

Academic Leadership Experience Session II

Strategies for Navigating Conflict

Presenters:

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- 2. Rabia Khan Harvey, Senior Learning and Development Manager, Academic Leadership, Academic Impressions**

Host: Jane Okech, Professor of Counselor Education and Supervision, and Vice Provost for Faculty Affairs

For information on Upcoming Workshops, please click the link below:

<https://www.uvm.edu/dofa/academic-leadership-experience-program>

Strategies for Navigating Conflict

Academic Leadership Experience Program

University of Vermont

September 24, 2025



Rabia Khan Harvey

Senior Learning & Development Manager
Academic Impressions



Gilpatrick Hornsby, Ph.D.

Associate Vice Provost, Faculty Success
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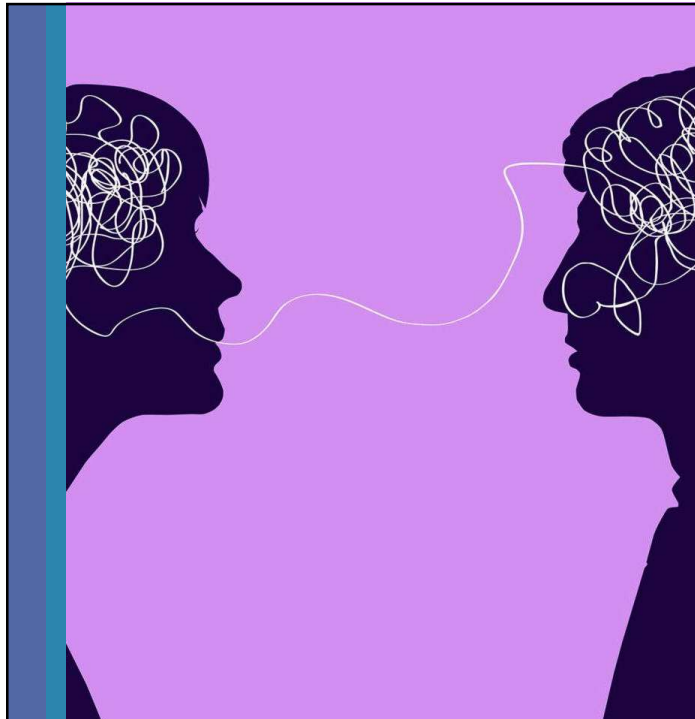
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Take a moment to think about the variety of reasons people avoid conflict, including yourself.

In the Chat, submit one reason you may have avoided conflict in the past.

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Goal for this session

Provide a framework to have the conversation To make it less difficult not necessarily "easy"

Practice

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Reflection

1. Name a few common topics that are more often difficult to address in your role (or in your future role).
2. In your career so far, how much formal training have you received on having difficult conversations?

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Reframing Conflict

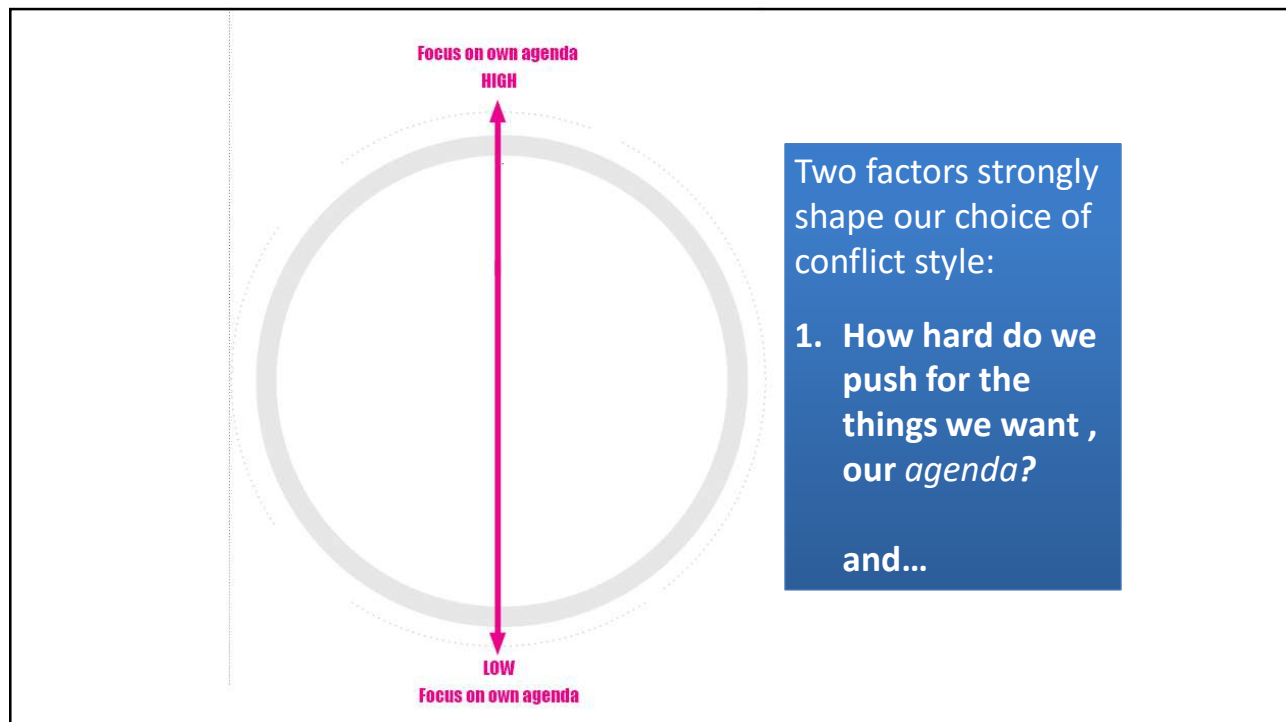
- The world needs more conflict (the well managed kind)
- The challenge is not to eliminate conflict, but to transform it
- PIN Model

