



# **Good Officer Training**

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## Introductions

- Who are we?
- Who are you?
- Why are we here?

# Centering and Grounding



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## Exercise: List Five of YOUR Social Identities



## Some Possible Social Identity Categories

- Profession
- Nationality
- Citizenship
- Language
- Religion/Spiritual Life
- Philosophy
- Avocation
- Family Role
- Age
- Ethnicity
- Economic Level
- Geographic Location
- Education
- Ability
- Gender
- Sexual Orientation

## Exercise: Cultural Strengths

- For each social identity find a strength that this gives you



**I am ....., but I'm NOT (or don't) ....**

**I am ....., and I am (or do).....**

## Role and Preparation

- Talk to others to understand context
- Don't assume identities
- Remember there are always differences
- Remember the identities making a difference may not be the obvious ones
- Listen, listen between the lines, establish trust
- Pay attention to your role
- Know when you need to say “no”

## Conversations to have

- What does time mean?
- What does interrupting mean?
- What does listening look/sound like?
- What does collaboration look like?
- What is appropriate attire?
- What does religious education mean?
- Notions of authority and loyalty
- What does this job mean to you?

## The iceberg concept of culture

*Primarily in awareness*

Fine arts Literature  
Drama Classical music Popular music  
Folk-dancing Games Cooking Dress

*Primarily out of awareness*

Notions of modesty Conception of beauty  
Ideals governing child raising Rules of descent Cosmology  
Relationship to animals Patterns of superior/subordinate relations  
Definition of sin Courtship practices Conception of justice Incentives to work  
Notions of leadership Tempo of work Patterns of group decision-making  
Conception of cleanliness Attitudes to the dependent Theory of disease  
Approaches to problem solving Conception of status mobility Eye behaviour  
Roles in relation to status by age, sex, class, occupation, kinship, etc. Definition of insanity  
Nature of friendship Conception of "self" Patterns of visual perception Body language  
Facial expressions Notions about logic and validity Patterns of handling emotions  
Conversational patterns in various social contexts Conception of past and future Ordering of time  
Preference for competition or co-operation Social interaction rate Notions of adolescence  
Arrangement of physical space Etc.

## Exercise

- What does it mean to be “on time”?



# Ways identity shows up in conflict



# Two Primary Characteristics of Conflict

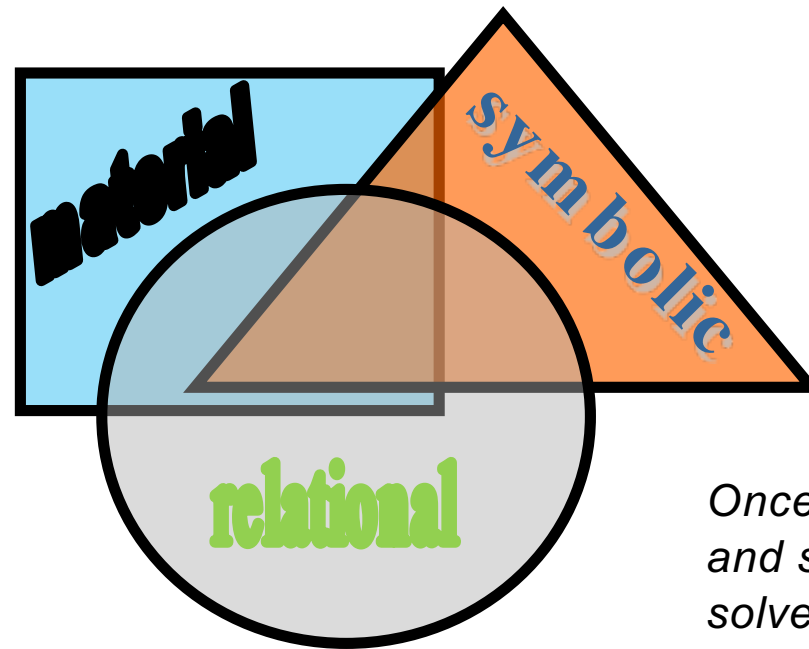
## Grounded in perceived incompatibilities

– substantive disagreement -- “I can not accomplish my goals if you accomplish yours”

## Grounded in emotional upset

– perceived interference -- “I can not believe you are taking actions that compromise my goals”

## Conflict Can Be About . . .



*Once conflict gets relational and symbolic, it cannot be solved by the material*

## (Some) Sources of conflict

- misperceptions and misconceptions
- communication misunderstandings
- difference in goals
- difference in values and needs
- misinterpretation of behavior

*Conflict is an opportunity for growth, change, and to bring people closer together.*



# In Times of Stress, Emotional Upset, Disagreement and Conflict...




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***... people tend to revert to their  
primary cultural programming***




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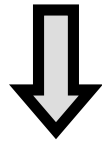
## Where are you on this continuum?

