

**Module:** Leadership Training Workshop for Health Professionals

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# Conflict Resolution

# What is a conflict?

- A conflict is a disagreement within a group or between people in a group
- Conflict between people can have very negative effects in a group
- It can prevent a group from implementing a leadership action plan

# Do we need to conform all the time?

- By conformity, we mean trying all the time to stick to the group's needs
- Sometimes, too much conformity may hinder change because there will be no new ideas on how things should be done
- Sometimes conflict over ideas can enhance team development provided it is within the objectives and goal
- Sometimes, a level of conflict is good for a group because it keeps members dynamic and connected and it can generate ideas

# Need for leadership in conflict resolution

- Several times we get too much conflict that the organisation is threatened
- The leader has to take immediate action to salvage the situation

# Causes

- Allocation of resources and money
- Allocation of duties
- Clash in goals
- Clash in interpretation of what is to be done
- Personal problems between people
- Clash in values and principles
- Failure to recognise that people are different

# Signs of Conflict

- Poor communication between people including silence or quarrelling
- Jealousy, hostility and sometimes violence
- When we always have to mediate problems of two or a few people
- The rules in the group tend to increase
- Frustration, reduced morale and reduced efficiency



# Preventing conflicts

- Communicating the leadership goal clearly
- Creating clear channels of communication by being clear on roles
- Having common values upheld in the group
- People should have correct information concerning the action plan
- Regular feedback from the leaders using meetings and other channels

# Resolving Conflicts: Mediation

- In order to resolve conflicts, the leader needs to be a good **mediator**
  - Analyse the source of the conflict
  - Obtain all relevant input and advice from other members that are not involved
  - Listen to each side of those involved, and do not be judgemental
  - List and evaluate the options for resolving the conflict
  - Arbitrate and mediate between the parties to select a middle ground

# Resolving Conflicts: Mediation

- Tell them the risks of un-resolved conflicts and tensions
- If an option is agreed, promote reconciliation and agreement
- Assess if you need some external help and get it if it is available
- Build trust by being true to the people involved
- Agree on a way to prevent future conflicts
- Always have an emergency plan if this fails

# Conflict Management Techniques

- There are about 5 approaches to conflict management
  - Avoidance
  - Accommodation
  - Forcing or competing
  - Compromising
  - Collaboration and consensus

# Techniques

<b>Strategy</b>	<b>Characteristic behaviour</b>	<b>Best used when</b>
Avoidance	This is a non-confrontational approach; You deny or ignore the existence of conflict	Conflict is small, or when emotions are running high and time is needed to cool them down

# Techniques

Strategy	Characteristic behaviour	Best used when
Accommodation	Agreeable, non-assertive behaviour. Cooperative even at the expense of personal goals	When the issue under dispute is not that important to you or when harmony and stability are important; you do not wish risking damage to relationships

# Techniques

Strategy	Characteristic behaviour	Best used when
Forcing or competing	This is a win-lose approach. It is confrontational and aggressive. Reliance on formal authority and power with promise of punishment if necessary.	When management needs a quick resolution to important issues that require unpopular actions. Forcing does not resolve the conflict and may serve to compound it by hurting feelings and evoking resistance

# Techniques

Strategy	Characteristic behaviour	Best used when
Compromising	Parties to the conflict seek middle-ground position that provides partial satisfaction for both parties.	This is based on negotiation resulting in maintenance of good relationship. Usually there is no one person or idea that is best. It works well for achieving a temporary settlement



# Techniques

Strategy	Characteristic behaviour	Best used when
Collaboration or consensus	This is a win/win technique; the needs of both parties are recognized as important. There is high respect and open communication. There is merging of views	When all the conflicting parties seriously want a win-win solution and no one want to make a major concession