

"Pick a Style...Any Style" Conflict Game

Directions:

- Gather into groups of 4-6 people. Get a deck of conflict style cards from the presenter. Decide which two people will play the first round. Placing the cards face down, have each of the two players choose a card.

PLAYERS: Do not let anyone else see your card. Using the first conflict scenario below, **act out the conflict using the style written on your card**. Limit your time to 2-3 minutes per conflict and pair. (Where necessary, chose before-hand who will play which role.)

OBSERVERS (Everyone else!): **Raise your hand when you think you know the styles being used by each player**. When nearly all hands are raised, have the observers guess which style each member of the pair was using.

Observers: What clues did you use to guess the styles? Be specific.

Players: How did it feel to play that style and to play opposite the other's style?

All: What patterns are likely when these styles interact?

Conflict Scenarios

1. Two people trying to decide who will get to ride in the front passenger seat of the car on a long trip.
2. Two couples are going on vacation together. One wants to go camping. The other wants to see the sites of a big city. (Note: Assign preferences to the players.)
3. Two people who share limited clerical support both need help making a very important deadline.
4. Three members of a steering committee (that operates by consensus) are in disagreement over whether or not a "outside" facilitator would be helpful for an upcoming retreat. One wants to facilitate the meeting him/herself, one wants a non-involved staff member to facilitate and a third wants an "outside" facilitator. (Note: Assign preferences to the players in this one.)

"PICK A STYLE"

GROUP DISCUSSION

Observers guess which style is being used.

Observers tell what clues they observed for each style that was used.

Players/Disputants talk about how they felt playing their roles.

Were the styles comfortable for the players?

Why?

Why not?

Discuss the implications of the strategies or styles that were used.

STYLES OF CONFLICT MANAGEMENT

It's not whether you have conflict in your life, but how you deal with the conflict that makes all the difference.

People respond to conflict in different ways. We often use different styles in different situations.

Avoidance means that a person knows there is a conflict but chooses not to deal with it. An avoider walks away from the problem and may avoid the person with whom he or she is having the conflict.

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Accommodation is putting aside one's own needs and concerns in order to satisfy the needs of the other person.

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Competition is trying to win or make the other person lose by giving in. In this style, a person defends his/her position or pursues his/her own goals without regard for the needs of the other person. This style assumes that in order for one person to win, the other person must lose.

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Compromise is giving up something in order to get something. It is an attempt to seek middle ground.

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Collaboration is working together in order to satisfy the needs of both people. It involves problem solving and assumes that both people can get their needs met. One party does not have to win at the other's expense. It is win-win problem-solving.

Advantages:

Disadvantages:

Which style do you most frequently use in a conflict with the following people?

-Spouse

-Parent

-Child

-Sibling

-Co-worker

-Friend

-Boss

-Students