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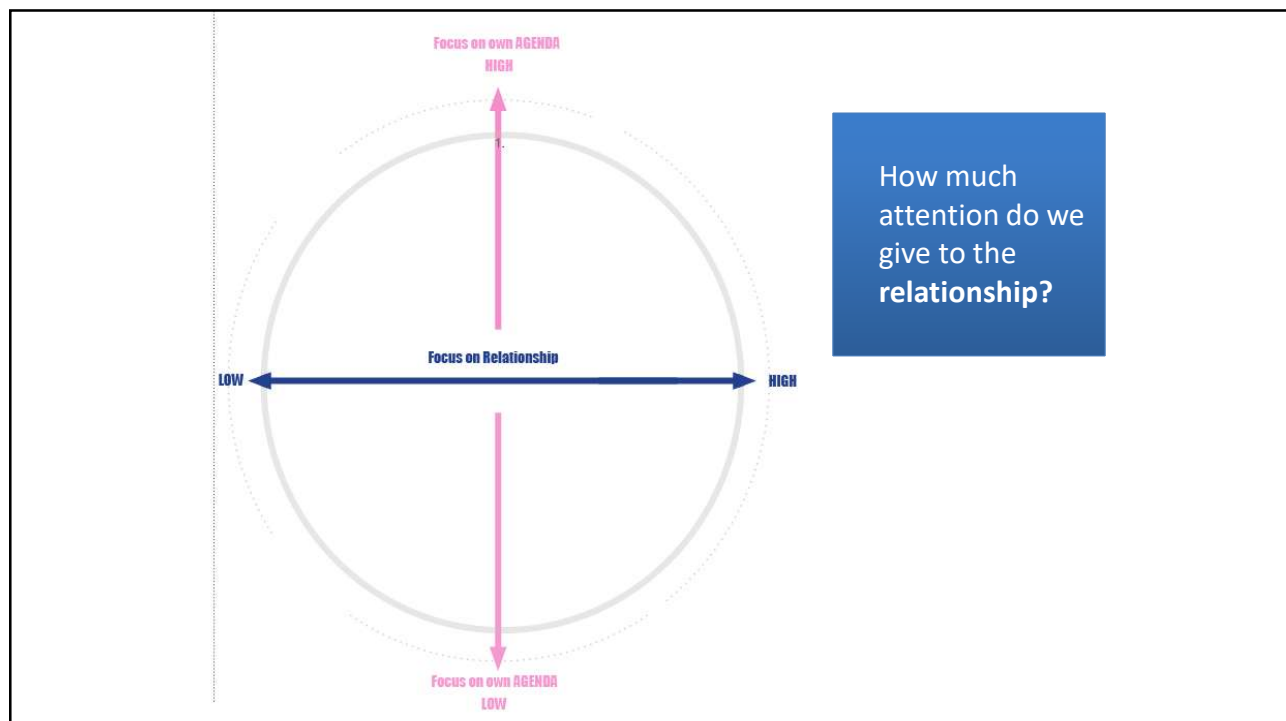
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One Model of Conflict
(Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory)

