

## Unit 5: Interpretation Guide for Conflict Style Self-Assessment

The lecture for this topic discussed a framework for describing conflict management style that is based on a combination of the degree to which a person's conflict management style tends to be cooperative versus uncooperative and assertive versus unassertive. The combination of these two factors leads to the five categories of conflict management style described below:

**Integrating Style:** This style, referred to as "collaborating" in lecture, is a style that shows high concern for one's own interests but equally high concern for the interests of the other party involved in the conflict. This approach often involves a collaborative search for a win-win solution to the conflict by working together to find a solution that is considered a win by each party.

**Avoiding Style:** This style, involves an attempt to avoid the conflict rather than address the underlying issues or search for a good solution. This approach often shows a lack of concern about the conflict and frequently involves downplaying the seriousness of the conflict or the importance of the underlying issues.

**Dominating Style:** This style, referred to as "competing" in lecture, is a style that shows high concern for one's own interests but little concern for the interests of the other party. This approach is often characterized by efforts to get one's own way and "win" the conflict even if doing so causes the other party to lose. It is characterized by a single minded effort to obtain one's own desired outcomes no matter what the impact on the other person in the conflict.

**Obliging Style:** This style, referred to as "accommodating" in lecture, is a style that shows high concern for the interests of the other party with little if any concern for one's own interests. This approach is often characterized by efforts to help the other party find a way to resolve the conflict in the manner preferred by the other party, sometimes by asking, "How would you like to resolve this situation?"

**Compromising Style:** This style is one that is characterized by searching for what each party is willing to give up in order to resolve the conflict. Rather than jointly search for a win-win solution, the two parties search for an acceptable solution that may not fully satisfy the interests of either party but that resolves the conflict. Hopefully, this is achieved with a compromise that is fair to each party and that minimizes the loss to each party

The purpose of this self-assessment is to identify the degree to which your tendency when faced with a conflict situation is to use each of the five conflict management styles. There is no one correct conflict style for every situation. As discussed in lecture, an appropriate conflict style will depend on the nature of the conflict, the conceptualization of the underlying causes of the conflict by each party, and the outcomes that each party hopes will be achieved by conflict resolution.

As you look at your self-assessment results, first determine whether you have a score that is substantially higher for one type of conflict style than for the others. If so, that is clearly your conflict management preference and the style you are likely to use "all else being equal." This style may or may not be appropriate for a specific situation so you will need to be very careful before you choose to follow your natural style. If you frequently behave the same way across conflict situations, others are likely to expect you to behave that way no what the situation and will judge you and behave accordingly.

Some of you will not have a dominant conflict management style. If that is the case for you, it is likely that you are comfortable with a variety of conflict management styles and are unlikely to immediately respond to every conflict situation with the same type of behavior. Those without dominant conflict

management styles are more likely to analyze the conflict situation and choose a conflict style that seems most appropriate for that particular situation. Others are less likely to believe that you will always respond to conflict the same way no matter what the situation and will judge you and respond to you accordingly.

As you look at your scores, consider the following:

### **Integrating Style**

Score of 1-2	=	Low Preference for Integrating Style
Score of 3	=	Medium Preference for Integrating Style
Score of 4-5	=	High Preference for Integrating Style

### **Avoiding Style**

Score of 1-2	=	Low Preference for Avoiding Style
Score of 3	=	Medium Preference for Avoiding Style
Score of 4-5	=	High Preference for Avoiding Style

### **Dominating Style**

Score of 1-2	=	Low Preference for Dominating Style
Score of 3	=	Medium Preference for Dominating Style
Score of 4-5	=	High Preference for Dominating Style

### **Obliging Style**

Score of 1-2	=	Low Preference for Obliging Style
Score of 3	=	Medium Preference for Obliging Style
Score of 4-5	=	High Preference for Obliging Style

### **Compromising Style**

Score of 1-2	=	Low Preference for Compromising Style
Score of 3	=	Medium Preference for Compromising Style
Score of 4-5	=	High Preference for Compromising Style