

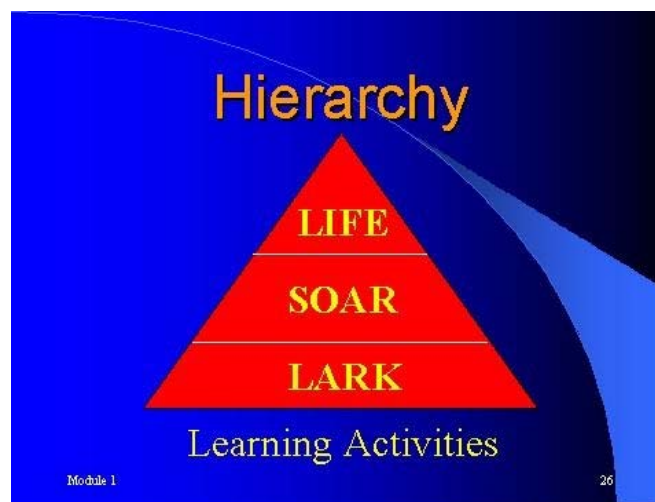
Chapter 7. The Role of Conflict in Community Development

Jerry W. Robinson, Jr., and L. Steven Smutko

BEHAVIOR OBJECTIVES

After studying this chapter and completing the online learning activities, students should be able to

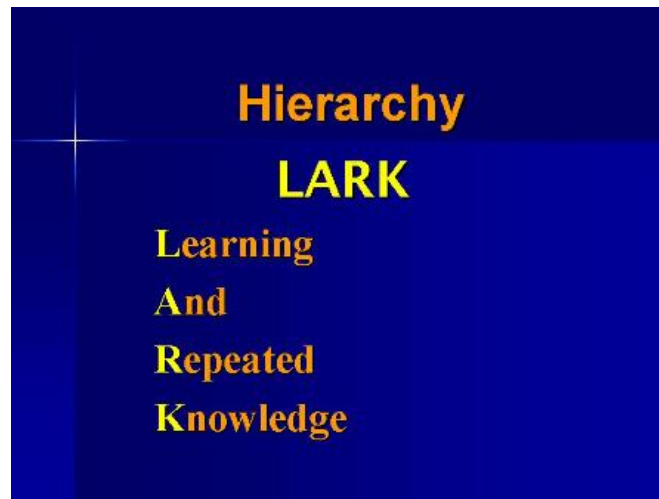
1. Define conflict in terms of behavior threats and territory.
2. Give examples of conflicts over physical, social, and psychological territory.
3. List and explain how community conflict can occur in five arenas.
4. List and explain six sources of conflict, and describe each source in the context of a community development conflict.
5. List and describe the three basic steps or stages of conflict management.
6. Describe the advantages and limitations of five behavioral styles, illustrated in Pruitt and Rubin's Dual Concern Model, that community leaders can use in conflict situations.
7. Give an example of a community conflict and describe the positions held by the parties in conflict in terms of interests that underlie the position of each stakeholder.
8. Devise ways to reframe community conflicts that lead to problems that invite collaboration.
9. Explain the advantages and disadvantages of each dispute resolution as described in Table 7.2.



Behavior Objectives:

After completing this learning module, you should be able to:

1. Define conflict in terms of behavior threats and territory.
2. Give examples of conflicts over physical, social and psychological territory.
3. Explain the stages of the conflict cycle.
4. Explain how the concepts of behavioral threat, territory, and the conflict cycle apply in conflict situations from your own experience.
5. Describe situations under which instigating conflict would be appropriate.
6. Identify behavioral styles used by community leaders in conflict situations.
7. Discuss the pros and cons of using professional mediators.
8. Develop an organizational communication strategy to prevent conflict.
9. List and explain at least three criteria that can be used to justify the use of conflict as a community development intervention in a democratic society.
10. Explain the difference between behavior, policy and values, and why it is more effective to focus conflict management on policy or behavior than on values.
11. Apply all the concepts in the text to analyzing real conflict situations in your life.
12. Apply all the concepts in the text to analyzing a real conflict situation in your community.



LARK Activity 7.1

Individual Multiple Choice Study Questions

Instructions: Select the best answer to each question after reading the text of chapter 7.

