Managing Conflict
ORED Leadership Series
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Where have you experienced conflict or in what situations has conflict affected you and your unit?

Actual examples from Leadership Groups

- Conflict in program area – change in program requirement
- People who are difficult with whom to work
- Merging of units and departments
- Mission and action conflict – who has assistantships, etc.
- Space – abuse of ownership
- Differences in how people respond
Continued (From Leadership Groups)

- Misuse of power by an administrator
- Lack of communication
- Everybody thinks their project is the most important
- Space and time
- People that think the rules do not apply to them
- Condescending, patronizing, insulting, lack facts, not listening
- Rules that make no sense
- Conflict in changing policy
- Roadblocks from low level administrators
- Mismatch between ability and resources
Where have you experienced conflict or in what situations has conflict affected you and your unit?

- Performance reviews
- Salary negotiations
- Negotiation for resources
- Lack of respect for position and respect for the job (chain of command)
Where have you experienced conflict or in what situations has conflict affected you and your unit?

- Disagreement with individuals on issues
- Conflict in personalities
- Disagreement on responsibilities
- Harassment issues
- Differences in ethical standards/ issues
- Research ethics issues
Why does conflict occur?

Actual examples from Leadership Groups

- Difference in values
- Difference of opinions
- Different perspectives
- Lack of communication
- Human nature
- Differences in people – some people are difficult
Why does conflict occur?

- Lack of honesty
- Differing ethical standards
- Jealously
- Attitudes
- Personalities
Why does conflict occur?

- Inequities (both perceived and real)
- Selfishness – what is good for the individual
- Lack of vision for the unit
What are some characteristics of people with whom you have had conflicts or ones who often cause conflicts?

Actual examples from Leadership Groups

- Arrogance
- Narcissist
- Selfishness
- Stubbornness
- Manipulation
- Close-minded
- People who are never wrong
- People who always have to win
- Can’t share new ideas
What are some characteristics of people with whom you have had conflicts or ones who cause conflicts?

- Always negative
- Always blaming someone else – “poor, pitiful me”
- Reads a slight or conflict in every situation or conversation
- Is concerned only for themselves – it is all about them
What are some characteristics of people with whom you have had conflicts or ones who often cause conflicts?

- Is a bully or intimidator
- Wants something for nothing – is owed something
- Insecurity and lack of confidence
Types of Difficult People
(The How to Easily Handle Difficult People Handbook by Murray Oxman)

- The Gloom and Doomer
- The Intimidator
- The Energy Thief
- Mr. Obnoxious
- The Criticizer
- The Judge
Types of Difficult People
(The How to Easily Handle Difficult People Handbook by Murray Oxman)

- The Trash Man
- The Persister
- The Moaner and Groaner
- The Moocher
- The Demander
- Touchy Touchy
What skills are required for negotiation? (The College Administrator’s Survival Guide by C. K. Gunsalus)

- Change your behavior
- Choose to listen
  - 2-minute technique – Listen carefully (no notes), respond passively, then repeat points made (revise until person agrees you understand).
  - Make eye contact
  - Be aware of body language
  - Mirror other person in sitting, style of speaking.
  - Give people the gift of attention and hearing – you learn something and buy yourself more time to think
What skills are required for negotiation? (Gun Salus, C. K.)

- **Ask questions**
  - “…positions are *what* people want, and interests are *why* they want them.” (p 76)
  - Put aside preconceptions
  - Slow down and use “active listening” – repeat portions to be sure you understand what the person is saying – briefly rephrase (way to interrupt or cut off tirade).
What skills are required for negotiation? (Gunsalus, C. K.)

- Do your homework
  - Put yourself in the other person’s shoes
  - “…prepare questions to elicit more information; ask the questions; and *listen* to answers.” (p 79)
What skills are required for negotiation?  (Gun salus, C. K.)

- Identify interests
  - Focus on interests (why someone wants something) rather than positions (what people want)
  - Ask questions and listen to responses – to determine whys
  - Find solutions that respond to reasons
  - Don’t have a closed mind
  - Attend to relationships, intangibles – “feelings about winning, saving face, precedents involved, levels of trust, reputations, concepts of fairness” (p 82)
Key points for success in preventing and managing conflict

- Be fair and honest. Treat others as you would like to be treated.
- Do not respond immediately. Think before you speak.
- Always be sure you have the facts. Remember there are two sides to every argument/conflict.
- Know when you need to seek advice. Never be afraid to ask for help. This is particularly critical in situations that may have legal implications.
- Do not make promises – do not promise total confidentiality – there are times when you cannot.
Research Ethics

- Listen to all of facts.
- Read and know well the Ethical Conduct of Research Policy.
- Work with the university Research Ethics Officer (Harpole) and university counsel.
Reference

