

## Conflict Management in Systems of Care: A Fruitful Research Agenda?

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## Why Do We Care?

Because... “Successful system builders integrate conflict resolution, mediation, and team building mechanisms into the process, recognizing that these are approaches and skills essential to developing and sustaining systems of care.”

Pires, S. (2002) Building Systems of Care: A Primer

## Examples from the Field?

- \*Where have you experienced the most conflict in Systems of Care?
- \*In what ways has unresolved conflict derailed System of Care efforts?

## Our Cultural Experience of Conflict

“Hey Buck, what’s a feud?”

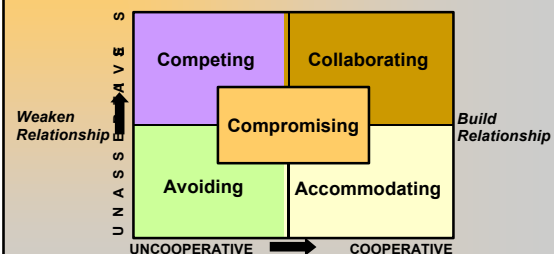


T I V E

## Interpersonal Conflict Styles

- \*Fighting fair
- \*Split the difference; give a little, get a little
- \*Find a win-win solution; look for a third option
- \*The golden rule; look out for the other guy’s interests
- \*Don’t go looking for trouble; good fences make good neighbors

## 5 Common Responses to Conflict



Adapted from Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument by Kenneth W. Thomas & Ralph H. Kilman, Xicom, Incorporated, 1974.

### *Trauma: An Inevitable Consequence of Conflict*

- \* Judith Herman's model: victim, perpetrator and bystander – applies to organizations, systems, cultures
- \* Re-enactment, retraumatization
- \* History MUST be acknowledged
- \* Need for forgiveness, reconciliation, healing

### *Conflict Management Approaches at the System Level*

- \* Structured Dialogue
- \* Partnering
- \* Mediation

### *Structured Dialogue: Making Implicit Conflicts Explicit*

- \* Use when: parties don't recognize conflict, disagree about the issues, or don't believe resolution is possible
- \* Developing trust more important than finding solution
- \* Ex: Recovery dialogues between mental health consumers and psychiatrists

### *Introduction to Partnering*

- \* **Partnering** philosophies and interventions are a form of alternative dispute resolution that are often used with organizations and agencies to identify and address underlying sources of conflict *before* conflicts emerge.
- \* **Partnering** constitutes a mutual commitment by all parties as to how they will interact during the course of a contract, project, or working relationship, with the primary objectives of facilitating improved performance through enhanced communications, effective conflict management, and avoidance of unnecessary disputes.

### *Introduction to Partnering*

- \* **Partnering** often requires an attitudinal shift whereby all parties look beyond the strict boundaries of a given contract or agreement to develop cooperative working agreements that facilitate the achievement of common goals and objectives.
- \* Moving beyond long-standing adversarial relationships or new conflicts born of ambiguity and complexity of roles requires more than the advocacy of a new philosophy .
- \* **Partnering** requires adherence to a well-defined process in order to achieve substantial benefit.

### *Where is Conflict Most Likely to Arise in Systems of Care?*

- \* Communication
- \* Values & Principles
- \* Sharing leadership, resources & responsibilities
- \* Expectations & Outcome

### *Conflict Diagnostic Categories in Alternative Dispute Resolution*

- \*Data/Information
- \*Relationship/communication
- \*Values
- \*Structural/Resource
- \*Procedural

### *What Does the Literature Say About Conflict in Systems of Care?*

- \*Not much...

### *Research Questions*

- \* Does embedded interagency conflict hinder the successful development and/or sustainability of systems of care?
- \* Does the proper use of extant conflict management methodologies improve the effectiveness of systems of care in identifying and working through embedded systemic conflict?

### *Group Discussion of Unasked, Unanswered Research Questions*