1. The opposite of conflict is not a monotonous consensus, rather it is a:
 - a. Pleasurable utopia*
 - b. Territorial conflict
 - c. Cooperative interaction
 - d. A formal and legal system
2. Competition may slide over into a conflict when:
 - a. Pressure within the group leads to a unified expression of ideology and sentiment.
 - b. Channels of verbal communication are open and too wide.
 - c. Subtle attempts develop to deny one party's access to goal achievement*.
 - d. Member similarities create a basis for identification with the group.
3. Spatial territory, social territory, and psychological territory are distinctions drawn from a:
 - a. Material view of conflict.
 - b. Cultural view of conflict.
 - c. Philosophical view of conflict.
 - d. Behavior view of conflict.*
4. A democratic leader believes that conflict:
 - a. Is an organizational tactic used only by frustrated or disgruntled employees.
 - b. Indicates failure by the leader's efforts to reduce group apathy.
 - c. May provide for the emergence of new styles of behavior by revealing the shortcomings of old styles.*
 - d. Results primarily from a communication gap.

5. Some of the most common behavioral reactions to conflict include:
 - a. Isolating, compromising, and dominating*.
 - b. Dreaming, thinking about tomorrow, and wishing that things were not so complex.
 - c. Taking notes, checking the time, confirming the date for the next meeting.
 - d. Redefining, sharing, and borrowing.

6. An alert democratic leader, who observes individuals taking revenge, scoring points, and showing up peers through subtle innuendos, recognizes immediately that:
 - a. The group is experiencing a final and hopeless collapse.
 - b. The group is in the injustice collecting phase of the conflict cycle.*
 - c. The group is adjusting in a healthy way to a variety of stressors.
 - d. A third party solution is the only possible answer.

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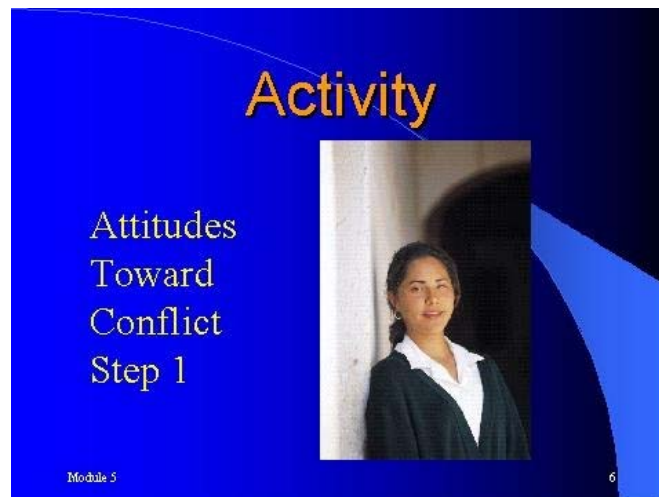
7. Third party strategies for generating creative tension are least likely to involve:
 - a. Detailed data collection.
 - b. Developing credibility.
 - c. Well-organized communication systems.
 - d. The avoidance of working goals.*

8. To be more effective in a conflict scene, a democratic leader first seeks goals that are:
 - a. Open-ended, flexible, and long-range*.
 - b. Specific and immediate.
 - c. Essentially content oriented.
 - d. Best communicated nonverbally.

9. As a symbolic effort, the movement to adopt the Equal Rights Amendment for Women was a modern example of conflict over:
 - a. Spatial territory.
 - b. Social territory.*
 - c. Psychological territory.
 - d. None of the above.

10. The conflict cycle is:
 - a. Injustice collecting; adjustment; confrontation; role dilemma; tension development.
 - b. Tension development; role dilemma; confrontation; injustice collecting; adjustments.
 - c. Confrontation; role dilemma; injustice collecting; tension development; adjustments.
 - d. Tension development; role dilemma; injustice collecting; confrontation; adjustments.*

NOTE: After answering all of the preceding questions, you may discuss your answers with a group of classmates and arrive at a team answer. Then, move on the activities that follow.



SOAR Activity 7. 1

Explore Your Attitudes toward Conflict

Objective:

The objective of this activity is to provide baseline information on the learner's attitudes toward conflict.

Instructions:

Circle the response which most nearly describes your attitude to each of the statements below.

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1. Open conflict in a community is usually a sign that things are not functioning well.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
2. When conflict has arisen over some policy, some change probably is necessary.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
3. Conflict usually does more harm than good in a community.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
4. Sometimes conflict is an appropriate way to bring about change.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
5. In developing solutions to conflicts, it is important to settle underlying issues of right and wrong before working out agreements.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
6. People can learn skills for dealing with conflict.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
7. Listening calmly to irrational outbursts encourages people in a conflict situation to become even more irrational.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
8. Sometimes a professional mediator from the outside can do better than local leaders in resolving a community conflict.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
9. The role of a third party mediator is to decide on the best solution for a group.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
10. Conflict can be a healthy way for people to resolve difference.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

SOAR Activity 7. 2

Analyze a Real-Life Community Conflict: A Fact-Finding Case Study

Objective: The objective of this activity is to enable you to apply the concepts presented in this chapter to an actual community conflict.