- Comfortable with others fully expressing themselves
  - Express my opinions, needs, and wants
  - Verbally defend my views
  - Make direct requests
  - Verbally confront differences in opinion
  - Candidly express my disagreements
- 
- Go along even if I disagree
  - Comfortable if the other goes along with me, even if they disagree
  - Avoid criticizing the other
  - Cautious about sharing my wants, goals, and needs
  - Talk “around” disagreements
  - Offer indirect suggestions
  - Use intermediaries to settle disagreements
  - Verbally apologize or the conflict

## Where are you on this continuum?

- Maintain emotional calm
  - Control strong emotions
  - Avoid imposing my feelings on others
  - Use a calm style to logically get my ideas across
  - Refrain from expressing negative emotions
  - Keep fear and anger hidden
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- Allow my emotions to come out
  - Openly express my frustration and anger
  - Present my ideas with full emotion, even if they're less logically presented
  - Express my feelings, even if it means shouting
  - Passionately express my disagreement
  - Express my deeper emotions like fear and anger

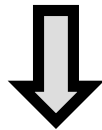
# Fundamental Cultural Differences in Conflict Styles



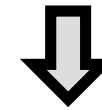
How we express  
disagreements around  
conflict issues



How we express  
emotion around conflict  
issues



direct or indirect



expressive or restraint

## Direct

- Meaning stated in words
- Precise, explicit language
- Face to face
- Frank, candid
- Solution focused

## Indirect

- Meaning not in words
- Ambiguity and vagueness
- Third parties
- Reserved, cautious
- Relationship focused

## Expressive

- Overt displays of emotion
- Expressive hand gestures, vocal tone
- Sensitivity to others' constraints on own emotions
- Trust developed by emotional expression of commitment
- Emotional information needed for credibility and de-escalation
- When really upset, get quiet

## Restrained

- Minimal emotion
- Deliberate calm in body language and voice
- Sensitivity to impact of one's feelings on others
- Trust developed by emotional control and focus on solution
- Emotional suppression needed for credibility and de-escalation
- When really upset, can blow up

# Some Signs of a Well-Managed Conflict

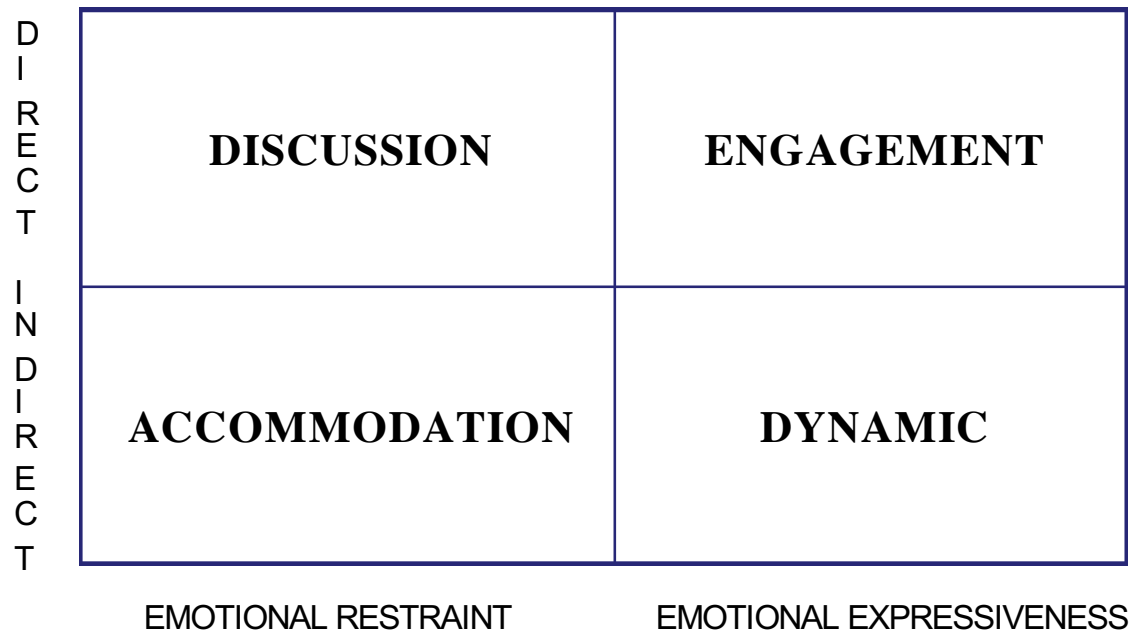
- People maintain their sense of self-worth
- Future work is not compromised (in fact, may improve)
- Trust / social capital is maintained (possibly even grows)



## Unhealthy Variants

- Using anger as a weapon
- Rage instead of anger
- Mean done calmly and logically
- Passive aggressive
- Slander, complaining behind people's backs
- Ignoring impacts of people's traumas

