



## S-420 Unit 7: Conflict Management

### Summary:

Effectively dealing with conflict is a vital skill for effective management of an incident. In this unit, the student will become familiar with different ways of dealing with conflict and identify methods for conflict resolution.

### Objectives:

Students will be able to:

- Identify elements of an environment which promote conflict resolution, not conflict avoidance.
- Recognize patterns and tendencies of one's own management style and behavioral responses to conflict.

### Instructor Note:

Before teaching this unit, instructors are encouraged to read about conflict management so they are more familiar with the concept. Suggested books are below.

- *Becoming a Conflict Competent Leader: How You and Your Organization Can Manage Conflict Effectively*, by Craig E. Runde and Tim A. Flanagan.
- *Resolving Conflict at Work: Ten Strategies for Everyone on the Job*, by Kenneth Cloke and Joan Goldsmith.

### Unit at a Glance:

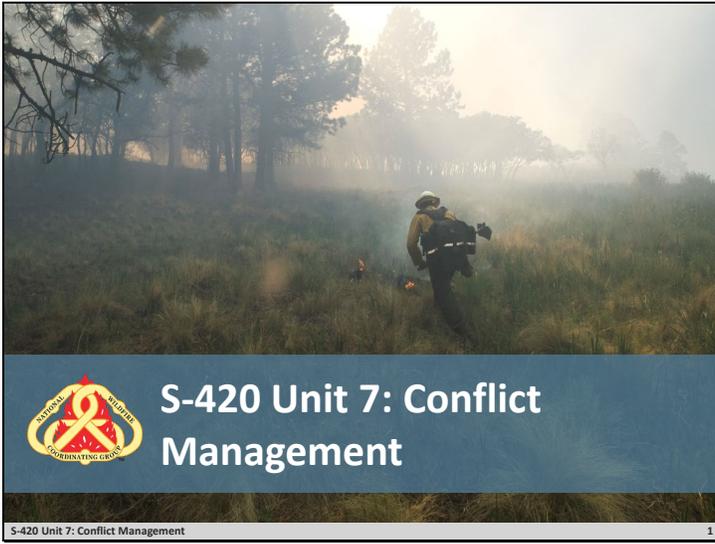
Topics	Method	Duration
Understanding Conflict	Presentation	10 Minutes
Impacts of Unresolved Conflict	Exercise	10 Minutes
Different Styles of Conflict Management	Presentation	15 Minutes
What is Your Conflict Style?	Exercise	10 Minutes
Conflict Competency	Presentation	15 Minutes
<b>Total Unit Duration</b>		<b>1 Hour</b>

### Materials:

- Ability to display images and video on large screen.
- White board or easel access for group breakout.
- Flip chart, paper and markers (1 per small group).

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 1



# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 2

### Objectives

Students will be able to:

- Identify elements of an environment which promotes conflict resolution, not conflict avoidance.
- Recognize patterns and tendencies of one's own management style and behavioral responses to conflict.

S-420 Unit 7: Conflict Management 2

- Review unit objectives.

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 3

### Understanding Conflict

- What is conflict?
  - Conflict is a state of opposition between ideas, opinions, and interests. Conflict is the action of incompatibility, an antagonistic state, or an active disagreement. Conflict is typically a difference of some sort.
- What causes conflict?

*“Conflict is inevitable, but combat is optional.”*  
– Max Lucado

*“The most important single ingredient in the formula of success  
Is knowing how to get along with people.”*  
– Theodore Roosevelt

S-420 Unit 7: Conflict Management

3

### Question: What Causes Conflict?

*Answers:*

- Conflict on teams is a natural occurrence.
- Not all conflict is negative.
- What causes conflict on a team?
  - Personal clashes.
  - Poor communication.
  - Power struggles.
  - Differing values and beliefs (for example, cultural, and geographical differences).
  - Role confusion.
  - Different expectations.
  - Individual versus team goals.
  - Performance issues.
  - Intra-team alliances.
  - Perceived disparity in reward or recognition.
  - Conflicting priorities.

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 4

### Types of Conflict

- Intrapersonal - Within a person
- Interpersonal - Between two people
- Intragroup - Within a given group/team
- Intergroup - Between different groups/teams

S-420 Unit 7: Conflict Management

4

- There are different types of conflict, such as:
  - *Intrapersonal conflict* is conflict within a person. Every person has intrapersonal conflict and this will affect relationships. Know your own hot buttons.
  - *Intragroup conflict* is within a given group/team. In team settings the successful performance of one team member is tied to the performance of another team member (it is an interdependent relationship) – this increases the potential for conflict. For example, golf is an individual sport and the performance of one individual does not affect the performance of anyone else – low conflict. Compared to a football team, a team sport, where the performance of players are interdependent – higher conflict.
  - *Intergroup conflict* is between different groups/teams. What other groups or teams does a Type 2 IMT work with? What type of conflict may occur when working with these groups?

