

# Conflict Management

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# Main Types of Workplace Conflict



**Task-Based Conflict**



**Interpersonal Conflict**



**Role Conflict**



**Values-Based Conflict**



**Structural Conflict**

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# Main Causes of Workplace Conflict



**Communication Issues**



**Resource Constraints**



**Unclear Expectations**



**Personality Differences**



**Change & Uncertainty**

## RECOGNIZING CONFLICT

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Avoidance or Withdrawal

Increased Tension or Hostility

Change in Work Patterns

Polarization

Rumors or Gossip

Emotional Reactions

Rigid Thinking

Negative Attribution

Catastrophizing

Tunnel Vision

Burnout & Cognitive Fatigue

Reduced Empathy

Threats & Retaliation

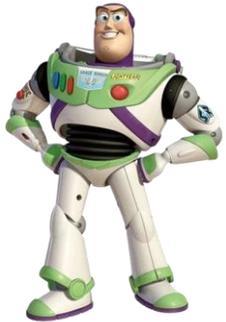
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# Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Mode Instrument (TKI)

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*Competing*  
**"I win, you lose"**

High Assertiveness  
Low Cooperativeness



*Collaborating*  
**"Win-win"**

High Assertiveness  
High Cooperativeness



*Compromising*  
**"Split the difference"**

Moderate Assertiveness  
Moderate Cooperativeness



*Avoiding*  
**"No winners, no losers"**

Low Assertiveness  
Low Cooperativeness



*Accommodating*  
**"I lose, you win"**

Low Assertiveness  
High Cooperativeness



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# Best Practice: Intervene Early & Stay Neutral!

## NEUTRALITY LOOKS LIKE

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**Listening Without  
Partiality**

**Setting Clear Boundaries**

**Knowing When to Step In**

**Staying Grounded in Facts  
& Policy**

**Facilitating, not Dictating**

**Acknowledging Emotions**



**Modeling Respectful  
Behavior**

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# SUPERVISOR STRATEGIES

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## Normalize Conflict

- Embracing Conflict as Growth
- Develop Conflict-Savvy Leaders and Staff
- Culture Building & Ongoing Practice

## Set Communication Norms

- Established Shared Norms for Feedback
- Promote Regular One on Ones
- Practice Self Awareness
- Model Professionalism
- Encourage a Growth Mindset



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# USE STRUCTURED DIALOGUE: PLAN, PLAN, PLAN!

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## Preparation

- Clarify the purpose for the meeting
- Plan enough time and neutral place (no ambushing!)
- Reflect on your own feelings, remain calm and focused

## During meeting

- Start neutral: share meeting purpose & express appreciation
- Share gathered facts
- Use active listening & take good notes
- Remain optimistic about solutions and work together to create one!

## Follow Up

- Document agreements
- Check-in
- Reflect



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## **Mediate**

Low-Intensity Conflicts  
Team Dynamics Issues  
Performance-Related Issues  
Both Parties Are Willing  
There is Trust Established



## **Escalate**

Harassment, Discrimination, Retaliation  
Repeated or Escalating Conflict  
Power Imbalance or Fear  
Legal or Policy Issues  
Supervisor Involved in Conflict

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**WHEN CONFLICT  
ESCALATES TO DISCIPLINE**

Typical Process



Verbal Counseling /Coaching (non-disciplinary)

Restatement of Expectations

First Level Written Reprimand

Second Level Written Reprimand

Third Level & Final Written Reprimand

Notice of Termination

## KEY TAKEAWAYS

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Conflict is NORMAL and can be necessary

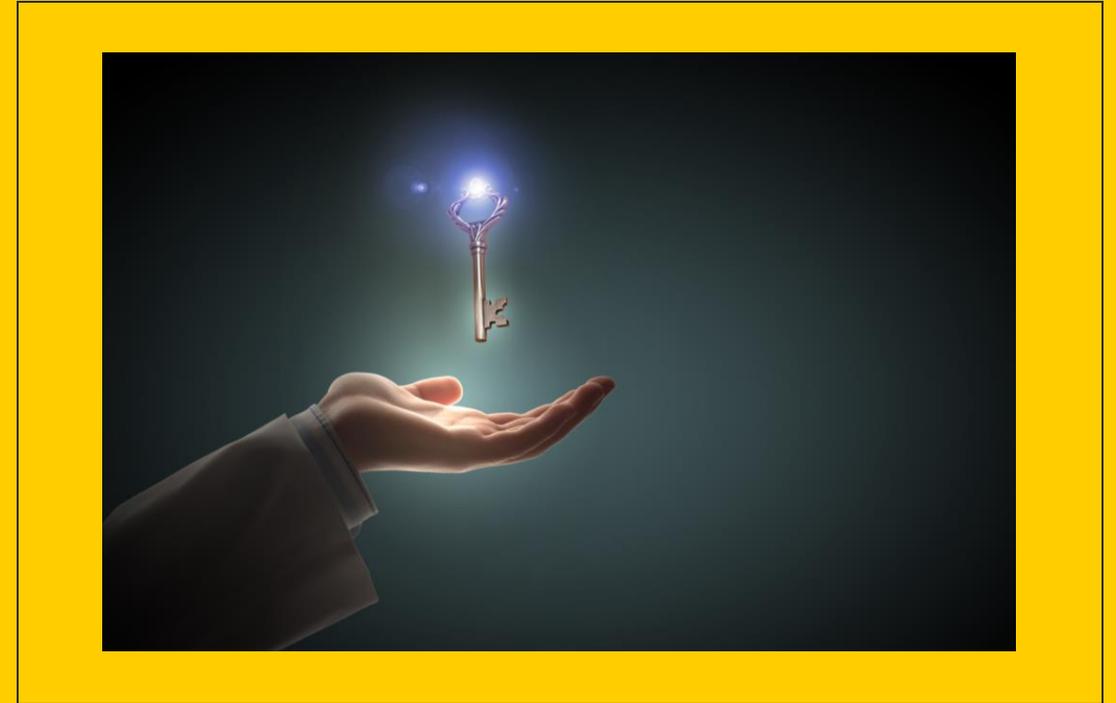
Understand the types and causes of conflict

Recognize early signs of conflict

Use the TKI indicator to reflect on your own conflict management style

Work to balance neutrality with leadership

Know when you mediate versus escalate



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# RESOURCES

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- **Reach out to your HR Rep!**
- **UHR Website for Navigating Conflict to find topics on:**
  - Building Confidence & Address Conflict
  - Supporting Others in Conflict
  - The Process of Conflict Resolution
  - When Conflict Crosses the Line

*LINK: <https://hr.uiowa.edu/development/consultations-support/consultation-resources/navigating-conflict>*

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