

# Understanding Conflict

## Understanding Conflict – Study Notes

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### 1. What Is Conflict?

| Aspect            | Description                                                                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Definition</b> | A clash of interests, values, goals, or perceptions between two or more parties.  |
| <b>Scope</b>      | Can occur at personal, group, organizational, community, or international levels. |
| <b>Nature</b>     | Both a <b>process</b> (the interaction) and an <b>outcome</b> (the disagreement). |

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### 2. Types of Conflict

| Category             | Sub?type                | Key Characteristics                                                                       |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Intrapersonal</b> | • Cognitive dissonance  | Conflict within a single person (e.g., values vs. actions).                               |
|                      | • Role conflict         |                                                                                           |
|                      | • Relationship conflict |                                                                                           |
| <b>Interpersonal</b> | • Task conflict         | Between two individuals; can be emotional (relationship) or content?focused (task).       |
|                      | • Subgroup conflict     |                                                                                           |
| <b>Intragroup</b>    | • Leadership conflict   | Within a team or department; often about resources or decision?making.                    |
|                      | • Interdepartmental     |                                                                                           |
| <b>Intergroup</b>    | • Inter?organizational  | Between distinct groups; may involve competition for goals, status, or resources.         |
|                      | • Inter?cultural        |                                                                                           |
| <b>International</b> | • Diplomatic            | Between nations or supranational entities; can range from negotiations to armed conflict. |
|                      | • Military              |                                                                                           |
|                      | • Economic              |                                                                                           |

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### 3. Sources (Causes) of Conflict

| Source                      | Examples                                                |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Goal Incompatibility</b> | Different sales targets, conflicting project deadlines. |

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| Source                   | Examples                                                    |
|--------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| Resource Scarcity        | Limited budget, equipment, or personnel.                    |
| Role Ambiguity / Overlap | Unclear responsibilities, duplicated tasks.                 |
| Values & Beliefs         | Ethical standards, cultural norms, religious convictions.   |
| Communication Breakdowns | Misinterpretations, lack of feedback, information overload. |
| Personality Clashes      | Divergent work styles, competing egos.                      |
| Power & Status Issues    | Struggles for authority, perceived unfairness.              |

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## 4. Conflict?Management Strategies

| Strategy                        | When to Use                                                                  | Typical Outcomes                                           |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------|
| Avoidance                       | Low?stakes issues, when more information is needed.                          | Conflict may fizzle out or resurface later.                |
| Accommodation                   | Preserve relationships, when the issue is more important to the other party. | Short?term harmony; possible resentment if overused.       |
| Competition (Power?based)       | Urgent decisions, safety concerns, or when a clear right exists.             | Quick resolution; may damage relationships.                |
| Compromise                      | Time?pressed situations, when both sides have equal power.                   | Mutual concessions; “win?some?lose?some.”                  |
| Collaboration (Problem?solving) | Complex, high?impact issues; long?term relationships matter.                 | Integrated solutions; higher satisfaction for all parties. |

*Tip:* Effective managers often start with **collaboration** for substantive issues and shift to other styles as context changes.

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## 5. The Conflict Process Model (Four?Stage Cycle)

1. **Latent Conflict** – Underlying incompatibilities exist (e.g., resource shortage).
2. **Triggering Event** – A specific incident brings the tension to the surface (e.g., missed deadline).
3. **Escalation** – Parties interpret, react, and communicate; emotions may rise.
4. **Resolution/Outcome** – Conflict is managed (resolved, transformed, or continues).

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*Intervention points:* Early detection (stage?