

## **Strawberries or Worms?**

Strategies for Effective Conflict  
Resolution

The Rural Emergency Continuum of  
Care Conference

June 18 -20, 2010

## **Goals for the Day**

Understand the Nature of Conflict  
Understand the Sources & Types of Conflict  
Identify Strategies to Effectively Deal with  
Conflict

## **Definition of Conflict**

- “Differences amplified by emotion.”

## **Conflict is.....**

- Inevitable
- Manageable
- Desirable (a symptom of caring)
- The opposite of “reaching agreement”
- Often a symptom of parties having different information

## Do You Want to be “Right”?

- We all think we are “right” most or all of the time
- Do you want to be right, or do you want a good outcome?

## Sources of Conflict

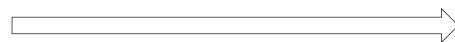
- Our assumptions (mental models)
- Communication- those in conflict do not share the same information.
- Lack of context & knowledge about issue
- Inequity- real or perceived
- Uncertainty/fear

## Sources of Conflict cont.

- Lack of feedback
- Competing over scarce resources
- Many others.....

## Forms of Conflict

- Passive
- Passive Aggressive
- Assertive
- Aggressive



Least disruptive .....Most disruptive

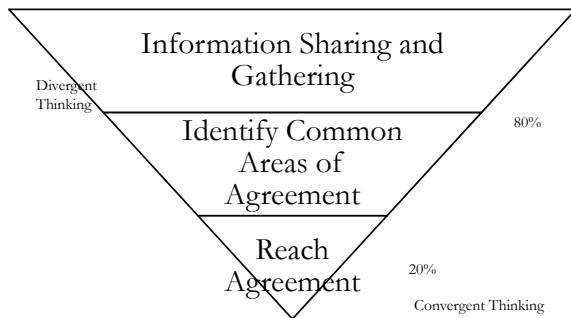
### Conflict Looks Like....

- Complaints (formal/informal)
- Sabotage
- Threats (verbal, physical, legal)
- Silence
- Body language/Attitude
- Circumvention
- Other forms

### Choices in Conflict Situations

- Do nothing
- Do something
- Real time response
- Respond later
- All may be effective strategies-----depends on the situation
- Trick is to not over-rely on any one strategy

### Prevent or Minimize Conflict Situations



**People with the same information tend to make the same decisions**

## Strawberries or Worms

- “I like strawberries, but for some strange reason, fish like worms. Therefore when I go fishing, I use worms.”

## This works- Even with your Teenagers



## Strategies for Dealing with Conflict Situations

- Focus on the dual outcomes of getting needs met and building relationships
- The status of the relationship AFTER the conflict resolution process is a key metric of success.

## Emotion in Conflict

- Recognize the role of emotion in resistance to  $\triangle$
- Intellectual justifications will not increase commitment nor minimize emotion
- Instead: explore & determine issues around control and vulnerability
- Stay curious

“Good leaders ask good questions” B. Benwick

## Logic and Emotion

- Logic and the prefrontal cortex
- A short circuit in the prefrontal cortex
- The emotional brain bath
- What to do?

## Your Role in Conflict

- Make no mistake about it- you have a role in conflict
- *“It’s funny, I have noticed that wherever there is trouble.....there I am”.*
- Your role as the leader is to hold yourself and others accountable for behaving in constructive ways

## Our Beliefs

- Our Beliefs
- Inform our thoughts
- Drive our behavior in conflict (indeed in life)

## Be Aware of Your Mental Model

- Mental models are our assumptions (usually untested). The internal “story” we tell ourselves
- They create our reality for us
- Largely unconscious
- Yet our story translates into our behavior
- Being conscious of our mental model helps us to choose how we will respond to situations
- Effective Leaders make conscious choices

### **Exercise: Handling Conflict Well**

- Describe for yourself, how you want to “be” or “show up” at work (or home) when in conflict.
- What helps you be the person you want to be?
- What gets in your way?
- What can you do to minimize the things that “get in your way” of being how you want to be in a conflict situation (at work or home)?

### **Evaluation**

- What worked today?
- What didn’t work?
- How might we make this kind of session better?

THANK YOU!