

Understanding Conflict Management Styles

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## Steps to Building Conflict Resilience



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Defining Conflict



How do you define conflict?

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What is Conflict?

*Any time when two or more people have different opinions or positions about a situation in which they both have an interest.*



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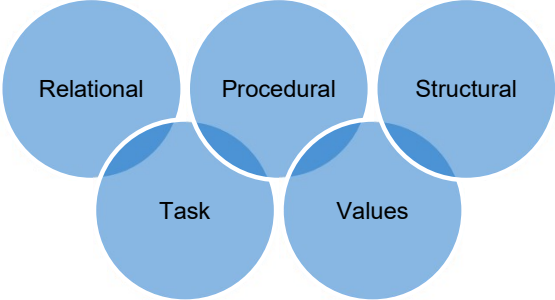
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Common Types of Conflict



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### Exercise 1: Causes of Conflict



What are  
some causes  
of conflict for  
trustees?

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### Some Common Contributors



- Feeling undervalued
- Passive aggressive responses
- Triangulation and gossip
- Relationships
- Misaligned Expectations
- Lack of respect
- Assumptions
- Inconsistent accountability
- Conflict Management Styles

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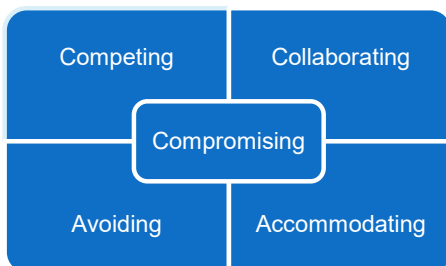
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### The 5 Conflict Management Styles

*Adapted from the Thomas-Kilmann Conflict Modes Instrument (TKI)*



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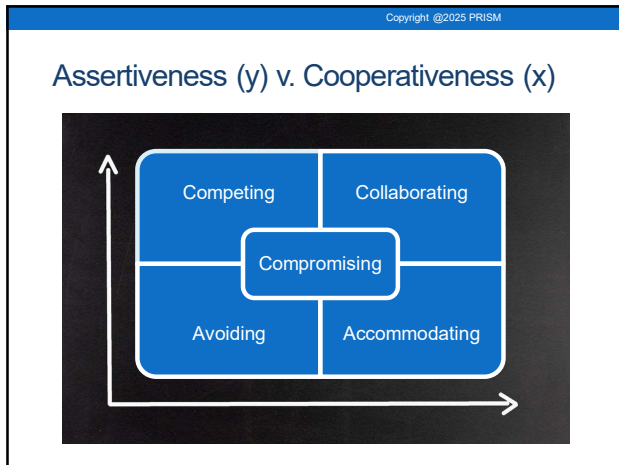
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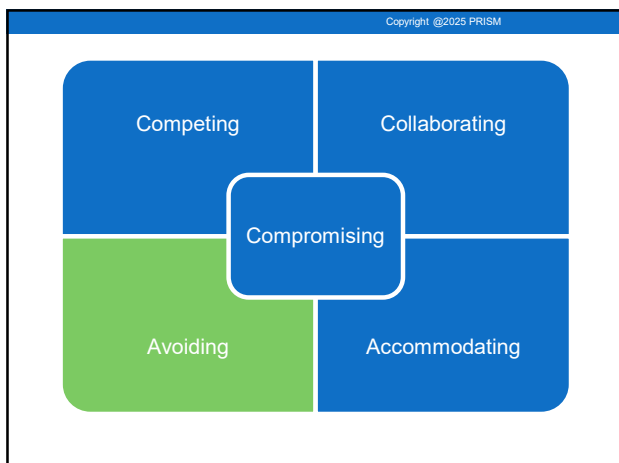
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### Avoiding Style: Advantages

- ❖ What conflict?
- ❖ Agency
- ❖ Neutrality
- ❖ Self-regulation
- ❖ Space

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### Avoiding Style: Disadvantages

- ❖ Concerns do not get addressed or resolved
- ❖ Conflict festers and grows
- ❖ Engagement and motivation decline
- ❖ Psychological safety is eroded

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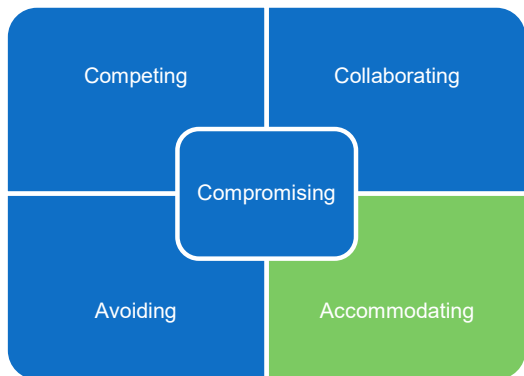
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### Accommodating Style: Advantages

- ❖ Effective when the outcome is of little importance to you, and of great importance to another
- ❖ Builds good will in the eyes of the person being accommodated
- ❖ Reduces situational inter-personal conflict

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### Accommodating Style: Disadvantages

- ❖ Not maintaining clear boundaries
- ❖ Not holding people accountable
- ❖ Building resentment over prioritizing others
- ❖ Perceived unfairness

