

Introduction to Constructive Conflict Resolution (CCR) | Appendix 4

Before audit completion

Return to the key values of **integrity** and **perseverance** and their role in **Protecting the Culture** as discussed during online sessions.

One time when **integrity** will be tested and **perseverance** will be essential is in dealing with conflict.

As a leader, you will encounter obstruction and resistance. And, despite your best efforts to have a shared vision and core values in your school, the culture will come under attack from a number of different sources and can be undermined in multiple ways.

Illustrate the point but **briefly...**

So how do **you** deal with conflict?

To help answer that question and give you something to reflect on, I am going to ask you to complete an Audit Sheet that we have used successfully in the past.

Suggest that they write what they consider to be their preferred conflict resolution style at the top of the Audit Sheet before completing it.

Explain how to complete form. Add your own preferred style!

On completion of audit, share some thoughts on CCR.

Key Points

- Think of conflict as neither good nor bad – without ethical prejudgement.
- Think of it not as warfare but as the appearance of difference (of opinions or interests).
- Conflict is DIFFERENCE – it can't be avoided so use it!
- Functional – healthy.
- Dysfunctional – unhealthy, negative impact.

Pause to allow reaction

Sources of conflict

Use Elicitation here – as far as possible draw examples from **their** experience with prompts (but not lengthy anecdotes) from own experience.

- Competition for resources
- A desire for autonomy
- Divergence over methods and means
- Personality clashes
- 'Loose cannons'

In the section that follows, introducing the Orange Scenario after Domination and before Compromise will illustrate how compromise can end in 'lose/lose'. It's also worth making the point that even when compromise is seen as 'win/win', it may contain the seeds of discontentment that will end in further conflict.

Methods of dealing with conflict:

- domination – one side gets what it wants (win – lose)
- compromise – neither side gets what it wants (lose – lose)
- integration – both sides get what they want (win – win)

The Orange Scenario comes in different versions. This one captures the difference between compromise and integration/collaboration.

A parent overheard two children arguing over an orange.

'It's mine!'

'It's not, it's mine.'

'But I want it.'

'I saw it first.'

The parent intervened, took the orange, cut it in half and gave a half to each child.

Sorted? Not quite.

As the parent watched, one child peeled her half of the orange, dropped the peel in the bin and wandered off to eat her snack, segment by segment. Meantime, the other child peeled his half of the orange, chucked the fruit in the bin and began to chop up the rind for a recipe he was following. Perhaps if a bit of time had been taken to understand the situation, to engage in some dialogue, a better outcome could have been achieved.

The example is an intro into an exploration of the needs/interests/reasons/concerns/hidden agendas that often lie behind conflict.

Much of the above early thinking and including 'the open window in the library' scenario is credited to Mary Parker Follett (1868 – 1933) – so not new.

These days the word **integration** is sometimes replaced by **collaboration**, indicating a desire to work through to a mutually beneficial solution based on trust.

It is also worth highlighting a quote from Mary Parker Follett: “It is to be hoped that...we shall always have conflict, the kind which leads to invention, to the emergence of new shared values.”

Understanding people’s interests can create options. While understanding is not the same as agreeing but can be the first step to an integrated solution over resources, time, space ... and oranges.

Now, over to you for your top tips in Constructive Conflict Resolution