World Health Organization

#Ready4Response

Tier 2: Ready4Response

Module 3: Response core skills

Working in a team: Managing conflict

Unit 3C

Photo: WHO / C. Cardenas

INTRODUCTION

It is essential that emergency responders are able to work as part of a team.

Understanding how conflict can arise in teams can help you reflect on how your behaviour might impact other team members and how you can avoid or manage conflict.

#Ready4Response

Hi – it's me, **Andrew**!

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this unit, you will be able to:

- define team conflict;
- describe the factors that can cause conflict in teams; and
- describe ways of managing conflict.

CONFLICT IN TEAMS

" is the degree to which members have real or perceived incompatible goals or interests. "
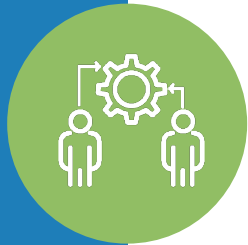
Knowing what might create conflict in the team can help you to judge your own behaviour as a proactive follower.

This helps you identify when to take initiative and discuss with the team, and when to follow to best achieve the team's aim.

There are 4 sources of conflict in teams:

Task conflict: about the ideas and goals of task work

Process conflict: about roles and how to fulfil them

Status conflict: about members' relative status and respect due

Relationship conflict: about interpersonal differences or incompatibilities.

TASK CONFLICTS can improve team performance as long as:

- the issue is of high importance to the team;

- conflicts don't become personal;

- they are conducted in an atmosphere of trust;

- they centre on more complex (rather than routine) problems; and

- you have time.

PROCESS CONFLICTS are more harmful and can last longer than other conflicts.

They are associated with people:

- being treated fairly;
- having access to resources; and
- having difficulty verbalising issues.

STATUS CONFLICTS are always linked to negative effects.

Status conflicts tend to occur when:

- people are motivated to obtain or protect positions of power;

- there are too many high-powered individuals in a team; and

- role and status are not clearly defined.

RELATIONSHIP CONFLICTS are caused by people's emotions.

They are very damaging and can be caused by:

- task conflicts that have become personal;
- the seniority of people in the team;
- the size of the team; and
- the diversity of the team.

Conflict can be avoided by:

- being a proactive team member and a proactive follower as needed;

- understanding what motivates and concerns you and your colleagues;

- being able to describe the potential impact of the environment (including stress) on your own behaviour; and

- recognizing, avoiding and managing conflict with colleagues.

REFLECTION

The following slides are a model* for how individuals deal with conflict.

*Thomas-Kilmann Instrument (TKI) Conflict Model
https://kilmanndiagnostics.com/overview-thomas-kilmann-conflict-mode-instrument-tki/

> **As you go through the slides, reflect on your own response to conflict:**
>
> - **Which approach do you adopt to deal with conflict?**
> - **What is good or bad about this approach?**
> - **What other approaches might you try?**

COMPETING

> is assertive and uncooperative – an individual pursues their own concerns at the other person's expense.
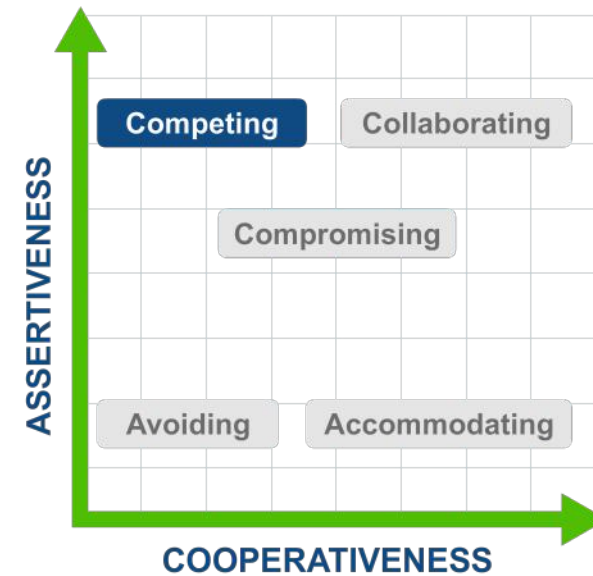
This is a power-oriented mode in which you use whatever power seems appropriate to win your own position – your ability to argue, your rank or economic sanctions.

Competing means "standing up for your rights," defending a position which you believe is correct or simply trying to win.

Graphic provided is an interpretation of TKI Conflict Model.