Instructions: Select a current community conflict situation with which you are familiar that will challenge your talents and resources. The conflict situation that you select should clearly relate to your interests as a citizen or leader in the community.

Following is an outline for collecting facts and for analyzing the conflict you have selected. Write your answers on this form. Be prepared to share your responses with others in your class. In summary, this problem will be used as a group case study in class discussion.

1. Your Name: _____

2. Title for your conflict case: _____

3. What are the major issues causing the dispute in this conflict situation?

4. What threats have been made by all of the parties in this conflict?

5. What are the vested interests which underlie the positions of each stakeholder?
Be specific:

5. What types of territories are being challenged by each stakeholder?

6. What power and resources does each party control in the situation?

7. Describe the stages of the conflict cycle that have occurred:

a. Tension development: _____

b. Role dilemma: _____

c. Injustice collection: _____

d. Confrontation: _____

c. Compromise: _____

8. What adjustments have occurred? (Group and/or individual responses)

9. How has the conflict caused the competing groups to become further apart or closer together?

SOAR Activity 7.3

The Rifle County Economic Development Case Study

A Group Activity

Objective: The objective of this activity is to provide practice in identifying the stages of conflict development.

Instructions:

Read the scenario and develop a response to each of the questions that follow it. If you are working in a group, select a recorder to make notes on your discussion, and be prepared to give a verbal report. If you are working alone, write out a brief response to each question.

Scenario:

A dispute has developed among three groups — the Rifle County Board; the Mayor of Shotgun (the largest municipality in the county); and the four other communities in the county. The issue is the use of local taxes to hire a full-time community developer. The County Board passed a resolution "to conduct an employment search and hire a qualified professional to work for County Government in community development." The Mayor of Shotgun is a long time County Board member. None of the elected officials of Stock, Trigger, Bullet or Barrel (the four other communities in the County) are members on the County Board. The County Board Resolution has raised old, entrenched, historic resentments. Some believe the town of Shotgun always "gets the bacon" while other communities struggle on without assistance from the county.

John Hammer is the Chairman of the County Board and a successful business owner in Shotgun. The Mayors of Stock, Trigger, Bullet and Barrel approached John Hammer with their concerns in person and in writing. They stated, "Our towns will not benefit, but we are expected to help pay the salary of this developer."

John Hammer did not respond to their correspondence. A local reporter quoted Hammer in Shotgun's daily paper, Gunsmoke, as stating: "The complaints of these mayors are more of the same old garbage that has stopped progress in this county for years."

At the latest County Board meeting, the mayors of Stock, Trigger, Bullet and Barrel disrupted the agenda during the discussion of candidates for the developer position. They claimed the County Board Chair and the Mayor of Shotgun were deliberately deceiving county residents regarding the benefits of hiring a developer. The County Board Chair and the Mayor of Shotgun were accused of being "in bed together" to saddle county residents with an unnecessary expenditure. The four mayors presented a proclamation to the County Board stating that they would "organize an economic boycott of Shotgun by the citizens of their communities and the county at large until a satisfactory resolution is achieved." Then they walked out of the meeting.

Step 1. Identify actions which were interpreted as behavior threats.

Step 2. List behavior and/or perceptions of participants in the dispute which illustrate each the first four stages of the conflict cycle.

a. Tension development

b. Role dilemma

c. Injustice collecting

d. Confrontation

Step 3. Describe any adjustments (stage four of the conflict cycle) that happened in response to the dispute.

a. Domination

b. Cold war

c. Isolation

d. Compromise

Step 4. List examples of the types of territories involved:

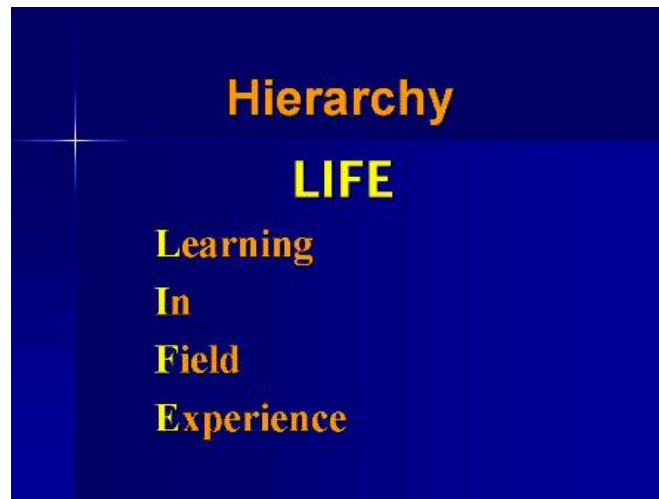
a. Physical or spatial

b. Social or work

c. Psychological or mental

After you complete this exercise, please proceed to the next activity.