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 5

### Unresolved Conflict Team Activity

- How does unresolved conflict affect a team?
  - Unresolved conflict threatens productivity of the team and affects the health of the team.

S-420 Unit 7: Conflict Management

5

### Exercise: Impacts of Unresolved Conflict (10 minutes)

*Purpose: To stress the importance that the team needs to resolve (not ignore) conflict.*

*Have each team list the answers to these questions on a flip chart:*

#### Question: What happens to a team when there is unresolved conflict?

*Possible answers: Stop communicating, get angry, and so on.*

#### Question: What might team members feel when there is conflict?

*Possible answers: Losing control, losing self-esteem, mistreated, and not valued.*

#### Question: Has your team experienced conflict during this course? If so, discuss what happened.

#### Discussion

- Ask teams what they listed. Tie their answers to previously discussed topics, such as communication. Mention that once people start feeling disdain, it is much more difficult to work through the conflict to some resolution.

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

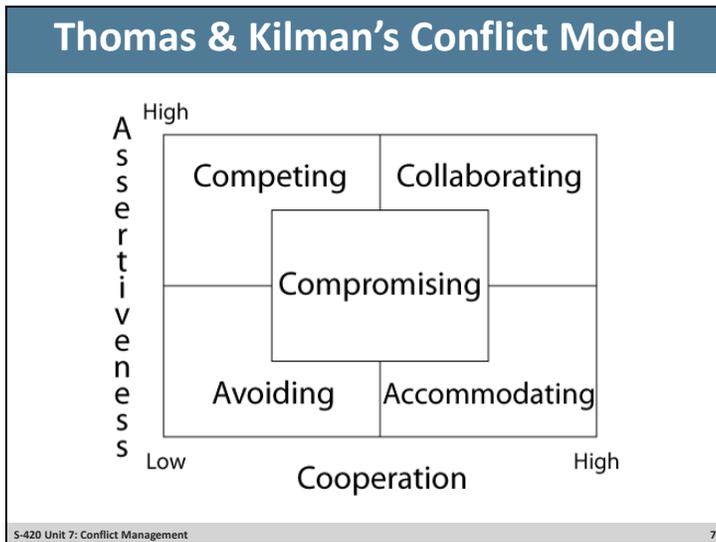
## Slide 6

### Styles of Conflict Management

- To manage conflict it is critical to recognize one's own patterns and tendencies related to conflict.

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 7



- The Thomas and Kilman's model of Conflict Management Styles provides valuable insights to the various styles a person may use to manage conflict. Although the Thomas and Kilman's model has been around since 1974, it can still help people see their own habits related to conflict. This model has five conflict styles:
  - Competing – Win/Lose (very assertive; does not care about what happens to the other person).
  - Collaborating – Win/Win (probably best method if you can get to it; but it is hard to get to; both walk away with something).
  - Avoiding – Lose/Lose (this was discussed earlier – isolation; sticking your head in the sand).
  - Accommodating – Lose/Win (put the other person's needs ahead of your own).
  - Compromising – No Win/No Lose (have to trust that the other person will go a certain distance).
- Important points about the Thomas and Kilman's model include:
  - This model is based on level of cooperation and assertiveness.
  - Everyone has the ability to function in any of these areas.
  - People typically have their preferred styles that comes most naturally; default styles.
  - People do not operate in just one style; we have patterns of styles.

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 8

Dynamic Conflict Model		
	Constructive	Destructive
Active	Perspective Taking Creating Solutions Expressing Emotions Reaching Out	Winning at All Costs Displaying Anger Demeaning Others Retaliating
Passive	Reflective Thinking Delay Responding Adapting	Avoiding Yielding Hiding Emotions Self-Criticizing

S-420 Unit 7: Conflict Management 8

- The Dynamic Conflict Model, a newer model (2004), provides insights to the behaviors and actions that a person may use when they are engaged in conflict. This model creates four categories of conflict behaviors:
  - Active constructive (good perspective taking, create solutions, express emotions, reach out).
  - Passive constructive (very reflective; delay response; adapt, may go away, and come back).
  - Active destructive (winning at all costs; displays anger quickly; demeaning to others; retaliation).
  - Passive destructive (avoid conflict; yield to others; hide emotion; self-criticize).
- Important points about Dynamic Conflict Model include:
  - Differentiates between constructive and destructive behaviors.
  - Divides responses into active or passive responses.

## Unit 7: Conflict Management

### Slide 9

#### Group Activity-What is Your Conflict Style?

Each team member should identify their own conflict style(s) and share it with the team.

The team should then discuss how these different styles might affect the team's effectiveness.