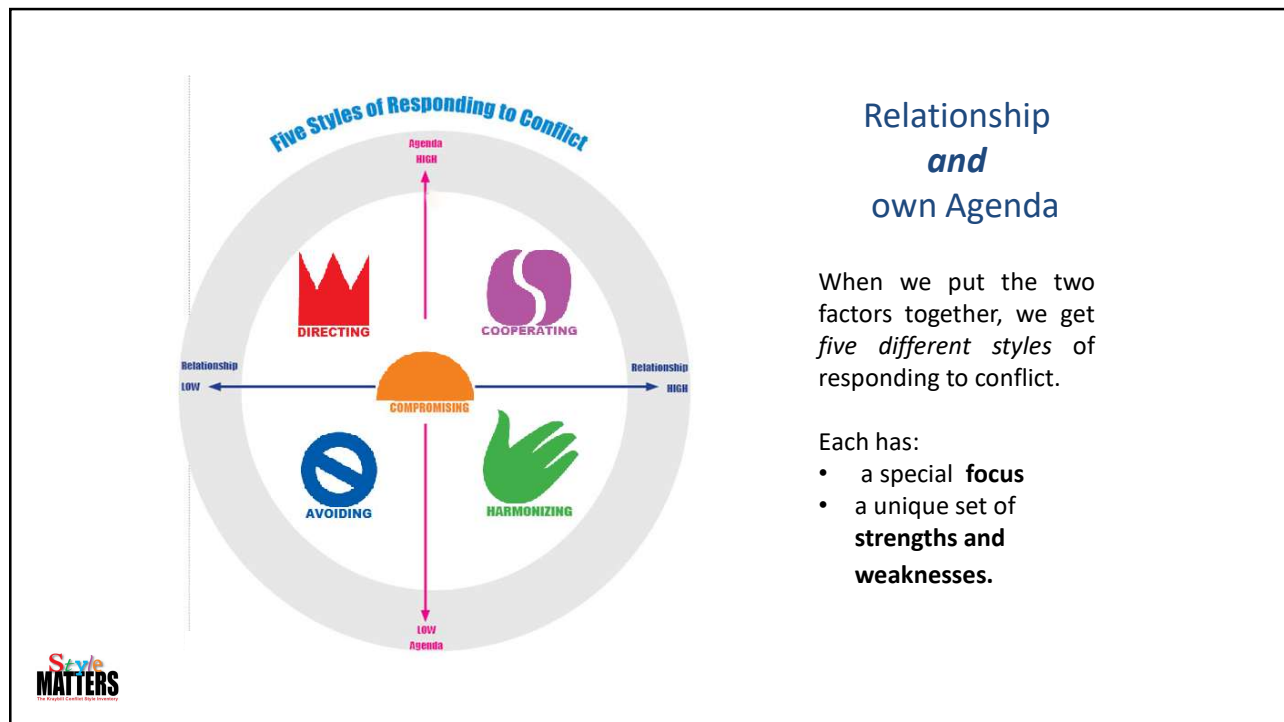
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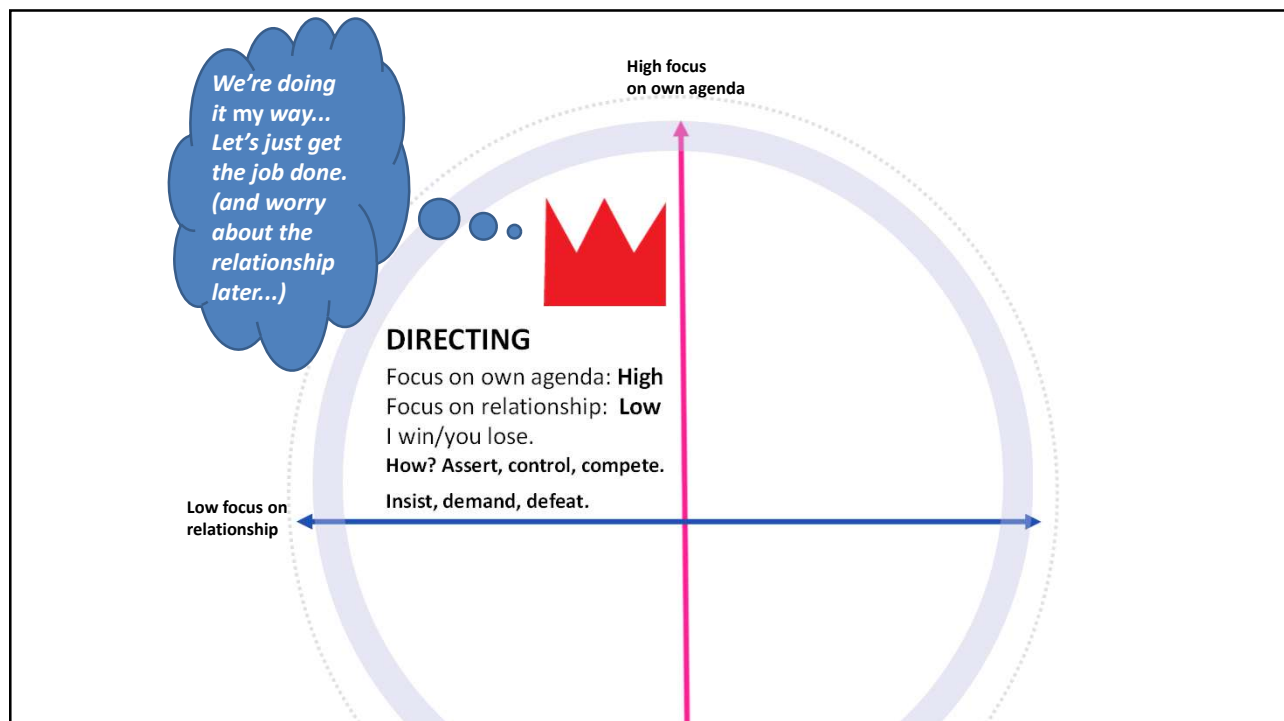
