## **Conflict Management Style Assessment**

## **Facilitator Notes**

**Purpose**: A self-assessment that allows participants to identify preferred conflict styles.

**Materials:** A copies of the reproducible self-assessment and scoring sheet for distribution to

participants

**Set Up**: Distribute prior to the full discussion of the 5 identified conflict styles. The assessment should take about 10-15 minutes to answer the questions. It should take about 5-10 minutes to score the results.

After they answer the assessment questions, you may want to hold off scoring it until after discussing each of the 5 conflict styles. Then the participants will be in a better place to confirm (or disagree) with their results.

The instructions for taking and scoring the assessment are self-explanatory.

**Notes**: The assessment is for discussion purposes only. It is not a validated, scientific instrument. Each participant needs to determine the accuracy of the results, they should not assume that the results are conclusive. After listening to the description of each of the conflict styles, the participant is free to which are their preferred styles (regardless of what the assessment says). The assessment is also confidential. Participants may wish to share their results, but they should not be required to share.

**Debrief:** One of the primary values of this activity is to generate discussion on conflict styles and the possible impact each style might have on how people address conflict situations. It is best if the participants do most of the talking during the debrief. Some of the questions that can be asked (on a volunteer basis) include: As you go through the rest of your presentation, or in debriefing any activities, you can refer people back to their results and ask how their preferred style may be impacting their approach to conflict.

**Assessment**

We each have our own way of dealing with conflict. The techniques we use are based on many variables such as our basic underlying temperament, our personality, our environment and where we are in our professional careers. However, by and large, there are five major styles of conflict management techniques in our toolbox.

## In order to address conflict we draw from a collaborating, competing, avoiding, accommodating or compromising style of conflict management. None of these strategies is superior in and of itself. How effective they are depends on the context in which they are used.

Each statement below provides a strategy for dealing with a conflict. Rate each statement on a scale of 1 to 4 indicating how likely you are to use this strategy.

***1 = Rarely 2 = Sometimes 3 = Often 4 = Always***

Be sure to answer the questions indicating how you would behave rather than how you think you should behave.:

1. I explore issues with others so as to find solutions that meet everyone’s needs. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

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 is a disagreement, I gather as much information as I can and keep the lines of communication open. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

6. When I find myself in an argument, I usually say very little and try to leave as soon as possible. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

7. I try to see conflicts from both sides. What do I need? What does the other person need? What are the issues involved? \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

8. I prefer to compromise when solving problems and just move on. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

9. I find conflicts challenging and exhilarating; I 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 deadlocks, I would meet people halfway. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

14. I may not get what I want but it’s a small price to pay for keeping the peace. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

15. I avoid hard feelings by keeping my disagreements with others to myself. \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

How to score the Conflict Management Assessment

As stated, the 15 statements correspond to the five conflict resolution styles. To find your most preferred style, total the points in the respective categories. The one with the highest score indicates your most commonly used strategy. The one with the lowest score indicates your least preferred

strategy. However, if you are a leader who must deal with conflict on a regular basis, you may find your style to be a blend of styles.

**Style Corresponding Statements: Total:**

**Collaborating:** 1, 5, 7 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Competing:** 4, 9, 12 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Avoiding:** 6, 10, 15 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Accommodating:** 3, 11, 14 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Compromising:** 2, 8, 13 \_\_\_\_\_\_\_

**Brief Descriptions of the Five Conflict Management Styles**

**Collaborating Style**

Problems are solved in ways in which an optimum result is provided for all involved. Both sides get what they want and negative feelings are minimized.

Pros: Creates mutual trust; maintains positive relationships; builds commitments.

Cons: Time-consuming; energy-consuming.

Competing Style: Authoritarian approach.

Pros: Goal oriented; quick.

Cons: May breed hostility.

**Avoiding Style**

The non-confrontational approach.

Pros: Does not escalate conflict; postpones difficulty.

Cons: Unaddressed problems; unresolved problems.

Accommodating Style: Giving in to maintain relationships.

Pros: Minimizes injury when we are outmatched; relationships are maintained.

Cons: Breeds resentment; exploit the weak.

**Compromising Style**

The middle ground approach.

Pros: Useful in complex issues without simple solutions; all parties are equal in power.

Cons: No one is ever really satisfied; less-than-optimal solutions get implemented