LIFE Activity 7.1

Inventory of Your Behavior Styles in a the Real-Life Case Study of a Conflict Situation: For Each Student

Objectives: The objectives of this activity are:

1. To apply the concepts covered in the text to your own behavior.
2. To consider alternative ways of dealing with a real conflict situation.

Instructions:

Use the same situation you chose for the activity Analyze a Real Life Conflict Situation as you complete this activity.

Step 1. Analyze All of the Behavior Styles You Used in Your Real Life Case Study

1. Review the behavior examples or descriptions listed below for each conflict management behavior style. Check all the behaviors you have used in the real-life conflict you selected.

Dominator

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Built up to a confrontation | <input type="checkbox"/> Used power |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Imposed solutions | <input type="checkbox"/> Told people what to do |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Used authority | <input type="checkbox"/> Made threats |

Manipulator

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Used indirect threats | <input type="checkbox"/> Used innuendos about values |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Used guilt, duty | <input type="checkbox"/> Offered bribes, rewards |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Appealed for pity | <input type="checkbox"/> Visibly overworked myself |

Negotiator/Mediator

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Established ground rules | <input type="checkbox"/> Used involvement |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Used 2-way communication | <input type="checkbox"/> Structured open with all adversaries communications |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Developed trust | <input type="checkbox"/> Questioned and listened |

Yielder

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Argued but not forcefully | <input type="checkbox"/> Diverted action |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Avoided judging or ridicule | <input type="checkbox"/> Gave in to other side |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Tried not to be a threat | <input type="checkbox"/> Made light of the conflict |

Avoider

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Withdrew — missed work | <input type="checkbox"/> Took sick leave or vacation meetings during crisis |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Turned leadership over to someone else for leadership in crises | <input type="checkbox"/> Assumed no responsibility |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Used delaying tactics to risk | <input type="checkbox"/> Simply ignored the problem avoid having to assume |

Step 2. Tabulate your totals for each style.

1. Which style did you use most frequently? _____
2. Which style did you use next most frequently? _____
3. Which style did you use least? _____

Step 3. Prepare an answer to each of the following questions:

1. Do you think these totals give a true picture of your behavior in this conflict? Why or why not?

2. Do you think your behavior in this situation was typical of your behavior in other conflict situations? Why or why not?

Step 4. Analyze your behavior with persons of different social rank from those in this dispute.

1. Do you use the same behavior styles in conflict situation with:

- a. Your boss that you use with other employees? _____ yes _____ no
- b. Your parents that you use with other family members? _____ yes _____ no
- c. Your spouse that you use with other family members? _____ yes _____ no
- d. Your peers that you use with other acquaintances? _____ yes _____ no
- e. A secretary that you use with other employees? _____ yes _____ no
- f. Your children that you use with other family members? _____ yes _____ no

2. If you have checked no, why do you think your style may change as the social rank of the other participants in the dispute changes?

LIFE Activity 7.2

Which Conflict Management Style Is Best in Your Situation A Case Study for Each Student

Objective: The objective of this activity is to determine which of the five conflict management styles (Competition, Avoidance, Negotiation, Collaboration, or Accommodation) is best for you in the conflict situation that you described in *Activity 1, Analyze a Real Life Conflict Situation*. You will use the criteria developed by Professor Ken Thomas to achieve this objective.

Instructions:

Step 1. Briefly review your responses to all of the questions in *Activity 1. Analyze a Real Life Conflict Situation*.

Step 2. Review the criteria for responding to a conflict in the Thomas model. The four criteria that can be used to predict the most appropriate approach to resolving a conflict are:

- **Power** of each party or adversary in the dispute.
- **Stakes** of each party – how strongly is each party attached to his stake.
- **Interests** of the stakeholders – specific conditions that stakeholders desire to attain. Are the desired outcomes of stakeholders independent or interdependent?
- **Relationships** among all of the stakeholders. How important is it to preserve or build good relationships among all stakeholders?

