

MODULE 2

Conflict Resolution & Risk Handling - Key Concepts

Designed and delivered by **Skalent® INDIA** for **TKIL Industries** for June 2026.



©2026 Skalent Consultancy Services Pvt. Ltd. All Rights Reserved.

This handout and all its contents are the exclusive intellectual property of M/s Skalent Consultancy Services Pvt. Ltd., shared solely for participants' personal learning and reference. Any unauthorized sharing, reproduction, or distribution, in whole or in part, constitutes a breach of confidentiality and intellectual property rights. By accessing, viewing, or using this material, participants acknowledge and agree to abide by these terms.

FOUR TYPES OF TEAM CONFLICT

Conflict on a team is inevitable. On diverse teams, where individuals come from varying backgrounds and possess differing opinions, those opinions will clash often in the form of disagreements and conflicts.

Understanding the types of team conflict that can arise in a team setting is crucial for effective management and resolution. In this handout, we will delve into the four types of team conflict: relationship conflict, task conflict, status conflict, and process conflict. Each type of conflict has its unique characteristics, causes, and potential solutions. By understanding these conflicts, leaders can respond appropriately in the moment, setting the team up to harness the benefits of conflict rather than letting it become a destructive force.

RELATIONSHIP CONFLICT

The first type of team conflict is relationship conflict. This is a type of conflict that arises from differing personalities, experiences, and identities. This type of conflict can undermine trust and belonging on the team, creating a negative atmosphere. It's crucial for leaders to address relationship conflicts promptly and effectively to prevent them from escalating.

Resolving relationship conflict requires empathy and understanding. Private discussions between conflicting individuals can help identify triggers and allow for open communication. It's important to focus on specific behaviors and their impact, rather than making accusations or assuming motives. By addressing the behavior rather than the person, leaders can help individuals understand how their actions affect the team and encourage them to adjust their behavior accordingly.

TASK CONFLICT

The second type of team conflict is task conflict. This is a positive type of conflict that arises from differing opinions on how to complete tasks. This type of conflict can be harnessed to encourage discussion and find the best plan of action. It indicates that the team is leveraging diversity for better performance.

When dealing with task conflict, it's important to avoid personal attacks and assumptions. Instead, leaders should encourage team members to ask intelligent questions about the assumptions behind ideas. By discussing different perspectives openly, the team can increase the chances of finding the best way to achieve tasks. This type of conflict, when managed properly, can lead to innovative solutions and improved team performance.

STATUS CONFLICT

The third type of team conflict is status conflict. This involves power struggles and hierarchy within the team. Unlike task conflict, status conflict has no positive outcome and can create a toxic work environment. It's crucial for leaders to address status conflicts promptly and effectively to prevent them from escalating. Status conflict is about people's opinions of their position in an invisible hierarchy within the team. To address this type of conflict, leaders can create rituals and experiences that signal equality and discourage status games. It's also important for leaders to lead by example and send the message that everyone's opinion is valued equally, regardless of their position in the team.

