

# Conflict Management & Mediation Skills

Dr. Tim Paquette

Northern Illinois University

Counseling and Consultation Services

# To Understand Conflict, We Need to Understand Our Values

- What are values? How do you define your values?
- Where do our values come from?
- How do our values influence our interactions with others and our reactions?
  - Values exercise & discussion
- How might our values lead to conflict?

# The Impact of Cultural Values

- How does growing up in Mindanao and the Philippines impact how you think about conflict with other people?
- What messages have you received about how to approach conflict situations with others?
- What are the expectations about how you're supposed to act when you're having conflict with peers? With people who are older than you? With family?

# Conflict

- What words do you think of when you hear the word conflict?
  - Conflict can be negative & POSITIVE
  - Conflict presents challenges & OPPORTUNITIES
- Is conflict *inevitable* and *unavoidable*?
- Conflict occurs when two or more people disagree and need to express/discuss their *behaviors, thoughts, feelings, and values.*

# Understanding Your Conflict Style

- How do you react in a conflict situation with someone else?
- How have others responded to you during a conflict?
- Understanding your conflict style and the style of others can help with the conflict management process

## Understanding Your Conflict Style (continued)

- More Direct (assertive) or Indirect (avoidant)?
- More of a Talker or Listener?
- More focused on accomplishing Goals (solution-focused) or maintaining Relationships (connection-focused)?
- More focused on Accommodating (adapting to others) or Collaborating (finding a compromise)?
- More Rigid or Flexible?
- Your conflict style can change depending on the conflict and the situation. On a spectrum & not one or the other.



# Conflict Style & Conflict Management

- Your conflict management style and the style of others provide various **strengths** when trying to reach a solution
- Understanding your conflict style and the style of others can help you **facilitate** the conflict management process in your role as student leaders

# Conflict Management

- *Is* focused on a positive and productive solution for all involved
- *Is* about healthy, assertive, and open communication
- *Is not* aggressive confrontation, yelling, or intimidation
- *Is not* about trying to “win” an argument or debate



# Steps of Successful Conflict Management

1) ***DO NOT*** attempt to resolve a conflict when you are experiencing “in the moment” emotional reactions

- Wait until you can approach the situation more calmly

2) Include all persons involved in the conflict and make sure they are available

- Find times to talk that are best for all
- Don't expect others to stop what they're doing when you're ready to talk
- Allow enough time to thoroughly discuss the situation. If you need more time, schedule more time that works for everyone

3) Come to agreement about the source of the conflict

- Be specific and don't make assumptions that someone else “knows what you're talking about”



# Steps of Conflict Management (continued)

4) Provide chances for each person to express her or his point of view

- Take turns sharing perceptions and feelings
- Listen! Don't interrupt and let them talk until finished
- This is not about proving your point, it's about facilitating communication to understand the reasons for the conflict

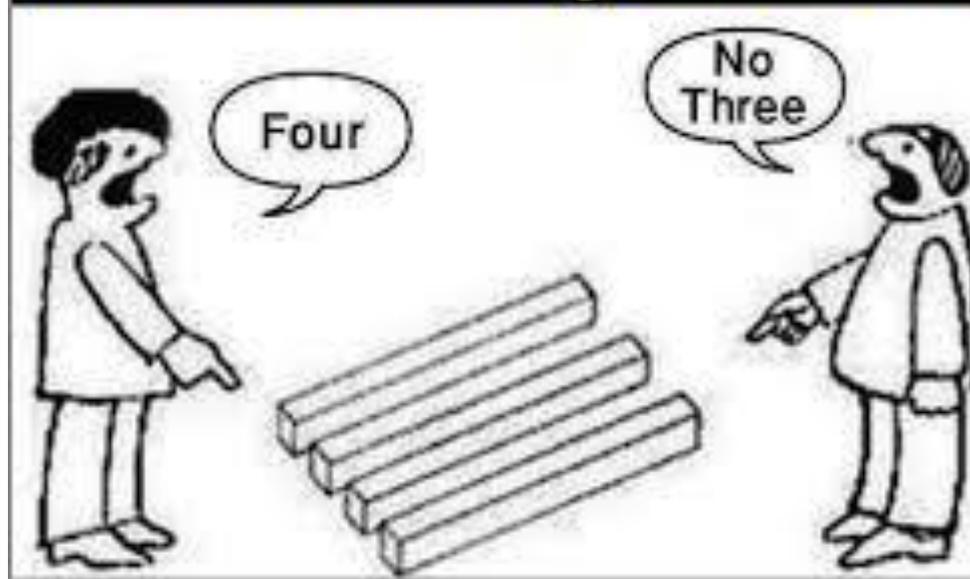
5) Validate and try to understand the other person's position

- Try to understand others' point of view and communicate that understanding
- Be honest. If you don't understand what someone is saying, let them know this