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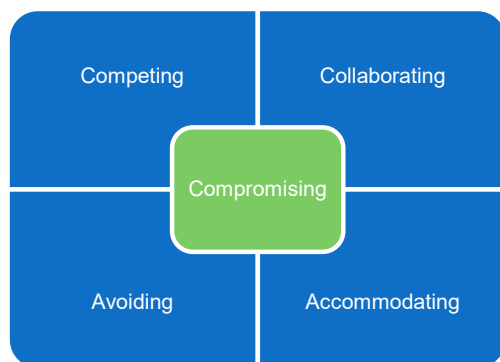
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### Compromising Style: Advantages

- ❖ Speed
- ❖ Efficiency
- ❖ The process feels fair
- ❖ Everyone gets something

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### Compromising Style: Disadvantages

- ❖ Missing out on a win-win solution
- ❖ Everyone is a bit (or very) unhappy
- ❖ Can seem like resolution is prioritized over ideas
- ❖ Buy-in suffers

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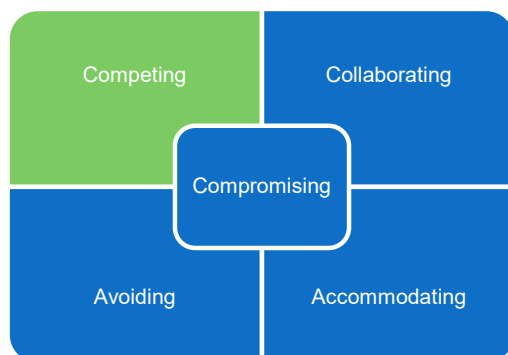
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### Competing Style: Advantages

- ❖ Speed
- ❖ Decisiveness
- ❖ Stability
- ❖ Clarity
- ❖ Someone wins and is pleased

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### Competing Style: Disadvantages

- ❖ Impacts motivation, engagement and buy-in
- ❖ Erodes trust and psychological safety
- ❖ Someone loses and is not pleased

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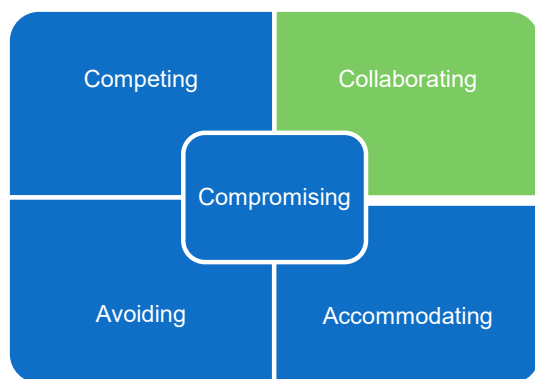
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### Collaborating Style: Advantages

- ❖Increases buy-in and motivation
- ❖Promotes engagement
- ❖Identifies creative solutions
- ❖Increases trust

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### Collaborating Style: Disadvantages

- ❖Time consuming
- ❖Discussion fatigue
- ❖Frustrating when contributors are looking for action

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What is  
your  
default  
style?



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## Context



- Hierarchy
- Status
- Expertise
- Outcome
- Relationship(s)
- Power
- Authority
- Familiarity
- Certainty

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## The Trouble With Snow



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## Lauren's Little Voice



Wow, I wonder what is bothering Melinda? She seems super upset. Something must have happened that she doesn't want to tell me about. Maybe I should ask her? Nah, if she wanted to tell me, she would. I'm sure it has nothing to do with me, so I won't bug her about it.

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### Melinda's Little Voice



She did it again. We JUST had this conversation and she PROMISED. It is like she is trying to undercut me with clients. I mean, doesn't she know that the plow won't come if she doesn't call them? I've told her a million times. I'm not sure I want to have this conversation again. I mean, what is she THINKING?!

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### Exercise: Styles in The Trouble with Snow



1. What style is Melinda using? How about Lauren?
2. Which styles would go well together in this scenario?
3. Which styles might clash?
4. What curious questions could Melinda ask Lauren?
5. What curious questions could Lauren ask Melinda?

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### Lightning Round



Which style would be most helpful when ...

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Which style would be most helpful when...

- you need to make a quick decision
- you want to build consensus
- the priority is finding a “fair” solution between two parties
- emotions are high and people need time to cool down before engaging
- the issue is not important to you and matters a great deal to another

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Which style would be most helpful when...

- the decision is unpopular, yet necessary
- you want to understand various perspectives before making a decision
- you want each stakeholder to get something
- someone else is in a better position to make the decision
- getting it right is more important than being right

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Questions  
and  
Comments

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## Next Steps

- ✓ Take the DYNAD to assess your style:  
[Dynamic Negotiating Approach Diagnostic \(DYNAD\) by Andrea Kupfer Schneider, Jennifer Gerarda Brown :: SSRN](#)
- ✓ Discuss your style with your board, including what style is most challenging to you
- ✓ Practice styles other than your default(s) when situationally appropriate

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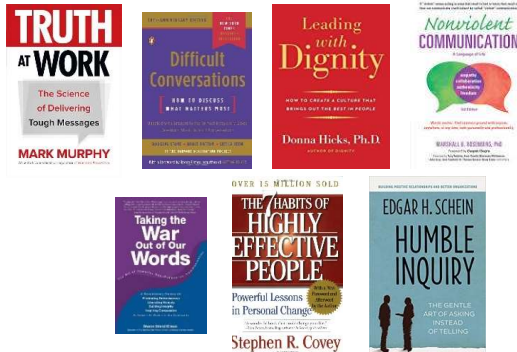
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## Recommended Reading



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