Step 3. Evaluate your conflict situation using the information from Activity 1. The criteria in step 2, above, are applied to each of the scales below. Circle the most appropriate number to develop scores for the conflict situation on each of the following scales. What is:

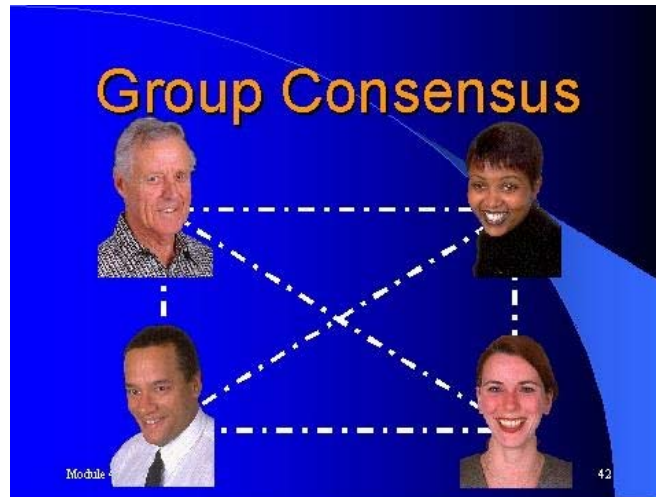
1a. Your evaluation of your power in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

1b. Your perception of the adversary's power in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

Low	2a.	Your evaluation of your stake in the situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Low	2b.	Your perception of the adversary's stake in the situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Low	3a.	Your evaluation of your interests in the situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Low	3b.	Your perception of the adversary's interest in the situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Low	4a.	Your evaluation of the importance of a quality relationship in the situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Low	4b.	Your perception of the importance of a quality relationship to your adversary in this situation.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High

Step 4. Interpret your scores.

- a. If power and stakes are high for both parties (scales 1a, 1b, 2a, & 2b), if interests are interdependent and incompatible (3a & 3b), and if there is little concern for the quality of interpersonal relationships in the situation (4a & 4b), the conflict is likely to continue. Domination will likely result in a win/lose outcome.
- b. If the stakes in the issue are not very important (2a) and power of your adversary is low (1b), avoidance is probably best. Why worry?
- c. Yielding is likely the best response if interests and relationships are high for both parties. You can ignore relative power when interests are high and relationships are exceptionally good and important to all parties.
- d. Negotiation is preferable if interests aren't compatible and both parties have relative equal power. You might improve the quality of the relationship with effective negotiation.
- e. Mediation and "collaboration" are desirable when both parties (you and your adversary) have:
 - Mutually interdependent interests in the situation.
 - Relatively equal power in the situation.
 - High interest in cooperating with each other.
 - High desire for a mutually satisfying outcome.



Step 5. Discuss the following questions.

1. Do you agree that these are good choices for you? Why or why not?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages to obtaining an outside third party to help you in this situation?
3. In view of our responses to question a, do you think you or your organization should use a professional mediator in resolving this dispute? Why or why not?

LIFE Activity 7.3

Actively Listening to Opposing Views

Objectives: The objectives of this activity are:

- 1. To practice and reflect upon the technique of active listening.**
- 2. To enhance your skills as a mediator.**

Instructions:

Step 1. Your workshop coordinator will help you select a partner. You are to practice active listening with another person.

Step 2. You and a workshop partner are to select two subjects on which the two of you have opposing views — you must disagree with each other on each issue. Also, you must have strong beliefs or feelings about this subject.

(Some issue examples are: mandatory seat belts, smokers' rights, mandatory auto insurance, prison sentences for drug dealers, animal rights, divorce, abortion, politics, homosexual rights, or any other controversial subject.)

Select a subject. The first person will talk about the subject for at least 10 minutes while the partner listens.

Step 3. Decide who will talk first. This is Round One. The other partner is to listen as the talker expresses his or her feelings about this subject.

The listener must not express his or her feelings about the subject. Instead, the listener is to use as many behavior skills as possible to get the talker to express all of his or her personal feelings and facts about this issue without verbally or nonverbally revealing his or her personal feelings.

Step 4. Act out the first round of this talk/listen activity. Your instructor will tell you when to switch roles.

Step 5. Switch roles. The other partner listens now as the first person talks about another subject.

Step 6. Discuss the following questions with your partner:

How did you feel when you were being listened to?

How did it feel to be the listener and not be able to express your disagreement?

Do you think you could use this method if you were mediating a conflict?

Do you think you could use this method if you were an adversary in a conflict, to listen to the other side?

SOAR Activity : The Rehabilitation Program: A Demonstration Group Role Play

Objective:

The objective of this activity is to demonstrate the role of the third party in dealing with conflict. This activity also provides an opportunity to learn strategies and behavior bits that are pertinent to conflict management.

Instructions:

Role players are carefully briefed on their roles, each reading only his or her own role and the background sheet. Observers use the Process Observer's Form for Conflict Management. After the role play, observers discuss their findings with the players.