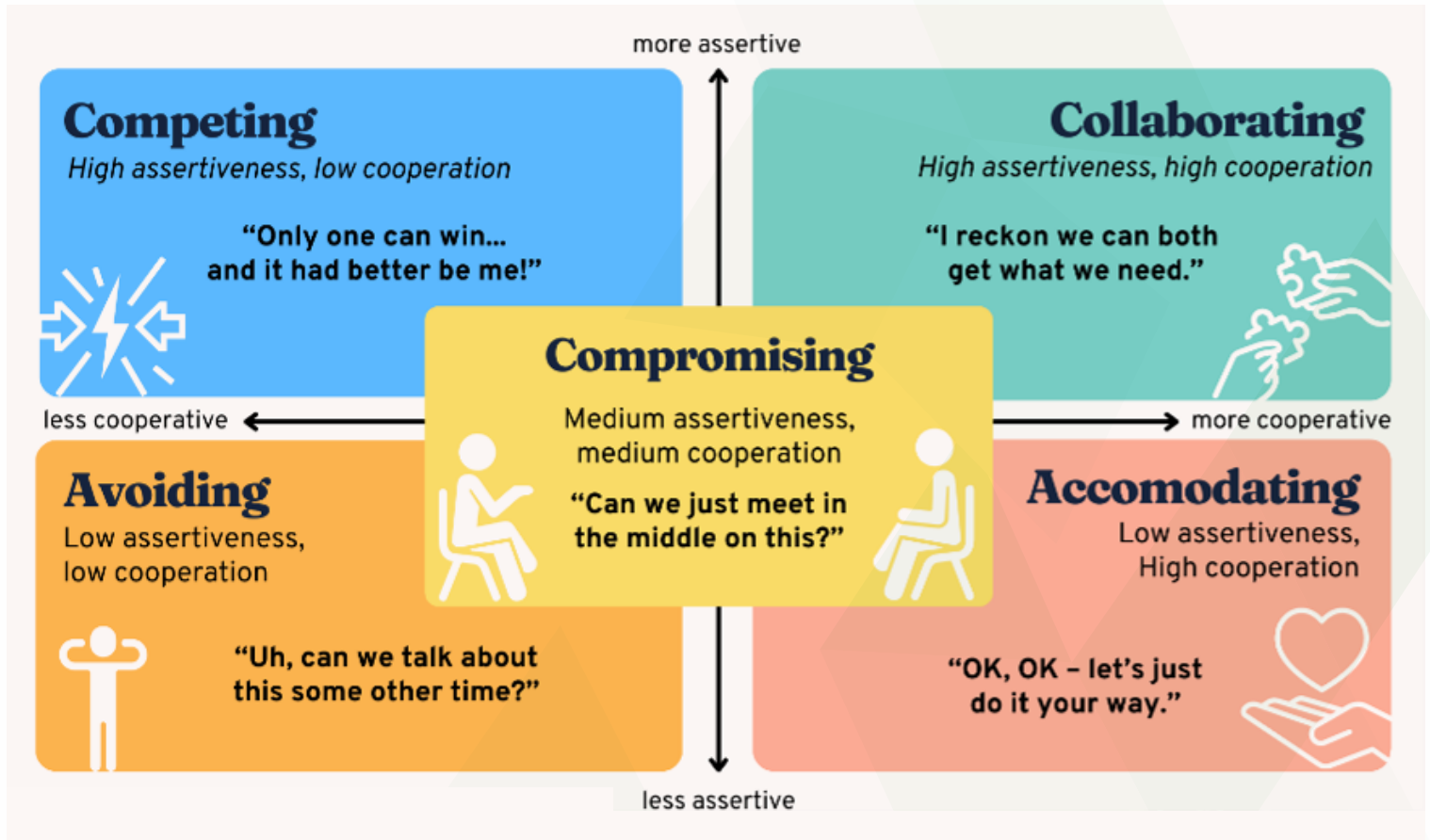
PROCESS CONFLICT

The final type of team conflict is process conflict. This conflict arises from disagreements about how tasks are delegated and the best process for achieving them. This type of conflict can be resolved by getting to know team members' strengths and weaknesses and explaining decisions that may go against their preferences. Process conflict can occur when there are differing opinions on who should do a task or when someone tries to avoid responsibility. By understanding team members' strengths and weaknesses, leaders can delegate tasks more effectively and prevent process conflicts. It's also important to explain decisions that may go against team members' preferences to prevent process conflict from turning into status conflict.

TAKEAWAY

As a leader, understanding the different types of team conflict is crucial for effective conflict management. By responding to each type of conflict in the moment and setting the team up to harness the benefits of conflict, leaders can foster a positive and productive work environment. Remember, conflict isn't necessarily a bad thing. When managed properly, it can lead to team's having their best ideas and individuals doing their best work ever.

THOMAS-KILMANN CONFLICT MODEL



The Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Instrument (TKI) is a model that categorizes different approaches to handling conflict based on two dimensions: assertiveness (how much you try to satisfy your own concerns) and cooperativeness (how much you try to satisfy the concerns of others). The TKI identifies five conflict-handling modes: Competing, Collaborating, Compromising, Avoiding, and Accommodating.

Here's a breakdown of each mode:

Competing: High assertiveness, low cooperativeness. This mode involves pursuing your own concerns at the expense of others.

Collaborating: High assertiveness, high cooperativeness. This mode involves working with others to find a solution that satisfies both your concerns and theirs.

Compromising: Moderate assertiveness, moderate cooperativeness. This mode involves finding a mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties.

Avoiding: Low assertiveness, low cooperativeness. This mode involves withdrawing from or ignoring the conflict.

Accommodating: Low assertiveness, high cooperativeness. This mode involves satisfying the concerns of others at the expense of your own concerns.

The TKI helps individuals and teams understand their preferred conflict-handling styles and how to choose the most appropriate style for a given situation. By understanding these different modes, individuals can improve their conflict resolution skills and foster more positive relationships in both personal and professional settings.

KEY ASPECTS OF CONFLICT RESOLUTION:

1. Understanding the Conflict:

Identifying the root cause of the disagreement and the needs and perspectives of all parties involved is essential.

2. Communication:

Effective communication, including active listening and assertive expression, is vital for understanding each other's viewpoints and finding common ground.