ACCOMMODATING

COOPERATIVENESS

> "is unassertive and cooperative – the complete opposite of competing."
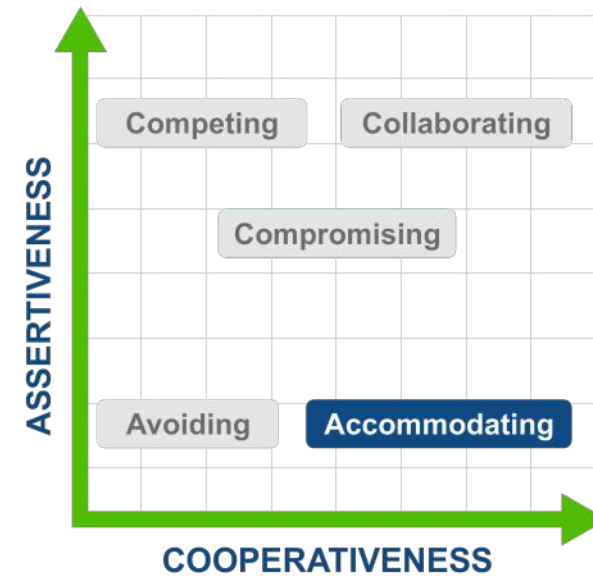
When accommodating, the individual neglects their own concerns to satisfy the concerns of the other person; there is an element of self-sacrifice in this mode.

Accommodating might take the form of selfless generosity or charity, obeying another person's order when you would prefer not to or yielding to another's point of view.

Graphic provided is an interpretation of TKI Conflict Model.

AVOIDING

> is unassertive and uncooperative – the person neither pursues their own concerns nor those of the other individual; thus they do not deal with the conflict.
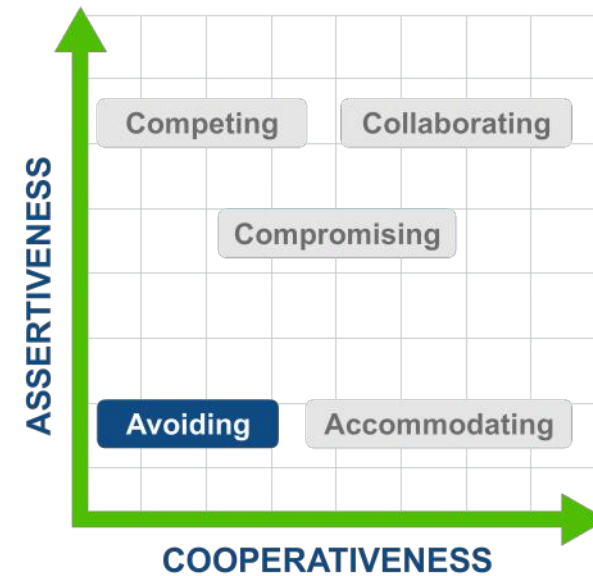
Avoiding might take the form of diplomatically sidestepping an issue, postponing an issue until a better time or simply withdrawing from a threatening situation.
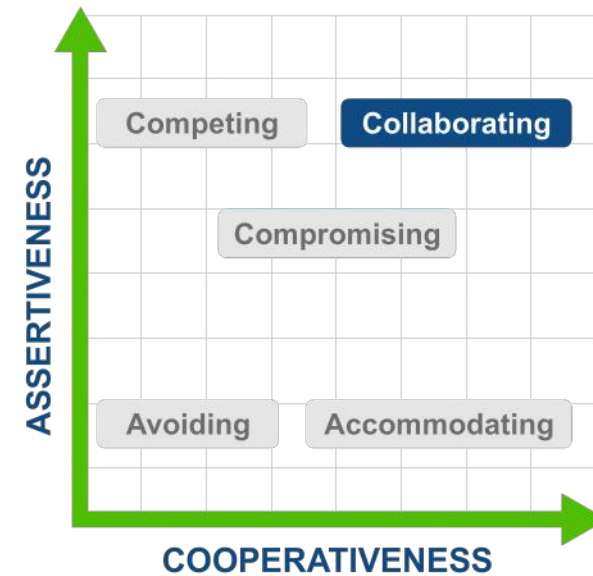
Graphic provided is an interpretation of TKI Conflict Model.

COLLABORATING

> is both assertive and cooperative – the complete opposite of avoiding.

Collaborating is an attempt to work with others to find some solution that fully satisfies their concerns.

Collaborating between 2 persons might take the form of exploring a disagreement to learn from each other's insights or trying to find a creative solution to an interpersonal problem.
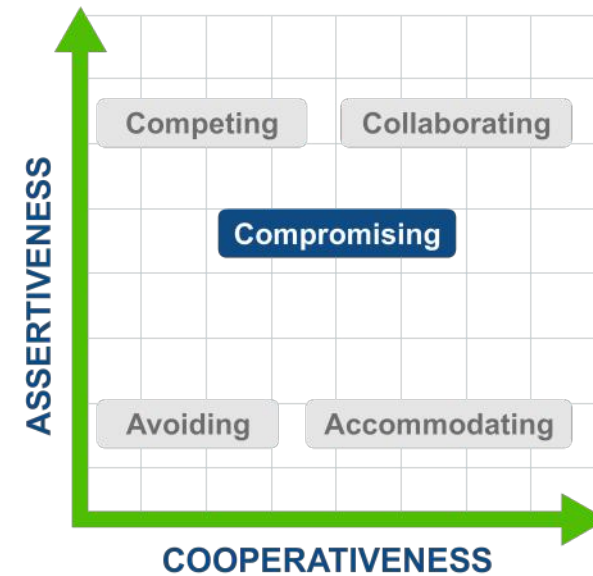
*Graphic provided is an interpretation of TKI Conflict Model.*

