






# War! What is it good for?

(Conflict styles)

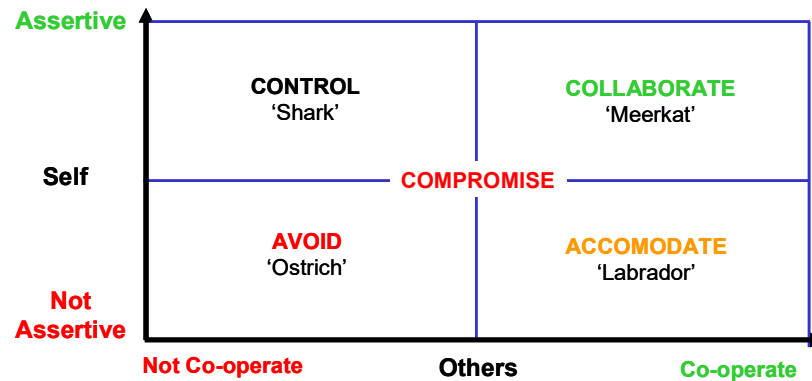
 <p><b>Purpose</b></p>	<p>Conflict within teams causes hurt, damage, mistrust, and a reduction in productivity (from some). More importantly, the cost of dealing with conflict takes money away from the needs of the service user!</p> <p>Evidence suggests that most workplace conflicts centre on issues that may seem serious to those affected by it (e.g. workplace change for example). But, to those on the outside, workplace conflict seems really trivial and something easily fixed.</p>
 <p><b>Application</b></p>	<p>This session sets out to introduce participants to different conflict styles, as identified in the work of Thomas Kilman and reflected in his conflict instrument (known as the TKI). The model suggests that people align themselves to a particular conflict style and sets out to provide a visual matrix of the conflict styles and how they are identified through a concern for self and concern for others scale</p>
 <p><b>What happens?</b></p>	<p>The manager facilitates the session as per the 'How do I?' guidance below.</p> <p>After the theory, participants complete the conflict questionnaire. The manager collates the results and leads a discussion on the findings.</p> <p>Finally, The team (or individual, if facilitated on a 1-2-1 basis) devise and agree an action plan to work through differences in approach.</p>
 <p><b>Resources</b></p>	<p><b>Overall time required: 60 minutes.</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 5 minutes for introduction and initial briefing</li> <li>• 55 minutes for brief, participation and discussion.</li> </ul> <p><b>Materials and resources</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A Flipchart Stand, Paper, Pens or Pencils for Participants. Conflict styles questionnaire (1 each)</li> </ul>
 <p><b>How do I do it?</b></p>	<p><b>INTRODUCE THE TASK</b></p> <p><b>The Five Conflict Management Approaches</b></p> <p>Conflict can be dealt with using several basic behaviours or approaches. We can be:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An Avoider (Ostrich)</li> <li>• An Accommodator (Labrador)</li> <li>• A Controller (Shark)</li> <li>• A Collaborator (Meerkat)</li> </ul> <p>These behaviours occur through a combination of how assertive each party to the conflict is about achieving their goals and how co-operative each party is towards the other party achieving their goals. This gives us the five approaches.</p>

## The Conflict Grid/Dual Concern Model

*Thomas-Kilman Conflict Mode Instrument – also known as the TKI (Mountain View, CA: CPP, Inc., 1974 – 2009)*

The following model can be drawn on a flipchart, with the styles added as explanation of the model progresses:

### The Conflict Grid/Dual Concern Model



Conflict situations provide an opportunity for us to make clear decisions about what behaviours to adopt. Many of us will have a preferred approach based on behaviours that have been successful for us in the past. These decisions will be based on how much we wish to cooperate with the other person and how much we wish to assert our own position in the conflict situation.



However, understanding the different conflict management approaches available, and knowing when to use them, may help us produce a better outcome to many conflict situations.

**1. Avoidance (Low cooperation / Low assertion)** - Some people choose to avoid conflict by postponing it, hiding their feelings, changing the subject, leaving the room or quitting the project. They might say *“leave me out of it – you decide”* or they may act as though the conflict does not exist.