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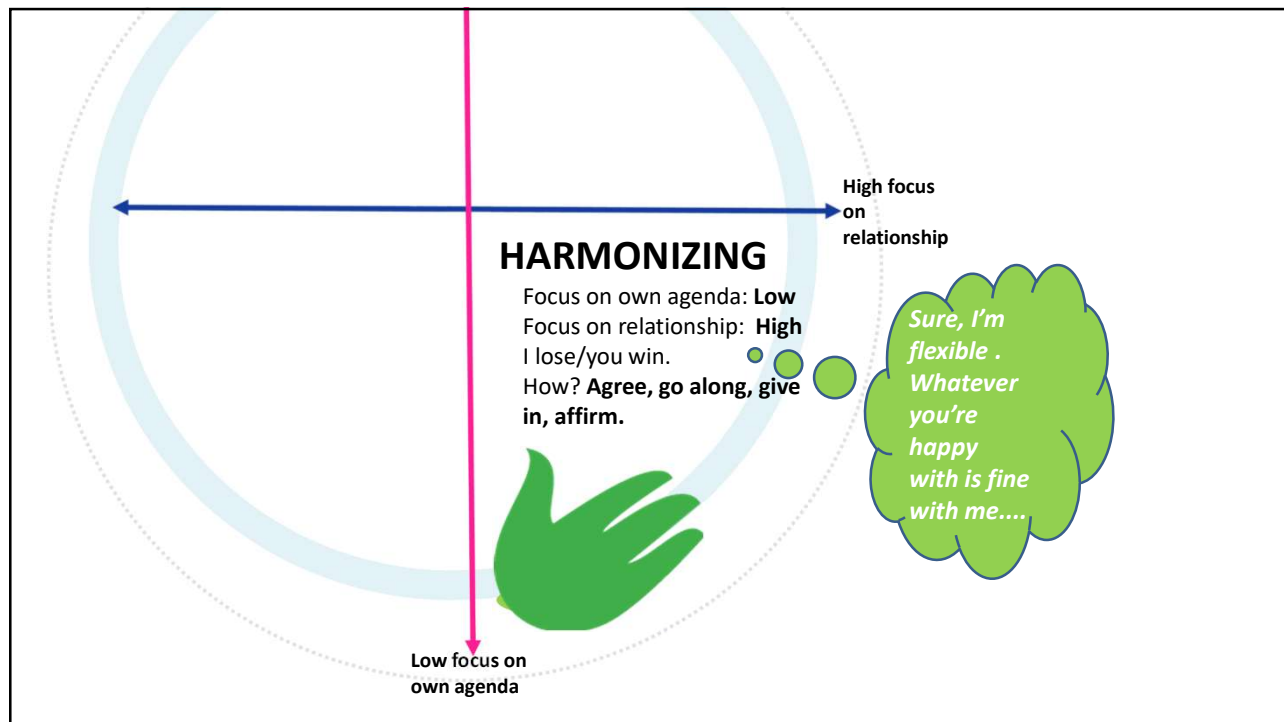
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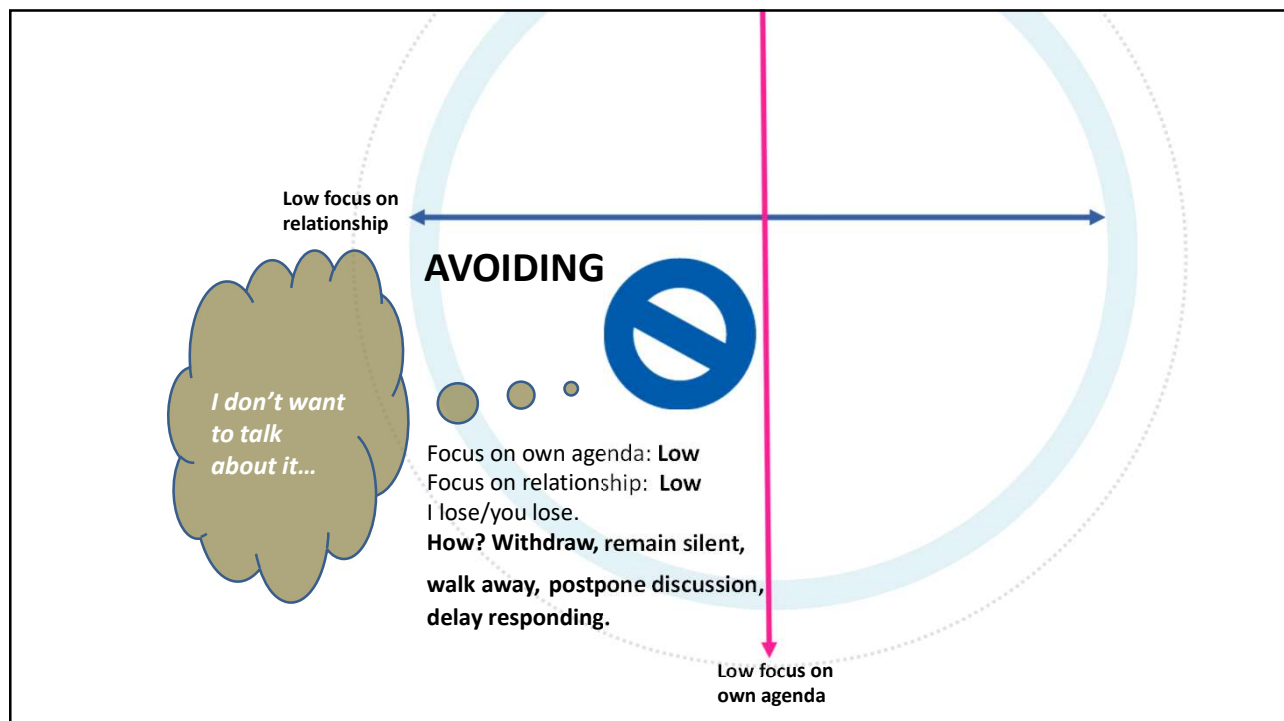