Scenario:

Jackie Brown, the Director of the Southmore County Development Office, has been approached by the area supervisor with a request to cooperate in an experimental rehabilitation program for ex-convicts called "Job Experience." This program is set up to find employers who are willing to give temporary, para-professional jobs to ex-convicts. The employees will be paid out of program funds from the federal government.

The supervisor has given his full cooperation to and approval of the program but will leave the decision of whether to accept the offer to the county office. Jackie will also cooperate, provided the staff agrees and desires the program in Southmore County.

The members of this role play are:

1. Jackie Brown, Director.
2. Lou Baker, Assistant Director.
3. Fran Parker, Office Manager and Head Secretary.

Role — Jackie Brown.

You are the Director of Rural Development in Southmore County, and you have been approached by your supervisor about the following proposal. The Office of Economic Opportunity has received a request to cooperate, on a statewide basis, with an experimental rehabilitation program for ex-convicts called "Job Experience." They ask employers to put the ex-convicts to work temporarily in para-professional positions that do not require too much skill or specific training. This work experience will serve as transition period for these people, before they start work in a job. An attractive aspect of the program is that the salaries will be paid out of federal funds.

Role — Lou Baker.

You feel that the program would serve a worthy cause and it could certainly be given a try, as long as your staff does not object. Therefore, you have sent a memo to all of the people concerned, explaining the details. This afternoon you will have a meeting with Lou Baker, the Assistant Director, as the representative of the professional staff; and Fran Parker, the Office Manager and Head Secretary, who represents the secretarial staff.

Because you are a democratic leader, you want to involve your staff in this decision. You do not know yet what their feelings are, but you hope you can reach some agreement with them. You do know that the secretarial staff could use some additional workers, and you think that using paraprofessionals might be a good solution. You are the Assistant Director of Rural Development in Southmore County. Two days ago, you received a memo from Jackie Brown, the Director and your boss, about an experimental work rehabilitation program for ex-convicts called "Job Experience." The request is to put ex-convicts to work in some para-professional positions on a trial basis. They could help with typing, filing and doing odd jobs.

You are very much in favor of this idea. In the first place, you think it is about time that ex-criminals start to be treated as human beings. You feel strongly that they should be given a fair chance to return to society without discrimination. In the second place, you think that it would be a real help to add to the secretarial staff. You have been having a problem lately getting your typing done on time. Sometimes this really bothers you, especially when the material is urgent. The typing staff always seems to be overworked. Other staff members, too, seem to feel that some extra help would come in very handy. The fact that Job Experience will pay the salaries of the new employees is another reason to accept this offer gratefully. This afternoon, you will have a meeting with Jackie Brown, Director, and Fran Parker, the lead Secretary. You plan to tell them that you like the idea, and you hope very much that the others will feel the same

Role for Fran Parker:

You are the lead Secretary You are the Office Manager and Head Secretary of Development Office in Southmore County. Two days ago, you typed and received a memo from Jackie Brown, the Director and your boss, about a new program. They would put criminals to work in the office to help with typing, filing, and doing odd jobs. They call it "Job Experience!"

You think this is the wildest idea you have ever heard in your life. Just imagine, working all day with a bunch of crooks hanging around the office! You simply would not feel safe. You never know what these people might do. Besides, you just would not know what to say to them. They probably would not be good at their work anyway. And what will the visiting Japanese industrialists coming next month think? You know that your office has been understaffed for the last couple of months. There is always more work than your people can handle. You have been pressuring Jackie for some time to get more help, but without results until now.

This afternoon, you will be having a meeting with Jackie Brown, Director, and Lou Baker, Assistant Director. You plan to tell them exactly how you feel about this proposal and let them know that you are very much against it.

Process Observer's Form for Conflict Management Role Plan Demonstration

Instructions:

You are to observe Jackie Brown, the Director Check the primary styles that Jackie uses as third-party conflict manager and note the important behavior bits for each style.

Behavior Styles and Behavior Bits

Collects data	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Probes, ask open-ended questions	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Saves face	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Discovers common interests	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Reinforces common interests	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Negotiates differences	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Makes adjustments	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Solidifies agreements	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Is aware of timing*	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____
Uses feedback*	_____	_____	_____	_____	_____

*These styles should take place throughout the conflict-management situation.

SOAR Activity 7. 8: Re-Examine Your Attitudes Toward Conflict, Step 2

Objective:

The objective of this activity is to provide baseline information on the learner's attitudes toward conflict.

Instructions:

Circle the response which most nearly describes your attitude to each of the statements below.