# Intercultural Conflict Style Model



## Discussion (direct, restrained)

### Self Perceived Strengths

- Confronts problems
- Elaborates arguments
- Maintains calm atmosphere

### Perceived by Others

- Difficulty reading between the lines
- Appears logical but unfeeling
- Appears uncomfortable with emotional arguments

**Material conflict:** wants to fix the material problem

# Engagement (direct, unrestrained)

## Self Perceived Strengths

- Provides detailed explanations, instructions, information
- Expresses opinion
- Shows feeling

## Perceived by Others

- Appears unconcerned with the views and feelings of others
- Appears dominating and rude
- Appears uncomfortable with viewpoints disconnected from emotion

**Relational conflict:** needs to have feelings heard and “met”

# Accommodation (indirect, restrained)

## Self Perceived Strengths

- Considers alternative meanings to ambiguous messages
- Able to control emotional outbursts
- Sensitive to feelings of the other party

## Perceived by Others

- Difficulty voicing own opinion
- Appears uncommitted and dishonest
- Difficulty in providing elaborate explanations

**Symbolic conflict:** how do we find ways to belong together?

## Dynamic (indirect, unrestrained)

### Self Perceived Strengths

- Uses third parties to gather information and resolve conflicts
- Skilled at observing changes in nonverbal behavior
- Comfortable with strong emotional displays

### Perceived by Others

- Rarely “gets to the point”
- Appears unreasonable and devious
- Appears “too emotional”

**Relational conflict:** how can we both save face?

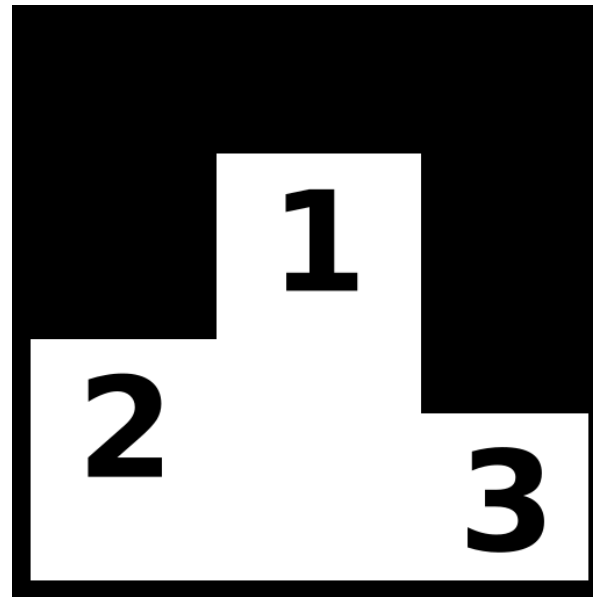
## Conflict across cultural styles

- Differences tend to cause each to exacerbate their own style
- A shift in one person's style toward the other can shift the tensions
- “Who should shift?” is a powerful relationship question
- It's helpful to negotiate the boundaries of conflict within “safe enough” boundaries for each person

## Microaggressions video

- [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f83xc1sM\\_j4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f83xc1sM_j4)

# Power differences



## In the process

- Pay attention to your role
- Advocacy on behalf of someone's identity is dangerous
- Pay attention to power dynamics, self awareness, identity issues known and unknown
- When judgements come up in you, pay attention to the temperature with in you
- Ask for clarification rather than make assumptions

## Impacts of trauma

- Always a part of conflicts that threaten people's well-being
- Microaggressions are trauma
- Identity impacts touches past identity trauma
- Cannot talk someone out of these impacts
- Can encourage self-care: especially embodied care and creating safe space
- Impacts can prevent us from being who we need to be for and with our colleagues
- Pay attention to your secondary trauma and seek self-care

# Support and Reaching Out

- This is long haul work
- It is good to check in with each other
- Each situation is different
- Different perspectives help
- Who to call?
  - Your Consultation Group
  - Congregational Life Staff

## Skills to practice

- Awareness of prejudgments
- Awareness of potential for microaggressions
- Check out cultural assumptions
- Notice complex identities
- Notice power dynamics
- Reach out for support, collaboration, perspective
- Focus on accompaniment role, not advocacy
- And let's be kind to each other as best we can
- ALL of us always working across difference
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## More Resources

- UU Leadership Institute Intercultural Skills course:  
<https://www.uuinstitute.org/courses/intercultural-skills-205-od/>
- Intercultural Conflict Styles Inventory: <https://icsinventory.com/>
- Hope Johnson: [hjohnson@uua.org](mailto:hjohnson@uua.org)
- Evin Carvill Ziemer: [eziemer@uua.org](mailto:eziemer@uua.org)
- Your Consultation groups!