S-420 Unit 7: Conflict Management

9

#### **Activity: What is Your Conflict Style? (10 minutes)**

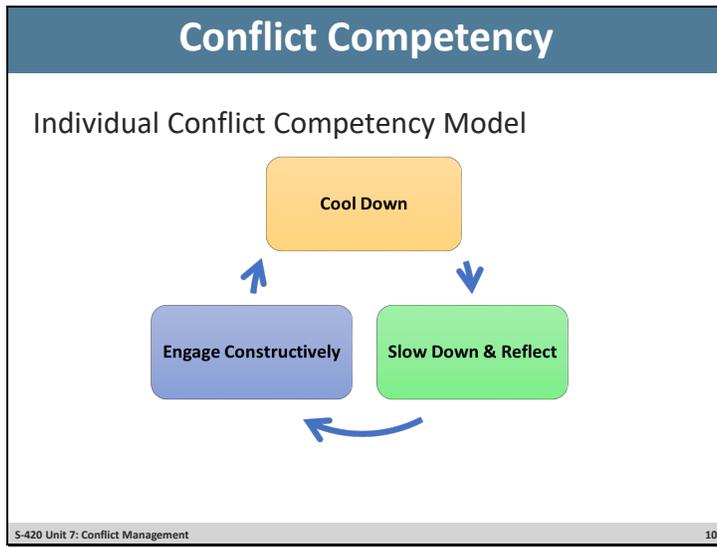
***Purpose:* To identify one's own conflict styles and to discuss how conflict styles affect the team's effectiveness.**

#### **☐ Facilitate a class discussion:**

- What did you learn about yourself? How many of you tend to be more “active” related to conflict? How many of you tend to be more “passive” related to conflict?
- What did you learn about each other that can help your team be more effective?
- Discuss how different conflict styles affect how the team members work together. Share a brief story to make it relevant to students.

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 10



- Conflict competency is the ability to develop and use cognitive, emotional, and behavioral skills that enhance productive outcomes of conflict (Runde & Flanagan, 2010).
- Conflict competency is the ability to be mindful of the ramifications of conflict and inappropriate emotions; and to use cognitive skills, emotional skills, and emotional intelligence to re-engage more constructively.
- The Individual Conflict Competency Model (Runde & Flanagan) provides insights on how to be more competent with managing conflict:
- Cool down.
  - Manage your emotions.
  - Know your hot buttons.
  - Think about what happens when you lose control.
  - Think about a different response.
- Slow down and reflect.
  - Take time to consider what is happening.
  - Acknowledge how we often move too quickly into conflict.
  - Stop the forward motion.
- Engage constructively.
- Use cognitive skills, emotional skills and emotional intelligence to re-engage more constructively.

### ❑ Discussion

*Lou Holtz's quote: "Life is 10% what happens to you and 90% how you react to it."*

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 11

### Use these Strategies to Resolve Conflict

- Know thyself
- Value people
- Truly listen
- Recognize multiple perspectives
- Differentiate facts from opinion
- Focus on behavior not the person
- Focus on the solution not conflict
- Step back

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 12

### Avoid these Strategies

- Retaliation
- Domination
- Isolation
- Triangulation

S-420 Unit 7: Conflict Management 12

- Avoid using these strategies when in a conflict:
  - Retaliation (payback, may feel good in the moment).
  - Domination (aggressive behavior, intimidation; opinionated).
  - Isolation (feel it is not worth confronting; sometimes the choice to withdraw, ignore, or accept the issue is the best response; if you cannot let it go – then this is the wrong response).
  - Triangulation (when two people in a conflict involve–enlist or recruit–a third person (or more); they share their negative emotions and possibly discuss sensitive issues; triangulation will destroy a team).

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 13

### Conflict Resolution

Create a team environment that promotes conflict resolution – not conflict avoidance.

“Conflict cannot survive without your participation.”  
Wayne Dyer

S-420 Unit 7: Conflict Management 13

- Promote conflict resolution on a team.
- Create team environment that promotes conflict resolution, not conflict avoidance.
- Conflict management and resolution is up to the individuals, leadership, and team structure – cooperation is the goal.
  - Individuals on the team have to be willing and prepared to change.
  - A team needs to decide how they are going to deal with conflict.
  - What is permitted vs. what is promoted. Behavior ignored is likely to continue.
  - Team chemistry will help motivate people to overcome conflict.
  - Team values play a role toward resolution.
  - Address conflict at the earliest stage when it is affecting the fewest people; catch conflict at its lowest level before it progresses.
- Tie this back to key points discussed in other units.
  - Unit 1–Team Development: Creating a positive team climate. (This is Team Identity not development)
  - Unit 4–Communication: Team climate is the foundation for effective communication.
- Team members often have different perspectives and skills related to confrontation. Confrontation is an attempt to develop a solution or seek a remedy. Confrontation is deliberate, intentional, and a systematic approach of resolution. Confrontation is to face something head on, directly, and purposefully.
- If a conflict escalates, a Human Resource Specialist on the team may need to facilitate a resolution.

# Unit 7: Conflict Management

## Slide 14

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S-420 Unit 7: Conflict Management

14

Review unit objectives.