4. Collaboration:

Working together to find solutions that address the needs of all parties involved is often the most effective approach.

5. Compromise:

Sometimes, finding a solution that fully satisfies everyone is not possible, and a compromise may be necessary.

6. Mediation:

In some cases, a neutral third party can help facilitate the resolution process by guiding communication and negotiation.

7. Emotional Intelligence:

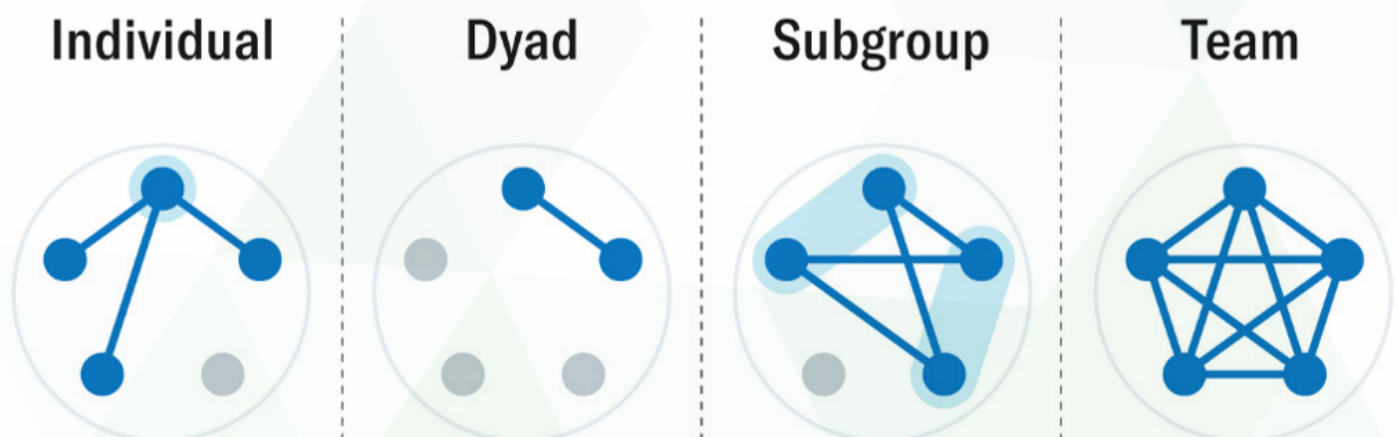
Recognizing and managing emotions, both one's own and others', is crucial for navigating conflict constructively.

NAVIGATING TEAM CONFLICTS

PATTERNS IN TEAM CONFLICT

In team dynamics, some level of conflict is inevitable—even healthy. However, understanding the nature of the conflict can help leaders manage and resolve it more effectively. Here are four common conflict patterns and strategies for handling them:

- 1. The Solo Dissenter :** This conflict arises when one individual disagrees with the rest of the team. Whether due to personal differences or a challenge to the status quo, isolating or scapegoating this person is counterproductive. Instead, leaders should engage in one-on-one conversations to better understand their perspective and address any underlying concerns. Open communication can transform a dissenter into a valuable source of alternative viewpoints and broader system awareness.
- 2. The Boxing Match :** This frequent form of conflict involves a disagreement between two team members. If the issue stems from a personal relationship, external coaching may be helpful. However, if it's task-related, the disagreement may benefit the team by introducing diverse ideas—provided the discussion remains civil. Leaders should avoid intervening prematurely, as genuine task-based disagreements often lead to more innovative solutions.



- 3. Warring Factions :** When two subgroups within the team oppose each other, an "us versus them" mentality can develop. This type of conflict is more complex, and solutions like voting or majority rule rarely resolve the issue. Leaders should introduce new options or third-way alternatives, encouraging both sides to broaden their thinking and find a compromise that addresses the core needs of both groups.

4. The Blame Game : This challenging conflict involves the entire team, often triggered by poor performance. Assigning blame worsens the situation and creates more division. A more effective approach is to refocus the team on collective goals and explore strategies for improvement. Shifting the conversation from blame to team purpose and collective problem-solving can unite the group around a shared vision.

By recognizing these conflict patterns and applying the right strategies, leaders can guide their teams through disagreements, fostering a more cohesive and productive environment.

LET'S RECAP

What do you recall from this session? Note your points in any or all of following categories:

1. **START** - What would you like to start afresh post this session? (any new habit, technique, awareness, etc.)
2. **STOP** - What would you like to stop as a mal-practice as a result of their new awareness?
3. **CONTINUE** - What would you like to keep doing as a good habit?

FOLLOW US