1. Open conflict in a community is usually a sign that things are not functioning well.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
2. When conflict has arisen over some policy, some change probably is necessary.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
3. Conflict usually does more harm than good in a community.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
4. Sometimes conflict is an appropriate way to bring about change.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
5. In developing solutions to conflicts, it is important to settle underlying issues of right and wrong before working out agreements.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
6. People can learn skills for dealing with conflict.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
7. Listening calmly to irrational outbursts encourages people in a conflict situation to become even more irrational.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
8. Sometimes a professional mediator from the outside can do better than local leaders in resolving a community conflict.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
9. The role of a third party mediator is to decide on the best solution for a group.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree
10. Conflict can be a healthy way for people to resolve difference.
Strongly Agree Agree Undecided Disagree Strongly Disagree

**LIFE Activity: Which Conflict Management Style Is Best in Your Situation?
Reexamine Your Experience**

Objective: The objective of this activity is to determine which of the five conflict management styles (Competition, Avoidance, Negotiation, Collaboration, or Accommodation) is best for you in the conflict situation that you described in *Activity 1, Analyze a Real Life Conflict Situation*. You will use the criteria developed by Professor Ken Thomas to achieve this objective.

Instructions:

Step 1. Briefly review your responses to all of the questions in *Activity 1. Analyze a Real Life Conflict Situation*.

Step 2. Review the criteria for responding to a conflict in the Thomas model. The four criteria that can be used to predict the most appropriate approach to resolving a conflict are:

- **Power** of each party or adversary in the dispute.
- **Stakes** of each party – how strongly is each party attached to his stake.
- **Interests** of the stakeholders – specific conditions that stakeholders desire to attain. Are the desired outcomes of stakeholders independent or interdependent?
- **Relationships** among all of the stakeholders. How important is it to preserve or build good relationships among all stakeholders?

Step 3. Evaluate your conflict situation using the information from Activity 1. The criteria in step 2, above, are applied to each of the scales below. Circle the most appropriate number to develop scores for the conflict situation on each of the following scales. What is:

1a. Your evaluation of your power in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

1b. Your perception of the adversary's power in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

2a. Your evaluation of your stake in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

2b. Your perception of the adversary's stake in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

3a. Your evaluation of your interests in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

Low	3b.	Your perception of the adversary's interest in the situation.									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Low	4a.	Your evaluation of the importance of a quality relationship in the situation.									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High
Low	4b.	Your perception of the importance of a quality relationship to your adversary in this situation.									
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	High

Step 4. Interpret your scores.

- a. If power and stakes are high for both parties (scales 1a, 1b, 2a, & 2b), if interests are interdependent and incompatible (3a & 3b), and if there is little concern for the quality of interpersonal relationships in the situation (4a & 4b), the conflict is likely to continue. Domination will likely result in a win/lose outcome.
- b. If the stakes in the issue are not very important (2a) and power of your adversary is low (1b), avoidance is probably best. Why worry?
- c. Yielding is likely the best response if interests and relationships are high for both parties. You can ignore relative power when interests are high and relationships are exceptionally good and important to all parties.
- d. Negotiation is preferable if interests aren't compatible and both parties have relative equal power. You might improve the quality of the relationship with effective negotiation.
- e. Mediation and "collaboration" are desirable when both parties (you and your adversary) have:
 - Mutually interdependent interests in the situation.
 - Relatively equal power in the situation.
 - High interest in cooperating with each other.
 - High desire for a mutually satisfying outcome.

Step 5. Discuss the following questions.

1. Do you agree that these are good choices for you? Why or why not?
2. What are the advantages and disadvantages to obtaining an outside third party to help you in this situation?
3. In view of our responses to question a, do you think you or your organization should use a professional mediator in resolving this dispute? Why or why not?

LIFE: Activity Follow-up for Each Student at the End or After the Course



After reading the text, participating in a group learning experience on conflict management, and completing the learning activities, you should be able to develop a management strategy for a "real life" on-the-job activity or problem that is related to conflict management. Your plan should include your answer to each of the following questions or statements. If you have learned "how to understand the conflict process, you will be better prepared to deal with it."

Step 1. Describe a current conflict problem related to community or economic development.

Step 2. Describe the problems encountered in relation to:

Behavioral threats:

