Objectives

✓ Examine the nature of conflict, including common sources and types of conflict

✓ Examine personal conflict styles and reactions

✓ Review key conflict resolution strategies
Outcomes

✓ Increased understanding of what constitutes and causes conflict
✓ Increased self-awareness of preferred style for dealing with conflict
✓ Improved skills for steering personal and community conflict in a constructive direction
Definition of Conflict

A disagreement through which the parties involved perceive a threat to their needs, interests or concerns.
Causes of Data Conflicts

- Misinformation or lack of information
- Different interpretation of data
- Differing views on what’s relevant

Examples: ??
Causes of Relationship Conflicts

- Strong emotions
- Poor or miscommunication
- Misperceptions or stereotypes
- Past history

Examples: ??
Causes of Structural Conflicts

- Destructive patterns of interaction behavior
- Unequal control, access, or distribution of resources and information
- Unequal power and authority
- Environmental factors that hinder cooperation
- Time constraints

Examples: ??
Causes of Value Conflicts

- Different criteria for evaluating ideas or behavior
- Different ways of life, ideology, and religion

Examples: ??
Causes of Interest-Based Conflicts

✓ Perceived or actual competition
✓ Substantive, procedural, or psychological interests

Examples: ??
Conflict Cycle

- Tension/Threats Development
- Role Dilemma
- Injustice Collecting
- Confrontation
- Behavioral Adjustments
- Round 2
- OR
- Resolution
“Conflict is a predictable social phenomenon and should be channeled to useful purposes. The goal of organizational leadership is not to eliminate conflict, but to use it.”

Gordon Lippitt, et.al.
Style Matters

The Kraybill Conflict Style Inventory
Two factors strongly shape our choice of conflict style:

1. How hard do we push for the things we want, our agenda?

   and...
How much attention do we give to the relationship?
When we put the two factors together, we get five different styles of responding to conflict. Each has:
- a special **focus**
- a unique set of strengths and weaknesses.
DIRECTING
Focus on own agenda: **High**
Focus on relationship: **Low**
I win/you lose.
How? Assert, control, compete.
Insist, demand, defeat.

We’re doing it my way...
Let’s just get the job done. (We’ll worry about the relationship later...)
HARMONIZING

Focus on own agenda: Low
Focus on relationship: High
I lose/you win.
How? Agree, go along, give in, affirm.

Sure, I’m flexible. Whatever you’re happy with is fine with me....
Let me out of here...!
I don’t want to talk about it...
Conflict? What conflict?

Avoiding

Focus on own agenda: Low
Focus on relationship: Low
I lose/you lose.
How? Withdraw, remain silent, walk away, postpone discussion, delay responding.

Low focus on own agenda

Low focus on relationship
High focus on own agenda

Let’s talk this through...
My preference is.....
And I want to hear and understand yours.....

COOPERATING

Focus on own agenda: High
Focus on relationship: High
I win/you win.

How? Dialogue. Agree to talk things through. Assert self and support the other.

High focus on relationship
If we each back off and accept half of what we want, we can get an agreement and move on...

COMPROMISING
Focus on own agenda: Medium
Focus on relationship: Medium
We both win some/We both lose some.

How? Bargain, strike a deal, find a little something for everyone.
“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 particular situations all of us face. We handle conflict better when we are skilled in using all five styles.

Then we can choose the response most likely to bring a good outcome.

Expand your ability to use all five styles skillfully by learning the strengths and weaknesses of each style. Experiment with greater use of styles you use least.

www.ConflictStyleMatters.com
Positions are:

- Something one has decided as a way to settle a conflict or a difference
- A pre-determined solution
Interests are:

- The needs, beliefs, and values underlying positions
- Why something is important to you
Examples of positions:

We **must** build a new publicly funded recreation center!

We **oppose** building a new publicly funded recreation center!
The problem with positions:

- Predetermined way to solve problem
- Don’t understand real interest of parties in dispute
- Limits creative options
Examples of interests:

• Elimination of childhood obesity
• After school opportunities for youth
• Fiscal responsibility
• Private enterprise
**Why focus on interests:**

- Gets to the heart of the issue
- Moves people beyond polarized positions
- Sets the stage for mutual understanding
- Leads to group cooperation
- Sets the stage for issue re-framing
- Sets the stage for generating creative options
Examples of interests:

• Elimination of childhood obesity

• After school opportunities for youth

• Fiscal responsibility

• Private enterprise
There is more under the iceberg.....
Reframing:

- Moves from taking positions to identifying interests
- Moves from debate to discussion
- Involves finding a common definition of the issue that is acceptable to all parties
- Uses open-ended rather than close-ended questions
Reframing Example

Closed-ended:

**Should we** use the budget surplus to hire additional law enforcement, **or** should we invest that money into developing the downtown business district?
Reframing Example

Should we use the budget surplus to hire additional law enforcement, or should we invest that money into developing the downtown business district?

Becomes open-ended:
How can we use the budget surplus to increase public safety while investing in the development of the downtown business district?
Reframing Example

Our county should increase property taxes to raise additional revenue

Becomes open-ended:

??