COMPROMISING

> is moderate in both assertiveness and cooperativeness; the objective is to find some expedient, mutually acceptable solution that partially satisfies both parties.

It falls between competing and accommodating; compromising gives up more than competing but less than accommodating.

In some situations, compromising might mean splitting the difference between the 2 positions, exchanging concessions or seeking a quick middle-ground solution.

Graphic provided is an interpretation of TKI Conflict Model.
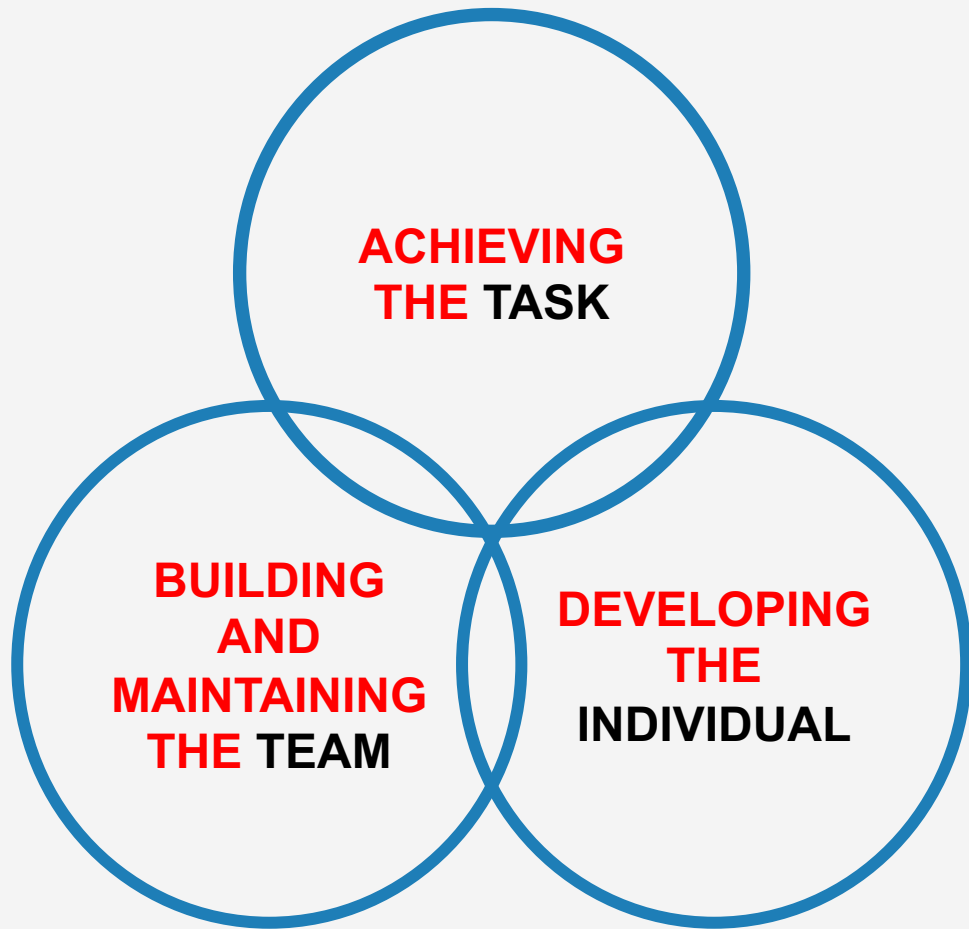
Avoiding conflict requires teams to achieve a balance between:

- the needs of the task (the response);
- the team; and
- the individuals who make up the team.

SUMMARY

- For an effective response, we need to work as a team.

- Being aware of what causes conflict and our response to it can help us be better team members.

- We need to balance the needs of the task, team and individuals to be an effective team.

> **Being aware of how we may create or react to situations can help us develop as team members.**

FOLLOW-UP TASK

Think about the last conflict you were involved in or witnessed. Use the models in this unit to think about what caused it and how you may have reacted to manage the situation.

Make a note in your journal.

Additional resources

- On conflict:
http://www.jendannals.com/uploads/9/7/2/5/97258180/c14-conflict_in_teams-lindred_l._greer_and_jennifer_e._dannals.pdf