avoiding

Incident 2

The supervisors in the clinic did a quality assessment of compliance with standards for counting respirations when evaluating children with respiratory complaints. Only 10% of the patients had respirations actually counted. The rest of the time the staff estimated. Your team needs to respond to these findings.

What's the source of this conflict?

What style of conflict management would you use?

Why?

Conflict Management - Critical Incidents

Instructions

Read the incident below and determine the source of the conflict:

- Facts
- Method
- Goals
- Values

Determine the style of conflict management you would use and discuss why you think it is the best.

- Collaboration/Consensus
- Compromising
- Competing
- Accommodating
- Avoiding

Incident 3

You are a health worker at a large primary care center. Twice a week, reports need to be delivered to the District Office in the village. People routinely make the trip in 45 minutes. But, Mohammed is always gone 1½ to 2 hours. You know he has many friends at the District Office. He's not behind in his work, but you wish he would return in less time like everyone else.

What's the source of this conflict?

What style of conflict management would you use?

Why?

Conflict Management - Critical Incidents

Instructions

Read the incident below and determine the source of the conflict:

- Facts
- Method
- Goals
- Values

Determine the style of conflict management you would use and discuss why you think it is the best.

- Collaboration/Consensus
- Compromising
- Competing
- Accommodating
- Avoiding

Incident 4

You are the team leader of the Senior Management Team of your district. You're responsible for budget allocation to meet healthcare needs of the people in your geographic area. The MOH has required you to set aside 40% of next year's budget to buy computers for the new health surveillance system. You are upset about that large sum of funding.

What's the source of this conflict?

What style of conflict management would you use?

Why?

Conflict Management - Critical Incidents

Instructions

Read the incident below and determine the source of the conflict:

- Facts
- Method
- Goals
- Values

Determine the style of conflict management you would use and discuss why you think it is the best.

- Collaboration/Consensus
- Compromising
- Competing
- Accommodating
- Avoiding

Incident 5

The government has a policy that the clinic collects a fee for all primary care given to non-pregnant adults. No one in this category is to be treated without payment. Your health center staff recognizes that many patients require care, but can't pay. You, as the team leader, want to help staff resolve the conflict of providing care without collecting payment.

What's the source of this conflict?

What style of conflict management would you use?

Why?

Exercise 2: Broken Squares

Goals

- To analyze some aspects of how members of a team work together.
- To sensitize participants to behaviors which may contribute toward or obstruct the solving of a group problem.

Group Size

Any number of groups of six participants each (there are five participants and an observer/judge in each group)

Time Required

Approximately forty minutes.

Materials

- ☐ A set of broken squares (prepared according to directions following) for each group
- ☐ One copy for each group of the Broken Squares Group Instruction Sheet
- ☐ One copy for each observer of the Broken Squares Observer/Judge Instruction Sheet

Physical Setting

A table that will seat six participants is needed for each group. Tables should be spaced far enough apart so that no group can see what the other groups are doing.

Procedure

1. Form groups of 6 people - **five participants plus the observer/judge**. Give each observer a copy of the Broken Squares Observer/Judge Instruction Sheet. Distribute the set of broken squares (five envelopes) to the teams, one envelope per person. The envelopes should not be opened until the signal is given to start.
2. Give each observer/judge a copy of the Broken Squares Group Instruction Sheet. The trainer should read these instructions to the groups, asking for questions or questioning groups about their understanding of the instructions.
3. Tell the groups to begin work. The trainer should monitor tables during the exercise to help the observer/judge enforce the rules established in the instructions.
4. When all groups have completed the task, the trainer should guide the groups in a discussion of the experience. The observers/judges should be asked for their input. The trainer encourages the groups to relate this experience to their “back-home” situations.

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Variations (Optional)