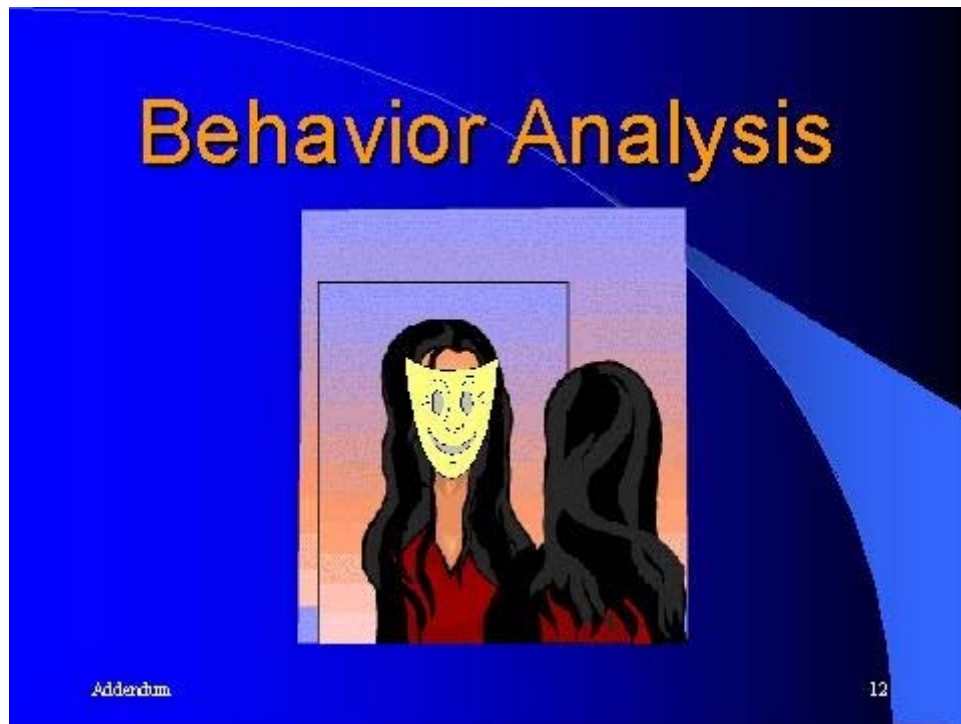
Role dilemma:

Injustice collecting:

Confrontation:

Step 3. Identify the major stakeholders and describe their stakes.

Step 4. Are you a third-party or conflict adversary? Why and how?



Step 5. What behavior communication skills have you used in relation to:

Dominating:

Manipulating:

Yielding:

Avoiding:

Negotiating:

Mediating:

Step 6. Review the criteria in the Thomas model. These four criteria can be used to predict the most appropriate approach to resolving a conflict. They are:

1. Power of each party or adversary in the dispute.
2. Stakes of each party — how strongly each party is attached to their territory.
3. Interests of the stakeholders — specific conditions which stakeholders desire to attain. Are the desired outcomes independent or interdependent?

4. Relationships among the stakeholders. How important is preserving or building a good relationship?

Step 7. Analyze your power, stake, interests and relationship quality in this situation. These criteria are applied to eight scales below. Circle the most appropriate number to develop scores for the current conflict situation on each of the following scales.

Step 8. Evaluate your conflict situation using the information from Activity 1. The criteria in step 2, above, are applied to each of the scales below. Circle the most appropriate number to develop scores for the conflict situation on each of the following scales. What is:

1a. Your evaluation of your power in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

1b. Your perception of the adversary's power in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

2a. Your evaluation of your stake in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

2b. Your perception of the adversary's stake in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

3a. Your evaluation of your interests in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

3b. Your perception of the adversary's interest in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

4a. Your evaluation of the importance of a quality relationship in the situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

4b. Your perception of the importance of a quality relationship to your adversary in this situation.
Low 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 High

Step 9. Interpret your scores.

1. If power and stakes are high for both parties (scales 1a, 1b, 2a, 2b), if interests are interdependent and incompatible (3a, 3b), and if there is little concern for the quality of interpersonal relationships in the situation (4a, 4b), the conflict is likely to continue. Domination will likely result in a win/lose outcome.

2. If the stakes in the issue are not very important (2a) and power of your adversary is low (1b), avoidance is probably best. Why worry?

3. Yielding is likely the best response if interests and relationships are high for both parties. You can ignore relative power when interests are high and relationships are exceptionally good and important to all parties.

4. Negotiation is preferable if interests aren't compatible and both parties have relatively equal power. You might improve the quality of the relationship with effective negotiation.

5. Mediation and "collaboration" are desirable when both parties (you and your adversary) have:

Mutually interdependent interests in the situation.

Relatively equal power in this situation.

High interest in cooperating with each other.

High desire for a mutually satisfying outcome.

Step 10. Discuss the following questions.

1. Do you agree that these are good choices for you? Why or Why not?

2. What are the advantages and disadvantages of obtaining an "outside" third party to help you in this situation?

3. In view of your responses to question 1, do you think you or your organization should use a professional mediator in resolving this dispute? Why or why not?



Step 11. Using the strategies and behavior styles presented in the text, figures and activities of this chapter, develop a comprehensive follow-up plan of action which seeks a successful outcome to this conflict situation.