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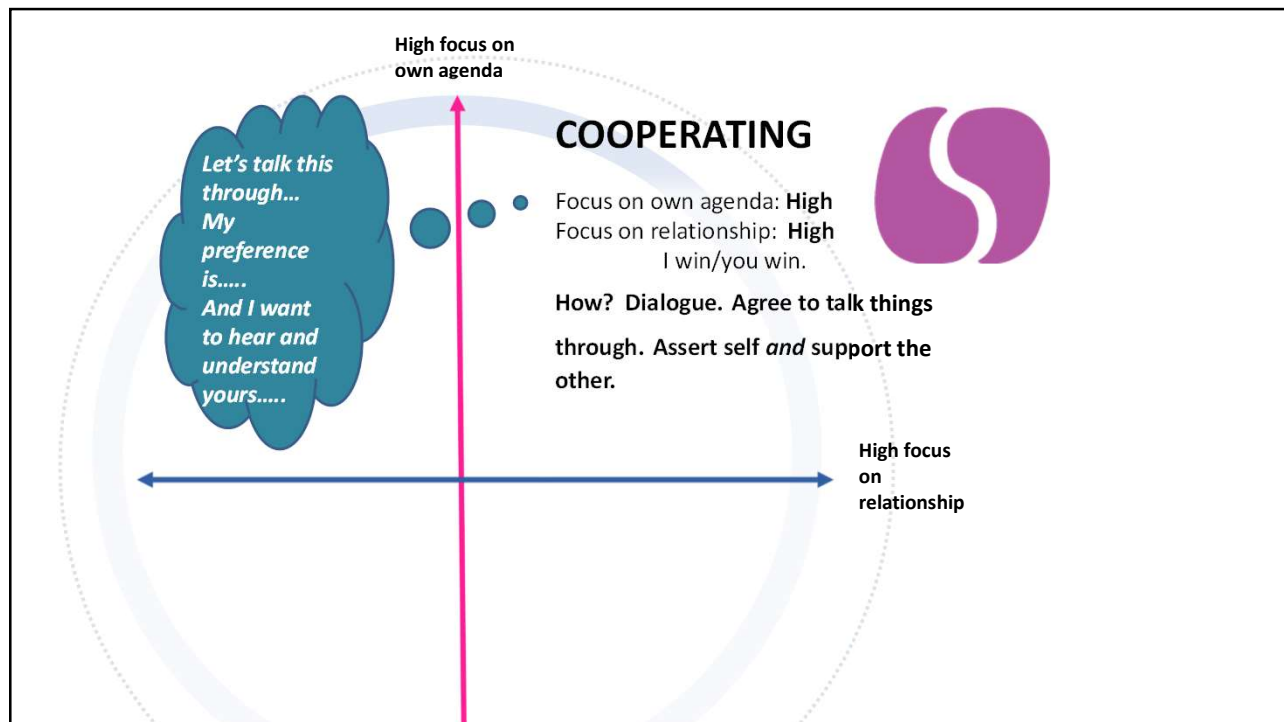
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