6) Begin to identify changes or compromises that can be made

- Negotiate options and brainstorm different ways to address the conflict

## How our perceptions can lead to misunderstanding and conflict



# Steps of Conflict Management (continued)

7) Develop a plan that specifies responsibilities and expectations for each person

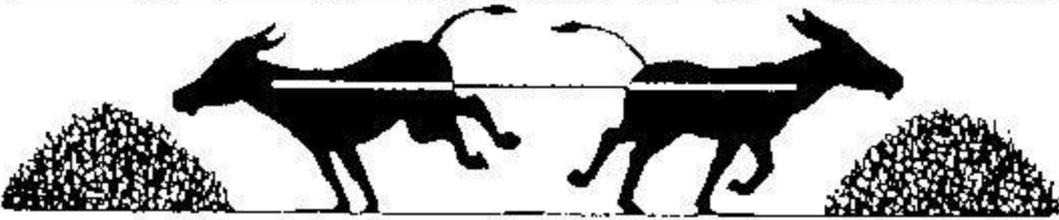
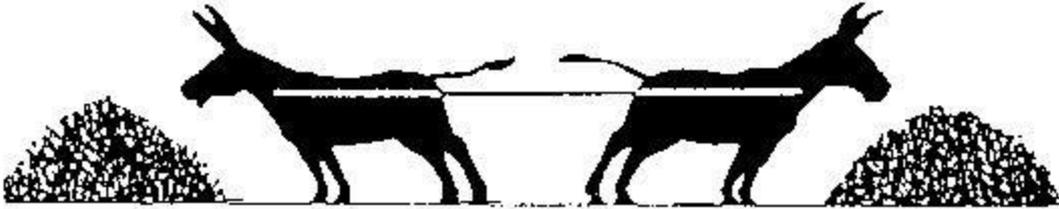
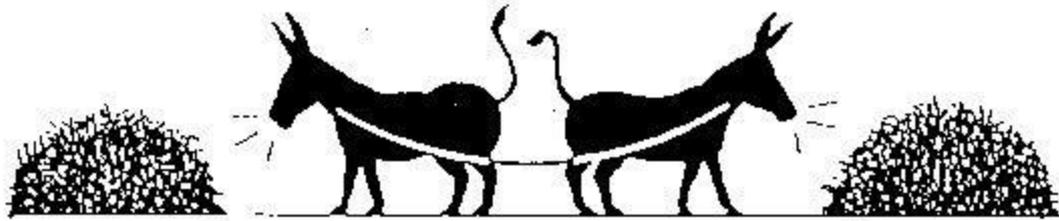
- Does everyone agree to these responsibilities and expectations?
- Is everyone satisfied with the details of the plan? If not, try again.

8) Make a commitment to make necessary changes

- Discuss what will be necessary from each person to follow through with the plan
- Identify potential challenges or difficulties that might happen, and what each person can do if these happen

9) Schedule a time to follow-up about the plan and if it is working

- If the conflict has continued or other issues have come up, try the process again and focus on what needs to be different for the conflict to be addressed



# Using Conflict Management in Your Lives

- Examples of conflict from your own lives or in your leadership roles?
  - In your relationships with others? At school? In your community?
- How could you use the steps of conflict management to address problems?

# Mediation for Student Leaders



- The example of Katarungang Pambarangay in the Philippines
- Use of peer mediations skills as a student leader

# Understanding the Mediation Process

- Mediation is the intervention of a *trained neutral third party* to facilitate a solution to a conflict
- Mediation helps the involved parties understand and explore their concerns and perspectives
- Mediation can provide more than one way to resolve conflict, and when done successfully, an outcome that maximizes the interests of both parties

# A Mediator Must Be

- A good listener
- A good communicator
- An advocate for both of the involved parties, not for one party more than another
- Able to summarize other people's opinions and feelings without letting their own opinions and feelings negatively impact the process
- Able to utilize reasoning and negotiating skills in order to provide solutions to resolve conflicts

# Questions to Ask Before Attempting Mediation

- Are the individuals involved in the conflict unable to find an independent solution?
- Are the individuals willing to utilize a neutral third party to facilitate the resolution process?
- Do the individuals recognize that the mediator is not responsible for the success or failure of the mediation process?
- Are individuals aware that the mediator is not being involved to “take sides” or be convinced about who is “right”?
- **NOTE:** You must complete training to be a peer mediator (but you can see how the steps for mediation can be helpful in your roles as student leaders)

# Practicing Conflict Management & Communication Skills

- What is the PRIMARY reason for the conflict in Mindanao?
- What is the MOST SIGNIFICANT barrier that stands in the way of peace?
- What is the MOST IMPORTANT thing that has to happen to end the conflict?

Your reactions,  
thoughts,  
& questions?

**Thank You  
&  
Best Wishes!**



**Good Luck !**