

Improving Workplace Communication

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UNIVERSITY SYSTEM OF GEORGIA

Objectives

- Learn how to communicate in collegial and civil ways at work
- Learn ways that conflict can be resolved
- Identify high vs. low EQ (emotional intelligence) behaviors in ourselves and others
- Understand the importance of self awareness in good communication

What are collegial and civil workplace communications?

They are interactions and exchanges, orally or in writing, that promote a common meaning, purpose or objective.

They are mutually respectful, courteous, cooperative, uncompetitive and generally polite in their tone.

The lack of respectful and civil communication can result in conflict.

Conflict

- Can be the result of poor communication
- Can be the cause of poor communication
- Occurs because people are different



People are Different

- Seeing, perceiving, and understanding the same information or situation
- Needs and desires
- Personalities (“difficult people”)
- Ideas and attitudes
- Preferences and approaches
- Responses to stress, pressure or deadlines



Conflict usually happens because each party usually . . .

- Is invested in their side of the discussion.
- Tends to defend their position.
- Is not taking time to understand the other person or point.

I'd agree with
you but then
we'd both be
wrong.... © TSPHLS
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Conflict

Conflict is

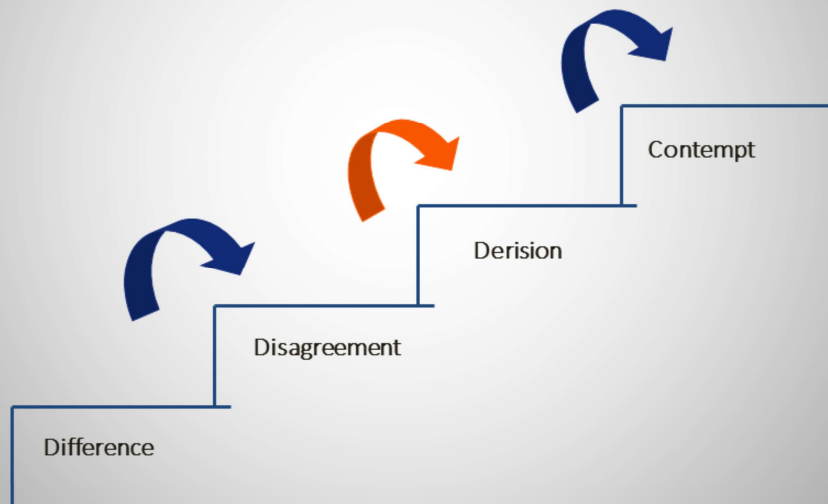
- Normal
- Natural
- Healthy when managed well

“Managed” Conflict is

- Anticipated
- Planned for
- Addressed directly and assertively

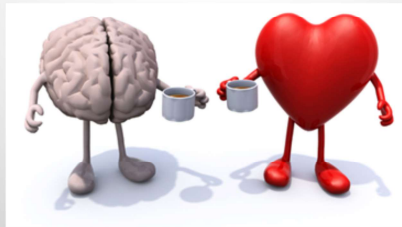


Stages of Conflict



Are you Emotionally Intelligent?

Respectful communications
require a high level of
emotional intelligence (EQ).



Goleman's 5 Domains of EQ

- Knowing your emotions.
- Managing your own emotions.
- Motivating yourself.
- Recognizing and understanding other people's emotions.
- Managing relationships, i.e. managing the emotions of others.

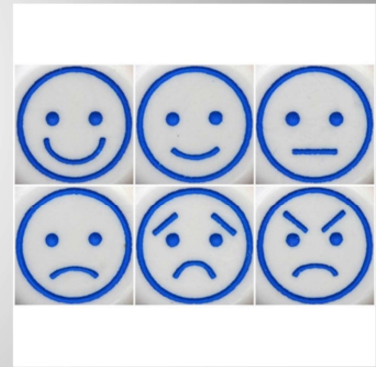
EQ

High EQ –

- Displays low insecurity and high openness
- Acts assertively

Low EQ –

- When emotionally triggered, thinking goes down
- Acts aggressively, passively, passive-aggressively



EQ

Low EQ

Scapegoating, blaming, bullying, gossip



High EQ

Self aware, inclusiveness, respectful, taking responsibility for actions



Being Collegial

- One cannot be collegial (other focused) if the brain is in a reactive, defensive mode (perceives a threat from others or the environment)
- To be collegial one must be able to control emotions that interfere with decision making or interpretation of the situation.



Steps Toward Collegial & Civil Communication

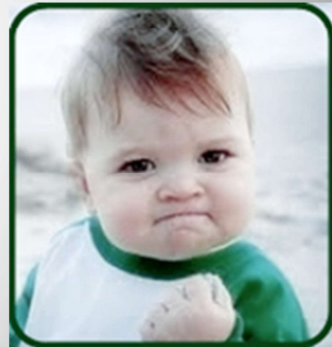
- Seek to understand the other party.
- Expect that you may not be understood.
- Know early warning signs that your emotional brain has been activated (e.g., clenched teeth, feeling flushed, anger).

Steps Toward Collegial & Civil Communication

- Observe your process (are you raising your voice, being sarcastic, bossy, arrogant, talking too much . . .?)
- Watch the other's reaction to you as a way toward self-awareness.
- Take a break and regroup.
- Re-engage when you are not triggered.
- Seek help when needed.

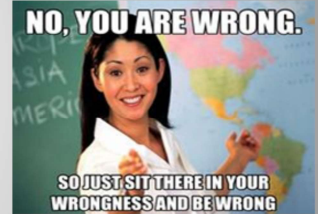
Difficult Personality Types

- The know-it-all expert
- The bully
- The procrastinator
- The chronic complainer or “whiner”



The Know-it-All Expert

- Be sure of your facts when dealing with this personality.
- Avoid confrontation over facts.
- Gently steer the conversation where you want it to go.
- Ask lots of questions to benefit from their expertise and win them over.
- Listen. You may actually learn something.



The Bully

- Maintain eye contact
- Allow the bully to “run down”
- Be professional
- Ask questions such as “What can I do to help?”
- Use phrases like “I feel” or “I believe”
- Stand up for yourself, but don’t fight back
- Relax

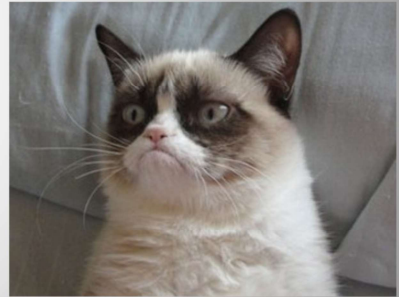


The Procrastinator

- Communicate regularly about what needs to be done.
- Provide positive feedback on any progress – minimizing self-criticism on the part of the procrastinator.
- Determine the real reason for the delay.
- Ask them for help in resolving issues with any delays. Push them to develop deadlines for themselves and to report progress as it occurs.

The Complainer/Whiner

- Don't let the complainer get you down.
- Ask questions such as "What is it you want?"
- Avoid suggesting solutions.
- Neither agree or disagree.
- Use effective listening skills.



WIIFT?

What is in it for them?

- What do they get out of this?
- Why are they here?
- How will doing what you want help them?

The answer is the key to motivation.



Summary

- Civil and collegial communication is mutually respectful, courteous, cooperative, uncompetitive and generally polite in tone.
- Communication is key for avoiding and managing conflicts in the workplace.
- Those with high emotional intelligence are assertive, open, inclusive, respectful, self aware and take responsibility for their actions.
- By understanding common difficult personality types, we can chose the best techniques to improve communication.

How to Contact EAP



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