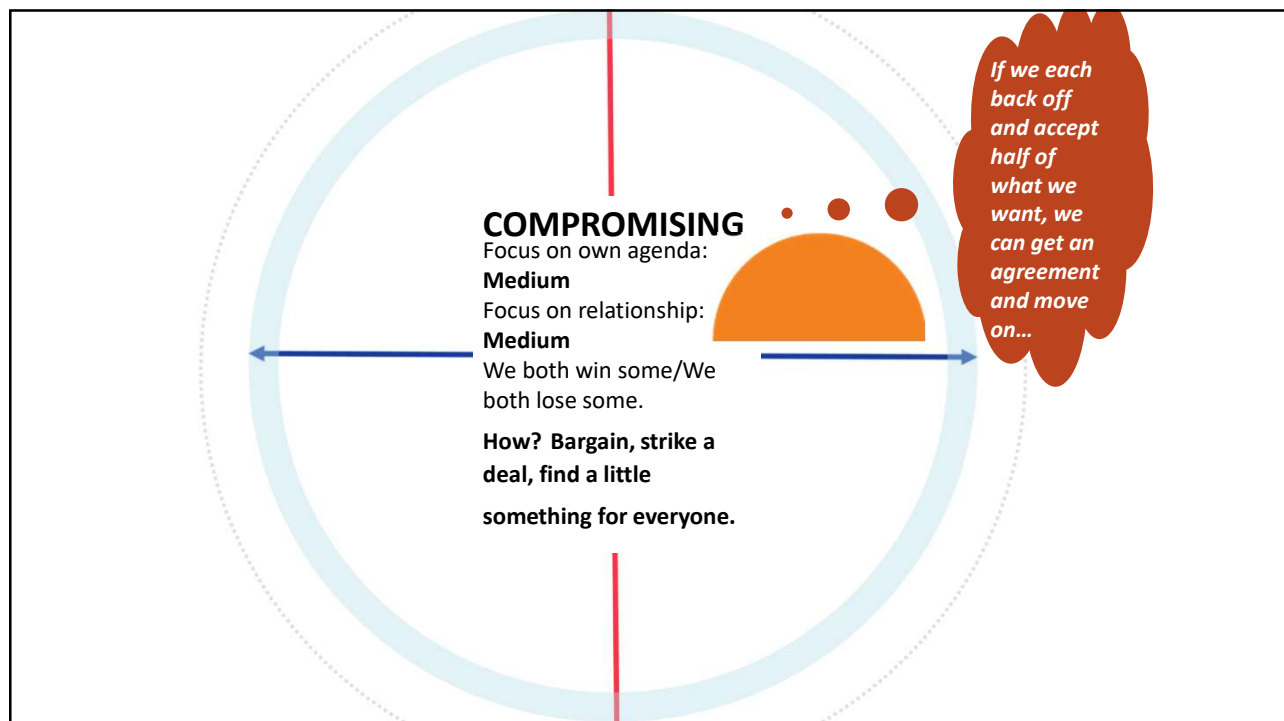
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Five Styles of Responding to Conflict