**2. Accommodation (Low assertion / High cooperation)** - People who choose accommodation put their own interests last and let others have what they want. Often they will sacrifice all of their own goals for the sake of the relationship between themselves and the other person (or persons).

**Controlling (Low cooperation / High assertion)** - People who choose a competitive approach put their interests ahead of anyone else’s interest. They are always out to win, do not believe there can be any middle ground and view conflicts as *“I win-you lose”* situations. Using this approach discounts the feelings of others and can ruin relationships.

**Collaboration (High assertion / High cooperation)** - People who use a collaborative approach look for a winning solution for all parties involved. They define the issues

	<p>carefully, work through the situation and implement agreed actions. This strategy encourages teamwork and cooperation within a group. Collaboration does not establish winners and losers. It does not gain power over others. The use of this approach creates opportunities for experimentation and innovation too: <b><i>“Ok, I see what you mean. Let’s try your way first and then we’ll try mine and compare results. Whichever works best is the one we’ll choose.”</i></b></p> <p><b>Compromise</b> - People who choose to compromise are willing to satisfy a part of their interests and are willing to be flexible. They are likely to say <b><i>“let’s split the difference”</i></b> or <b><i>“something is better than nothing”</i></b>. Compromise is mutual for all parties. All parties should receive something, and all parties will need to give up something.</p> <p><b>Question to each participant:</b></p> <p><i>What conflict type do you think you display and why?</i></p> <p><b>Conflict questionnaire</b></p> <p>At this stage participants complete the questionnaire (below) and the manager then compiles the results (perhaps on a blank matrix, drawn on a separate flipchart sheet)</p> <p>The manager then leads a discussion about the results and facilitates the compilation of an agreed action plan.</p>
 <p>Note</p>	<p>Managers should be aware of the potential sensitivity that might be required when facilitating a session of this nature, particularly where a known conflict exists within the team or where, if facilitating on a 1-2-1 basis, the individual may be receiving support as a result of a conflict having previously occurred or being affected by ongoing conflict.</p>
 <p>When?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conflict has occurred</li> <li>• Is ongoing</li> <li>• Building a team to be aware of the danger of conflict occurring and putting in place behaviours to hopefully help to avoid it actually happening</li> </ul>

## Conflict Resolution Style Questionnaire

Read each of the fifteen statements below and score each as follows:

**(True = 4 points; Somewhat True = 3 points; Somewhat False = 2 points; False = 1 point)**

No.	Statement	Score
1	I look at issues with others to find solutions that meet the needs of everyone	
2	I try to negotiate and adopt a give-and-take approach to problem situations	
3	I try to meet the expectations of others	
4	I would argue my case and insist on the merits of my point of view	
5	When there's disagreement, I get as much information as I can and keep communication open	
6	When I find myself in an argument, I usually say very little and leave as soon as possible	
7	I try to see conflicts from both sides: what I need and what the other person needs	
8	I prefer to compromise when solving problems and just move on	
9	I find conflicts challenging and exhilarating and enjoy the battle of wits that usually follows	
10	Being at odds with other people makes me feel uncomfortable and anxious	
11	I try to accommodate the wishes of my friends and family	
12	I can figure out what needs to be done and I am usually right	
13	To break any deadlocks, I am willing to meet people halfway	
14	I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself	
15	I may not get what I want, and it's a small price to pay for keeping the peace	

In the chart below enter the score you gave to each question as indicated.

**(True = 4 points; Somewhat True = 3 points; Somewhat False = 2 points; False = 1 point)**

**TOTAL EACH ROW IN THE BOX AT THE END OF EACH ROW.**

	Question Number	I scored this as:	Question Number	I scored this as:	Question Number	I scored this as:	ROW TOTALS
Controlling	4		9		12		
Avoiding	6		10		15		

Compromising	2		8		13		
Accommodating	3		11		14		
Collaborating	1		5		7		

The row with the highest score indicates your **most preferred** conflict resolution style.  
The row with the lowest score indicates your **least preferred** conflict resolution style.

**What have you learned about yourself from completing this questionnaire?**