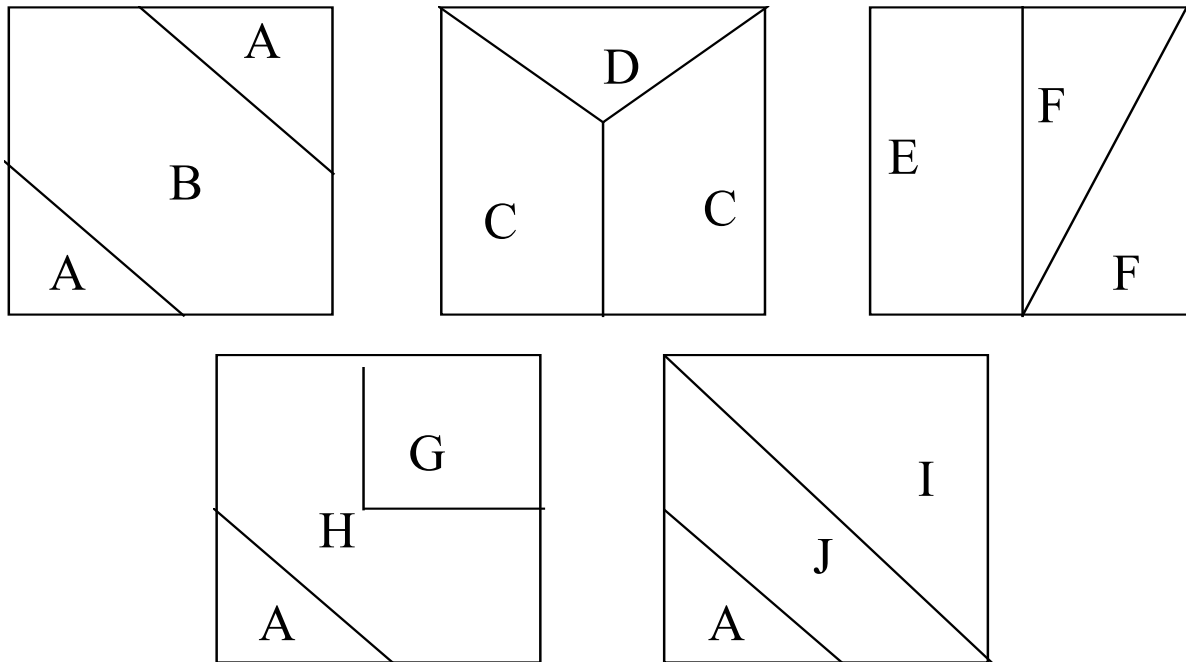
- When one member makes a square and fails to cooperate with the remaining members, the other four can be formed into two-person subgroups to make squares of the leftover pieces. They discuss their results, and the exercise is resumed.
- The five-person teams can be given consultation assistance by the observer/judge or an appointed member of the team. This may be a person who has done the exercise before.
- Ten-person teams can be formed, with two duplicate sets of five squares each distributed among them. Teams of six to nine persons can be formed; in this case, prepare a broken square set with one square for each person, duplicating as many of the five squares as necessary.
- An intergroup competition can be established, with appropriate recognition to the group that solves the problem first.
- Members may be permitted to talk during the exercise, or one member may be given permission to speak.
- Members may be permitted to write messages to each other during the exercise.

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Directions for Making a Set of Broken Squares

A set consists of five envelopes containing pieces of cardboard (or heavy weight paper) cut into different patterns which, when properly arranged, will form five squares of equal size. One set should be provided for each group of five persons.

To prepare a set, cut out five cardboard squares, each exactly 6" X 6". Place the squares in a row and mark them as below, penciling the letters lightly so they can be erased.



The lines should be so drawn that, when the pieces are cut out, those marked A will be exactly the same size, all pieces marked C the same size, etc. Several combinations are possible that will form one or two squares, but only one combination will form all five squares, each 6" X 6". After drawing the lines on the squares and labeling the sections with letters, cut each square along the lines into smaller pieces to make the parts of the puzzle.

Label the five envelopes, 1, 2, 3, 4 and 5. Distribute the cardboard pieces into the five envelopes as follows: envelope 1 (I, H, E); envelope 2 (A, A, A, C); envelope 3 (A, J); envelope 4 (D, F); and envelope 5 (G, B, F, C).

Erase the penciled letter from each piece and write, instead, the number of the envelope it is in. This makes it easy to return the pieces to the proper envelope, for subsequent use, after a group has completed the task.

Each set may be made from a different color of cardboard.

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Broken Squares Group Instruction Sheet

Each of you has an envelope that contains pieces of cardboard for forming squares. When the signal to begin is given, the task of your group is to *form five squares of equal size*. The task will not be completed until each individual has before him a perfect square of the same size as those in front of the other group members.

Specific limitations are imposed upon your group during this exercise:

- No member may speak.
- No member may ask another member for a piece or in any way signal that another person is to give him a piece (members may voluntarily give pieces to other members).

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Broken Squares Observer/Judge Instruction Sheet

Your job is part observer and part judge. As a judge, you should make sure each participant observes the following rules:

There is to be no talking, pointing, or any other kind of communication.

Participants **may give pieces** directly to other participants but **may not take pieces** from other members.

Participants may not place their pieces into the center for others to take.

It is permissible for a member to give away all of his or her pieces, even if he or she has already formed a square.

As an observer, look for the following:

- Who is willing to give away pieces?
- Does anyone finish “his” square and then withdraw from the group problem-solving?
- Is there anyone who continually struggles with his pieces, yet is unwilling to give any or all of them away?
- How many people are actively engaged in putting the pieces together?
- What is the level of frustration and anxiety?
- Is there any turning point at which the group begins to cooperate?
- Does anyone try to violate the rules by talking or pointing as a means of helping fellow members solve the problem

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