“When the only tool you have is a hammer, everything you see is a nail.”
Mark Twain

Each style is a valuable tool, essential for situations all of us face.

We handle conflict better when we are equally skilled in all five styles. Then we can choose the response most likely to bring a good outcome.

Learn the strengths and weaknesses of each style. Grow by experimenting with greater use of styles you use least.
www.ConflictStyleMatters.com

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Take a moment to **reflect** on your last conversations where conflict was present. Based on how you showed up, identify what you believe to be your **dominant** conflict style.

When does this style work best for you?

When doesn't this style work for you?

Quiet Reflection

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Why do we avoid difficult conversations?

- They make us uncomfortable
- We don't want to hurt others
- Not sure what to say
- Timing "not quite" right
- Not worth "risking" the relationship

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Important Concepts



Not all
conflict is bad

Stay curious



Watch for
self-serving
bias

Focus on
interests, not
position



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Where to start?

Engage in a difficult
conversation



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In preparation for the conversation...

- What do you want out of this conversation?
- What do you want out of this for the other person?
- Consider the environment
- Consider the timing
- Consider power and privilege



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The actual conversation



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S.T.A.T.E. Your Path

What to Do

- Share your facts
- Tell your story
- Ask for their story

How to Do It

- Talk Tentatively
- Encourage Testing



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What to Do



Share Your Facts



Tell Your Story



Ask for Their Story

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What to Do

- Your observations
- Simply stating what happened
- NOT the story.



Share Your Facts



Tell Your Story



Ask for Their Story

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What to Do

- Assumptions you made based on the facts.
- Where defensiveness likely comes in.



Share Your Facts



Tell Your Story



Ask for Their Story

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What to Do

- Listen
 - Ask Questions
 - Dig Deeper
-
- “What are your thoughts?”
 - “How do you see it?”
 - “What’s your reaction to that?”
 - I’d love to hear from you.
-
- “What’s your perspective?”
 - “Do you see it differently?”



Share Your Facts



Tell Your Story



Ask for Their Story

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How to Do It

Talk Tentatively

- Make sure the other knows it’s safe to share



Encourage Testing

- Make sure your story is not presented as fact
- Be gentle, but firm (not too hard, not too soft)

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Let's Try One: From Faculty to Chair (Peer to Leader)

Gilpatrick and Rabia have been friends and peers for the last 5 years. They joined the department around the same time and developed a friendship by learning the ropes together and supporting one another during tough moments. They have kids around the same age and along the way, their families began to socialize on weekends, and the kids enjoy each other's company. Recently however, a new research center was created on campus (in their discipline) with an open director position, and both Gilpatrick and Rabia applied for the position. Rabia was appointed. Gilpatrick tried to be gracious in congratulating Rabia, but the first few weeks have gotten off to a rough start: Gilpatrick has started to miss deadlines and has failed to effectively mentor students in the lab without and isn't responding to Rabia's emails. Rabia decides she needs to reach out to Gilpatrick to clear the air.

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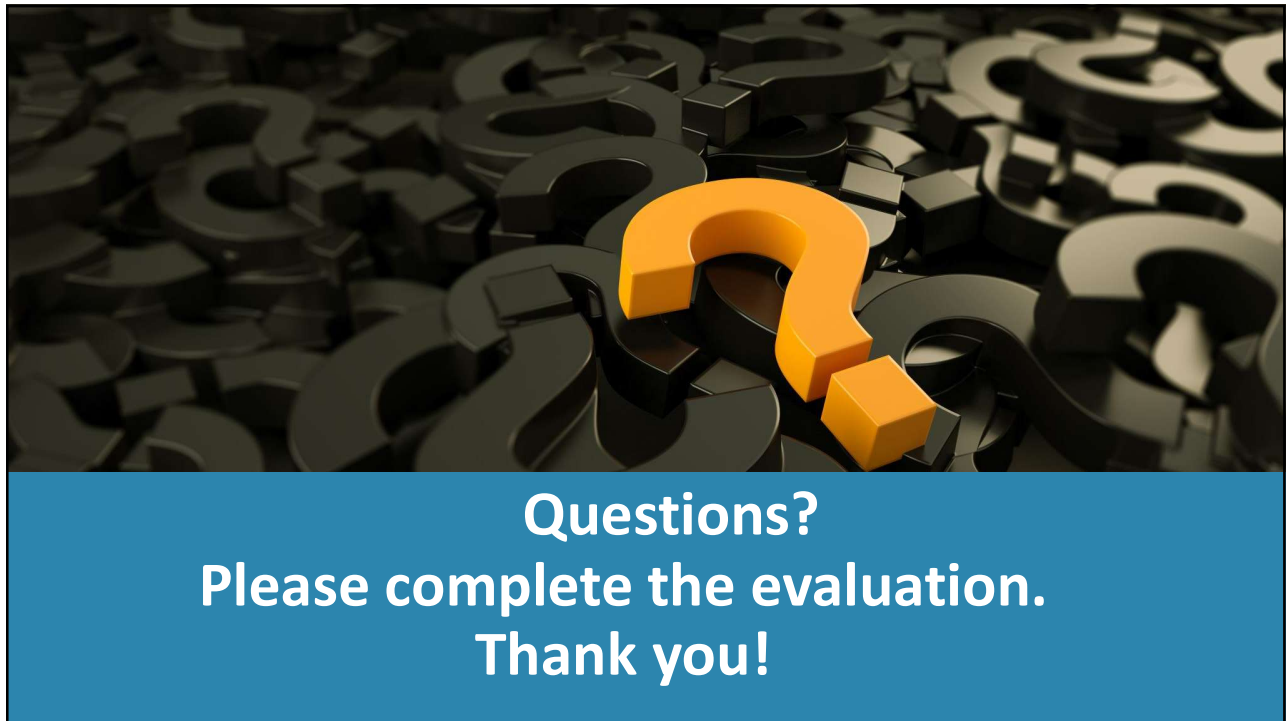


