CONFLICT MANAGEMENT IN THE WORKPLACE
Understanding Conflict

• What are examples of workplace conflict?
• Impacts?
• What triggers a conflict?
• What behaviors or reactions are demonstrated during conflict?
Defining Conflict

A discussion between 2 or more people

• The stakes are high
• Opinions vary
• Emotions run strong
• Personal or emotional histories get in the way
Is This Really A Conflict?

- Crisis: Interferes with productivity or safety
- Clash: Differing opinions both with apparent value, stakes moderate
- Blip: No visible value in engaging, no or low impact, issue has low stakes
Strategic and Empowered Responses

- Responding versus reacting
- Determining what's at stake
- Understanding history, personality and communication style
Conflict and Choice

Tools for Addressing Conflict
• Effective Communication styles
• Timing
• Navigating the dialogue
• Best/worst practices
• Motive, intention and attitude

Consequences
• Dealing with or ignoring
Benefits of Addressing Conflict

- Allows focus to remain on behaviors, impacts, consequences, processes, outcomes
- Avoids making an individual the center of the conflict
- Encourages development versus defensiveness
- Facilitates problem solving
Impacts of Ignoring Conflict

- Misunderstandings continue
- Damage to reputation
- Impacts on team or unit
- Impacts to productivity
- Unspoken messages sent to team
- Position/Workplace satisfaction
- What else?
Conflict and Conversations

Critical Conversations
- Performance Appraisals
- Bullying and disruptive workplace behaviors
- Managing Change
- Meetings, collaborations

Challenging Conversations
- Stakes/outcomes are high – extreme visibility
- Opinions differ among stakeholders
- Stakeholder histories differ
- Organizational history challenges contributor’s input
- Emotions run strong
Typical Reactions

• Avoid, Deflect, Defend – the person with the authority wins!
• Changing the conversation in the middle of a sentence
• Grudges and gossip
Physical Preparation

Physical Preparation

• Drunk on Adrenaline: The Amygdala and the Flight, Fright or Fight Response
• How do I feel about the person, the discussion, the outcome?
• Is this the right time to have this discussion?
  o Have I eaten?
  o Sleep deprivation?
Preparation: Situational Assessment

Situational Assessment

• Do I have all the facts and information?
• What is the value of this conflict?
• What outcome do I hope to achieve?
• Do I have motives contrary to the desired outcomes?
• What are the emotional or political risks?
• How will I open the discussion?
• What challenges do I expect to encounter?
The Importance of the Conflict Management Skill Set

- Managers with skill set avoid, or diminish the possibility of workplace violence
- Save by addressing versus avoiding
- Reduce costs when managing virtual or global team members
- Accountability and productivity increase
- Increases manager/leader influence and integrity
Myth vs Truth About Conflict

Myths
• “Tell the truth and keep the peace”
• “Speaking up now will have a cost later” – reprisals and grudges
• What else?

Truths
• Varying histories, education, work experience provide a rich context for growth, process development and efficiency
• Respectful disagreement can be healthy – the best ideas surface!
• Passion is often mistaken for conflict
Review: Your 6 Step Process

- State the issue, challenge or problem
- Describe the impact of the issue, problem or challenge
- Provide opportunities for the other person to respond
- Discuss or state the desired outcome or required change
- Describe resources available, time frames and clarify expectations of understanding or correction
- Conclude with Confidence
• EAP Services available to employees, any household members and dependents
• Confidential
• EAP Counselors available 24/7/365 via 833-539-7285
• Up to 6 in person counseling sessions, per issue, per year
• Unlimited Management Consultations
• Financial/Legal Consultation and Referral Service
• Work/Life & Convenience Services
• https://sowi.mylifeexpert.com Company code: SOWI
Please complete a training evaluation!

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/SOWITrainingEval

Thank you!
Questions & Answer

Conflict Management in the Workplace