Your Turn!

- Teams of 4 – randomly assigned.
- Pick two **scenarios** (handout in chat).
- You will have 12 minutes to practice two scenarios.
- Please use the first 2 minutes to read and select the scenarios you want to practice in pairs.
- After six minutes, switch pairs and scenarios.
- We will debrief after you practice.

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Difficult Conversations – Practice Scenarios

SCENARIO A: THE MEETING AFTER THE MEETING

One of your newer faculty members rarely speaks up during department meetings. In fact, you cannot recall her ever answering a question, offering input on departmental priorities, or contributing to problem-solving discussions. This is puzzling to you since you try to foster an open and collaborative environment where all voices are welcome. While you are okay with her silence in the meetings, you've heard from several other faculty and staff members over the past year that this individual regularly shares her opinions in private afterward—often criticizing the decisions made and speaking disparagingly about others in the department. You decide it's time to have a conversation.

SCENARIO B: PUBLIC ALTERCATION

As the Dean, you've organized a planning retreat to discuss curriculum revision across the College. During one of the sessions you're leading, you witness Ed, a tenured faculty member and star researcher, publicly berate Tanya, an assistant professor hired barely 3 months ago. Tanya is visibly upset, but Ed appears indifferent. Others in the room look shocked, but no one speaks up, including the chair responsible for overseeing the department in which both Tanya and Ed work. Everyone is looking to you at the front of the room to see how you handle the situation. What do you do?

SCENARIO C: PERFORMANCE CONCERNS

You are the Dean, and you've received multiple reports that one of your chairs is struggling to provide timely feedback to faculty on important curriculum changes, resulting in confusion and missed deadlines. Faculty morale is beginning to suffer in the department, and frustration toward the chair is building. You value this chair's expertise and dedication, but you need to have a candid conversation about their performance and expectations moving forward.

Difficult Conversations – Practice Scenarios

SCENARIO D: FORMER FRIENDS

You (Carmen) are in your third month as department chair. You accepted the position with enthusiasm, as yours is largely a collegial and productive department and you want to do your part. Since you took the post, you've noticed a change in attitude from some of your faculty, especially Tate. You and Tate were close and friendly colleagues, but now he seems distant towards you: you no longer chat about family life or music the way you used to. The limited interaction you have is all business and usually when he needs something from you. More distressing is the fact that he is no longer replying to your emails. You've sent him three messages about his teaching schedule for next semester, and he hasn't answered. You also emailed him about some student complaints and asked him to come talk to you. He ignored that message as well.

You want to talk with Tate to find out what is going on, but you dread a confrontation, especially given the friendship you had.

SCENARIO E: CAUGHT IN THE MIDDLE

You're an Associate Dean in a large College of Arts & Sciences. One of your newly appointed chairs is dealing with a particularly difficult personnel situation in their department that was not properly addressed by the chair that came before them. The Dean has asked you to support the new chair by providing coaching and advice, and you have done this already on several occasions, but the new chair does not seem particularly receptive to your feedback and recently has become openly dismissive. The situation is escalating and you believe it requires a more direct approach, but the chair isn't listening and you're becoming frustrated. On one hand, you don't want to let your Dean down, but at the end of the day you are not responsible for the chair's performance, and this is becoming a headache.



S.T.A.T.E. Your Path Worksheet

What to do:

Share your facts.

Tell your story.

Ask for their story.

How to do it:

Talk tentatively.

Encourage testing.